

# Research: Half of Arab Academics do not Apply for Jewish Owned Companies



*By: Maayan Manla*

**65% of Arab employees do not think they are expected to work in companies with a Jewish majority, a norm that impedes their job search intentions, according to a new study conducted for Co-Impact.**

In recent years, more and more companies in the Israeli economy have set themselves the goal of integrating employees from Arab society, and despite the evident progress, companies are still finding it difficult to recruit and integrate Arab employees.

A new study examined the integration of Arab employees into the Israeli economy through the perspective of social psychology and found that 45% of Arab academics did not apply for jobs in a Jewish company at all. According to research conducted by the aChord Center, which serves among others, the Co-Impact teams, they expect racism and do not think they will be accepted. Moreover, 65% of them do not think they are expected to work in companies with a Jewish majority, a norm that impedes their job search intentions. The study also found that most Arab candidates did not think they would be good at their job.

"With the advancement in the companies' readiness for Arab employment, it became clear that there was also a bottleneck in the locating process. This means that the maturity of the companies is a necessary but insufficient condition, and that a parallel move is required on the part of candidates. Past studies that sought to track barriers that prevent Arabs from applying to companies with a Jewish majority, have identified structural barriers (residential areas, infrastructure, and more) and cultural barriers (interview skills, minority in employment experience, and other cultural differences), as well as psychological barriers. Research conducted at the aChord Center sought to map and understand the same psychological barriers that hinder Arabs from applying to companies with a Jewish majority" says Dr. Oranit Ramati Dvir, Director of the Employment Field at the aChord Center.



Dr. Ornit Ramati Dvir and Sama Safouri, Researchers

The study found that there are three main barriers which prevent Arab applicants from entering the employment market and even from applying. The first obstacle is the belief in one's abilities - Arab candidates fear that their chances as Arabs to pass the screening process are low, meaning that their chances to be invited to an interview and pass it, to be invited to assessment centers and pass them - are low; The second barrier is the question 'will I feel good in my workplace?' - Arab applicants fear that companies with a Jewish majority are not a good place for them, that they may encounter racism, unfairness, etc.; The third barrier is the perception of norms - Arab candidates believe that applying to companies with a Jewish majority is not acceptable behavior in their environment. Given the low representation of Arabs in the employment market, Arab candidates do not see role models, examples of other Arabs in companies with a Jewish majority and therefore are less likely to act differently.

"If I think I have no chance of being accepted, that I will not feel good in the workplace, and that other people in my area also do not apply and do not work in companies with a Jewish majority - then the chance of me applying is very low," explains Sama Safouri, Project Manager in the field of employment. In addition, these concerns are not detached from reality. "The chance of the Arab candidate really is lower- and that is a sobering reality. The Israeli-Jewish employment market can sometimes be discriminatory and Arab representation is sometimes very marginal. However, there is a change in the field and it is important to emphasize that," she says.

The novelty of the study, conducted among 400 Arab academics, is the psychological barrier that emerged for the first time. It consists of a low belief in one's abilities about meeting a Jewish employer; negative attitudes and feelings about working in companies with a Jewish majority and the perception that this is not the norm in Arab society.

### **How can the findings of the study increase Arab employment?**

"aChord's research allows us to guide companies on how to persuade Arab candidates that they sincerely intend to change in their efforts to reduce gaps and to provide a real equal opportunity for Arab candidates," says Nawa Jahshan Batshon, CEO of Co-Impact which works with leading companies in order to increase the integration of Arab society in the business sector. "The study allows us to teach the companies that the challenge of reaching Arab candidates is not just a technical challenge, but a deep challenge of overcoming a prolonged crisis of confidence between Arab society and the Israeli economy."

According to the research conductors, the findings can be used to increase Arab employment by reducing the intensity of barriers in the following ways:

1. Incorporating messages to emphasize the commitment to recruitment, onboarding and promotion of Arabs, such as: How many Arabs have been hired each year, what adjustments have been made to the company's procedures in recruiting, sorting and onboarding and more.
2. Messages of change: The presence of Arab employees in companies with a Jewish majority reinforces the perception that Arabs can be accepted, work and feel good in companies where they work.

3. Adapting the Arab candidates' guidance and preparation process for the unique psychological and emotional experience as seen in the research findings. For example, how can negative emotions that arise around the job search process be dealt with and channeled into pre-action?

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