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# Perceptions of Gender Bias in Vocational Training at an Employment Service Organization in Central Virginia

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Perceptions of Gender Bias in Vocational  
Training at an Employment Service  
Organization in Central Virginia.

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Abstract

This was a qualitative study conducted at an employment service organization in Central Virginia. The researcher examined supervisor for perceptions of gender bias on the vocational training of client employees, through the use of interviews and observation. Four interviews were conducted with supervisors at the employment service organization. Results indicated three themes: gender roles are changing so no gender bias exists, placed by interest into jobs, and no physical strength requirement. Interrater reliability was calculated by two experts. The policy manual for the employment service organization was examined for gender specific vocational training procedures. Also the researcher observed the frequencies of males and females working in different training stations. A two-way chi square was calculated to determine the observed and expected frequencies. The chi square was statistically significant at the .05 level.

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Gender Bias in Vocational  
Training at a Employment Service  
Organization in Central Virginia.

Women have been struggling against the effects of gender bias for decades. The struggle for women's equity in the work place is an ongoing problem. Yelin (1992) reported that " employers select [employees] on the basis of justifiable differences in skills, experience, and formal training, and on the unjustifiable biases about race, sex and disability" (p.123).

Also employers tend to match applicants' gender with the gender of those already in that position. Although this gender bias is subtle, it is still detrimental to the advancement of women in the work place (Powell, 1987).

The act of getting a job for women or persons with disabilities is inherently a discriminatory process, according to Yelin (1992). Current statistics indicate that about 46 percent of the actual labor force is made up of women (Randle,1990; U.S. Dept. of Labor,1991). The United States Department of Labor (1991) reported that the level of participation in the work place from 1950 to 1991 was on average 57.5 percent of the women in the population versus 76.5 percent of the males in the population. The percentage of women obtaining jobs by the year 2000 is estimated to be 61 percent (Bailey, 1988). The statistics suggest that women are becoming a major part of the American work force.

The increase in the proportion of women in the work force is due primarily to societal and economic changes in our country. Several societal changes that have encouraged women to join the work force include changes in stereotypes, educational opportunities and gender roles. Women are increasingly experiencing a sense of desire for achievement and the satisfaction of meaningful and rewarding activities (Thom, 1984). The

changes in the stereotypical views of women as homemakers and mothers have also helped to encourage women to join the labor force. Another change that has encouraged women to join the work force is the opportunity to earn advanced degrees in education. Research indicates that 86 percent of all jobs in the year 2000 will require post-secondary education (National Commission on Working Women, 1990). The National Commission on Women (1990) reported in 1961 only 2.7 percent of women earned professional degrees. In 1990, however, 36.3 percent of women earned professional degrees and the number of doctoral degrees quadrupled. The obtaining of advanced degrees by women has made them more marketable in the work force and more able to compete with males for higher paying jobs.

Women, who were once seen as traditional homemakers, are now providing economic support for family stability. Baslow (1992), for example, stated that wages for men have gone down while taxes have risen. Therefore, both spouses must now work to achieve middle income status (Hewlet, 1990). Moreover, single women are the primary providers for their families. Frustenburg (1990) reported half of all female-headed families live below the poverty level. Unfortunately many single women are living in poverty conditions due to a number of factors: low educational attainment, low salaries in traditionally female jobs, vocational preparation, and the high cost of child care (Baslow, 1992). These factors are major contributors to many women's failure in the work place when compared with their male counterparts.

Despite women's gains in society and economic positions, women still have several barriers to face. The United States Department of Labor reported that in 1991 women were still likely to be found working in gender

segregated occupations. Baslow (1992) stated that this type of segregation of jobs by gender is even more severe than the segregation of jobs by race. Occupational segregation contributes to the salary differential between men and women. Research by Jacobs (1989) indicated that 25 percent of the salary gap between men and women is due to gender segregation. According to the research a woman's worth in the job market is about two-thirds of the worth of a man (Baslow, 1992). Also the United States Department of Labor reported in 1991 that for every dollar earned by a man a woman earns approximately sixty-eight cents. The research on salary clearly stated that women are paid less than men on an average in most occupations.

Women in the work force still face an excessive amount of subtle gender bias. The research stated that women are over represented in the lowest paying and lowest status jobs (Baslow, 1992). Although women are moving into male dominated professions, they are still not gaining equity in job status (Yelin, 1992). The research suggests that this lowers self esteem and potentials for all women workers (Baslow, 1992). Women face barriers in male dominated fields which require excessive physical strength, such as fire fighting, police force, and federal agencies. Hogan (1991) reported job analysis results suggest that the structure of physical requirements of jobs can be described by muscular strength, endurance and movement quality. These components play an important part in the hiring employees for occupations which require high amounts of physical strength. Gender bias, whether it is subtle or forth right, may contribute to harmful effects to the advancement of women in the work force. In addition, gender bias may be evidenced in settings other than the work force, such as in the schools.

Gender Bias in the Identification of Special Education Students

Over the years there has been considerable concern over the number of females versus males enrolled in special education programs . In the special education programs fewer females are typically identified than males. Harris et al. (1987) requested from school psychologists information on their most recent referrals. These researchers reported that of all the students referred 70 percent were males and 30 percent were females. Due to the large amount of discrepancy between male and female enrollment in special education many hypotheses have emerged to explain the gender disparities. Five general factors have been suggested to explain the gender discrepancy in special education referrals and enrollment: biological differences , learned differences , different reactions of boys and girls to school, different reactions of teachers to boys in comparison to girls, and flaws or weaknesses in criteria procedures, or tests (Wisconsin Dept of Public Instruction, 1992).

Biological differences between males and females are emerging in the scientific world daily. Some important biological factors can be linked with reasons for gender disparity in special education. Scientific research reveals that females have fewer birth defects and a faster maturation rate than males, thus giving females an advantage (Gribble,1991). Another advantage of females is their genetic makeup. Scientific studies report that females have an advantage on the twenty third chromosome pair. For example, " if one gene on one of a female's X chromosomes is disabled, a healthy gene on the other X chromosome can counter its disabling effects" (Wisconsin Dept. of Public Instruction, 1992, p.vii). Males on the other hand are prone to X chromosome linked disabilities. Chromosomal errors can result in certain forms of mental retardation. Another biological difference between males and females includes their body chemical makeup. Research supports that

some disabilities in males are caused by their male hormones, thus giving them aggressive behavior (Jacklin, 1989). Researchers who support this belief use biologically -based aggressive behavior to explain the overrepresentation of males in classrooms for the emotionally disturbed . Biological differences play a role in gender disparities but does not account for the whole difference.

Gender disparities in special education may also be due to the learned differences of males and females. Children often imitate their same -sex parent , siblings or peers. The research suggested that females tend to model more sex appropriate behaviors(Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1992), whereas males may initiate aggressive behaviors. In addition parents tend to be more tolerant of the acting out behaviors of boys (Wagner, 1976). Wagner (1976) reported that females are taught to bow to authority therefore, the female students do not receive as much attention in the classroom.

These learned differences play a role in how children react to the school environment. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction(1992) suggested learned differences may be one of the reasons more males are referred to the special education programs. Boys tend to rebel against the authority of schools and get recognized by the authorities. Girls tend to act in compliance with school expectations and are often overlooked by the authorities. The reactions of the individual to the school environment seems to affect the referral rate of males and females.

Teachers are the primary persons for making a referral to the special education program therefore, their reaction to the different sexes affects referral rates (Wisconsin Dept.of Instruction, 1992). McIntyre(1988) noted that both female and male teachers are more alarmed by boys' behaviors than girls behaviors. The teachers refer more males than females because the

males have more demanding disruptive behaviors . Teachers' reactions to student behavior may be another cause for the male over-identification in special education.

Assessment and procedures for identification of special education students are additional factors contributing to the over-identification of males in special education programs. Research suggests that the unclear definitions and procedures for identification can cause gender disparities (Wisconsin Dept. of Instruction, 1992). The criteria for the identification of special education students need to be consistent in all districts. Also the multidisciplinary team members need to play a more active role in the identification process (Wisconsin Dept. of Instruction, 1992). This would enable multidisciplinary team members to make more identifications from both genders.

The lasting result of these gender disparities in the identification process is that females are not being given a fair chance to succeed in their education , particularly when special education services need to be rendered. According to the research , the problem of gender bias in the identification of students with special needs is a great concern of many states (Wisconsin Dept. of Instruction, 1992). All students with special educational needs deserve the opportunity to succeed in their education. Moreover these students deserve to succeed in an employment or vocational setting.

#### Vocational Education

Vocational education is a mandatory requirement for special education. Vocational education was mandated by Public Law 94-142, Public Law 99-199, and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 which identifies as a priority the inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular

vocational education. These legislative mandates have helped to improve vocational education services.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 is a major legislative act that amended the vocational act of 1963 (Public Law 98-524, 1984). The purpose of the Carl D. Perkins Act is to strengthen the vocational education program in nine specific areas. The first goal of Public Law 98-524 was to modernize, expand and improve the quality of vocational education. Next the law guarantees that individuals who are served inadequately are assured access to quality vocational education programs. In addition, the act helps to promote greater cooperation between public agencies and the vocational educators and to improve the academic foundations of vocational students, which includes training and retraining to meet the requirements of the employment market. The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act contains three components involving the assessment of economically depressed areas to provide better vocational services. Lastly, PL 98-524 works to limit the effect of sex role stereotyping on occupations, job skills or level of competencies. The Carl D. Perkins Act serves as an essential piece of legislation for providing and ensuring quality vocational education.

Vocational education serves to maximize the independence of youth with disabilities. The responsibility of special educators is to provide vocational training until the adult service providers begin support in the training process. Vocational training at the secondary school level provides the necessary ground work for placing the individual in a field of interest. During the in-school phase of vocational training, the special educator administers school based assessments and training, while the adult service providers are collecting information regarding the disability of the client and service providers for possible placement. During this phase the individuals

are assessed for their interests, abilities and special needs. Based on the assessment results individuals are then provided with intense vocational training in a classroom, vocational lab, or community work site. Lastly the special educators arrange for the necessary modifications and accommodations for the student. When the student completes the necessary phases in the vocational education process, they are ready to be placed in the work place.

Vocational education can contribute several essential roles in the transition process( Ehrsten& Izzo,1988). First, vocational education provides the student with basic employability competencies. Second, vocational education reinforces basic skills learned by the students. Third, the student can be placed in actual work settings and given a chance to practice his / her skills. Lastly, vocational education allows for greater participation of all authorities in the Individualized Education Program process, which in turn gives the student the opportunity for a smooth transition into the work place. Once the student has completed the vocational education process and has been afforded all opportunities mandated under federal legislation, the transition process begins.

### Transition

Transition services, which are designed to help students move from the school environment to a vocational environment, are a right accorded to all special education students. Transition services are mandated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA). IDEA clearly defines transition services and also provides guidelines and regulations for making a transition program individualized. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, at least by a student's sixteenth birthday or preferably by his/her fourteenth birthday, the Individualized Education



Program must include a statement of needed transition services. In some cases, the statement of services may need to be included in the Individualized Education Programs (IEP) earlier than the student's fourteenth birthday.

Each student transition plan should be clearly defined within the student's IEP

Paul Wehman (1992) believes that a meaningful transition includes postsecondary educational opportunities such as employment, as well as allowing the students to become independent and have individual competence in community living. He identifies several key components that should be present in every transition model. The first component that should be considered in every transition plan is the context of the local community.

When planning school-to-adulthood activities, providers must be aware of community resources, particularly the local economy, which determines the tax base from which services are funded. Next, the student's individual choice needs to be considered and the families need to be informed of the student's options. Another important component is the school- business relationship at the local level. According to Wehman (1992) this component is crucial, because businesses can help determine marketability of special education and the vocational curricula. Also businesses can provide training sites in all types of industrial occupations. A successful transition program includes knowing the role of the rehabilitation manager (Wehman, 1992). Lastly, the direct involvement of family and friends plays a crucial role in the success of the student during and after his or her placement. Paul Wehman (1992) asserts that all of the components are necessary for a transition model to be effective.

Several different transition models exist. In the 1970s a model called the Life Centered Career Education Model was highly used. This model defines major competencies in the areas of daily living skills, personal social

skills, and occupational guidance and preparation (Wehman, 1992). Another early model of transition was the Life Planning Program. This model involves instruction in cognitive compensatory strategies, problem solving, and goal setting (Wehman, 1992). Although several types of transition models have been proposed, not all of them contain the components for success.

According to Clark and Kolstoe (1990) the school-based career development and transition education model for adolescents with disabilities contains all of the crucial components for student success.

A model that is used frequently in the supported employment setting is the train-place-train model. The current research suggests that a train-place-train transition process helps the disabled worker to adjust to his/her new job responsibilities (Ehrstein & Izzo, 1988). This transition process begins with a preparation phase, which actually commences during vocational training. The next phase is the on-the-job training which provides work site orientation and the introduction of the client with other staff. This phase is important because the agency begins to fade out of daily support and provides follow along services. The ultimate goal of all of these phases is the obtaining of independent work with a lifelong follow along support (Ehrstein & Izzo, 1988).

The employment outcomes of youth in transition have been very positive. Due to the newness of the transition process, data is still emerging and being collected. Current data suggests that high school experiences may contribute significantly to obtaining and maintaining employment (D'Amico, 1992). According to the Illinois Transition Project, conducted by Paul Bates (1991), seventy-two percent of students were actually employed and eighty-seven percent were projected to be employed from his sample. The National Longitudinal Transition Study (1989) researchers reported that employment

rates varied between fifty seven percent and eighty seven percent. In the Washington state longitudinal study Wehman(1992) found that seventy five percent of persons with disabilities were employed two years after high school. Males consistently attained higher employment rates across the National Longitudinal Transition Study (1989) and the Washington state longitudinal study (Wehman,1992). In addition, Bates (1991) reported based on his projections of service needs in Illinois, over 2000 individuals will leave school each year and are expected to require employment. Supported employment , then, provides an important resource for these individuals.

### Supported Employment

The supported employment model is a successful placement for many individuals with severe disabilities. This type of employment addresses the massive unemployment problem among adults with disabilities (Storey, Sandow & Rhodes, 1990). One of the strengths of supportive employment is that it has a "zero exclusion" policy, hence this model provides services to those individuals who have been excluded from vocational placement in the past (Will,1984).

Supported employment provides the worker with paid work in integrated settings and the employee is given additional support by the employer which is quite different from the traditional sheltered workshop model. Sheltered workshops were established by the United States Government as rehabilitation facilities. Sheltered workshops have been historically the predominant placement for people with developmental disabilities (Wehman, 1992). The United States Department of Labor reported that people with disabilities placed in sheltered workshops generally remain in them (Buckley& Bellamy, 1985). Historically, sheltered workshops do not provide the chance for competitive placement in the job market. Yet,

the placement of individuals with disabilities into the competitive job market is the ultimate goal of the individuals vocational training and transition plan. Thus, in the 1990's more interest has been focused on supported employment (Wehman,1992).

Despite the growth in supported employment a large number of persons with disabilities are still being excluded. Results of a survey of supported employment in forty two states clearly indicates that individuals with severe mental retardation or physical disabilities are under-represented in the supported employment setting (Revell , Wehman, Kregal, West, & Rayfield 1994). The survey indicated that of 74,960 individuals who were participating in supported employment, only 8.7 percent represented individuals with severe disabilities (Revell et. al., 1994). This contradicts the research on " zero exclusion" because the role of supported employment is to provide services regardless of the severity of the disability (Storey, Sandow& Rhodes, 1990).

Despite these limitations, supported employment provides many individuals the opportunity to succeed in the competitive job market. According to Wehman (1992) supported employment is popular because it works well for everyone involved and has dramatically improved outcomes for people with severe disabilities. Supported employment will continue to expand in the future.

### Statement of Purpose

Women face many obstacles throughout their pursuit of career opportunities. They are labeled by their gender, and often seen by employers, as not adequate for the job because of their sex. Women with disabilities , however, already face great barriers that society has placed on them. When we consider a disabled woman in the work force or seeking vocational training and advancement, double discrimination often affects her chances of obtaining a job. Even when these women break the barriers, they are made to feel inadequate. A woman with a physical disability reported in the research that she felt as if she were "at best treated like a child and at worst treated like a helpless object" (Hopkins,1988, p. 125 ).

Women with disabilities also encounter gender bias in their daily lives just as do average women. Gender bias is a barrier that is detrimental to the educational and vocational training of women with disabilities because it limits their full potential for seeking higher paying and more career oriented jobs. This bias may be traced back as early as a woman's identification into special education, entry into vocational training, or participation in the transitional process.

Women have made many gains since the 1900's , yet women still face many barriers. Women have increased their participation in the workforce, but many women still remain in female segregated occupations. When women are hired into male dominated occupations their pay often is not equal with that of their male counterparts. Not only do women still face discrimination in the work place, they are discriminated against in the school setting. Females with disabilities are less frequently identified for special education services than males. Thus, females with disabilities are limited in their opportunities to achieve success in school and in after school

placements, such as placements in a supportive employment setting. Women with disabilities are most often trained in female stereotypical jobs such as food services. Also women's placement from supported employment settings to competitive employment settings is less frequent than their male counterparts. After reviewing the current literature the researcher identified a lack of studies examining gender bias in the vocational training of women with disabilities. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine for gender bias in the beliefs expressed by the supervisors in a supported employment work place in Central Virginia.

## Method

### Subjects

Six respondents were selected for interviews from a supportive employment organization in Central Virginia. The six respondents were in Supervisory positions, excluding the Executive Director. The Supervisors were a valuable source of information because they have worked with the client employees individually. Also the supervisors have been responsible for the placement of the client employees into their respective jobs in the organization.

### Procedure

Permission was obtained from the Executive Director of the employment service organization in Central Virginia prior to conducting the research (See Appendix A). Also permission to interview was obtained from the six respondents in supervisory positions (See Appendix B).

### Interviews

An interview was conducted to obtain the perceptions of gender bias that may be currently held by the supervisors. The interview questions were used to reflect the perceptions of gender bias held by the supervisors, when training the females clients for vocational tasks. The interviews were scheduled in advance and held in a private location. The location was at the employment service organization. Interview responses were tape recorded and later transcribed in private by the researcher. The tapes and the transcribed interviews were kept in a locked file. After the interviews were transcribed the tapes were magnetically erased. The anonymity and confidentiality of the supervisors was assured by the researcher. The interview tapes were numbered. The researcher identified the respondents

by the numbered tapes. Names of the supervisors were not written down at any time during the research , nor were names revealed in the results.

### Policy Manual

The policy manual was examined for gender specific regulations. Attention was paid to gender specific regulations about vocational placement within the employment service organization. The gender specific regulations identified were recorded and later used by the researcher during observation. The researcher did note whether or not the specific gender regulations were being used to help train the client employees.

### Observation

Lastly observations of the different vocational training centers within the workshop were conducted for gender specific placements. The researcher observed the number of males versus females working at the five different training stations. The jobs were coded by male / female as defined by the physical strength levels found in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) (see Appendix C).

### Instruments

The researcher used one self- made table of questions (See Appendix D). Pilot interviews were given to acquaintances of the researcher prior to conducting the interviews with the six respondents. Interview questions were constructed to obtain information about the supervisor's perceptions of gender bias at the employment service organization.

### Data Analysis

This was a qualitative study. Field notes were taken by the researcher during observation and numbers of males and females were recorded in each training station. Recurrent themes were identified across the interviews , policy manual and observations. Observer bias was addressed by having a



third party observe in the employment service organization. Interobserver reliability coefficients were computed for the themes by dividing the number of agreements by the number of disagreements plus agreements.

## Results

### Subjects

Out of the six possible subjects , four agreed to be interviewed. Subjects ranged between the ages of thirty-five and fifty years old. Of the four subjects, one had an Associates degree, three had regular high school diplomas and three had some training working with persons with disabilities. Subjects have worked for the employment service organization a range of one to six years. One out of the four had worked for a similar organization. All four of the subjects hold supervisory positions at the employment service organization and work with client employees on a daily basis.

### Interviews

Demographic information, educational background of each supervisor, and perceptions of gender bias in the employment service organization were obtained from supervisors through the use of interviews. The interviews were conducted in a private location at the employment service organization so that all information would remain confidential. A self- made schedule of twenty one questions was used to collect information (See Appendix D). The subjects were informed that the interviews were going to be tape recorded and transcribed later in private by the researcher. Following the transcription, the audio tapes were destroyed.

### Themes

After the interviews were transcribed, three specific themes were drawn from similar statements made across the four subjects. In order for a topic to be considered a theme, at least two (50%) of the subjects must have supported the topic with their statements. Twenty-one responses were found that supported the themes. Following are the constructed themes and examples of supporting statements.

Theme A: Gender Roles Are Changing So No Gender Bias Exists

Much of the literature indicates that gender roles are changing in society and less overt gender bias exists in the work force. Therefore, this theme was constructed out of statements made by the subjects supporting the changes occurring in gender roles. This theme had the most support, accounting for 12 (57%) of the total statements. ( See Table 1) Statements representative of this theme included:

Today there is [sic] a lot less emphasis on the fact you're a woman or a man.

I think people are judged more on their capabilities , education and background now than their gender.

Theme B: Placed by Interest into Jobs

This theme represented the placement of client employees into their work positions at the employment service organization. Seven (33%) of the total statements supported this theme ( See Table 2) including:

Any employee that comes in is asked to try whatever area they are assigned to, which they have the choice when they come...

All of our employees are given a tour and given a choice for which area they want to work...

Theme C: No Physical Strength Requirements

This theme represented the placement of clients into different work areas based on their physical strength ability. Two (10%) of the total statements accounted for this theme ( See Table 3) including "Strength doesn't apply out there..."

### Reliability

Overall interrater reliability between the researcher and Expert #1 was 95%. Across themes , interrater reliability was 91% for theme A, 100% for theme B, and 100% for theme C. ( See Table 4) Overall interrater reliability between the researcher and Expert #2 was 80%. Across themes, interrater reliability was 91% for theme A, 57% for theme B, and 100% for theme C. ( See Table 5) Interrater reliability overall between Expert #1 and Expert #2 was 76%. Across themes, interrater reliability between Expert #1 and Expert #2 was 75% for theme A, 57% for theme B, and 100% for theme C. ( See Table 6)

### Policy Manual

When the policy manual was examined for gender specific regulations for training female clients, the researcher found no such regulations to exist. Nor were any gender specific policies found for the placement of female clients into their job task at the service employment organization.

### Observation

Training stations were coded male or female by the physical strength levels defined in the DOT. (See Appendix C) A third party observer was then given a tour and given the physical strength levels from the DOT (See Appendix C) . Then, the observer was asked to code the jobs male or female. An interrater reliability check was conducted between the researcher's categorizations and the third party's responses. Five different training stations were observed to count the frequencies of males and females working in the specific areas. Also observed were the specific work tasks for each of the genders. Three days of observation were recorded and average numbers of males and females in each training station were computed. The overall interrater reliability of the third party observer was 80% .

A two way chi square was then calculated to find the observed and expected frequencies of males and females in each job. The two way chi square for males was .79 and for females, .79. Both values did not exceed or equal the critical value at the .05 level ; therefore, apparently gender bias does exist in vocational tasks at the employment service organization.

### Discussion

The comments made by the supervisors were consistent with the current research that gender roles are changing . According to these supervisors, women are playing a bigger role in the work force because it takes two people working in a family to survive. Also the supervisors stated there are many more women in executive roles than five to ten years ago. The supervisor's responses were positive about the changes in women's roles at home and work.

When asked about the vocational training and placement at the employment service organization, supervisors clearly stated there were no differences between vocational training and placements for their male and female client employees. These supervisors stated clients were placed into their job task based on client interest. This is consistent with the research on vocational education and supported employment. Vocational education allows for the students to develop job skills for the areas in which they would like to work. Also vocational education mandates assessment of the needs and abilities of the students prior to job placement. This too, is consistent with the placement of the client employees when they first enter the employment service organization. Research on supported employment also supports that clients should be placed in a job that is maximizing their ability. Supervisors stated that clients had the opportunity to change their work placement should they be having difficulties. Also the supervisors reported that adaptations were made to meet the client's abilities.

Supervisors commented that physical strength did not play a role in the placement of the client employees, yet upon observation there were not any female employees in the male coded job task. Although statistically gender bias existed , the small number of clients might have accounted for that

difference. Recycling requires a higher physical strength level according to the DOT. This is consistent with the research by Hogan (1991). Women were less likely to be doing jobs that required higher amounts of physical strength. However, supervisors contended clients are allowed to pick their area of work and if a female chose to work in recycling, he or she would be given that work.

Very few inconsistencies were found with the research literature reviewed. The responses given by the supervisors, when asked to name gender specific occupations, were varied. Some of the responses were traditional stereotypical jobs such as sewing production. The majority of the answers given, however, were that there are not any stereotypical jobs. Baslow (1992) stated women are still likely to be found working in gender segregated occupations. Even though the employment organization provides many work areas, no women were observed working outside in recycling, which could be seen as a male job.

Some problems and limitations in this study should be noted. Only four out of the six supervisors agreed to be interviewed, which limited the response rate and resulted in a small sample size. In addition, the sample size for the observation was relatively small and could have effected the results of the two way chi square. Another possible problem was that the responses given to interview questions were politically correct versus what the person might have really believed. For example, several inconsistencies were noted in a few interviews for the questions dealing specifically with gender. This may be due to the familiarity of the researcher with the supervisors.

The researcher was not surprised by the overall results of this study. When considering the limitations, the results were what the researcher

expected. It could be perceived by an outside observer that gender differences do play a role in the training; however, the truth may lie between the observations and interviews. The results supported that at this employment service organization there are not any gender specific jobs because the client chooses his/ her work area.

More research must be conducted on the training of students prior to placement in a supported employment setting. This would help to explain the reasons students might choose gender specific jobs. In addition, more research needs to be done on the success of employment service organizations, so that there is a positive alternative for students after completing their vocational education programs. This would lead to more studies on the outcomes of supported employment and job placement successes. These studies should be conducted by both gender and disability, so that professionals can ensure that the best possible programs are serving both genders and all disabilities.



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**Appendix A**  
**Consent letter**

I consent for my organization to participate in the research project entitled: Perceptions of Gender Bias in Vocational Training at an Employment Service Organization.

I acknowledge that the purpose of this study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my organization's participation have been explained to me. I have been assured confidentiality and anonymity for all of the organization's participants who will be involved.

I understand that if I have any concerns or complaints about my organization's involvement in this study , I am encouraged to contact the Office of Academic Affairs at Longwood College at (804) 395-2010. Also I am aware I can withdraw my organization's participation at any time .

Finally, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand this consent letter. A copy has been given to me.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

(Participant)

**Appendix B**  
**Consent Letter Supervisors**

Longwood College  
Consent Participation in  
Social and Behavioral Research

I, \_\_\_\_\_, consent to participate in the research project entitled: Perceptions of Gender Bias in Vocational Training at an Employment Service Organization.

I acknowledge that the purpose of this study , the procedures to be followed , and the expected duration of my participation have been explained to me. Possible benefits of this project have been described to me as have the alternative procedures, if such procedures are applicable and available.

I acknowledge that I have had an opportunity to obtain additional information regarding this research project, and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Further, I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, and I am free to withdraw my consent at any time and discontinue participation in this project without prejudice. I understand that no information will be presented which will identify me as the subject of this study unless my permission is given in writing.

I understand that if I have any concerns or complaints about my treatment in this study , I am encouraged to contact Office of Academic Affairs at Longwood College at (804)395-2010.

Finally , I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and Voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Participant)

**Appendix C**  
**Dictionary of Occupational Titles**  
**Physical Strength Levels**



## Gender Bias 40

Code	Title	Physical Strength Level
589.678-014	Cloth Folder Hand	Light
781.687-026	Cutter, Hand II	Light
920.685-010	Bailing Machine Tender	High
739.684-134	Needle Board Repairer	Light
653.685-010	Bindery Worker	Light

**Appendix D**  
**Supervisor Interview Questions**

## Interview Questions

### Demographic Questions

1. What is your age?
2. How long have you worked for this organization?
3. Have you worked for a similar organization before?
4. What level of education have you obtained?
5. Have you had training to work with persons with disabilities?

### Interview Questions

1. What made you want to work for an employment service organization?
2. What types of jobs do you provide for your employees in your employment service organization?
3. Have you received any complaints from the clients about their job placements?
4. What are some common complaints? (boredom, too hard)
5. How is client ability measured?
6. What are some of your concerns, when placing the client employees into job tasks?
7. What are some differences in the client employees that affect their training placement within the organization? (physical size, mental ability, interest)
8. What are some differences in the client employees that affect their vocational placement outside of the organization? (physical size, mental ability , interest, previous job performance)
9. What are some of the criteria your organization uses for job placement?
10. How do you feel the roles of men and women in society have changed in the past ten years?
11. How have your ideas about gender in the work force changed in the past five years?

12. What is the ratio of male to female in your employment organization?
13. Are you aware of any legislation for persons with disabilities concerning gender differences?
14. What role do gender differences play in the work force?
15. To what extent do you feel gender differences effect the vocational placement of client employees?
16. What is the role of physical strength in job placement?
17. What are some examples of gender specific occupations?
18. What is your definition of gender differences or bias?

Tables 1-6

Table 1

Supporting Statements for Theme A: Gender Roles Are Changing So No Gender Bias Exists

Subjects	Statements
# 1	<p>I think people are judged more on their capabilities, education and background now than their gender.</p> <p>What has traditionally been seen a quote male role or female role such as a nurse female and male engineer... I don't see those things now.</p> <p>There is no difference made, when placing individuals</p>
# 2	<p>Today there is [sic] a lot less emphasis on the fact you're a women or a man...</p> <p>... I think there is a difference. Each person has to have a role like the father role and the mother role but when they get out there, there should not be a difference</p> <p>... women are asserting themselves much more.</p> <p>It's pretty much equal here from what I can see.</p> <p>Well, it use to be a man would not sew but now we have a couple male sewers</p>
#3	<p>... more women working. It takes two in a family now to survive.</p>
#4	<p>I'm sure the opportunities are the same for men as they are for women.</p> <p>I think men and women experience the same things.</p>

Table 2

Supporting Statements for Theme B: Placed by Interest into Jobs

Subjects	Statements
#1	<p>Any employee that comes in is asked to try whatever area they are assigned to, which they have a choice when they come...</p> <p>Other than interest we use whatever assessment...</p> <p>All our employees are given a tour and given a choice for which area they want to work...</p> <p>If we have a female that comes in and prefers recycling then recycling is where she will receive her training.</p> <p>Finding a position that the individual is interested in and trying them in that position and giving them a shot.</p>
#2	None
#3	... taken on a tour and asked what area they want work.
#4	Most people are just given the option for where they want to work.

Table 3

Supporting Statements for Theme C: No Physical Strength Requirement

Subject	Statements
#1	Physical size really doesn't have an effect...
#2	Strength doesn't apply out there...
#3	None
#4	None



**Table 4**

**Interrater Reliability Expert 1**

Themes	Percentage of Reliability
Theme 1	91%
Theme 2	100%
Theme 3	100%
Overall	95%

Table 5

## Interrater Reliability Expert 2

Theme	Percentage of Reliability
Theme 1	91%
Theme 2	57%
Theme 3	100%
Overall	80%

Table 6

## Interrater Reliability Between Expert 1 and Expert 2

Themes	Percentage of reliability
Theme 1	75%
Theme 2	57%
Theme 3	100%
Overall	76%