Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities

by

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to identify hiring manger perceptions in the workforce toward hiring and working with people with disabilities. The concepts of stigma, attribution theory, and the spread effect are examined in regard to their impact on individuals and their counter productiveness in regard to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Potential suggestions are made as to how this stigma and bias can be reduced. Recommendations are made to help business and rehabilitation professionals reduce this stigma and increase employment rates of individuals with disabilities by being creative, proactive, professional, and responsive to the needs not only of potential employers but also to the consumers of rehabilitation services.

The results of the study indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in manager perceptions of hiring PWD based on their collective scores on the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities attitude scale. These results suggest that employer responses toward hiring people with disabilities were less than positive.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Introductory Statement

In regard to the meaning of work, having a mission in life and being affirmed by others is

highly valuable in society. Work roles provide opportunities to experience being part of society,

being a useful member of society, and being appreciated for what one does (Liedberg &

Henriksson, 2002). Many people with disabilities (PWD) that are either taken out or left out of

the workforce experience sadness or grief over not having a professional identity. There is also a

feeling that some of their value as human beings has been lost (Liedberg & Henriksson, 2002).

This would especially be the case for someone who acquired a disability later in life.

Work roles are also important because they provide social contact. For some, work can

mean having social contacts and an avenue for getting back into society. A socially isolated life

may result in feelings of diminished human dignity and a less meaningful life situation, factors

that in turn may lead to greater focus on health problems (Liedberg & Henriksson, 2002). The

ability to maintain an organized time structure is often taken away when a PWD is not allowed

back into the workforce. Work is an important part of daily life structure and without a work

role, it is difficult to maintain a functional life pattern. Missing work or not being allowed to

work changes one's ordinary habits (Liedberg & Henriksson, 2002).

Unlike other individuals who may become targets of job discrimination, PWDs have an

obstacle embedded in the very language that describes them. The term "disability" has a

different meaning in at least three different contexts. In the Workers' Compensation program,

disability refers to the damages that one person collects from another as a result of an insult or injury (Zames Fleischer & Zames, 2001). In the Social Security Disability Insurance program, disability refers to a condition that links poor health and employment. In the context of civil rights laws, disability is linked to discrimination. Furthermore, since disability is commonly associated with disability benefits (which typically implies an inability to work), employment for PWDs can appear to be a contradiction (Zames Fleischer & Zames, 2001).

In support of those findings, a study used focus groups with 67 participants, representing human resources officers and direct supervisors, to explore perceptions toward employed PWD (Stensrud, 2007). Participants reported that they think that many people who made their disability known to the organization seemed to use it to expect unreasonable accommodations or as an excuse to not do their job effectively.

The participants viewed disability primarily from the perspective of accommodations. If people had disabilities but did not request accommodations, they were not seen as having disabilities. The participants' conceptualization of people with disabilities included those who created problems for the organization because they asked for accommodations; asked for accommodations and did their job; or obviously had a disability and were exemplars of hard workers (Stensrud, 2007). Such views serve to strengthen stigma within an organization. The perception of disability becomes the major factor, instead of how effective or ineffective a worker tends to be as an employee. People with disabilities are still seen as different, thus stigmatized, simply because they either asked for accommodations or obviously had a disability (Stensrud, 2007).

The most common theme in the Stensrud (2007) study involved the perception of co-workers. If advancement and accommodations were connected in any manner, co-workers

would be concerned about the fairness of the promotion. Additionally, perceptions of a PWD as having doubtful soft skills, poor interviewing skills, questionable resumes, and inappropriate discussion of disabilities and accommodations suggest to employers that an applicant who is a PWD brings too much risk to a job and should be avoided (Stensrud, 2007).

To many employers, the least risky person who seems motivated to develop the necessary job skills is the best potential employee. A sense of risk underlines every aspect of hiring people with disabilities. Decisions are usually based on risk reduction more than on performance enhancement. Whether they were recruiting, selecting, training, accommodating, or promoting, the participants considered the risks people brought more than they considered people's potential (Stensrud, 2007).

These risks could be direct, through increased costs that result from inappropriate hires and increased medical costs. The risks could be indirect, through dissatisfaction of other workers with the performance or accommodations received by co-workers who are PWD. Recruiting and selecting the wrong person could cost recruiters and human resource (HR) personnel their bonuses or jobs. Keeping nonproductive workers could cost supervisors their jobs or even result in entire units being closed. Providing training or accommodations to workers who are PWD may result in less teamwork or other workers leaving because of perceived inequity (Stensrud, 2007).

Statement of the Research Problem

Stigma and discrimination continue to exist in the workforce toward both hiring and working with PWD (Liedberg & Henriksson, 2002; Stensrud, 2007). The focus of this research is the lack of information related to managers' perceptions toward hiring and working with PWD.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of employers toward hiring and working with PWD. The study identified the extent to which employers agree or disagree with statements related to working with and hiring PWD. The purpose of this study was further delineated by the following research questions.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study.

1. What are the demographic characteristics (age group, educational level, type of organization) of managers who hire or make recommendations to hire PWD?

2. What are the types of employing organizations or businesses for respondents in this study?

3. To what extent do managers have a very favorable (as indicated by strongly agree) or favorable (as indicated by agree) perception of hiring PWD?

4. To what extent is there a correlation between social desirability and employer perceptions?

5. What do managers report as their greatest challenges in hiring/working with people with PWD?

6. What do managers report as their greatest benefits in hiring/working with PWD?

Statement of Hypotheses

H_01: There is no statistically significant difference in the mean score on the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities and the test value of 120.

H_02: There is no statistically significant correlation between social desirability and perceptions.

Research Design Methods and Procedures

Source of Data (Population/Sample)

1. The sample for this study will be hiring managers who are directly involved in the hiring or who make recommendations to hire employees in local communities. These will be individuals who are members of the Auburn-Opelika, AL Chamber of Commerce.

2. Managers who are directly involved in training and placement of employees in their local communities.

Instrumentation

The instrument for this study will be the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities (Kraska, 1998). This is a 30-item questionnaire that asks participants' perceptions of PWD. Each item is scored on a five-point Likert-type scale as follows: Strongly Agree = 5; Agree = 4; Undecided = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1. The maximum possible total score is 150 and the minimum possible total score is 30. For this instrument, there are no correct or incorrect responses to the items; however, the higher the total score, the more favorable a participants' perceptions. Cronbach's alpha was .89.

The validity of the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities survey for this study was established by a panel of experts. The panel included two employers, a rehabilitation counselor, and a research methodologist. Each panel member was instructed to use his or her own expertise to assess each item for clarity, appropriateness, relevance, and completeness. All panel members agreed that the questionnaire was a valid instrument for this study. Instrument reliability for this study will be established using Cronbach's alpha.

The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (SDS) describes culturally approved behaviors that have little probability of occurring (Fischer & Fick, 1993). When used with other

self-report measures, the Marlowe-Crowne SDS has proven to be an effective control for socially desirable responses (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). With 33 items in a True-False response format, the Marlowe-Crowne can take as long to complete as the primary assessment instrument (Reynolds, 1982). Due to the length of the original Marlowe-Crowne SDS, the Marlowe-Crowne SDS Short Form will be utilized.

With only 13 items, as opposed to 33, the Marlowe-Crowne SDS Short Form has been proven to be both reliable and valid measures of social desirability (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Fischer & Fick, 1993; Reynolds, 1982). Kuder-Richardson formula 20 reliability was used to establish reliability, the short form has .76 reliability (Reynolds, 1982). Concurrent validity was examined through correlations between the Marlowe-Crowne short version and the standard version. The correlation coefficient is .38 (Reynolds, 1982).

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher will obtain the email addresses from the Auburn-Opelika, AL Chamber of Commerce website. The researcher will then record the email address of each hiring managers into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Once potential participants are identified using a table of random selection, the selected hiring managers' email addresses will be uploaded into the Qualtrics survey platform with the questionnaires for emailing.

The researcher will contacted each hiring manager electronically listed on the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet explaining the purpose of the study, the reason they were selected, assurance that their involvement would be anonymous, and the link to the survey. The surveys will be formatted for Internet delivery and hosted through Qualtrics.com.

Qualtrics is a web-based software survey platform that makes it possible to create, administer, view, and download results of online surveys (Qualtrics.com, 2017). The researchers

will create a Qualtrics survey link within the announcement, so the group members can anonymously participate in the survey. A demographic sheet will be included with the survey. Once they complete the survey, the results will only be accessible though a secure and password protected Qualtrics log in.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data will be analyzed using IBM SPSS Version 23. Descriptive statistics will be calculated to respond to the first two research questions. The third research question is addressed by the first null hypothesis. This null hypothesis will be tested using a one-sample t-test with a cut-off score of 120. This score was decided by the researcher to be an appropriate score to indicate whether a participant agreed or strongly agreed (positive response) to an item. The fourth research question will be addressed by the second null hypothesis. The second null hypothesis will be tested at the .05 level using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Procedure. The fifth and sixth research questions will be analyzed for common themes related to challenges and benefits of hiring or working with people with disabilities.

<div align="center">Definition of Terms</div>

Accommodation: Modification to a job, work environment, or the way work is performed that allows an individual with a disability to apply for a job, perform the essential functions of the job, and enjoy equal access to benefits available to other individuals in the workplace (DOL, 2013).

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Legislation that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications (U.S. Department of Justice, 2009).

Attribution theory: Seeks to explain the cognitive process in which individuals make explanatory inferences regarding the causes of events (Manusov & Spitzberg, 2008).

Disability: An umbrella term, which covers impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions (World Health Organization [WHO], 2016). More specifically, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 defines disability as any restriction or lack (resulting from any impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being (ADA, 1990). A disability includes conditions that are present, or once existed but do not any more; for example, a person who has had a back injury, a heart attack, or an episode of mental illness. A disability also includes those that may exist in the future; for example, a person with a genetic predisposition to a disease, such as Huntington's disease or heart disease or a person who is HIV positive (Hill Country Disabled Group, 2013).

Furthermore, a person has a disability if any of the following conditions apply: used a wheelchair, crutches, or a walker; had difficulty with or needed assistance with one or more activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, eating, or toileting; had a developmental delay or learning disability; had difficulty walking, playing, or moving arms; had a specific condition, such as mental retardation, cerebral palsy, or Alzheimer's disease; had a mental or emotions condition that seriously interfered with everyday activities; or had a condition that made it difficult to remain employed (Robinson-Wood, 2009, p. 13). A disability may also include situations in which someone thinks or assumes a person has a disability (Hill Country Disabled Group, 2013).

Employment: The condition of having paid work

PWD: Person/people with a disability

PWD: Individual with a disability

PWOD: Person/people without a disability

Rehabilitation: Process aimed at enabling PWD to reach and maintain optimal physical, sensory, intellectual, psychological, and social functioning levels. Rehabilitation provides PWD with the tools needed to attain independence and self-determination (WHO, 2016).

Spread effect/phenomenon: When a dominant characteristic of a person is negative, he will tend to be perceived negatively regarding his other characteristics as well (Wright, 1959). The same is true for positive characteristics.

Stigma: Bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the person (Goffman, 1962).

Limitations

1. For the purpose of this study, only hiring managers who are directly involved in the hiring or who make recommendations to hire employees that have emails listed with the Auburn-Opelika Chamber of Commerce were included in this study.

2. Limited demographic groups for data collection.

3. Limited to the extent that the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities survey identifies participant perceptions toward hiring PWD.

Assumptions

1. It is believed that all questionnaire participants will respond to the items based on their true perceptions.

2. All individuals understand the survey items.

3. Representative hirers will be surveyed.

Need for the Study

People with disabilities (PWD) often experience limited employment opportunities, challenging lifestyles, fluctuating health status, and subpar pay rates (Kontosh, Fletcher, Frain, &

Winland-Brown, 2007). A major obstacle facing these individuals is gaining access to employment. Work gives us purpose and meaning; it is also tied to income, which relates to other social factors. For example, if we have a good income, we can afford better housing and access more services.

The poverty rate for the disability community exceeds the rate for the general population. The Annual Disability Statistics Compendium (2012) reports that in 2011, the poverty rate of PWD ages 18 to 64 years living in the community was 28.6%, while the poverty rate of people without disabilities (PWOD) ages 16 to 64 years living in the community was 13.7% — less than half the rate of PWD. The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (2012) states that a single person was considered to be living in poverty in 2011 if they earned less than $11,170 annually. Living in poverty limits the full participation of PWD in our society (Heasley, 2011).

The diversity of the American workforce suffers when the disability community is not represented. Workplaces lose out on the perspectives and talents of workers with disabilities when they are not included in the workforce (Hernandez et al., 2007). While full-time work may not be everyone's goal, PWD need to be supported in their efforts to find purpose and meaning through work. These individuals must have access to training, education, or other workplace programs (Here to Help, 2013).

Employment and employment opportunities for all people are considered important components along the path of being considered a productive member of society. For others, employment is the most important anti-poverty strategy. For PWD, inclusion in the workplace can translate into the difference between independence and dependence. Considering the importance of work in American society and for the socioeconomic and psychological well-being of all people, it is vital that this population be fully integrated into the work force.

Employment of PWD not only provides benefits to themselves, but also to their coworkers and communities (Hartnett, Stuart, Thurman, Loy, & Batiste, 2011).

Significance of the Study

By specifically examining employer perceptions, rehabilitation counselors will be better able to recognize that providing assistance to business through referrals to human service agencies and advocacy groups does not coincide with the process by which businesses recruit for workers. Counselors should help consumers participate in the social networks that business employees utilize so that they can use the entry points favored by the people who will recruit and hire them (Stensrud, 2007). Counselors must also recognize that if they can provide skilled workers where they are needed and when they are needed, they will be able to develop productive, mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses.

Employers that may be interested in hiring employees with disabilities have trouble finding such applicants (Luecking, 2008). Those who have had previous experience with employees with disabilities are typically satisfied with the experience, but may still be hesitant to hire PWD (Luecking, 2008).

There is a need for refocused job development strategies and disability employment advocacy (Luecking, 2008). This is especially the case if vocational rehabilitation is to make any more progress in facilitating employment for PWD, including those with significant support and accommodation needs. Instead of methodology and advocacy, which has historically concentrated on aspects of disability and related accommodations, job development needs a stronger focus on the context of the employers' enterprises and organizational processes. A refined approach is needed that more effectively considers the demand-side of the employment

development equation and that demonstrates to employers that they are valued customers of job development initiatives.

The aggregate costs of disabling conditions, measured as the sum of reductions in household income, net of income transfer payments, and purchases of goods and services made necessary by disabling conditions, totaled an estimated $176.7 billion in 1980 (Chirikos, 1989). Between 1960 and 1980, according to the analysis that yielded this estimate, annual economic losses attributable to disabling conditions for people with moderate disabilities are $54.1 billion and for people with severe disabilities, $122.6 billion (Chirikos, 1989). Chirikos (1989) contends that the losses can be described as a tax of approximately $800 for every American. When the price of ADA litigation is added, these totals will rise even more (Smart, 2009). Putting PWD to work would lower these costs; however for the PWD, the emotional and social benefits of working may be much more impactful than the economic benefits (Smart, 2009).

Chapter II. Review of the Literature

Introduction

Individuals with disabilities often experience limited employment opportunities, challenging lifestyles, fluctuating health status, and subpar pay rates (Kontosh, Fletcher, Frain, & Winland-Brown, 2007). A major obstacle facing these individuals is gaining access to employment (Kontosh, Fletcher, Frain, & Winland-Brown, 2007). Work gives us purpose and meaning; it is also tied to income, which is tied to other social factors (Kontosh, Fletcher, Frain, & Winland-Brown, 2007). For example, if we have a good income, we can afford better housing and access more services.

The poverty rate for the disability community exceeds the rate for the general population. The Annual Disability Statistics Compendium (2012) reports that in 2011, the poverty rate of individuals with disabilities ages 18 to 64 years living in the community was 28.6%, while the poverty rate of individuals without disabilities ages 16 to 64 years living in the community was 13.7% -less than half the rate of individuals with disabilities. The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (2012) states that a single person was considered to be living in poverty in 2011 if they earned less than $11,170 annually. Living in poverty limits the full participation of people with disabilities in our society (Heasley, 2011).

The diversity of the American workforce suffers when the disability community is not represented. Workplaces lose out on the perspectives and talents of workers with disabilities (Hernandez et al., 2007). While full-time work may not be everyone's goal, persons with

disabilities need to be supported in their efforts to find purpose and meaning through work. These individuals must have access to training, education, or other workplace programs (Here to Help, 2013).

Employment and employment opportunities for all people are considered important components along the path of being considered a productive member of society. For others, employment is their most important anti-poverty strategy. For people with disabilities, inclusion in the workplace can translate into the difference between independence and dependence. Hartnett, Stuart, Thurman, Loy, and Batiste (2011) explain that because of the importance of work in American society and for the socioeconomic and psychological well-being of all people, it is vital that this population be fully integrated into the work force. As will be discussed later in this paper, employment of individuals with disabilities not only provides benefits to themselves, but also to their coworkers and communities (Hartnett, Stuart, Thurman, Loy, & Batiste, 2011).

Liedberg and Henriksson (2002) conducted research regarding work disabilities and found that regarding the meaning of work, having a mission in life and being confirmed by others is highly valuable in society. Work roles provide opportunities to experience being part of society, being a useful member of society, and being appreciated for what one does (Liedberg & Henriksson, 2002). The researchers also found that many PWD that are either taken or left out of the workforce experience sadness or grief over not having a professional identity. There is also a feeling that some of their value as human beings has been lost (Liedberg & Henriksson, 2002).

Work roles are also important because they provide social contact. For some, work can mean having social contacts and getting back into society again (Liedberg & Henriksson, 2002). A socially more isolated life may result in feelings of diminished human dignity and a less

meaningful life situation; factors that in turn may lead to more focus on their own health problems (Liedberg & Henriksson, 2002). Liedberg and Henriksson (2002) found that the ability to maintain an organized time structure is often taken away when an IWD is not allowed back into the workforce. Work is an important part of that work structure and without a work role, it is difficult to maintain an ordinary life pattern. Missing work or not being allowed to work disrupts the time structure and changes one's ordinary habits (Liedberg & Henriksson, 2002).

Zames Fleischer and Zames (2001) explain that unlike other targets of job discrimination, PWDs have an obstacle embedded in the very language that describes them (p. 110). The term "disability" has a different meaning in at least three different contexts. In the Workers' Compensation program, disability refers to means the damages that one person collects from another as a result of an insult or injury (Zames Fleischer & Zames, 2001, p. 110). In the Social Security Disability Insurance program, disability refers to a condition that links poor health and employment (Zames Fleischer & Zames, 2001, p. 110). In the context of civil rights laws, disability is linked to discrimination. Furthermore, since disability is commonly associated with disability benefits (which typically implies an inability to work), employment for PWDs can appear to be a contradiction (Zames Fleischer & Zames, 2001, p. 110).

Fortunately, and much to the contrary, factors such as modern technology and advancements in medicine are allowing an increasing number of PWDs to become employable (Zames Fleischer & Zames, 2001, p. 110). Several years before the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed, disability advocates promoted the idea that it is better for PWDs, as well as for the nation, if PWDs are working, supporting their families, and contributing to the community rather than being dependent; it is better if PWDs are taxpayers rather than tax users (Zames Fleischer & Zames, 2001, p. 110).

Whether or not a person has a disability does not determine their workforce success or socioeconomic development. In situations of appropriate knowledge, relevant skills, productive habits, empowering policies, institutional structures, and normative practices, both individuals with and without disabilities can produce good results (Rubin & Adu-Febiri, 2004). Hiring managers' perceptions and stigmas regarding persons with disabilities are critical barriers to their employment. This integration of IWDs into the workforce can only be accomplished by eliminating the influence of impermissible factors on accommodation decisions and stigmas in hiring practices (Mitchell & Kovera, 2006).

Disability Explained

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2012), there are 56.7 million people, or 19% of the population age 5 and older, with a disability. When most people think of the word "disability" they immediately picture someone in a wheelchair. But there are many different types of disability. People with a disability may include people who are blind or partially sighted, people with learning or intellectual disabilities, people who are deaf or hearing impaired, people with a physical disability, people with long-term illnesses, people with mental health or psychological difficulties, and people with an acquired brain injury (Hill Country Disabled Group, 2013). According to the World Health Organization (2013), a disability is defined as any restriction or lack (resulting from any impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.

A disability includes conditions that are present, or once existed but do not any more; for example, a person who has had a back injury, a heart attack, or an episode of mental illness. A disability also includes those that may exist in the future; for example, a person with a genetic

predisposition to a disease, such as Huntington's disease or heart disease or a person who is HIV positive (Hill Country Disabled Group, 2013).

Furthermore, a person has a disability if any of the following conditions apply: used a wheelchair, crutches, or a walker; had difficulty with or needed assistance with one or more activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, eating, or toileting; had a developmental delay or learning disability; had difficulty walking, playing, or moving arms; had a specific condition, such as mental retardation, cerebral palsy, or Alzheimer's disease; had a mental or emotions condition that seriously interfered with everyday activities; or had a condition that made it difficult to remain employed (Robinson-Wood, 2009, p. 13). A disability may also include situations in which someone thinks or assumes a person has a disability (Hill Country Disabled Group, 2013).

The ADA considers such situations to occur when an individual is regarded as being disabled. Mish (1998) explains that being regarded as disabled focuses less on the extent of an individual's actual impairment and more on how others perceive the individual, as well as the effect of those perceptions on the attitudes toward, and assumptions about, the individual's abilities. The ADA says an individual is regarded as disabled if the person has a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit major life activities but is treated by an employer as having such limitation (Mish, 1998).

A second condition of being regarded as disabled is having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits major life activities only as a result of the attitudes of others toward such impairment (Mish, 1998). The third condition for being regarded as disabled is that the individual has none of the impairments specified by the ADA, but is treated by an employer as having a substantially limiting impairment (Mish, 1998). An individual is regarded as

disabled when others behave toward that individual as if he has a substantially limiting impairment, regardless of whether the individual actually has such an impairment (Mish, 1998).

The regarded as disabled provision was intended by Congress to provide protection to individuals who are discriminated against because of the "the myths, fears, and stereotypes associated with disabilities" (Mish, 1998). The regarded as disabled provision was designed to help the individual who, though not disabled from performing a particular job, was nevertheless discriminated against based on the false assumptions of others about the individual's ability to perform that job (Mish, 1998).

One example of a regarded as disabled situation in which the individual would be entitled to ADA protection is if a person with a large scar on their face or body is denied employment based on the employer's personal discomfort with disfigurement. A second example is if a person is denied employment because their pre-employment physical reveals a back anomaly, though there are no symptoms of actual back impairments. The employer simply refuses to hire the person because the employer fears injury and increased insurance or worker's compensation costs (Mish, 1998).

Disability is a dynamic term, given the open membership of this identity as a function of the natural aging process, injury, and/or disease. There are many categories for describing persons with disabilities, from mild to moderate to severe (Robinson-Wood, 2009, p. 13). Members of this group do not have to be born with a disability. Whether existing at birth or at some other point in life, it is a natural reality. Disability is a lived experience for millions of Americans. People with mental and physical disabilities face obstacles to access and experience discriminatory attitudes.

These attitudes are fueled by a societal perception that persons with disabilities are helpless, dependent, incompetent, and childlike (Robinson-Wood, 2009, p. 13). These attitudes are among the main reasons that the employment and economic gaps between PWD and PWODs continue to exist. Government programs are having a positive impact and improving employment opportunities for PWD; however, their position in society continues to fall (Smart, 2009, p.121). PWD are getting more jobs, but PWODs are getting even more and better jobs. Things such as labor market changes, technological advances, inflation, and poor economies negatively affect PWD even more so than PWODs (Smart, 2009, p.121).

Data from the United States Department of Labor (DOL) labor force measures are based on the civilian, non-institutional population 16 years old and over. Persons under 16, all inmates of institutions, and persons on active duty in the Armed Forces are excluded. All other members of the civilian, non-institutional population who are 16 or over and have a job or are actively looking for one and available to work are classified as belonging in the labor force (DOL, 2013). The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), a branch of the DOL, found the unemployment rate for persons with a disability was 15.0% in 2011, well above the of 8.7% figure for those with no disability.

BLS (2012) defines unemployed persons as those who did not have a job, were available for work, and were actively looking for a job in the four weeks preceding the survey. The unemployment rate for persons with a disability was about the same in 2011 as in 2010, while the rate for persons without a disability fell. Among persons with a disability, the jobless rate for men (15.3%) was slightly higher in 2011 than the rate for women (14.7%). As is the case among those without a disability, the unemployment rates in 2011 reported by BLS (2012) for those

with a disability were higher among Blacks (23.5%) and Hispanics (20.3%) than among Whites (13.7%) and Asians (11.0%).

Persons described as "neither employed nor unemployed" are not in the labor force. "Neither employed nor unemployed" effectively means that these individuals are not employed and are not seeking employment. This can happen for a number of reasons, such as someone having a severely debilitating disability; but typically it indicates individuals at the retirement age of 65 or older.

As was the case in 2010, a large proportion of persons with a disability, about 8 in 10, were not in the labor force ("neither employed nor unemployed") in 2011, compared with about 3 in 10 of those with no disability. Among persons not in the labor force, 1% of those with a disability were marginally attached to the labor force in 2011, compared with 4% of those with no disability. These figures show that, for all age groups, persons with a disability were more likely than those with no disability to be unemployed and/or out of the labor force.

What is Stigma?

In the history of disability, there are three dominant models for conceptualizing disability: the moral model, the medical model, and the social/minority model (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999, p. 36). The oldest of the three is the moral model. The moral model is the view that disability is directly linked to sin and evil (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999). The moral view was derived in early human cultures and the Neolithic tribes who viewed PWD as possessed by evil spirits (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999, p. 37).

The Spartans abandoned PWD of all ages to die along the countryside (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999, p. 37). Plato is credited with developing much of the ethical framework that we have today. He viewed PWD as standing in the way of a perfect world and that they should be

hidden away from the rest of society (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999, p. 37). Though the moral model still exists today, this point of view was dominant until the end of the Middle Ages (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999, p. 36).

Biblical and religious history has many references that link disability to possession or sin and evil (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999, p. 37). The Judeo-Christian tradition was strong among Europeans during the Middle Ages, and though their philosophy did not advocate killing, PWD were treated as outcasts and stereotyped. Judeo-Christian thinking is the foundation for much of Western culture (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999, p. 37). Ancient Hebrews thought PWD were possessed by demons. People who were deformed or crippled were forbidden from becoming priests (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999, p. 37).

Judeo-Christian teachings suggest that humans are made in God's image and are different from and superior to all other animals. Proponents of the moral model believe that to have a disability reminds people of man's imperfections and dissimilarities to God and aligns man with the imperfect animal kingdom (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999, p. 38). In today's society, some people still believe that people are disabled because of their evil or the evil of their parents or family (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999, p. 38). Employment disability has origins in the moral paradigm of understanding disability (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999, p. 38).

Out of the Enlightenment era, which began in the mid 1700s, came the notion that humans could be perfected. PWD began to be defined by their pathologies and biological defects. This is where the medical model was developed. Of the three models, the medical model is more prevalent in society today (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999, p. 38). Institutions emerged with the intent of curing disabilities with professional intervention. If there were no cure possible, the goal was to train the PWD to adapt to society's behavioral norms

(Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999, p.38). The medical model has been described as an institutionalized expression of society's anxiety regarding those that look and function differently than they do. The medical model treats PWD as hideous, inept, and a threat to society (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999, p. 38).

The social/minority model differs from the medical and moral models in that this model of disability regards PWD as a minority group within the dominant nondisabled society (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999, p. 40). Disability is seen as a social construct, much like race and gender. Within this model, the limitations of the disability are due to society more than any trait of disability. In the case of combatting the social/minority model, the intervention is not necessarily with the PWD, it is with society that constructs and holds on to their definition of disability and what it means to be disabled (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999, p. 40).

The Greeks originated the term stigma to refer to bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the person (Goffman, 1962, p. 1). Society establishes the means of categorizing people and the attributes seen as ordinary and natural for members of these categories. Social settings establish the categories of people likely to be encountered. The routines of social intercourse in established settings allow us to deal with the anticipated individual without special attention or thought. Society relies on these anticipations, transforming them from normative expectations into righteously presented demands (Goffman, 1962, p. 2).

Goffman (1962) explains that while a stranger is present before someone, evidence arises that makes him different from others in the category of persons available for him to be, and of a less desirable kind–in some cases, a person who is thoroughly bad, dangerous, or weak (p. 3). Society then reduces him from a whole and usual person, to a tainted discounted person. This

type of attribute is a stigma, especially when the discrediting effect is very extensive. Sometimes it is also called a failing, a shortcoming, a handicap. By definition, society believes a person with a stigma is not quite human (Goffman, 1962, p. 3).

Based on this belief, society employs a variety of discrimination tactics that both intentionally and unintentionally reduces the life chances of the stigmatized person (Goffman, 1962, p. 3). Society even constructs ideology to explain the stigmatized person's inferiority and even to account for the danger the stigma represents. Society uses specific terms, such as cripple, bastard, or moron on a regular basis as a source of metaphor of imagery (Goffman, 1962, p. 3). Therefore, the term stigma is used to refer to attributes designed to expose something unusual or bad about the moral status of someone and stigma represents a special type of relationship between attributes and stereotypes (Goffman, 1962, p. 3).

An understanding of this type of discrimination is increased by assessing the "mastery-over-fate" ideology that is a part of American society (Robinson-Wood, 2009, p. 41). The U.S. culture puts an extreme focus on youth and fitness while also establishing a striking preoccupation with beautiful bodies. A physically active and able-body is a valued commodity within society. Disabilities are seen as imperfections, and this is in contradiction to U.S. cultural norms and desire to control–such as fixing what is broken or imperfect, overcoming, and dominating (Robinson-Wood, 2009, p. 41). A definite bias exists in favor of the able-bodied. Persons without disabilities are often oblivious to their unearned privileges.

Regarding these advantages and disadvantages, Beatrice Wright (1959) explains that another way of looking at the cultural evaluation of "independence" and "dependence" is to consider the fact that people in American society tend to judge independence as positive and

dependence as negative. Independence evokes strength, masculinity, and leadership. Dependence is associated with weakness, femininity, indecision, and helplessness.

Researcher Beatrice Wright (1959) also speaks about the concept of heightened maladjustment. One of the main factors in heightened maladjustment is the "halo" or "spread" phenomenon. It has also been referred to as the spread effect, which will be addressed later as well. The concept means that when a dominant characteristic of a person is negative, he will tend to be perceived negatively regarding his other characteristics as well (Wright, 1959). The same is true for positive characteristics. Based on this premise, a person with a disability is also believed to be less able or sound in other areas, such as mental or emotional capacity (Wright, 1959).

Wright (1985) says this phenomenon supports man's tendency to see someone as all good or all bad. The spread phenomenon is stronger in conditions of heightened emotions. The positive view is more easily conveyed when love is blind and negative distortions occur with our enemies. Heightened maladjustment thrives when we have fear, resentment, or guilt regarding disability (Wright, 1985).

Wright (1985) explains that this spread phenomenon can be enhanced by personal advantage. It is understandable for someone to grasp on to the worst traits of their enemies. Yet when disabilities are concerned, it is much more covert (Wright, 1985). To see a person with a disability in a negative manner is morally wrong. However, "the requirement of mourning" occurs when someone needs to reassure himself of his own status and well-being by insisting that the person with a disability is suffering and quite unfortunate (Wright, 1985). This pity spreads the negative effects of disability. Wright (1959) stresses that genuine sympathy is one thing and devaluating pity is another.

Most PWD consider their disability to be an attribute, not a problem (Smart, 2009, p.149). Whereas PWD consider the disability to be just another part of their whole identity, many PWODs consider the disability to be the focal and defining characteristic of the PWD (Smart, 2009, p. 149). This is where salience becomes a part of the stigma and discrimination. Salience of the disability means that the disability is the most important, or even the only, aspect of the PWD (Smart, 2009, p. 146). Others make the assumption that the disability is the focus of the identity and self-definition of the PWD (Smart, 2009, p. 146). Salience can also mean most noticeable, and regarding disabilities, salience so often means different from the rest of society (Smart, 2009, p.146). Assigning that level of salience and importance to the disability only heightens and exaggerates differences between PWD and PWODs (Goffman, 1963, p. 107).

Furthermore, society has a tendency to overgeneralize the limitations of one's disability and a majority of the generalizations are negative (Smart, 2009, p.150). When the few exceptions to the generalizations are positive, it is known as the "Tiny Tim" syndrome (Smart, 2009, p. 150). PWD are at times identified as kindhearted, wise, or perceptive heroes or saints (Smart, 2009, p. 150). "Tiny Tim" syndrome describes the idea that disabilities result in PWD having a kind personality (Smart, 2009, p. 150).

Conversely, Wright (1959) describes the myth of tragedy as further compounding stigma and discrimination. This myth occurs when the life of a person with a disability is made equivalent to disaster when there has been merger between tragedy and disability. Nothing else is perceived but a life full of suffering, frustration, and rejection. Wright (1985) also discusses the myth of sin and how it correlates with attribution theory. The myth of sin has to do with the perceived cause of disability and implicitly affirms that disability is a punishment for evil, typically on the part of the person with a disability or his family members. This belief is often

expressed covertly in the shame, guilt, and need to blame that commonly revolve around

disability.

Similarly, the more common and destructive concept of spread is "twisted body, twisted

soul" (Smart, 2009, p. 150). This is a widespread belief that ascertains that disability has a

negative impact on a person's personality, which makes PWD resentful, irate, and unfriendly

(Smart, 2009, p. 150). Another perspective of this belief is that the PWD has resentment because

they have not accepted their disability (Smart, 2009, p. 150). This is an example of the

attribution theories, which will be discussed in the next section. Here, it is society making the

judgment of the person and their character, then ascribing or attributing the reasons for such

character deficiencies (Smart, 2009, p. 150).

The Impact of Attribution Theory

Attribution theory seeks to explain the cognitive process in which individuals make

explanatory inferences regarding the causes of events (Manusov & Spitzberg, 2008, p. 37).

There are two general categories of explanation, internal and external. Internal attributions

implicate characteristics of the individual (such as ability, attitudes, personality, mood, and

effort) for having caused a particular behavior, whereas external attributions implicate external

factors (such as the task, other people, or luck) for causing an event or outcome to occur.

Weiner (1971) added an additional dimension to causal interpretation when he proposed

that the stability of the cause is also included in individual's explanations of outcomes. The

distinction between stable, non-variable causes (such as innate ability for internal attributions

and inherent task difficulty for external attributions) and unstable, variable causes (such as effort

and luck respectively) was combined with internal/external dimension to form a basis for

classifying the performance attributions made by individuals (Manusov & Spitzberg, 2008, p. 40).

Following the emergence of two-dimensional attribution theory, many studies have been conducted which observed patterns governing the type of attribution which individuals tend to make in given situations (Manusov & Spitzberg, 2008, p. 41). Three phenomena that are commonly observed when studying attributions are the actor-observer bias, the fundamental attribution error, and the self-serving bias (Manusov & Spitzberg, 2008, p. 41).

The actor-observer bias is the phenomenon where the perceived cause of an event follows from the particular perspective of the explainer. An observer of an individual's behavior displays a tendency to attribute the causes of that behavior to internal characteristics of the actor whereas the person carrying out the act in question explains their own behavior as having resulted from external circumstances (Jones & Nisbett, 1971).

For PWD, requesting accommodations can fall subject to this type of attribution. The actor would be the employee in a wheelchair requesting an accommodation and the observer would be the employer/manager. The employee attributes her request for accommodation to external factors, such as there being no ramp to access certain parts of the building. Her desk may be to low or small to adequately use her desk area to efficiently perform her job without straining her body. In this case, the observer/manager would attribute the employee's accommodation request to factors such as wanting special treatment, sympathy, or new equipment.

The fundamental attribution error refers to a general bias on the part of an observer, whereby individuals tend to explain the behavior of others in terms of internal factors to a greater extent than situational factors (Lennon, Watson, Arlidge, & Fraine, 2011). This bias is also

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manifested in explanations for group behavior, and in this context is termed the ultimate

attribution error (Manusov & Spitzberg, 2008, p. 40). Using the same example as above, the

manager may feel like the employee's request for accommodation is due to her lack of effort,

wanting a new position in the company, and possibly even an initial step toward litigation for

financial compensation. This would especially be true if the manager has experienced either of

these things in the past with an employee with a disability (Kontosh et al., 2007).

Finally, self-serving bias is a common pattern of explanation for personal success or

failure and refers to the tendency for individuals to explain success as internally derived and

failure as resulting from external, situational factors (Manusov & Spitzberg, 2008, p. 41).

Continuing with the same example, a manager may attribute the success of employees with

disabilities as due to their determination and willingness to work hard. The same manager would

attribute any failure that an employee with a disability experiences as due to the external ability

for them to have access to benefits and compensation if they are not successfully employed.

Attribution research has also covered how people with invisible disabilities face

discriminations and stigma as well (McClure, 2011). Invisible disabilities, such as mental illness

and traumatic brain injury (TBI), are disabilities that are not as easily seen as physical disabilities

(McClure, 2011). Research by McClure (2011) has shown that public misconceptions about

persons with TBI and other invisible disabilities occur because people unfamiliar with invisible

disabilities misattribute behavior resulting from invisible disabilities to causes other than their

disability.

People tend to attribute behaviors to visible causes and these observers have the tendency

to misattribute behaviors that result from the disability to other causes (McClure, 2011).

Observers also tend to focus on whether the PWD's behavior is normal relative to other people,

instead of whether it is normal relative to the person's premorbid behavior (McClure, 2011).

Visible disabilities lead to stigma and exaggeration of the PWDs limitations; however, many

misattributions occurring with invisible disabilities lead to the failure to recognize the severity of

the condition in addition to the needs of the PWD.

McClure, Buchanan, McDowall, and Wade (2008) conducted research examining visible

markers of injury such as scars and how they shape judgments of severity of attributions for

actions of persons with brain injury. In their research, 101 participants between the ages of 18–

30 were given pictures of a person with a scar on his head. Fifty-one participants were given a

no-scar photograph and 50 were given a scar photograph. Each picture included a short

discussion of undesirable behaviors being exhibited by the person in the picture (McClure,

Buchanan, McDowall, & Wade, 2008).

The visible marker of the scar lead more participants to attribute the undesirable

behaviors more to brain injury than other factors such as age (McClure, Buchanan, McDowall, &

Wade, 2008). Participants also judged the brain injury as more severe and more recent with the

photograph showing a head scar than with the same photograph with no head scar. In addition,

judged severity of the injury predicted the participants' attributions. Higher severity predicted

higher attributions to brain injury and lower attribution to factors such as age (McClure,

Buchanan, McDowall, & Wade, 2008). The researchers explain that these findings suggest that

the visibility of an injury increases perceived severity of the injury. It also leads society to see

the injury as a reason for the problem behaviors (McClure, Buchanan, McDowall, & Wade,

2008). Furthermore, when a person with an invisible disability behaves in an undesirable

manner, as a consequence of their disability and shows no visible markers of their condition,

society is more likely to attribute the behavior to normative or familiar factors, such as a difficult

personality (McClure, Delvin, McDowall, & Wade, 2006). Findings such as these also gives relevance to the notion that when people have some experience with people behaving in undesirable ways, their memories of the reason for those behavior are easily retrieved and used as an explanation for such behaviors in their current situation (McClure, Delvin, McDowall, & Wade, 2006).

However, seeing a scar or a bandage makes the disability explanation more plausible. People tend to explain others' behaviors in the same way they would explain their own (McClure, Buchanan, McDowall, & Wade, 2008). Since the typical person has not experienced a brain injury or have an invisible disability, seeing someone do things such as sleep excessively, lack motivation, be forgetful, easily lose their temper, say mean things, be overly aggressive, and excessively self disclose would be easily explained as the PWD being rude or antisocial–as the typical person may also label themselves if they were behaving in such manners (McClure, Delvin, McDowall, & Wade, 2006). This is often the preferred explanation when people with invisible disabilities display undesirable behaviors (McClure, Delvin, McDowall, & Wade, 2006).

These research implications carry over to the legal system as well. When someone with an invisible disability is presented in front of a judge and jury, if that person looks normal, the research of McClure, Delvin, McDowall, and Wade (2006) implies that both judges and juries are inclined to see the disability as less of a reasonable explanation for the PWDs behavior than other reasons. In these instances, it would be helpful to present evidence that the undesirable behavior reflects the disability (McClure, Delvin, McDowall, & Wade, 2006).

These patterns of attribution type exhibit fallacious and biased reasoning in action (Manusov & Spitzberg, 2008, p. 41). The negative impact of attribution theory and its impact on

stigma and discrimination regarding the employment of individuals with disabilities can be seen in several of the articles and findings discussed from this point forward.

Impact on Individuals with Disabilities

The ADA of 1990 specifically forbids employers from discriminating against people with disabilities if they are otherwise qualified for the position (Collins & Matthews, 2012). ADA protection is given for all aspects of employment, including the application process, employee selection, and hiring. Title I of ADA (ADA, 1990) states that employers cannot deny a position to a current employee or applicant because of a disability, as long as the person is able to perform the essential job functions with reasonable accommodations (Mitchell & Kovera, 2006). The term "reasonable accommodation" means altering the job environment or the application method so that a qualified individual is still capable of getting and doing the job and therefore is provided an equal employment opportunity (Collins & Matthews, 2012). Furthermore, a reasonable accommodation is a modification to a job, work environment, or the way work is performed that allows an individual with a disability to apply for a job, perform the essential functions of the job, and enjoy equal access to benefits available to other individuals in the workplace (DOL, 2013).

To enable a qualified person with a disability to perform job duties, employers are required to provide reasonable accommodation(s) upon request (Mitchell & Kovera, 2006). The employer does not have to provide an accommodation that would present an "undue hardship" to the company. Undue hardship is defined as an action requiring significant difficulty or expense when considered in light of factors such as an organization's size, financial resources, and the nature and structure of its operation (DOL, 2013).

The law requires a case-by-case analysis of whether an accommodation creates a hardship for qualified individuals with disabilities to compete for a variety of positions, but is vague about the factors that should be considered in the analysis (Collins & Matthews, 2012). This provides ample opportunity for extralegal factors, such as stigmas, to influence the decision-making process (Mitchell & Kovera, 2006).

Several characteristics may contribute to an assessment of whether to grant a worker with a disability reasonable accommodation, such as attributions of responsibility for disability origin or work history. Weiner (1985) explains that attributional decisions represent phenomenal causality–the causal world as perceived by the viewer. Perceived causality will differ from person to person and within an individual over occasions. Weiner (1985) goes on to explain that for one person, luck may be seen as an external and unstable cause of success. For a different person, luck is viewed as an enduring personal property.

A cause may communicate different meanings in different context; for example, effort attributions imply greater stability given success than given failure. Though the interpretation of specific causal inferences may change over time and between people and situations, the underlying dimensions on which causes are understood or given meaning remain constant.

A study by Mitchell and Kovera found that if people view an event as caused by the person with a disability, they attribute the event to something internal to the person; if they believe the situation or environment caused an event, they will make an external attribution for the event (Mitchell & Kovera, 2006). For internal attribution, the researchers used the example of an employee running a red light when he was driving home from a social event and hitting a sport utility vehicle (SUV) with his compact car. Tests revealed he had a blood alcohol level slightly over the legal limit. Although the driver of the SUV had only minor injuries, the

employee suffered spinal cord damage and is now confined to a wheelchair. This would be considered an internal attribution, meaning the employee is blamed for his injury (Mitchell & Kovera, 2006). In the external attribution example, they reported that the employee was driving through the intersection when the driver of the SUV ran the red light and hit the employee's car. It was later revealed that the driver of the SUV had a blood alcohol level over the legal limit. The injuries to the driver were the same, but are now interpreted as an external event; meaning the employee is seen as a victim and not blamed for his injuries (Mitchell & Kovera, 2006).

Mitchell and Kovera (2006) explain that attribution theory suggests that two individuals with identical disabilities and job descriptions working for or applying to the same company may receive different accommodations or employment opportunities if one of them has an externally caused disability whereas the other's disability is internally caused. The researchers examined whether an internal versus external attribution of responsibility for a disability and an individual's work history influences participants' willingness to make accommodations or hiring decisions.

Their sample included 80 human resource managers and directors of sales, marketing, and accounting departments (Mitchell & Kovera, 2006). The participants read a two-page scenario describing an individual's work history and disability origin. To be certain that the participants were not influenced by the unlawfulness of the example listed above, the researchers used additional internal and external scenarios involving an individual with low vision, rather than paraplegia. In both conditions the employee had started experiencing light-headedness, dizziness, and fatigue 18 months previously and had visited the doctor at that time (Mitchell & Kovera, 2006). In the internal attribution of responsibility condition, the employee was

diagnosed with diabetes but repeatedly ignored his doctor's orders to change his diet, to exercise

regularly, and to check his blood sugar levels daily (Mitchell & Kovera, 2006).

After 18 months of ignoring these medical instructions, the employee suffered a partial

loss of sight that leaves him almost legally blind (Mitchell & Kovera, 2006). In the external

responsibility condition, the treating doctor failed to diagnose the employee's diabetes when the

employee initially complained of his symptoms (Mitchell & Kovera, 2006). Because of this

failure, the employee's diabetes remained untreated, resulting in the employee's vision loss.

In each of the above scenarios, disability origin consistently influenced the granting of

accommodations (Mitchell & Kovera, 2006). Participants granted more accommodations for the

employee who provided an external explanation for his disability. Mitchell and Kovera's (2006)

results provide evidence that disability origin influences an additional phase of the employment

process. Already facing potential discrimination due to their disability, individuals with

disabilities expect the ADA to help them combat discrimination from potential or current

employers (Mitchell & Kovera, 2006).

Instead, particularly if there is any way to attribute their disability onset to an action they

have chosen to take, they may find themselves further disadvantaged when they are unable to

receive an accommodation or hiring/promotion consideration from an employer (Mitchell &

Kovera, 2006). The researchers found that employers might rely on impermissible factors, such

as perception of disability origin, to guide their hiring practices. In theses instances, hiring

managers take the stigma further by deciding whether to hire based on the person's worthiness of

having the job (Mitchell & Kovera, 2006).

Wright (1985) explains that this aspect of matching between cause and effect has to do

with man's need to bring harmony into his world by aligning existing reality with what ought to

be. In other words, it is wrong for the good to be hurt and the bad to be rewarded. This type of injustice is corrected either by changing the measure of the person, or by alerting the judgment of good and bad (Wright, 1985). For this type of thinker, disability is a reality; especially when it is an unchangeable reality, harmony is restored when disability is seen deserved punishment for sin (Wright, 1985).

Society establishes the means of categorizing persons and the complement of attributes thought of as ordinary and natural for those in these categories (Goffman, 1963, p. 2). The setting establishes the category of people likely to be encountered. The routineness of social interaction in established settings allows one to deal with anticipated others without special attention or thought (Goffman, 1963, p. 2). Therefore, when an employee or potential employee with a disability enters his employer's office for an interview or to ask for accommodations, first appearance and perceptions likely lead the employer to anticipate the employee's category and attributes–his social identity (Goffman, 1963, p. 2). Employers lean on those anticipations, transforming them into normative expectations.

Employers typically do not become aware that they have such expectations until it is brought to their attention (Goffman, 1963, p. 2). Only then are they likely to realize that they have held these expectations and assumptions as to what an employee ought to be. While the employee is in the employer's presence, the employee can express an attribute that makes them different from others with a disability (external attribute) and of a less desirable attribute (internal attribute). Employers may see the internal attribute employee as bad, dangerous, or weak (Goffman, 1963, p. 3).

The employee is reduced in the employer's mind from a whole and usual person to tainted and discounted. Such an attribute is a stigma, especially when its discrediting effect is

extensive as in denying accommodations or employment (Goffman, 1963, p. 3). Mitchell and

Kovera (2006) found that employers might rely on impermissible factors, such as perception of

disability origin, to guide their hiring practices. In theses instances, hiring managers take the

stigma further by deciding whether to hire based on the person's worthiness of having the job.

Draper, Reid, and McMahon (2011) examined employment discrimination experienced

by Americans "regarded as" disabled (but not medically verified as such) using records from the

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). They sought to determine if EEOC

claims for people with documented disabilities differed from claims made by people regarded as

disabled, but not necessarily documented as disabled, including analysis of demographic

variables such as age, gender, and race (Draper, Reid, & McMahon, 2011).

The researchers found that there were 4% more discrimination claims for those regarded

as disabled as opposed to those documented as disabled (26.2% vs. 22.5%). Their findings

suggest that employers discriminate against workers on the basis of perceived disability and that

the employer is unconsciously motivated by prejudice against any perception of impairment,

regardless of its severity (Draper, Reid, & McMahon, 2011).

The ADA was enacted to help individuals with disabilities overcome obstacles to fully

participating in American life (e.g., work, access to public transportation). Based on the

previous findings, willingness to fulfill the spirit of the ADA seems to be in part based on

whether the individual with the disability is "good" (external cause for disability or excellent

work history), "not good" (internal cause for disability or average work history) or regarded as

disabled (Draper, Reid, & McMahon, 2011). This runs counter to the goals of the ADA, which

include equitable treatment of individuals with disabilities, not the further classification of

people into those who are worthy or not worthy of accommodation (Mitchell & Kovera, 2006).

Smart (2009) explains that for centuries PWD have been viewed as burdens or drains on community resources. In the early 20th century, PWD were described as crippled, immoral characters that drained the life out of economies. Smart discusses three factors that make disability an expensive burden that is paid for by all of society (p. 128). First, there is the loss of tax dollars from PWD who do not work.

There are also tax dollars spent on government programs for PWD, like special education, vocational rehabilitation, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and public assistance (welfare). Lastly, there is the increased insurance premium for all policyholders as a result of the high price of disability (Smart, 2009, p.121). Social and company economic calculations of the cost-benefit ratio and cost-value typically consider disability as a negative factor for society, the company, and the PWD (Smart, 2009, p. 130).

Hernandez et al. (2007) conducted a qualitative study that explored employment from the perspective of people with disabilities. They conducted 12 focus groups with 74 working-age adults from ethnically diverse backgrounds and with a variety of disabilities. Negative attitudes among employers toward hiring workers with disabilities were identified as an employment barrier. Almost one-third of the participants reported that employers held prejudiced attitudes toward workers with disabilities, which was particularly evident during the hiring phase (Hernandez et al., 2007). The participants felt undervalued by the hiring managers who seemed to hold misperceptions about workers with disabilities. The misperceptions included fear of costly accommodations, increases in work-related accidents, and notions that people with disabilities were unable to work (Hernandez et al., 2007).

Hernandez et al. (2007) reported that for some participants with sensory disabilities, the experience of employer discrimination was particularly evident because they felt individuals

with physical disabilities were preferred as workers over them. These participants felt singled out from people with physical disabilities (Hernandez et al., 2007). They reported even being told by employers that they were expecting somebody that came in a wheelchair or that they are trying to find someone in a wheelchair. For participants of color, the experience of employer discrimination based on racial/ethnic background was not as pronounced as the experience of discrimination based on disability (Hernandez et al., 2007).

People with psychiatric disabilities encounter multiple layers of prejudice and discrimination stemming from centuries old stereotypes (Russinova, Griffin, Bloch, Wewiorski, & Rosoklija, 2011). There is substantial evidence about the existence of workplace prejudice and discrimination toward individuals with serious mental disabilities (Russinova, Griffin, Bloch, Wewiorski, & Rosoklija, 2011). Negative attitudes and discriminatory behaviors by employers and anticipated by individuals with mental disabilities limit their chance of getting a job, keeping the job, or advancing in the job (Russinova, Griffin, Bloch, Wewiorski, & Rosoklija, 2011).

Stensrud's (2007) research revealed that many of the human resources and management personnel in his study neither knew little about mental disabilities, nor how to accommodate them. Some participants suggested that if they had known more about mental disabilities, maybe they would have been more accommodating. They reported that there were a lot of employees who could have kept their jobs if the company had understood what was going on and how to help (Stensrud, 2007).

Russinova et al. (2011) sought to identify and classify discrete manifestations of prejudice and discrimination in the work environment as experienced by individuals with mental disabilities. Their data analysis revealed three main pathways through which psychiatric

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prejudice and discrimination are enacted in the workplace: direct, indirect, and perceived (Russinova et al., 2011).

The first pathway involves direct expression of any subtle or blatant prejudicial and discriminatory treatment of workers with psychiatric disabilities (Russinova et al., 2011). The second involves the manifestation of prejudicial and discriminatory practices that are directed toward a co-worker, client, or customer who has a psychiatric disability (Russinova et al., 2011). The worker who witnesses such expression of psychiatric prejudice or discrimination may or may have not disclosed his or her own psychiatric disability. Although such practices are not directed toward the observer, they can have a strong negative impact on this person. The third pathway involves perceived or anticipated prejudicial and discriminatory treatment at the workplace (Russinova et al., 2011). This is when a person anticipated such treatment without reporting observable evidence (Russinova et al., 2011).

Workers with psychiatric disabilities can be subjected to prejudicial and discriminatory practices that can affect not only their professional confidence, but also their sense of worthiness as a person (Russinova et al., 2011). Characterizing a person's functioning at work revealed that prejudicial and discriminatory practices occur along a continuum from very subtle to markedly blatant expressions of negative attitudes and behaviors toward mental disabilities in general and toward persons who have experienced psychiatric challenges (Russinova et al., 2011).

The research of Russinova et al. (2011) has given operationalization of some prejudicial practices toward workers with mental disabilities. Such practices included critical comments, sudden poor performance evaluations, mistrust, denial of skills that were previously proven, refusing to honor medically-excused leaves of absences, refusing to provide accommodations, being urged to quit, and even being fired when their disability was revealed (Russinova et al.,

2011). Awareness of such practices is particularly important because they constitute important, yet frequently unrecognized, expressions of negative attitudes that can become a source of discrimination against workers with disabilities (Russinova et al., 2011). As previously mentioned, these attitudes become engrained in the culture and norms of companies to the point that hiring managers may or may not realize that they are not hiring a candidate because of her disability (Russinova et al., 2011).

The research of Russinova et al. (2011) is supported by Corrigan (2004). He found that individuals with disability may not only avoid asking for accommodations, but they also may opt to avoid the stigma all together by denying their disability and by not seeking help for their disability at all. This kind of label avoidance is perhaps the most significant way in which stigma impedes care-seeking requests for accommodations (Corrigan, 2004). Goffman (1962) goes further by explaining that the standards a person with a disability has gathered from society in general is that they are not ready to accept him as an equal (p. 7). His disability is viewed as a failing, inevitably causing him to agree, if only briefly, that he does fall short of what he is supposed to be (Goffman, 1962, p. 7).

Goffman (1962) also states that a person with a disability can never be sure what the attitude of a new acquaintance will be, whether rejective or accepting, until contact has been made. The person with a disability develops a sense of not knowing what those without disabilities are truly thinking about him. Because of this, a person with a disability likely feels he has to be self-conscious and calculating about the impression he makes, to a level and in areas that PWODs do not (Goffman, 1962, p. 14).

Corrigan's (2004) research distinguished public stigma from self-stigma. Public stigma is what a naive public does to the stigmatized group when they endorse the prejudice about that

group. Self-stigma is what members of a stigmatized group may do to themselves if they internalize the public stigma (Corrigan, 2004). Public stigma involves stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination such as 'I don't want to be near them', and 'Don't hire them at my job' (Corrigan, 2004). Self-stigma also involves stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. However the self-stigma manifests in the PWD as feelings and beliefs of their own incompetence (Corrigan, 2004). This can lead to a lack of motivation to even apply for a job in addition to the reluctance to request accommodations previously addressed (Corrigan, 2004).

Vogel, Bitman, Hammer, and Wade (2013) conducted research examining how public stigma leads to self-stigma. Their study involved 448 college students, in which they measured public stigma at one point and then measured self-stigma three months later. They used a Likert scale with sample items such as "Seeing a psychologist for emotional or interpersonal problems carries social stigma" to measure public stigma (Vogel, Bitman, Hammer, & Wade, 2013). The Likert scale measuring self-stigma included items such as "I would feel inadequate if I went to a therapist for psychological help."

The relationship between public stigma and self-stigma was 82%. The relationship between self-stigma and public stigma was 35% (Vogel, Bitman, Hammer, & Wade, 2013). Their findings supported the notion that public stigma is internalized as self-stigma over time. Higher initial public stigma predicted higher subsequent self-stigma, but this was not the case for the reverse (Vogel, Bitman, Hammer, & Wade, 2013). Their research supports previous findings regarding the role of public stigma on the development and internalization of self-stigma (Vogel, Bitman, Hammer, & Wade, 2013). This study supports the belief that public stigma can act as a direct barrier not only to seeking treatment and accommodations, but also to individuals with

disabilities' capacity to form positive and healthy attitudes about themselves and their abilities (Vogel, Bitman, Hammer, & Wade, 2013).

Furthermore, in addition to reducing the efficacy of the ADA, the use of impermissible factors in hiring and accommodation decisions along with the concepts of public and self stigma all serve to prevent the integration of individuals with disabilities in the work force. In a study of workplace rights, Davison, O'Leary, Schlosberg, and Bing (2009) examined the factors that affect whether individuals with disabilities request needed accommodations. Many employers may be reluctant to hire persons with disabilities or may fail to accommodate them on the job, and individuals with disabilities may be reluctant to request accommodations when faced with such unaccepting cultures (Davison, O'Leary, Schlosberg, & Bing, 2009).

Employers may view more detailed requests for accommodation as unreasonable. As mentioned earlier, disability attributes, including the type of disability and its onset controllability, are also likely to affect hiring and accommodation requests. Only 24% of disabled participants in the Davison et al. (2009) study indicated that they had ever requested accommodations for their disability. Astoundingly, 66% indicated they were "somewhat unlikely" or "very unlikely" to request help in the future (Davison et al., 2009). They found that the participants generally were reluctant to request accommodations for their disabilities based on concern for how employers and co-workers might respond (Davison et al., 2009).

A study by Stensrud (2007) is in direct correlation with those findings. He conducted focus groups with 67 participants, representing human resources officers and direct supervisors (Stensrud, 2007). Participants in Stensrud's (2007) study described the participants as feeling that many people who made their disability known to the organization seemed to use it to expect unreasonable accommodations or as an excuse to not do their job effectively.

The participants viewed disability primarily from the perspective of accommodations (Stensrud, 2007). They did not think of people that had disabilities, but did not request accommodations, as having disabilities. Their conceptualization of people with disabilities included those who created problems for the organization because they asked for accommodations, asked for accommodations and did their job, or obviously had disabilities and were exemplars of hard workers (Stensrud, 2007). Such views serve to strengthen stigma within an organization. The perception of disability becomes the major factor, instead of how effective or ineffective a worker tends to be as an employee. Individuals with disabilities are still seen as different, thus stigmatized, simply because they either asked for accommodations or obviously had a disability (Stensrud, 2007).

The most common theme in Stensrud's (2007) study involved the perception of co-workers. If advancement and accommodations were correlated in any manner, co-workers would be concerned about the fairness of the promotion. Perceptions of an individual with a disability as having doubtful soft skills, poor interviewing skills, questionable resumes, and inappropriate discussion of disabilities and accommodations suggest to employers that an applicant brings too much risk to a job and should be avoided (Stensrud, 2007).

To many employers in the Stensrud (2007) study, the least risky person who seems motivated to develop the necessary job skills is the best potential employee. A sense of risk underlined every aspect of the participants' comments (Stensrud, 2007). They described decisions as being based more on risk reduction than performance enhancement. Whether they were recruiting, selecting, training, accommodating, or promoting, participants considered the risks people brought more than they considered people's potential (Stensrud, 2007).

These risks could be direct, through increased costs that result from inappropriate hires, and increased medical costs (Stensrud, 2007). The risks could be indirect, through dissatisfaction of other workers with the performance or accommodations received by co-workers. Recruiting and selecting the wrong person could cost recruiters and HR personnel their bonuses or jobs (Stensrud, 2007). Keeping nonproductive workers could cost supervisors their jobs or even result in entire units being closed. The perception of the participants was that providing training or accommodations to workers may result in less teamwork or other workers' leaving because of perceived inequity (Stensrud, 2007).

The previously discussed, employment figures for persons with disabilities are impacted by both the large and small business sectors of our economy. According to the United States Small Business Administration (SBA; 2013), small firms (500 or fewer employees) represent 99.7% of all employer firms, employ half of all private sector employees, pay 44% of total U.S. private payroll, and have generated 65% of net new jobs over the past 17 years. Bruyere, Erickson, and Vanlooy (2006) conducted a study examining business size on employer response to the ADA. The researchers surveyed 345 small business and 489 large business human resource managers/representatives about a number of topics related to the ADA, including recruitment, pre-employment screening and personnel training on the ADA (Bruyere, Erickson, & Vanlooy, 2006).

Bruyere, Erickson, and Vanlooy (2006) found that smaller companies are significantly less likely than larger companies to have made accommodations for employees with disabilities. Small businesses were significantly less likely to proactively recruit persons with disabilities than larger firms (39% as opposed to 60%) (Bruyere, Erickson, & Vanlooy, 2006). Small firms were less familiar than larger firms with all areas examined, particularly with regard to framing

questions about job tasks (84% to 93%), restrictions to obtaining medical information (73% to 86%), and using a text telephone (TTY) to set up interviews (19% to 29%) (Bruyere, Erickson, & Vanlooy, 2006).

For respondents in this study that had actually made accommodations for employees, changing supervisor and co-worker attitudes toward employees with disabilities was seen as the most difficult change (Bruyere, Erickson, & Vanlooy, 2006). Large employers were more likely than smaller businesses to report changing attitudes as difficult. Employers' report of the most common barriers to employment and advancement for people with disabilities were the perceived lack of related experience and requisite skills and training on the part of the individual with a disability and lack of supervisor knowledge of which accommodation to make (Bruyere, Erickson, & Vanlooy, 2006). Larger firms were significantly more likely to say that attitudes and stereotypes were an issue, and smaller firms were slightly more likely to mention the cost of accommodation (Bruyere, Erickson, & Vanlooy, 2006).

Combs and Omvig (1986) completed a study examining whether certain types of disabilities may be more acceptable to employers than other types. They also examined the issue of company size to determine if it affected the employability ratings of individuals with disabilities (Combs & Omvig, 1986). The majority of the sample population was made up of manufacturing companies. The study sample included 300 companies altogether (Combs & Omvig, 1986). One hundred of the companies were selected at random to complete personal interview utilizing questionnaires. The other 200 companies were mailed the same survey to complete and mail back to the researchers (Combs & Omvig, 1986).

The questionnaire contained a list of 16 disabilities, which included: amputee, orthopedic disabilities, blind, visually impaired, deaf, hard of hearing, impaired speech, emotionally

disturbed, mild and severe mental disabilities, learning disability, cardiac impairment, epilepsy, respiratory disease, alcoholism, and drug abuse (Combs & Omvig, 1986). Each employer was asked to rate the employability of an individual with each of these disabilities, using a five-point scale. The ratings were as follows: (a) cannot accommodate, (b) can accommodate with extreme difficulty, (c) can accommodate with much difficulty, (d) can accommodate with some difficulty, and (e) can accommodate quite easily. Employers rated these disabilities considering all jobs available within the company (Combs & Omvig, 1986).

Combs and Omvig's (1986) results found the average ratings for the 16 disabilities ranged from 1.36 to 4.08. No disability received an average rating close to 5, which indicates such person could easily be placed on a job (Combs & Omvig, 1986). Of all of the disabilities, impaired speech was the only disability rated above 4.0 (can accommodate with some difficulty). However, only two disabilities had an average less than 2.0 (can accommodate with extreme difficulty): severe mental disability, with a rating of 1.36, and blind, with a rating of 1.41 (Combs & Omvig, 1986).

Furthermore, physical disabilities were rated as easier to accommodate than mental or emotional disabilities, with the exception of deafness and blindness (Combs & Omvig, 1986). The rest of the physical disabilities received ratings of 3.0 or higher, suggesting these individuals could be placed, but with much more difficulty. Drug and alcohol abuse were both included in the group described as difficult to accommodate disabilities (Combs & Omvig, 1986).

Combs and Omvig (1986) proceeded to analyze the data regarding any significant difference resulting from the size of the company. The participants were divided into three groups based on the number of employees they reported their business as having. The company sizes ranged from size 1(1 to 15 employees), size 2 (16–55 employees), to size 3 (over 55

employees) (Combs & Omvig, 1986). The groups were formed by dividing the sample into three

equal groups. Larger companies rated each of the 16 disabilities higher than smaller companies

did. Combs and Omvig (1986) report that the literature has proven that larger companies are

able to hire more workers with disabilities than smaller firms. Therefore, they would naturally

rate their ability to accommodate IWDs higher than would smaller firms (Combs & Omvig,

1986).

Stensrud (2007) reminds us that employers rarely say that they do not want to hire people

with disabilities. They often say that people with disabilities bring with them risks to the

business. These risks include being unable to perform the essential functions of jobs, given the

pace and pressure of the workplace (Stensrud, 2007). They also include increased liability from

government regulation, benefits compensation, and the potential for lawsuits. Again, added to

this is the concern that having different expectations for one group of employees because of

disabilities might alienate other workers who see them as less productive or receiving more

assistance through accommodations (Stensrud, 2007).

Domzal, Houtenville, and Sharma (2008) conducted a survey with 3,797 company

respondents. Their findings were analyzed by company size: small companies (5–14

employees), medium-sized companies (15–249), and large companies (250+). They found that

only 20% of all the companies reported employing people with disabilities (Domzal,

Houtenville, & Sharma, 2008). The large companies had the highest percentage (53%) for

employing people with disabilities. Seventy-two percent of all companies said the nature of their

work is too challenging for people with disabilities (Domzal, Houtenville, & Sharma, 2008).

Companies designated as small and medium-sized versus the larger companies referenced

health care costs, workers' compensation, and litigation fears as intimidating (Domzal,

Houtenville, & Sharma, 2008). Attitudes of co-workers and supervisors were the least frequently cited challenges. The study found that companies that did not recruit employees with disabilities believed persuasive information was needed relative to the productivity/incentive options that can benefit a company (Domzal, Houtenville, & Sharma, 2008). The larger companies were more likely to be influenced by means of a statistical or research supported presentation as to benefits of hiring workers with disabilities (Domzal, Houtenville, & Sharma, 2008).

Stensrud (2007) reported that the main barrier employers saw to hiring people, including diverse workers and people with disabilities, was their need to recruit the best possible candidates. Participants in his study viewed recruitment as soliciting the most qualified applicants with the least amount of cost (Stensrud, 2007). When the participants discussed recruiting people through public agencies, the primary agency mentioned was the state DOL (Stensrud, 2007). Based on their past experience, they saw this labor pool as risky and a waste of time because many previous applicants from this pool were unqualified for the position, did not have the necessary soft skills or were not serious about work (Stensrud, 2007).

Stensrud's (2007) research supports the belief that an employer's willingness to hire workers with disabilities is impacted by prior experiences and outcomes. As seen in attribution theory's concept of "level of aspiration," aspiration largely increases after goal attainment and decreases if a prior aspiration has not been filled–in this case, hiring workers with disabilities that are subpar (Stensrud, 2007). Weiner (1985) refers to these goal discrepancies as atypical aspiration shifts. It has been found that aspiration level largely reflects the subjective expectancy of success. The higher the expectancy, the higher the aspiration level. Expectancy increases with success and decreases with failure, as was the case in the Stensrud (2007) study.

The employers researched by Stensrud (2007) also did not know how best to use the state agencies that provided applicants. There was confusion over whom to call with questions, who could provide specific information on applicants, or who could answer technical questions about disabilities, further decreasing the level of expectancy. Stensrud (2007) reports that disability is an accommodation issue to them, not a recruitment issue. Recruiting for diversity was important to employers because they recognize that the market is becoming more diverse and they need to do the same in order to remain responsive (Stensrud, 2007).

Practices that Reduce Stigma in Employment

A broad range of individual, workplace, and work organization interventions have been developed to promote the employment of individuals with disabilities. Current practices are encouraging persons with disabilities to be active participants in the design and implementation of their personal employment interventions (Krupa, 2007). An intervention might involve teaching persons with disabilities to be proactive and preempt employer prejudgment using evidence based self-advocacy statements, usually linked to a well-constructed resume (Krupa, 2007). For example, an interviewee could ensure employers they can do the job or provide examples of how they have adapted and been successful in previous employment. Counteracting statements that "de-bias" or counter employers' faulty assumptions about the worker and disabilities are crucial to overcoming stigma (Draper, Reid, & McMahon, 2011).

Fortunately, Weiner (1985) describes atypical responses regarding level of aspiration that can be seen in individuals with disabilities as they seek employment in the job market. There can be an increase in aspiration following failure. When failure or a lack of achievement can be linked to outside disturbances or bias, a person may not be as likely to lower aspiration as he

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would if he believed his failure was due to a genuine deficiency in his ability to perform or do a certain job (Lewin, Dembo, Festinger, & Sears, 1944).

For interviewees with less visible disabilities, anticipating negative prejudgment and providing evidence-driven alternative explanations for behavior that would serve a de-biasing purpose could be a very effective intervention (Krupa, 2007). Several factors will be critical in improving employment outcomes for persons with all types of disabilities. Training initiatives must be aimed at education and awareness to develop employer knowledge about work-related issues associated with mental illness and physical disabilities–both visible and invisible disabilities (McClure, Buchanan, McDowall, & Wade, 2008). Training initiatives addressing the rights and expectations of affected individuals in regard to accommodation must be developed as well (Krupa, 2007).

Gilbride, Stensrud, Vandergoot, amd Golden (2003) suggested that organizational culture, work design issues, and employers' experience of disability-related support were factors that affected the employment opportunities of people with disabilities. Based on these factors, some organizations seemed more open than others to employing people with disabilities. A November 2008 Technical Report from the DOL Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Survey of Employer Perspectives on the Enhancement of People with Disabilities, examined the type of information that would encourage companies to employ, hire, and actively recruit people with disabilities. Overall, companies surveyed (representing 2,469,000 companies) reported that they would be persuaded by information about satisfactory job performance, increases to company productivity, and benefits to the company bottom line (Hartnett et al., 2011).

There is significant value in providing rehabilitation resources to supervisors. This could be difficult to provide, as each company and each supervisor is different, but this is the primary way to keep people with disabilities employed (Stensrud, 2007). If rehabilitation resources were viewed as resources by supervisors, and could provide quick convenient consulting on specific issues, they would generate a useful service to companies. Some businesses are high-pressure jobs that are stressful and fast paced. If accommodations cannot fit this work environment, supervisors face too much risk to collaborate with rehabilitation counselors (Stensrud, 2007). Therefore, rehabilitation counselors need to be able to provide services quickly, efficiently, and just in time. Stensrud (2007) explains that failure to respect this element of a business culture can cost consumers job opportunities.

Developing a universal design mindset that would be more open to everyone, including workers and customers with disabilities could serve to reduce workplace stigma and create a more diverse workforce (Stensrud, 2007). Diverse workforces are good for business as they orient planning and support marketing, while adding complexity to production. Diverse work teams tend to be less productive until training, enculturation, and accommodation build collaboration (Stensrud, 2007).

Rehabilitation agencies must be willing to provide such insight and collaboration. The agencies have to attend to attitudinal barriers and realize that past working experience with an employee with a disability, increases the positive attitude about and willingness to hire and work with other employees with disabilities (Kontosh et al., 2007). This is linked to Weiner and attribution theory in general; yet it may be more specifically described as a spread effect. Even though the willingness may be limited to the specific disability encountered in the past, it is still progress toward reducing stigma and increasing employers' level of aspiration in hiring workers

with disabilities (Kontosh et al., 2007). In fact, educational programs aimed at reducing stigmatized attitudes that provide opportunities for personal contact with individuals with disabilities have shown promising results (Kontosh et al., 2007).

Providing employers with information about the cost-effectiveness of accommodations, in order to reduce the perceptions of accommodations as costly is necessary (Davison et al., 2009). Existing research counters the beliefs described in many of the studies mentioned above and suggests that the direct costs of accommodating employees with disabilities are low and the benefits are numerous. The DOL (2013) reports that the majority of workers with disabilities do not need accommodations to perform their jobs, and for those who do, the cost is usually minimal.

Two-thirds of accommodations cost less than $500, with many costing nothing at all. Hartnett et al. (2011) reports how moving an employee to another job, a change in workplace policy, or changes in work schedule are all accommodations. DOL (2013) states that tax incentives are available to help employers cover the costs of accommodations, as well as modifications required to make their businesses accessible to persons with disabilities. In addition, the employment provisions of the ADA do not cover businesses with fewer than 15 employees.

Despite the legal mandates of the ADA, Hartnett et al. (2011) report that employers' impression of the accommodation process may be dominated by considerations of possible obstacles as opposed to the benefits of providing accommodations. Much more training and assistance is needed to overcome fears and stereotypes. A basic understanding of disabilities is necessary. Participants in the Stensrud (2007) study viewed disability differently from diversity because they saw disability as a problem to be accommodated rather than a difference to be

celebrated. VR must make repeated efforts to change this view by reminding employers that

reasonable accommodations are intended to ensure that qualified individuals with disabilities

have rights in employment equal, not superior, to those of individuals without disabilities. (DOL,

2013).

Furthermore, the cost of job accommodations has been found to be very low (Smart,

2009, p. 136). The average cost of making 34 business facilities accessible was under one cent

per square foot (Smart, 2009, p. 136). It was also reported that just over 50% of

accommodations cost nothing, 30% cost less than $200, and 20% cost less than $500 (Smart,

2009, p. 136). The cost of disability accommodations that allow PWD to work versus the

billions of dollars in aggregate economic loss makes it clear that workplace accommodations

make sound and efficient economic sense (Smart, 2009, p. 136).

Hartnett et al. (2011) explains that in their assessments of monetary costs, employers

need to evaluate the costs of accommodating employees with disabilities relative to the costs

associated with accommodating employees without disabilities. If an employee with a disability

were in need of a retrofitted office chair, for example, the employer would have to evaluate this

cost in relation to the price of standard ergonomic chairs supplied to other non-disabled

employees (Hartnett et al., 2011). Benefits include avoiding spending both time and money

associated with job searches, as well as hiring and training new employees. In addition,

employers are able to keep qualified employees while encouraging the positive social and

psychological benefits of creating an inclusive work environment (Hartnett et al., 2011).

Hartnett et al. (2011) go on to state that employees with disabilities are said to be

punctual, reliable, and conscientious. That type of employee effectiveness has been known to

contribute to the company's overall profitability and productivity (Hartnett et al., 2011).

Information presented to employers in these terms may be more likely to impact their employment practices. Third party benefits are a positive factor for employers to consider as well (Hartnett et al., 2011). Third party benefits are accommodations for persons with disabilities that also benefit nondisabled employees.

With this type of universal designing, some of those benefits can include the expansion of medical privacy in the workplace and greater focus on an individual's ability to perform the essential tasks required by a job, as opposed to an individual's personal characteristics (Hartnett et al., 2011). One such example could be the use of an elevator as a benefit to co-workers in addition to the individual who requested the accommodation (Hartnett et al., 2011).

Hartnett et al. (2011) provided several examples of how providing accommodations and universal designs benefited the employer. There was an increase in productivity for the accommodated worker, increased company morale, and increased interaction with customers and public image (Hartnett et al., 2011). An agency reported that bringing the person back to work allowed the company to restructure its departments and increase workplace safety (Hartnett et al., 2011). There were reports of improved employee retention, improved management and labor relations, positive interaction with union representation, and reduced hiring and training expenses (Hartnett et al., 2011).

A company stated they were able to establish a reputation of employee accommodation and create a work environment where employees' health and welfare were valued (Hartnett et al., 2011). One business explained their belief that a happy employee is a productive employee. Employees got the impression that the company is fair and accommodating in its treatment of workers (Hartnett et al., 2011). Another agency reported that its accommodation helped other employees with disabilities because there is now a designated parking area. Retention was

repeated several times because of the benefit of a reduction in turnovers and training/hiring costs (Hartnett et al., 2011). Managers also were able to be educated on ADA, learning how the process works. Those managers were now prepared as company leaders for future cases and compliance with ADA (Hartnett et al., 2011).

Several employers in the same study were also candid that accommodating an employee eliminated legal processes, which could have been costly (Hartnett et al., 2011). One agency reported they were able to avoid future litigation and also relieve employee discontent. Another business stated they just wanted to make sure the company was doing the right thing from a liability standpoint (Hartnett et al., 2011). Many stated that their motivation to accommodate and hire persons with disabilities was simply to follow the law. Some wanted to be proactive instead of reactive and not violate anyone's civil rights (Hartnett et al., 2011). For some companies, avoiding legal action is a strong motivator and can help rehabilitation agencies find employment opportunities for people with disabilities (Hartnett et al., 2011).

Recruiters want help finding appropriate workers but are reluctant to bring in "risky" applicants (Stensrud, 2007). They have worked with public agencies such as VR, but are frustrated because they get no guarantee as to the quality of the worker and do not get workers with the qualifications they need in a timely manner (Stensrud, 2007). As alluded to earlier, such lack of service wastes their time and puts their jobs and bonuses at risk. Stensrud (2007) explains that to minimize risks, recruiters rely on their own social networks of other recruiters, friends, members of voluntary associations, and members of faith-based organizations. In those networks, disability is seldom discussed, so recruiters are not sensitized to consider disability as a recruitment factor (Stensrud, 2007).

Rehabilitation counselors must recognize that providing assistance to business through referrals to human service agencies and advocacy groups does not coincide with the process by which businesses recruit for workers (Stensrud, 2007). Counselors should help consumers participate in the social networks that business employees use so that they can use the entry points favored by the people who will recruit and hire them (Stensrud, 2007). Counselors must also recognize that if they can provide skilled workers where they are needed and when they are needed, they will be able to develop productive, mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses (Stensrud, 2007).

Employers that may be interested in hiring employees with disabilities have trouble finding such applicants (Luecking, 2008). Those who have had previous experience with employees with disabilities are typically satisfied with the experience, but may still be hesitant to hire people with disabilities, especially those with certain disability labels (Luecking, 2008).

There is a need for refocused job development strategies and disability employment advocacy (Luecking, 2008). This is especially the case if vocational rehabilitation is to make any more progress in facilitating employment for individuals with disabilities, including those with significant support and accommodation needs. Instead of methodology and advocacy, which has historically concentrated on aspects of disability and related accommodations, job development needs a stronger focus on the context of the employers' enterprises and organizational processes (Luecking, 2008). A refined approach is needed that more effectively considers the demand-side of the employment development equation and that demonstrates to employers that they are valued customers of job development initiatives (Luecking, 2008).

Educational programs aimed at reducing stigmatizing attitudes that provide opportunities for personal contact with individuals with disabilities have shown the most promising results.

Anti-stigma efforts should not only be aimed at educating employers and the general public about major mental illnesses, but should also include the involvement of typical consumers of mental health services in the development and presentation of such content (Spagnolo, Murphy, & Librera, 2008).

This will allow a staging opportunity for contact with persons affected by mental disabilities. This involvement of consumers in the development and presentation of educational programs can have dual benefits (Spagnolo, Murphy, & Librera, 2008). Not only could consumer involvement have a positive impact on their learning experiences, but also on the mental health of the consumers involved in facilitating the educational programs (Spagnolo, Murphy, & Librera, 2008). For the current research, this could best be presented as a job fair for employers and consumers. Employers and consumers could be guests and vendors at the job fair as both search for employment/employees and seek information about employment issues for job seekers and job developers (Spagnolo, Murphy, & Librera, 2008).

Spagnolo, Murphy, and Librera (2008) conducted research regarding these type of educational programs with adolescents. Adolescents were chosen based on evidence that shows modifying negative attitudes among children and adolescents could prevent them from developing into adults who stigmatize individuals with disabilities (Spagnolo, Murphy, & Librera, 2008). Health course curriculum and traditional psychology courses rarely emphasize disabilities and mental health as issues facing millions of Americans each day (Spagnolo, Murphy, & Librera, 2008). They also do not focus on the ways mental illness can be managed and coped with effectively. Many high school kids never receive accurate information regarding disabilities (Spagnolo, Murphy, & Librera, 2008). This lack of information can translate into

outdated and negative views regarding people with disabilities and their capabilities (Spagnolo, Murphy, & Librera, 2008).

Their study sought to evaluate the effectiveness of combining three approaches to decreasing stigmatized attitudes among an adolescent population (Spagnolo, Murphy, & Librera, 2008). The first approach was the presentation of accurate information about mental illness, their characteristic symptoms, the various treatments demonstrated to be effective in managing these illnesses, and the very real possibility of recovery from a disability such as mental illness (Spagnolo, Murphy, & Librera, 2008). The second approach was the inclusion of consumers of mental health services in the development of the content for the presentations and the facilitation of those presentations. The third approach emphasized sharing personal stories of recovery with the target audiences.

There were 426 high school students participating in the study. Questionnaires were used to assess the following nine constructs: responsibility, pity, anger, dangerousness, fear, help, coercion, segregation, and avoidance (Spagnolo, Murphy, & Librera, 2008). A Likert scale with questions such as "How dangerous would you feel Charlie is?" and "How likely is it that you would help Charlie with schoolwork?" (Spagnolo, Murphy, & Librera, 2008).

The results of the Spagnolo, Murphy, and Librera (2008) study indicate that a 1-hour informational session developed and facilitated by consumers of mental health services can significantly affect the attitudes of adolescents toward people with disabilities. These results confirm that when the three effective approaches to decreasing stigma (i.e., the presentation of accurate information about mental illness and the very real possibility of recovery, the inclusion of consumers of mental health services in the development of the content for the presentations and the facilitation of those presentations, and sharing personal stories of recovery) are

incorporated into a presentation, stigmatizing attitudes are decreased (Spagnolo, Murphy, & Librera, 2008).

Adolescents who viewed the educational presentation demonstrated less stigmatizing attitudes on the constructs of pity, dangerousness, fear, help, segregation, and avoidance (Spagnolo, Murphy, & Librera, 2008). In addition to the efforts to reduce stigma, educational interventions can also alleviate some of the shame and misunderstanding regarding seeking mental health treatment (Spagnolo, Murphy, & Librera, 2008). Rehabilitation professionals can employ these same training tactics in addition to the job fair concept. Both of which have been proven to reduce stigma of persons without disabilities by increased exposure and familiarity of persons with disabilities (Spagnolo, Murphy, & Librera, 2008).

Furthermore, Luecking (2008) identified characteristics and features of demand-side job development to improve employment prospects and reduce stigma for individuals with disabilities. Job developers must focus on employer need by minimizing the "selling" to employers of potential candidates from categories of job seekers, i.e., people with disabilities, and maximizing interactions that feature getting to know the employers' circumstances and how work gets done (Luecking, 2008). There also has to be a consultation approach for identifying areas in which employers need operational help and offering alternative methods to address this need, including matching a job seeker with the skills and characteristics to meet that need (Luecking, 2008).

Another characteristic of demand-side job development is increasing demand (Luecking, 2008). This is done by identifying functions and tasks associated with improving productivity and service delivery and presenting potential candidates to perform these functions. Contacting and negotiating with employers is an especially key component of this process because the

vocational rehabilitation job developer must show where this arrangement can meet specific employer needs (Luecking, 2008).

Luecking (2008) explains that this job-task identification process is the rationale behind job customization. A demand is thus created for the job seeker's characteristics. In all effective job development approaches, there is negotiation with employers so that mutual benefit results (Luecking, 2008). Such a negotiation approach is a useful tactic for any job seeker, but it is especially effective when the job seeker requires considerable support and accommodation. This must be a multi-layered communication process that requires ongoing contact, an upbeat attitude, and definite goals for interacting with prospective employers (Bissonette, 2010).

Ongoing consultation is another key component of demand-side job development (Luecking, 2008). There must be recognition that the relationship with the employer does not end with the placement. The employer must be provided with help to insure production, performance, and appropriate work behavior of the employee. Customer service orientation is another "must have" for demand-side job development (Luecking, 2008). Job developers must emphasize responsiveness to employer need, solicit feedback from the employer about service, and make service adjustments based on employer need and feedback. A final characteristic of demand-side job development is an improvement in the employer's financial position (Luecking, 2008). There must be a way for employers to save money, make money, or otherwise improve their operation as a result of their relationship with the job developer and the individual with a disability (Luecking, 2008).

Luecking (2008) discusses how a demand-side approach to job development offers two advantages. It increases methods to assist individuals who have unique and often complex job assistance needs and it offers a way to engage employers other than traditional attempts to "sell"

disability employment (Luecking, 2008). The adoption of demand-side job development methodology such as attentive consultation, responsive service, and focus on company needs will enable job developers to expand their employer partnerships. It is a way to pull customers of vocational rehabilitation programs into the workplace by meeting demand-side concerns (Luecking, 2008).

Not only is the conscious social psychological factor of stigma relevant to workplace discrimination, so is implicit bias –unconscious stereotyping by the employer. This examination of literature regarding the stigma of hiring persons with disabilities reveals that the existence of a disability as well as the mere perception of disability constitutes a significant aspect of workplace discrimination (Draper, Reid, & McMahon, 2011). The creation of a work environment free of prejudice and discrimination would undoubtedly enhance the employment outcomes of persons with disabilities and facilitate their overall well-being as well as give them access to full societal integration (Russinova et al., 2011).

Potential Social Impact

The aggregate costs of disabling conditions, measured as the sum of reductions in household income, net of income transfer payments, and purchases of goods and services made necessary by disabling conditions, totaled an estimated $176.7 billion in 1980 (Chirikos, 1989). Between 1960 and 1980, according to the analysis that yielded this estimate, annual economic losses attributable to disabling conditions for people with moderate disabilities are $54.1 billion and for persons with severe disabilities, $122.6 billion (Chirikos, 1989). Chirikos (1989) contends that the losses can be described as a tax of approximately $800 for every American. When the price of ADA litigation is added, these totals will rise even more (Smart, 2009, p. 136). Putting PWD to work would lower these costs; however for the PWD, the emotional and social

benefits of working may be much more impactful than the economic benefits (Smart, 2009, p.

136).

The following table includes referenced lists of best practices for reducing several aspects

of the employment stigma discussed above.

Table 1

Strategies to Reduce Employment Stigma

Author	Journal	Best Practice
Krupa, T., 2007	The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry	• Help job seeker with disability to preempt/counter employer judgment by using self-advocacy statements and a well-constructed resume. • Training initiatives to educate employers about work-related issues (rights, accommodations, etc.) for PWD.
Stensrud, R., 2007	Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin	• Provide quick, convenient follow- up service to employer after agency placement. Increases likelihood of future placement with that same employer. • Inform employers that reasonable accommodations are intended to ensure that PWD have employment rights that are equal, not superior to, PWODs. • VR placement recruiters should rely on their own social network of other recruiters, friends, etc. to find qualified applicants.

Author	Journal	Best Practice
Kontosh, L. G., Fletcher, I., Frain, M., & Winland-Brown, J., 2007	Work	• Educational programs aimed at reducing stigmatizing attitudes by providing personal contact with PWD
Davison, H.K., O'Leary, B.J., Schlosberg, J.A., & Bing, M.N., 2009	Journal of Workplace Rights	• Provide employers with information about the cost-effectiveness of accommodations in order to reduce the perception of accommodations as being costly.
Harnett, H.P., Stuart, H., Thurman, H., Loy, B., & Batiste, L.C., 2011	Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation	• Present positive statistics to employers about PWD' work ethic and productiveness and how that contributes to company's productivity and profitability.
Luecking, R.G., 2008	Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation	• VR placement recruiters must focus more on the needs of employer (attentive consultation, responsive service, focus on company need, etc.) to make them feel comfortable hiring PWD –provide follow-up support, etc. • Job task identification/customization to help employer see the value in hiring PWD that meets employer's needs.

Author	Journal	Best Practice
Spagnolo, A.B., Murphy, A.A., & Librera, L.A., 2008	Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal	• Involve consumers/PWD with the educational efforts. • Employers and consumers can be vendors at job fairs as both search for employment/employees and seek information about employment issues for job seekers and developers. • Provide curriculum to high school students that emphasize accurate information about disabilities to prevent stigma before it develops.

CHAPTER III. METHOD OF STUDY AND INSTRUMENTATION

Chapter I provided an introduction and theoretical framework for this study, statement of

the research problem, purpose of the study, research questions, hypotheses, definition of terms,

significance, limitations and assumptions of the study. The purpose of this study was to examine

the perceptions of employers toward hiring people with disabilities (PWD). For the purpose of

this study, employer is defined as hiring managers who are directly involved in the hiring or who

make recommendations to hire PWD. Chapter II presented a review of related literature relevant

to practices related to hiring PWD. Chapter III discusses the design of the study, sources of data,

data collection procedures, privacy and confidentiality of employer data collected,

instrumentation, and method of procedure.

Design of Study

This was a survey study to identify overall perceptions of employers toward hiring people

with disabilities. The dependent variables were (1) employer perceptions as measured by scores

on the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities scale, and (2) social

desirability of responses as identified by scores on the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability

Scale 13-Item Short Form. The independent variables in this study were age; gender; race;

highest level of education; whether or not the participant had a disability; years of management

experience; whether or not the participant had hired a person with a disability; whether or not the

participant had ever worked with a person with a disability; and the type of organization,

business, or agency that employs the participant. The dependent variables were the score on the

Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities scale and scores on the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (SDS).

Sources of Data

The population for this study was 987 hiring managers that worked for businesses that were members of the Auburn (AL) Chamber of Commerce. Of this total number of businesses listed with the Chamber of Commerce, 278 were selected using a table of random numbers based on the recommendations of Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The hiring managers were employed in the following industries: service, medical, retail, food, and manufacturing.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher obtained the email addresses from the Chamber of Commerce website. The researcher then recorded the email address of each hiring managers into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Once potential participants were identified using a table of random selection, the selected hiring managers' email addresses were uploaded into the Qualtrics survey platform with the questionnaires for emailing.

The researcher contacted each hiring manager electronically listed on the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet explaining the purpose of the study, the reason they were selected, assurance that their involvement would be anonymous, and the link to the survey. The surveys were formatted for Internet delivery and hosted through Qualtrics.com. Qualtrics is a web-based software survey platform that makes it possible to create, administer, view, and download results of online surveys (Qualtrics.com, 2017). The following paragraphs address the basic steps the researcher used to launch the survey.

The researcher activated an account with Qualtrics.com by creating a username and password. Qualtrics allows the researcher to add questions using 20 different question formats

(i.e., multiple choice, descriptive text, file upload, pick, group, and rank, etc.). The researcher was able to download data into an SPSS version 23 file (Qualtrics.com, 2017) for analysis.

The researcher designed the survey by giving the survey a title "Perceptions of Employers" and adding the demographic questions and survey items. The researcher contacted each potential participant through the Qualtrics electronic email feature to provide them with the purpose of the study, a request for their participation, the Qualtrics anonymous survey link to access the online survey, and instructions on how to complete it. The survey form was designed to be retrieved and completed by the participants. Participants could access the survey using the anonymous link.

The participants were asked to respond to 11 demographic items by selecting the appropriate response. The first request for participation was sent on March 24, 2017. On April 7, 2017, only 11 participants had completed the survey form. Therefore, a reminder email was sent to all potential participants. In total, 29 participants completed the survey form, which yielded a response rate of 10%. A copy of the letter requesting participant participation is included in Appendix A.

Privacy and Confidentiality of Hiring Managers Data Collections

Proper steps were taken to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the data collected. Permission was obtained by the researcher from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Auburn University to conduct the study. A copy of the IRB approval is included in Appendix B. Data were collected via the Qualtrics survey platform. Only the researcher and the faculty who served on the researcher's doctoral committee had access to the data due to the database being username and password protected. Data obtained in connection with this study were reported in its totality and remained anonymous.

Instrumentation

One of the instruments used in this study was the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities (Kraska, 1998). This is a 30-item questionnaire that asks participants' perceptions of people with disabilities. Each item is scored on a five-point Likert-type scale as follows: Strongly Agree = 5; Agree = 4; Undecided = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1. The maximum possible total score is 150 and the minimum possible total score is 30. For this instrument, there are no correct or incorrect responses to the items; however, the higher the total score, the more favorable participants' perceptions toward hiring people with disabilities.

The validity of the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities survey for this study was established by a panel of experts. The panel included two employers, a rehabilitation counselor, and a research methodologist. Each panel member was instructed to use his or her own expertise to assess each item for clarity, appropriateness, relevance, and completeness. All panel members agreed that the questionnaire was a valid instrument for this study. Instrument reliability for this study was established using Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha was .89. Cronbach's reliability coefficient alpha for this study was .80.

The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (SDS) describes culturally approved behaviors that have little probability of occurring (Fischer & Fick, 1993). When used with other self-report measures, the Marlowe-Crowne SDS has proven to be an effective control for socially desirable responses (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). With 33 items in a True-False response format, the Marlowe-Crowne can take as long to complete as the primary assessment instrument (Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities; Reynolds, 1982). Due to the length of the original Marlowe-Crowne SDS, the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (SDS) Short Form was used.

Using 13 items, the Marlowe-Crowne SDS Short Form has been proven to be both reliable and valid measures of social desirability (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Fischer & Fick, 1993; Reynolds, 1982). Kuder-Richardson formula – 20 reliability was used to establish reliability; the short form had .76 reliability (Reynolds, 1982). The Kuder-Richardson – 20 reliability for this study was .64. Concurrent validity was examined through correlations between the Marlowe-Crowne short version and the standard version. The correlation coefficient was .38 (Reynolds, 1982).

The correlation coefficient between total scores for the Marlowe Crowne and total scores for the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities Scale was .38, $p = .164$. Given the weak correlation between scores on the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities and the Marlowe Crowne SDS, the influence of social desirability responses on the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities was not likely.

The researcher developed items to collect demographic information on age, gender, race, education level, disability status, management experience, experience hiring PWD, experience working with PWD, type of business, challenges hiring/working with PWD, and benefits hiring/working with PWD.

Method of Procedure

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Version 23. Descriptive statistics were calculated to respond to the first two research questions. The first research question was: "What are the demographic characteristics (age group, educational level, type of organization) of managers who hire or make recommendations to hire PWD?" The second research question was: "What are the types of employing organizations or businesses for respondents in this study?"

The third research question was addressed by a null hypothesis. The research question asked, to what extent do managers have a very favorable (as indicated by strongly agree) or favorable (as indicated by agree) perception of hiring PWD? The accompanying null hypothesis was as follows. There is no statistically significant difference in the mean score on the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities and the test value of 120. This null hypothesis was tested using a one-sample t-test with a cut-off score of 120. Scores on the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities ranged from 30 to 150. This score was decided by the researcher to be an appropriate cut-off score to indicate whether a participant agreed or strongly agreed (positive response) to an item.

The fourth research question was formulated to address correlation between social desirability and employer perceptions. It is stated as follows, "To what extent is there a correlation between social desirability and employer perceptions?" This research question was addressed by the second null hypothesis, which stated: There is no statistically significant correlation between social desirability and perceptions. The second null hypothesis was tested at the .05 level using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Procedure.

The fifth and sixth research questions were analyzed for common themes related to challenges and benefits of hiring or working with people with disabilities. The fifth and sixth research questions are stated as follows respectively: "What do managers report as their greatest challenges in hiring/working with PWD?" and "What do managers report as their greatest benefits in hiring/working with PWD?"

Summary

This chapter discussed the methodology used in this study. The sources of data, data collection procedures, privacy and confidentiality of hiring manager data collected, instrumentation, and method of procedure used in this study were presented. The data analysis and results of the study are presented in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Chapter I provided an introduction and theoretical framework for this study, statement of the research problem, purpose of the study, research questions, hypotheses, definition of terms, significance, limitations and assumptions of the study. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of employers toward hiring people with disabilities (PWD). For the purpose of this study, employer was defined as hiring managers who are directly involved in the hiring or who make recommendations to hire employees in their business or industry or managers who are directly involved in training and placement of employees in their local communities. Chapter II presented a review of related literature relevant to discriminatory practices related to hiring PWD, statement of the research problem, purpose of the study, research questions, statement of hypotheses, research design methods and procedures, definition of terms, limitations and assumptions of the study, as well as the need and significance of the study. Chapter III discussed the design of the study, sources of data, data collection procedures, privacy and confidentiality of employer data collected, instrumentation, and method of procedure. Chapter IV focuses on the results of the data analysis.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were calculated to respond to the first two research questions. The third research question was addressed by the first null hypothesis. This null hypothesis was tested using a one-sample t-test with a test cut-off score of 120. This score was set by the researcher to be an appropriate score to indicate whether a participant agreed or strongly agreed

(positive response) to an item. The fourth research question was addressed in the second null hypothesis. The second null hypothesis was tested at the .05 level of significance using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical procedure. The fifth research question was addressed by the third null hypothesis. The third null hypothesis was tested at the .05 level using the Pearson Product Moment correlation Procedure. The sixth and seventh research questions were analyzed for common themes related to challenges and benefits of hiring or working with people with disabilities. The results of each research question and their corresponding hypotheses are presented in the following sections.

Results of Research Question One

The first research question was: "What are the demographic characteristics (age group, educational level, type of organization) of managers who hire or make recommendations to hire people with disabilities (PWD)?"

Demographic Characteristics for All Managers

Demographic characteristics for all managers in this study were summarized in terms of age, gender, race, education level, disability status, management experience, experience hiring PWD, experience working with PWD, and type of business. The total number of managers in this study was 29. Forty-one percent of the sample was 56–65 years of age. The majority of the managers in this sample were female (55.2%) and white (93.1). The highest level of education completed by the majority of the sample was a bachelor degree (37.9%) and the majority of the sample did not have a disability (96.6%). Hiring managers who had more than 20 years of experience comprised most of the sample (44.8%). Most of the sample had hired PWD in the past (41.4%), and most of the sample has worked with PWD (72.4%). About one-third of the sample described the type of organization/business/agency they work for as other (34.5%). The

frequencies and percentages for the demographic information for all hiring managers are shown in Tables 2 through 10, respectively.

Table 2

Frequencies and Percentages of Participants by Age Group

	Frequency	Percent
Age Group:		
26–35 years of age	2	6.9
36–45 years of age	8	27.6
46–55 years of age	4	13.8
56–65 years of age	12	41.4
65 years of age or older	2	6.9
Total	28	96.6
Missing	1	3.4
Total	29	100.0

Table 3

Frequencies and Percentages of Participants by Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	12	41.4
Female	16	55.2
Total	28	96.6
Missing	1	3.4
Total	29	100.0

Table 4

Frequencies and Percentages of Participants by Race

	Frequency	Percent
Race		
White	27	93.1
Black/African American	1	3.4
Total	28	96.6
Missing	1	3.4
Total	29	100.0

Table 5

Frequencies and Percentages of Participants by Highest Level of Education

	Frequency	Percent
Highest Level of Education Completed		
One or more years of college/university	6	20.7
Bachelor degree	11	37.9
Master Degree	4	13.8
Doctoral degree or equivalent	7	24.1
Total	28	96.6
Missing	1	3.4
Total	29	100.0

Table 6

Frequencies and Percentages of Participants by Disability Status

	Frequency	Percent
Disability		
No	28	96.6
Missing	1	3.4
Total	29	100.0

Table 7

Frequencies and Percentages of Participants by Years of Management Experience

	Frequency	Percent
Years of Management Experience		
Under 5 years of experience	3	10.3
6–10 years of experience	2	6.9
11–15 years of experience	4	13.8
15–20 years of experience	6	20.7
Over 20 years of experience	13	44.8
Total	28	96.6
Missing	1	3.4
Total	29	100.0

Table 8

Frequencies and Percentages of Participants by Hiring Experience

	Frequency	Percent
To your knowledge, have you ever hired an individual with a disability?		
Yes	12	41.4
No	9	31.0
Don't know	6	20.7
Total	27	93.1
Missing	2	6.9
Total	29	100.0

Table 9

Frequencies and Percentages of Participants by Co-worker Experience

	Frequency	Percent
To your knowledge, have you ever worked with an individual with a disability?		
Yes	21	72.4
No	6	20.7
Don't know	1	3.4
Total	28	96.6
Missing	1	3.4
Total	29	100.0

Table 10

Frequencies and Percentages of Participants by Type of Organization

	Frequency	Percent
Type of organization/business/agency for which you work		
Service (law, computer, sales etc., real estate)	8	27.6
Medical (doctor, nursing, etc.)	3	10.3
Retail (hardware store, dept. store. specialty store, etc.)	4	13.8
Food (fast food, grocery, restaurant, etc.)	2	6.9
Manufacturing (assembly, fabrication, design, maintenance, etc.)	1	3.4
Other	10	34.5
Total	28	96.6
Missing	1	3.4
Total	29	100.0

Results for Research Question Two

The second research question was: "What are the types of employing organizations or businesses for respondents in this study?" Ten of the respondents could not classify the type of organization, business, or agency they worked for. Eight worked in the Service industry, while only one worked in manufacturing. Descriptive statistics were calculated to respond to this research question. The results are presented in Table 10.

Results for Research Question Three

The third research question was: "To what extent do managers have a very favorable perception of hiring people with disabilities (as indicated by strongly agree) or favorable (as indicated by agree) perception of hiring PWD?" The following null hypothesis was formulated to answer the third research question, which was stated as no statistically significant difference in

the mean score on the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities and the test value of 120. The null hypothesis was tested using a one-sample t-test with a cut-off score of 120. This cut-off score was decided by the researcher to be an appropriate cut-off score to indicate whether a participant agreed or strongly agreed (positive response) to an item.

Results of the one-sample t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in manager perceptions of hiring individuals with disabilities based on their collective scores on the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities attitude scale and the test value: $t_{(14)} = 13.86$, $p = .00$; mean $= 88.67$, SD $= 8.80$. The 95% confidence interval of the difference was -36.18, -26.48. The difference between the observed mean score (88.67) and the test value (120) was -31.33. These results suggest that employer responses toward hiring people with disabilities were less than positive. The average score for all employees was below the agree/strongly agree level. Table 11 displays the mean score, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values, and the range of scores for each item on the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities.

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics by Item on the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with

Disabilities Scale

Item	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Range
1. Many of the things managers do with employees on the job site are appropriate for employees with disabilities.	15	3.6667	.72375	3.00	5.00	2.00
2. The needs of employees with disabilities can be best served through special training programs.	15	3.6667	.81650	2.00	5.00	3.00
3. Job site behavior of employees with disabilities generally requires more patience from managers than does the behavior of employees without disabilities.	15	3.4667	1.12546	1.00	5.00	4.00
4. The challenge of being at a regular job site will promote the professional growth of employees with disabilities.	15	3.5333	.51640	3.00	4.00	1.00
5. The extra attention required by employees with disabilities will be to the detriment of the other employees.	15	2.4000	.91026	1.00	4.00	3.00
6. Accommodation offers mixed group interaction which will foster understanding and acceptance of differences.	15	3.8667	.51640	3.00	5.00	2.00
7. It is difficult to maintain order at a job site that includes employees with disabilities.	15	2.1333	.91548	1.00	4.00	3.00
8. Management possess a great deal of expertise necessary to work with employees with disabilities.	15	2.9333	.88372	2.00	4.00	2.00
9. The behavior of employees with disabilities will set a bad example for other employees.	15	1.6667	.72375	1.00	3.00	2.00
10. Isolation at a job site has a negative effect on the social and emotional development of employees with disabilities.	15	4.2000	.67612	3.00	5.00	2.00
11. Employees with disabilities will probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a separate job setting than at a regular job site.	15	2.3333	.48795	2.00	3.00	1.00
12. Most employees with disabilities do not make an adequate attempt to complete their job assignments.	15	1.8667	.83381	1.00	4.00	3.00

Item	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Range
13. Inclusion of employees with disabilities will require significant changes in classroom procedures.	15	2.6000	.91026	1.00	4.00	3.00
14. Most employees with disabilities are well-behaved at the job site.	15	3.6667	.61721	3.00	5.00	2.00
15. The contact other employees have with employees with disabilities may be harmful to those without disabilities.	15	2.0000	.92582	1.00	4.00	3.00
16. Job site managers have sufficient training to supervise employees with disabilities.	15	2.7333	.79881	2.00	4.00	2.00
17. Employees with disabilities will monopolize the manager's time.	15	2.3333	.81650	1.00	4.00	3.00
18. Accommodations for employees with disabilities will promote their social independence.	15	3.8000	.56061	3.00	5.00	2.00
19. It is likely that an employee with a disability will exhibit behavior problems in the workplace setting.	15	2.2667	.59362	1.00	3.00	2.00
20. Diagnostic-prescriptive supervision is better done in special programs by instructors than by regular managers.	15	3.2667	.88372	2.00	5.00	3.00
21. The inclusion of employees with disabilities can be beneficial for all other employees.	15	4.1333	.63994	3.00	5.00	2.00
22. Employees with disabilities need to be told exactly what to do and how to do it.	15	3.0000	.84515	2.00	4.00	2.00
23. Accommodations are likely to have a negative effect on the emotional development of employees with disabilities.	15	2.4000	.63246	1.00	3.00	2.00
24. Increased freedom in the workplace creates too much confusion.	15	2.4667	.63994	2.00	4.00	2.00
25. Employees with disabilities will be socially isolated by other employees.	15	2.2667	.96115	1.00	4.00	3.00
26. Family members of employees with disabilities present no greater problem for managers than family members of employees without disabilities.	15	3.0000	.92582	1.00	4.00	3.00
27. Inclusion of employees with disabilities will necessitate extensive retraining of managers.	15	2.8667	.74322	2.00	4.00	2.00

Item	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Range
28. Employees with disabilities should be given every opportunity to function in an inclusive workplace setting when possible.	15	4.2667	.45774	4.00	5.00	1.00
29. Employees with disabilities are likely to create confusion at the job site.	15	2.0667	.79881	1.00	3.00	2.00
30. The presence of employees with disabilities will promote acceptance of differences on the part of other employees.	15	3.8000	.67612	3.00	5.00	2.00

Results for Research Question Four

The fourth research question was: "To what extent is there a correlation between social desirability and employer perceptions?" The following null hypothesis was formulated to answer the fourth research question: Ho_2: There is no statistically significant correlation between social desirability and perceptions. The second null hypothesis was tested at the .05 level using the Pearson Product Moment correlation Procedure.

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between total scores for the Marlowe Crowne and the total scores for the Attitude Scale was .38, $p = .164$. The mean scores and standard deviations were mean = 15.31 and standard deviation = 3.08 and mean = 88.67 and standard deviation of 8.80 for the Marlowe Crowne and Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities attitude scale, respectively.

Results for Research Question Five and Six

The fifth and sixth research questions were: "What do managers report as their greatest challenges in hiring/working with people with PWD?" and "What do managers report as their greatest benefits in hiring/working with PWD?" The fifth and sixth research questions were

analyzed for common themes related to challenges and benefits of hiring or working with people

with disabilities. Results for questions 5 and 6 are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Manager Challenges and Benefits to Hiring or Working with People with Disabilities

Greatest Challenges	Greatest Benefits
We are an all-volunteer organization, so we don't hire people.	Human relations
Communications	Gratitude
Gaining acceptance of members	Their positive attitudes/determination
Perceptions and assumptions of physical/mental ability	Diversity
No experience	Compassion
Due to the physical nature of the work we have out here, it has been difficult to find a person with a disability that would be able to perform the duties required of a position.	Hard workers and dedicated to the work.
Comprehension	Teaches us patience/they are a joy to work with
Helping them to keep up with the speed and demand of our services	Helping the person and helping others to be more compassionate.
Entire staff understanding and having patience. You are limited to what you are allowed to tell them which makes it hard for some to understand.	These employees bring new perspectives on the total work environment
My daughter is a quadriplegic due to being a passenger in the wrong vehicle 4 years ago! I am one of the very FEW who DO know what goes into her care and her needs. You have the wrong person to survey as I know much more than the average person.	The feeling that I am helping someone to feel good about themselves
We have some hearing impaired staff that makes it hard to communicate with them except in person.	
Accommodations	

Summary

This chapter discussed the results of the data analysis. Descriptive data presented in this chapter summarized the demographic characteristics of the hiring managers used in this study. The majority of the hiring managers were white females. The chapter also provided the results of the one-sample t-test. The results of the one-sample t-test were statistically significant. An overview of this study, summary of results, limitations, conclusions, recommendations for practical applications, and summary are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Chapter I provided an introduction and theoretical framework for this study, statement of the research problem, purpose of the study, research questions, hypotheses, definition of terms, need and significance of the study, limitations and assumptions of the study. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of employers toward hiring people with disabilities (PWD). For the purpose of this study, employer was defined as hiring managers who are directly involved in the hiring or who make recommendations to hire employees in their business or industry or managers who are directly involved in training and placement of employees in their local communities. Chapter II presented a review of related research literature relevant to practices in hiring PWD. Chapter III discussed the design of the study, sources of data, data collection procedures, privacy and confidentiality of employer data collected, instrumentation, method of procedure, and a summary. Chapter IV presented the results of the data analysis by research questions and hypotheses. This chapter will present an overview of the study, summary of results, limitations, implications, conclusion, recommendations for practical applications, and summary.

Overview of the Study

Various researchers have conducted research on the low employment rates of people with disabilities (PWD) over the years. As a result, several different factors have been identified as potential reasons for the low employment rates. However, there has been limited research focusing on employer perceptions toward hiring people with disabilities as a contributing factor.

The focus of this research was the lack of information related to managers' perceptions toward hiring and working with PWD. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of employers toward hiring and working with PWD. The Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities survey instrument was used to identify the extent to which employers agree or disagree with statements related to working with and hiring PWD. Managers who were currently employed in fields such as service, medical, and manufacturing were used in this study. Demographic characteristics included age, gender, race, education level, years of management experience and whether or not the manager had a disability.

The researcher used a random sample by selecting 278 hiring managers that worked for businesses that were members of the Auburn (AL) Chamber of Commerce. The researcher obtained the email addresses from the Chamber of Commerce website. The researcher then recorded the email address of each hiring manager into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Once potential participants were identified using a table of random numbers, the selected hiring managers' email addresses were uploaded into the Qualtrics survey platform with the questionnaires for emailing.

The researcher contacted each hiring manager electronically listed on the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet explaining the purpose of the study, the reason they were selected, assurance that their involvement would be anonymous, and the link to the survey. The surveys were formatted for Internet delivery and hosted through Qualtrics.com. The survey was active for eight weeks. Responses were received from 29 participants.

By specifically examining employer perceptions, rehabilitation counselors will be better able to recognize that providing assistance to business through referrals to human service agencies and advocacy groups does not coincide with the process by which businesses recruit for

workers. Instead of traditional protocol and advocacy, which have historically concentrated on aspects of disability and related accommodations, job development needs a stronger focus on the context of the employers' enterprises and organizational processes. A refined approach is needed that more effectively considers the demand-side of the employment development equation and that demonstrates to employers that they are valued customers of job development initiatives.

Summary of Results

This study investigated the answers to the following research questions:

(1) What are the demographic characteristics (age group, educational level, type of organization) of managers who hire or make recommendations to hire PWD?

(2) What are the types of employing organizations or businesses for respondents in this study?

(3) To what extent do managers have a very favorable (as indicated by strongly agree) or favorable (as indicated by agree) perception of hiring PWD?

(4) To what extent is there a correlation between social desirability and employer perceptions?

(5) What do managers report as their greatest challenges in hiring/working with PWD?

(6) What do managers report as their greatest benefits in hiring/working with PWD?

Question one addressed demographic characteristics for all managers in this study, which were summarized in terms of age, gender, race, education level, disability status, management experience, experience hiring PWD, experience working with PWD, and type of business. The total number of managers in this study was 29. Forty-one percent of the sample was 56–65 years of age. The majority of the managers in this sample were female (55.2%) and White (93.1). The highest level of education completed by the majority of the sample was a bachelor degree (37.9%), and the majority of the sample did not have a disability (96.6%). Hiring managers who

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had more than 20 years of experience comprised most of the sample (44.8%). Most of the

sample had hired PWD in the past (41.4%), and most of the sample has worked with PWD

(72.4%). About one-third of the sample described the type of organization/business/agency they

work for as Other (34.5%).

Question two investigated the types of employing organizations or businesses for

respondents in this study. Ten of the respondents did not classify the type of organization,

business, or agency that they worked for. However, eight worked in the Service industry, while

only one worked in Manufacturing.

Question three focused on the extent that managers have a very favorable perception of

hiring people with disabilities (as indicated by strongly agree) or favorable (as indicated by

agree) perception of hiring PWD. The following null hypothesis was formulated to answer the

third research question, which was stated as no statistically significant difference in the mean

score on the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities and the test value of

120. The null hypothesis was tested using a one-sample t-test with a cut-off score of 120. This

cut-off score was decided by the researcher to be an appropriate cut-off score to indicate whether

a participant agreed or strongly agreed (positive response) to an item. There was a statistically

significant difference in manager perceptions of hiring individuals with disabilities based on their

collective scores on the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities attitude

scale: $t_{(14)}$ = 13.86, p = .00; mean = 88.67, SD = 8.80. The 95% confidence interval of the

difference was -36.18, -26.48. The difference between the observed mean score (88.67) and the

test value (120) was -31.33. These results suggest that employer responses toward hiring people

with disabilities were less than positive. In other words, the average score for all employees was

below the agree/strongly agree level.

Question 4 investigated to what extent was there a correlation between social desirability and employer perceptions. The following null hypothesis was formulated to answer the fourth research question: Ho_2: There is no statistically significant correlation between social desirability and perceptions. The second null hypothesis was tested at the .05 level using the Pearson Product Moment correlation Procedure. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient between total score for the Marlowe Crowne and the total scores for the Attitude Scale was .38, $p = .164$. The mean score and standard deviation for the Marlowe Crowne and the Attitude Scale were mean = 15.31 and standard deviation = 3.08, and mean = 88.67 and standard deviation of 8.80, respectively.

Questions 5 and 6 addressed managers' greatest challenges and their greatest benefits in hiring/working with PWD. The fifth and sixth research questions, respectively, were analyzed for common themes related to challenges and benefits of hiring or working with people with disabilities. Those common themes for greatest challenges were communication difficulties; perceptions and assumptions made regarding the PWD, whether the PWD would be accepted by co-workers, and concerns about whether the PWD would be able to keep pace with the job demands. The common themes for greatest benefits were the increase in diversity, new perspectives being brought to the job, learning to be patient and compassionate toward PWD, and realizing that PWD can be dedicated hard workers.

Limitations

The findings for this research study were based entirely on hiring managers that worked for businesses that were members of the Auburn (AL) Chamber of Commerce. The results must be interpreted with caution for several reasons. First, for the purpose of this study, "hiring manager" was defined as anyone who was directly involved in the hiring or who makes

recommendations to hire employees. There may have been people that meet this qualification

that did not have their email address on file with the Chamber of Commerce. Therefore, the

results may not be representative of all businesses in the area.

This leads to another limitation, which is the limited geographic area from which data

were collected. Consequently, these results may not be representative of businesses outside the

Auburn-Opelika (AL) area. Also, the study is limited to the extent that the Employer

Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities survey identifies participant perceptions

toward hiring PWD and the Marlowe-Crowne detected whether responses were given in a

socially acceptable way, rather than one's true feelings. In addition, the low number of

respondents limits the generalizability of the results. Despite these limitations, this study may

provide information that could be useful in employer perception research, enhancing

rehabilitation worker effectiveness, and improving employment outcomes for people with

disabilities.

Conclusions

Based on the low response rate, a primary conclusion of this study may be that employers

are not receptive to Internet surveys, particularly for topics that could be considered sensitive.

Employers may have failed to respond to questions that could suggest employment

discrimination or bias toward people with disabilities (PWD), even though employers were

informed that their responses would be anonymous and confidential. Also, many individuals

avoid opening electronic links for fear of computer tampering and viruses.

To the extent that the data collected in this study were valid and reliable and the

assumptions of this study were appropriate and correct, the following conclusions may be made.

Based on the results of this study, it may be concluded that most hiring managers are White females without disabilities between the ages of 56–65 with bachelor degrees.

There was a statistically significant difference in manager perceptions of hiring people with disabilities based on their collective scores on the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities attitude scale. The difference between the observed mean score (88.67) and the test value (120) was -31.33. These results suggest that employer responses toward hiring people with disabilities were not as positive. In fact, the mean score of 88.67 suggests responses were less than neutral. In other words, the average score for all employees was below the agree/strongly agree level.

Implications

The results from this study suggest several implications. First, the assumption can be made that in general, respondents held less than positive views toward hiring PWD as indicated by their responses of less than agree/strongly agree on the survey items. There is also the implication that since none of the respondents had a disability, they may not have been aware of the contributions that PWD can make in the workplace. This speaks to the broader focus of this study, hiring managers could benefit from special staff meetings and/or seminars to become aware of PWD and related employment issues.

Previous research shows that PWD are typically unemployed or under employed (Combs & Omvig, 1986), meaning that if the companies that participated in this study hire PWD, they may be highly unlikely to hold a position in which they would be in charge of hiring decisions. Furthermore, the results of this study imply that efforts to minimize employment discrimination continue to fall short even with the education and media attention that is focused on PWD, which includes acceptance and value of diversity.

Recommendations

The research for this study focused on employer perceptions toward hiring people with disabilities (PWD). This study focused only on hiring managers for businesses in the Auburn-Opelika (AL) area that are members of the Chamber of Commerce. It is recommended that a similar study be conducted using a larger geographical region. Twenty-one of the 29 participants indicated that they had worked with a PWD, yet the overall score on the employer perception scale was less than desirable. At the same time, their comments about the barriers and benefits of working with PWD suggests that further research be conducted on hiring managers in various types of businesses and organizations. In other words, it might be informative to focus on type of organization in the data analysis to see the extent of impact that business or organization has on hiring manager perceptions.

According to Krupa (2007), job seekers with a disability can preempt and counter employer judgment by using self-advocacy statements and a well-constructed resume. The literature suggests that many employers are unaware of the positive statistics regarding PWDs work ethic and productiveness and how that contributes to company productivity and profitability (Krupa, 2007). Providing such information to employers can improve employment for PWD. Training initiatives to educate employers about work-related issues (rights, accommodations, etc.) for PWD could help to reduce employer liability concerns. Employers should also be informed that reasonable accommodations are intended to ensure that PWD have employment rights that are equal, not superior to, people without disabilities (Stensrud, 2007). Studies similar to the present study may be useful in creating and maintaining more positive perceptions toward hiring PWD.

There are additional opportunities for research that includes addressing what is taught in college and university courses and programs when it comes to hiring and working with PWD. This would be especially useful for human resources and business management programs of study (Stensrud, 2007). These educational programs could include training aimed at reducing stigmatizing attitudes by possibly providing personal contact with PWD (Kontosh, Fletcher, Frain, & Winland-Brown, 2007).

Such educational interventions can even extend to high school student curriculum to emphasize accurate information about disabilities and PWD to prevent stigma before it develops (Spagnolo, Murphy, & Librera, 2008). As higher education continues to become more diverse, future studies using new graduates of human resources and business management programs might reveal a change in hiring managers' attitudes toward PWD. The focus of this study may be useful to policy makers in higher education institutions and business practices as they work to improve perceptions toward hiring PWD.

Summary

The focus of this study was employer perception toward hiring people with disabilities (PWD). Hiring managers for businesses in the Auburn-Opelika (AL) area that are members of the Chamber of Commerce were selected to participate for this study. The results of the study indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in manager perceptions of hiring PWD based on their collective scores on the Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities attitude scale and a score at the midpoint on the scale. These results suggest that employer responses toward hiring people with disabilities were less than positive.

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APPENDIX A

Email Narrative

THIS IS THE SCRIPT FOR THE EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear Sir/Madam:

You are receiving this email because your business, company, or organization is listed with the Auburn Chamber of Commerce. This email is to request your participation in a survey research study. The study is about employers who hire or recommend hiring individuals for your business or company.

An Information Letter about the study is attached explaining the purpose of the study and assuring the confidentiality of your responses and your anonymity. If you would be so kind as to read the Information Letter and if you are willing to participate in this study, please link the clink below which will take you directly to the survey.

Clinking the link below indicates your willingness to participate in this survey; however, you may withdraw from the survey at any time.

Thank you for your participation.

https://auburn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_bOwzfFCS4mmEj7D

APPENDIX B

IRB Approval

REQUEST FOR EXEMPT CATEGORY RESEARCH

For information or help completing this form, contact: THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE, 115 Ramsay Hall
Phone: 334-844-5966   e-mail: IRBAdmin@auburn.edu Web Address: _____

Revised 2/1/2014 Submit completed form to _____ or 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University 36849.

1. **PROJECT PERSONNEL & TRAINING**

    PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI):
    Name Clarence D. Merckerson   Title ___ Investigator ___ Dept./School Auburn University
    Address 2084 Haley Center - Auburn, AL 36849   AU Email cdm0033@auburn.edu
    Phone 334-322-7212   Dept. Head Jamie Carney

    FACULTY ADVISOR (if applicable):
    Name Dr. Rebecca Curtis   Title Associate Professor Dept./School Auburn University
    Address 2084 Haley Center - Auburn, AL 36849
    Phone 706-957-0098   AU Email curtirs@auburn.edu

    KEY PERSONNEL: List Key Personnel (other than PI and FA). Additional personnel may be listed in an attachment.

Name	Title	Institution	Responsibilities
Dr. Marie Kraska	Distinguished Prof.	Auburn University	assist with research design/data analysis

    KEY PERSONNEL TRAINING: Have all Key Personnel completed CITI Human Research Training (including elective modules related to this research) within the last 3 years?   ☑ YES   ☐ NO
    TRAINING CERTIFICATES:

2. **PROJECT INFORMATION**
    Title: Hiring persons with disabilities

    Source of Funding: ☑ Investigator   ☐ Internal   ☐ External
    List External Agency & Grant Number: _____

    List any contractors, sub-contractors, or other entities associate with this project.

    List any other IRBs associated with this project (including those involved with reviewing, deferring, or determinations).

FOR ORC OFFICE U_____

APPROVA___
APPROVA___
INTERVAL___

Add this approval information in sentence form to your electronic information letter!

COMMENTS:

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this Document for use from
03/21/2017 to 03/20/2020
Protocol # 17-075 EX 1703

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APPENDIX C

Instrument: Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities

Employer Perceptions Toward Hiring People with Disabilities
© Marie Kraska, 1998

DIRECTIONS: Please circle the letter that best describes your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. There are no correct answers. The best responses are those that reflect your honest perceptions. Thank you for your participation.

Use the following scale for your responses. This is relevant to any type of disability.

SA = Strongly Agree   A = Agree   U = Undecided   D = Disagree   SD = Strongly Disagree

SA	A	U	D	SD	1. Many of the things managers do with employees on the job site are appropriate for employees with disabilities.
SA	A	U	D	SD	2. The needs of employees with disabilities can be best served through special training programs.
SA	A	U	D	SD	3. Job site behavior of employees with disabilities generally requires more patience from managers than does the behavior of employees without disabilities.
SA	A	U	D	SD	4. The challenge of being at a regular job site will promote the professional growth of employees with disabilities.
SA	A	U	D	SD	5. The extra attention required by employees with disabilities will be to the detriment of the other employees.
SA	A	U	D	SD	6. Accommodation offers mixed group interaction which will foster understanding and acceptance of differences.
SA	A	U	D	SD	7. It is difficult to maintain order at a job site that includes employees with disabilities.
SA	A	U	D	SD	8. Management possess a great deal of expertise necessary to work with employees with disabilities.
SA	A	U	D	SD	9. The behavior of employees with disabilities will set a bad example for other employees.
SA	A	U	D	SD	10. Isolation at a job site has a negative effect on the social and emotional development of employees with disabilities.
SA	A	U	D	SD	11. Employees with disabilities will probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a separate job setting than at a regular job site.
SA	A	U	D	SD	12. Most employees with disabilities do not make an adequate attempt to complete their job assignments.
SA	A	U	D	SD	13. Inclusion of employees with disabilities will require significant changes in classroom procedures.
SA	A	U	D	SD	14. Most employees with disabilities are well-behaved at the job site.
SA	A	U	D	SD	15. The contact other employees have with employees with disabilities may be harmful to those without disabilities.
SA	A	U	D	SD	16. Job site managers have sufficient training to supervise employees with disabilities.
SA	A	U	D	SD	17. Employees with disabilities will monopolize the manager's time.

SA	A	U	D	SD	18. Accommodations for employees with disabilities will promote their social independence.
SA	A	U	D	SD	19. It is likely that an employee with a disability will exhibit behavior problems in the workplace setting.
SA	A	U	D	SD	20. Diagnostic-prescriptive supervision is better done in special programs by instructors than by regular managers.
SA	A	U	D	SD	21. The inclusion of employees with disabilities can be beneficial for all other employees.
SA	A	U	D	SD	22. Employees with disabilities need to be told exactly what to do and how to do it.
SA	A	U	D	SD	23. Accommodations are likely to have a negative effect on the emotional development of employees with disabilities.
SA	A	U	D	SD	24. Increased freedom in the workplace creates too much confusion.
SA	A	U	D	SD	25. Employees with disabilities will be socially isolated by other employees.
SA	A	U	D	SD	26. Family members of employees with disabilities present no greater problem for managers than family members of employees without disabilities.
SA	A	U	D	SD	27. Inclusion of employees with disabilities will necessitate extensive retraining of managers.
SA	A	U	D	SD	28. Employees with disabilities should be given every opportunity to function in an inclusive workplace setting when possible.
SA	A	U	D	SD	29. Employees with disabilities are likely to create confusion at the job site.
SA	A	U	D	SD	30. The presence of employees with disabilities will promote acceptance of differences on the part of other employees.

APPENDIX D

Instrument: Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale 13-Item Short Form

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale

13-Item Short Form Highlighted

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it pertains to you.

1.	Before voting I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates.	True	False
2.	I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.	True	False
3.	It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.	True	False
4.	I have never intensely disliked anyone.	True	False
5.	On occasion I have doubts about my ability to succeed in life.	True	False
6.	I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my own way.	True	False
7.	I am always careful about my manner of dress.	True	False
8.	My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out in a restaurant.	True	False
9.	If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen, I would probably do it.	True	False
10.	On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.	True	False
11.	I like to gossip at times.	True	False
12.	There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.	True	False
13.	No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.	True	False
14.	I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.	True	False
15.	There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.	True	False
16.	I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.	True	False
17.	I always try to practice what I preach.	True	False

18.	I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loud-mouthed, obnoxious people.	True	False
19.	I sometimes try to get even, rather than forgive and forget.	True	False
20.	When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.	True	False
21.	I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.	True	False
22.	At times I have really insisted on having things my own way.	True	False
23	There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.	True	False
24.	I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my own wrongdoings.	True	False
25.	I never resent being asked to return a favour.	True	False
26.	I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.	True	False
27.	I never make a long trip without checking the safety of my car.	True	False
28.	There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.	True	False
29.	I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off.	True	False
30.	I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favours of me.	True	False
31.	I have never felt that I was punished without cause.	True	False
32.	I sometimes think when people have a misfortune they only got what they deserved.	True	False
33.	I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.	True	False