

12-12-1996

Employer and Employee Perceptions of Workers With Disabilities and How They Effect Supported Employment

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Running head: EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS

Employer and Employee Perceptions
of Workers With Disabilities
and How They Effect Supported Employment

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December 12, 1996

Abstract

Twenty-three percent of the businesses participated in the study with 8 employer and 24 employee subjects. The purpose of the study was to determine the perceptions of people with disabilities by their nondisabled coworkers and employers. The first part of the purpose was to address the employers' perceptions of people with disabilities and how experience and level of education can affect those perceptions. The second part addressed the amount of experience the individual's had in working with people with disabilities and the types of disabilities presented in their workplace.

The data were analyzed with frequency distributions and an item analysis using Pearson - r was computed for relationships between demographic variables and employer perception. The results indicated an overall positive perception of working with people with disabilities. A significant relationship ($r = .81$) with employer results was found between one to five years experience and knowledge of legislation and the type of job people with disabilities were considered to be capable of performing.

A significant relationship ($r = .40$) was revealed with the employee results between amount of experience of nondisabled coworkers and the quality of work of people with disabilities.

Acknowledgements

While I have a lot to be grateful for in finishing my graduate year and thesis, I realize there is still much more for which to be grateful. Among them are my family, friends, and those professionals that I have encountered throughout my education.

I owe a special thanks to my family who have supported and encouraged me during these past few years. Guiffrida's, Lodato's, McIntyre's and Guilfoyle's - all of you have played a very important role in my success.

I also have to thank my good friends Dana, Fritz, and Barb for staying close even though I was still in school. You guys are the best! Lisa and Kevin, thanks for taking good care of me, I know it has not been fun.

A special thank you to all of my committee members. I have truly enjoyed myself at Longwood and I have had wonderful teachers to model myself after.

Finally, a huge thank you to Mike. You provided me with the day-to-day encouragement, support, understanding and inspiration that I know was difficult. You had faith in me with the ups and downs throughout this endeavor and your patience has been wonderful. I will never forget it.

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Employer and Employee Perceptions
of Workers With Disabilities
and How They Affect Supported Employment

Supported employment is an alternative source of work for people with all types of disabilities. This form of vocational rehabilitation has become a window of opportunity for people who might not have been otherwise able to secure a job. One piece of legislation that has encouraged the furtherance of supported employment is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (PL 101-336) and the Rehabilitation Act (PL 93-112).

Legislation Issues

The ADA eliminated discrimination of qualified individuals with disabilities by mandating specific guidelines during the interviewing, evaluation, promotion, and hiring process. In addition to these factors the ADA also required employers to make "reasonable accommodations" for an individual with a disability. The implementation of this Act can inflict a significant challenge on small and/or private businesses and to the government on the local, state, and federal levels. In response to these demands, according to Kregel and Tomiyasu (1994), the National Council on Disability (NCD) proposed a report to the President and Congress. The committee reviewed the progress that employers were making with implementation of this new law. The results proved that most companies were succeeding in meeting the ADA requirements and that most companies had a designated individual to ensure its proper implementation. Additionally, the committee came across companies that were not implementing the new laws and found that they were smaller businesses that were unaware of the legislation entirely. The

intentions of the ADA have been considered by some as good; however, the legislation has also been seen as an unnecessary burden and interference of government business (Lindsay, 1989). When employers do not follow these guidelines set by the ADA, or do not hire up to an assigned quota, a consequential fine or tax addition is applied to that corporation or small business. The principle behind this piece of legislation was that "persons with disabilities are willing and able to make a valuable contribution to the economic life of their local communities" (Kregel & Tomiyasu, 1994).

The Rehabilitation Act Amendment of 1992 provided a more specific definition of supported employment in regard to related, extended, and ongoing services that are a part of Supported Employment Programs. The Senate Committee's purpose with the Senate Report 102-357 (National Easter Seals Society, 1994 Annual Report) and intent on the development of this Act was to reaffirm the principles of the ADA in that " individuals with disabilities, regardless of the nature, type, or severity of disability, should have the same opportunity as their non disabled peers to experience and enjoy working, leisure time activities, and other life experiences in our society" .

Another important area in the framework for this legislation was the ability to choose the place of employment. "Choice Regulations" were established in order to ensure that the individual with disabilities was given the opportunity to actively participate in his/her employment decision making process. The individualized written rehabilitation plan (IWRP) is the state's written plan for the rehabilitation services to be received by an individual with disabilities upon exiting high school. The development and agreement of the IWRP must be between the individual and the counselor, must be designed to achieve the determined objectives for employment, must conform with the individual's abilities, needs, and priorities, and must provide related services information clearly and in the individual's native language. All items on the IWRP must be understood and agreed upon by both parties developing the plan with a duplicate copy provided to the individual for

his/her own records. The IWRP is still in use; however, additional amendments were made to the IWRP's development.

Employer Rationale

"Supported Employment exists when three program components are present: employment wages benefits in the competitive marketplace; continuing on-the-job supports such as training, supervision, and transportation; and an integrated workplace in which non challenged and challenged people are employed" (Bellamy, Rhodes, & Albin, 1988). Prior research on supported employment and it's place in the future has provided a positive outlook. Tice (1994) stated that the idea of supported employment to most corporations, businesses, or governments is virtually new. However, research (Siegel & Gaylord-Ross, 1991) continues to indicate that this alternative employment program benefits challenged individuals and society.

A significant setback in the furtherance of supported employment and the number of job placements in the workforce has been the lack of employers available with which to place individual's with disabilities. One of the major assumptions about supported employment is that there are appropriate jobs available to workers with disabilities (Shafer, Hill, Seyfarth, & Wehman, 1987). In reality only 18% of the able population of people with disabilities have jobs and are presently working (National Easter Seals Society, 1994). Job developers are assisting in eliminating this lack of employment opportunity problems. The role of the job developer is to contact employers on behalf of the individual to be placed in a supported employment position. The job developers' position is of vocational service with responsibilities that include: job - matching, placing students in jobs most appropriate for their abilities; training and post - employment support, and job development which is the most crucial component of career development (Hagner & Daning, 1993). Hagner and Daning (1993) endeavored to discover the components that were vital in the job development process. Some of the components

found to be essential were open communication between job developers and the potential employer, a clear statement of the purpose of the job developer's proposition to the corporation, and the nature of the individual's disability.

A top incentive for employers to hire employees with disabilities has been Targeted Job Tax Credits program. According to Powell (1992), employers are eligible to take a 40% tax credit on the first \$6,000 of wages paid to a worker with disabilities. The tax credit is for one year only, and all paperwork must be completed prior to employment. Presently, most large corporations are taking advantage of this tax credit. Researchers (Shafer, M.S., Hill, J., & Wehman, P., 1987) found that 54% of employers from a job coached sample reported use of the tax credit, as compared to 31% of those placed in supported employment programs, and only 15% of unaided placement workers with disabilities. Smaller companies and restaurants, however, have not taken advantage of the tax breaks. The reason is unknown, but there is some speculation that the smaller companies are unaware of this program. Research by Shafer and colleagues (Shafer et al., 1987) has also shown that there are reasons for employers to hire workers with disabilities other than financial benefits. The researchers stated that "employers from all 3 samples who have hired employees with mental retardation did so due to a commitment that such individuals deserve an opportunity to work" (p.309),

Another successful incentive program for employers is the Minimum Wage Payment Program. This program is part of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) which outlines specific guidelines to follow that not only benefit the employer but also the worker. The minimum wage that must be paid is the going rate of minimum wage. Employees must be paid overtime pay for overtime work, and the employer can not employ an individual under the age of 16 in a hazardous job.

Employee Attitudinal Research

In a study by Bellamy, Rhodes, Wilcox, Albin, Mank, Boles, Horner, Collins, and Turner (as cited in Shafer, M.S., Rice, M.L. & Metzler, H.M.D., 1989) researchers stated, "Opportunity to work in integrated environments represents the most significant promise of supported employment as well as one of the greater challenges facing supported employment providers" Integrated work environments are those that provide an atmosphere where most workers are without documented disabilities. The focus is not on instruction but rather on performance of valuable work in an employment setting. "In an extensive literature review, Greenwood and Johnson (as cited in Kregel & Tomiyasu, 1994) found the educational level of employers to be a significant determinant of their attitudes toward individuals with disabilities" (p. 53). Smith, Edwards, Heineman and Geist (1985), in their research, stated that an increase in positive attitudes was found among Chicago employers who had prior encounters of employing people with disabilities. In another study (Levy, Jessop, Rimmerman & Levy, 1992) on employer attitudes, over 300 out of the Fortune 500 companies surveyed proved that executives who had significant work experience with people with disabilities indicated that they had more favorable attitudes than those that did not. Research as early as the 1950's (Eddy, 1964; Rosenberg, 1956, Watson, 1950) has shown that positive attitude changes can be attributed to increases in contact, followed by positive experiences of employees and employers. Tice (1994) reported that the respondents in her study were more willing to work with challenged individuals after six months of participating in the supported employment program than at initial contact. The contact with challenged individuals was determined to be an intervening variable which accounts for the change in attitude toward disabled co-workers.

Purpose of Research

The purpose behind this research is to determine the perceptions of people with disabilities by their nondisabled coworkers and employers. The perceptions of an individual with a disability may have an overall affect on how the nondisabled workers view, treat, and work alongside people with disabilities. The first part of the purpose was to address the employers' perceptions of people with disabilities and how experience and level of education can affect those perceptions. It is hypothesized that there is a relationship between perception of employers and the amount of experience in working with people with disabilities and formal educational levels. More specifically the following questions will be addressed:

- 1). What are employers' perceptions of employees with disabilities?
- 2). Does the amount of experience in working with employees with disabilities affect their perceptions?
- 3). Does a specific level of formal education affect employers' perceptions of working with people with disabilities.

The second part of the purpose of research was to look at nondisabled employees perceptions of their coworkers who are disabled. The amount of experience the individual's had in working with people with disabilities and the types of disabilities presented in their workplaces were also considered in how they affected perceptions. Three questions were researched within this portion of the study.

- 4). What are the nondisabled employees' perceptions of working with coworkers with disabilities?
- 5). Does the amount of experience working with workers with disabilities have an effect on their perceptions?
- 6). Does the type of disability of their coworkers influence the nondisabled employees' perceptions?

In order to better understand the hiring practices of people with disabilities by employers reasons for hiring a candidate need to be researched. There appears to be a discrepancy between the number of people with disabilities able and willing to work and the number of people with disabilities actually employed. Research has shown that people with disabilities can perform valued and competitive work Smith (1981), reported that the most common concerns by an employer were participation, punctuality with arrival and departure, returning from breaks on time, and safety concerns. These four indicators on a performance scale portrayed what was considered to be a dependable employee by several studies.

Employee attitudes toward disabled co-workers can additionally have an impact on supported employment and its' success. Studies have shown that initial perceptions of working with people with disabilities are negative, until the nondisabled worker has been exposed to supported employment programs. With this concept in mind, this study will seek a better understanding of employer and employee perceptions of people with disabilities and how experience, education and types of disabilities can affect the perceptions of disabled workers by their nondisabled co-workers.

Methods

Subjects

In this research study hotel businesses and food service businesses were selected and surveyed from Virginia and Maryland for reasons of convenience in conducting the study. The hotel and food services businesses represented both small and large size businesses. All of the businesses included in the research had at least one employee with a disability.

A list indicating businesses in Maryland and Virginia using supported employment programs was obtained from an anonymous source. Food services and hotel corporations were chosen from this list to participate in this study. The limitation in type of businesses to be used was due to the majority of the businesses (43%) on the list representing hotels and food service businesses. Twenty-two businesses were invited to participate. The study yielded a return rate of 31%, with a total of seven businesses having participated.

All of the nondisabled employee subjects from the hotel corporations and the food service corporations received surveys. No responses were obtained from the hotel business. Therefore, all subjects come from the food service businesses.

The employer subjects' participation in the study was based on the following criteria. Subjects must work with a person with a disability on a regular basis and be in a supervisory position. A disability, for the sake of the study, was operationally defined as a physical or mental impairment requiring special needs or assistance while on the job including those who have had accommodations previously made. Subjects in supervisory positions surveyed were eight individuals responsible for hiring employees at the businesses. These subjects met the criteria for participation. Twenty four employee subjects were selected by the companies with the requirement that they work with individuals with disabilities. Employee

subjects represented various positions within the food service business. Those positions represented were: bartenders, assistant managers, line servers, unit leaders, cashiers, cooks, executive chefs, and cafeteria workers.

Instrumentation

Two researcher generated questionnaires were administered in this study. One questionnaire surveyed employers who hire workers with disabilities. The second questionnaire surveyed the nondisabled employees. Each questionnaire consisted of 15 questions that require the respondent to choose their answer based on a Likert scale. Responses were (1) Strongly Agree, (2) Agree, (3) Disagree, and (4) Strongly Disagree.

A pilot study was not conducted on the surveys prior to distribution. The surveys were however, examined by the committee members for content validity by expert judgment.

The questions on the employers' survey sampled the employers' perceptions of people with disabilities, reasons for hiring, beliefs on hiring, and company status of positions to be filled (See Appendix A). Additional information such as prior experience of supported employment programs, levels of formal education, and the amount of one on one contact with their employees with disabilities was obtained along with the surveys through the use of a demographic instrument (See Appendix B). Upon completion of the instrument the subjects were encouraged to make their own personal comments relating to the issues of the research.

The survey for the nondisabled employees required them to respond to questions that addressed perceptions of working with people with disabilities (See Appendix C). An additional demographic survey was also completed by the participants to asses types of disabilities presented by their coworkers and the amount of time working with people with disabilities (See Appendix D). This

survey also provided the respondent(s) with the opportunity to include any additional comments they may want to make.

Confidentiality was continually ensured to all subjects participating in the study by using a numerical identification system for response/return information.

Procedure

The questionnaires were distributed to all of the business that agreed to participate in the study. The surveys with deadlines noted for their return were mailed to the contact person. The contact person received a letter with the guidelines to follow for research participation (See Appendix E). Each nondisabled employee responded to a questionnaire and returned the survey to the contact person. Each employer participant answered the survey and returned the questionnaire to the contact person likewise. Upon completion, both employer and employee surveys either were collected by the researcher and/or returned through the mail to the researcher. Reminders were sent to those businesses that surpassed the deadline date and for one particular business two personal visits were made as reminders.

Data Analysis

The surveys were separated by the researcher and put into two different groups. One group was the employer surveys and the other group were the employee surveys. The survey separation by group was performed because two different analyses were used for the employer subjects and the employee subjects.

The first calculations were mean scores based on the perception questions answered by the employers. The mean scores were based on the Likert Scale response format with values as follows: strongly agree = 1, agree = 2, disagree = 3 and strongly disagree = 4. A frequency distribution was completed to determine

the employers' responses to each of the 15 survey questions. Finally, a Pearson r was computed to ascertain if there was any relationship based on demographic variables and educational level on employers' perceptions of people with disabilities.

The employee subjects' data were similarly calculated. Employees' perceptions of supported employment responses to the survey were represented in mean scores. The values for the responses were the same as those previously mentioned in the employer data analysis. A Pearson r was then computed for a relationship based on demographic variables of experience and type of disability represented on employees' perceptions of people with disabilities.

Results

Thirty questionnaires were distributed to employers from the food service and hotel businesses. This included 13 from the hotel businesses and 9 from the food service businesses; however, none of the hotel businesses returned the questionnaire. Of the 9 food service businesses, only six (35%) returned the questionnaire. Of the six businesses that returned the questionnaire, eight were employers and 24 were employees.

Employer Profile

Employer profile based on demographic variables such as experience, formal special education background, and prior training (See Table 1). Of the employers who were supervising people with disabilities, 85.8% (n=6) had been doing so from one to five years and one (14.2%) respondent had zero to eight weeks experience. Fifty-seven percent (n=4) had previous experience supervising employees with disabilities at another place of employment while 42% (n=3) had no prior experience. One subject did not answer this question.

The variable regarding formal educational background in Special Education revealed none of the subjects had any formal education in that particular area.. Fifty percent, (n=4) of the subjects responded yes and 50% (n=4) responded no when asked if they had received any employment training prior to supervising employees with disabilities.

The amount of interactions the subjects had with employees with disabilities was also recorded by the survey. Once a day with employees with disabilities was represented by 57.1% (n=4) of the subjects while 42.9% responded with contact as once a month or longer. Of the four subjects that responded to once a day contact,

66.7% had one on one contact with the employee(s) with (a) disabilities. Overall means were calculated from this information (See Table 2).

Employer Perceptions

The employers responded to 15 questions on their perceptions of working with people with disabilities (See Table 3). Of the employers that had a job opening that needed to be filled 62.5% (n=5) filled it with a person with a disability because the position remained available (refer to Question 1, Part II). All eight of the respondents agreed that people with disabilities are considered objectively at the time of employment (refer to Question 2, Part II). Sixty-two percent, (n=5) reported that they disagreed with the statement that they met quota requirements by hiring a person with disabilities (refer to Question 3, Part II). Seventy-one percent reported knowledge of legislation and mandates for supported employment and related programs (refer to Question 4, Part II). Seventy-one percent also disagreed that they hired a person with disabilities to take advantage of a Tax Credit Program (refer to Question 5, Part II). All of the respondents reported that they believe people with disabilities deserve the chance to work (refer to Question 6, Part II) while 87.5% (n=7) of the employers believed that hiring a person with disabilities would not require any unnecessary accommodations or expenses (refer to Question 7, Part II). Seventy-five percent (n=6) of the employers presently have the manpower to train employees with disabilities; therefore that would not influence their decision to hire someone with a disability (refer to Question 8, Part II). People with disabilities are believed to be able to complete a job by 87.5%, (n=7) of the employers (refer to Question 9, Part II) while another 85.7% agreed that hiring people with disabilities enhanced an Equal Opportunity Employment image (refer to Question 10, Part II). Seventy-five, (n=6) percent disagreed that the reason to hire a person with a disability was to save money by paying minimum wage (refer to Question 11, Part II) and 71.4% (n=6) disagreed

that people with disabilities can perform at the same level as nondisabled employees (refer to Question 12, Part II). Fifty-one percent, (n=4) disagreed that they hired a person with disabilities to do a lower, more repetitive type of job (refer to Question 13, Part II). Seventy-five (n=6) percent disagreed with the statement that they had never hired a person with a disability so they decided to try supported employment (refer to Question 14, Part II). Finally, 100.0% of the employers reported that hiring and working with a person with disabilities is not a burden on the company nor on his/her coworkers (refer to Question 15, Part II).

Relationship Between Demographic Variables and Employer Perception

Experience An item analysis using Pearson-r was computed to determine if there was a relationship between experience and any of the questions in part II.

A significant relationship ($r = .81$, $df = 4$, $p < .05$) was found between the number of years of experience and question number 12, part II (See Table 4). Employers with a greater amount of experience, one to five years (n=6), in working with people with disabilities reported knowledge of supported employment programs and legislative mandates.

A significant relationship ($r = .81$, $df = 4$, $p < .05$) was found between experience of employer and question number 13, part II (See Table 4). People with a higher amount of experience, one to five years, were found to be more willing to hire a person with a disability to do a repetitive, lower level job.

No other significant differences were found between employers' experience and other variables such as objective consideration for a position, meeting quotas, and filling vacancies (See Table 5).

Employer Comments

In addition to the demographic survey and the perception questions, respondents were provided an opportunity to make additional comments. One employer commented on disabilities and how they affect people and another commented on the type of supported employment used in her company.

The first comment regarding disabilities was that "a person can only have a disability if you let them. You just have to find the right job and that can eliminate their having a disability at work".

The second respondent commented that they place their employees according to the ability in order to be productive and to give an opportunity for success. This respondent also commented that due to the inability to perform some tasks there was infrequent contact with customers, but this did not prevent them from contact with other employees.

Employee Profile

The employee profile was based on demographic variables such as experience, types of disabilities at their place of work, and the number of coworkers with disabilities is shown in Table 6.

The demographic information revealed that 37.5% (n=9) have four to six years experience in working with people with disabilities, with 50.0% of the subjects having prior experience in supported employment. Sixty-five percent, (n=15) reported that between 1-5 of their coworkers are disabled. Twenty-nine percent, (n = 7) reported that while they were presently employed they had only been working with a person with a disability for less than 6 months.

The respondents were asked to choose from 5 types of disabilities depicted in their workplace. Fifty percent, (n=12) had hearing impairment; 45.8%, (n=11) had

emotional disturbance; 75%, (n=18) had mental impairment; and 25%, (n=7) had physical disabilities, none of the nondisabled coworkers had visual impairments.

Employee Perceptions

Employees perceptions surveyed included acceptance, work abilities, and work styles to name a few. Employees responded to 15 questions on their perceptions of working with people with disabilities. Overall means for each question can be found in Table 7. Twenty four subjects responded to the survey.

Forty-one percent, (n=18) of the employees agreed that people with disabilities need more assistance than others (refer to Question 1, Part II) and that rote memory/repetitive type of work is best (refer to Question 2, Part II), 83.38%, (n=20). When considering acceptance of people with disabilities, 58.3%, (n=14) subjects responded that they fit in with the rest of the nondisabled employees (refer to Question 3, Part II) and 100% (n=24) considered them as part of the team (refer to Question 7, Part II). Ninety-five percent (n=23) of the employees were in agreement that people with disabilities are treated equally (refer to Question 8, Part II) and 90.9% (n=20) found them easy to work with on the job (refer to Question 12, Part II).

When the employees were asked to consider if people with disabilities were capable of doing the same work as their coworkers (refer to Question 5, Part II) 54.2%, (n=13) agreed and 54.2%, (n=13) disagreed that people with disabilities were more likely to make mistakes (refer to Question 10, Part II). Forty-nine percent, (n=12) disagreed that people with disabilities need constant supervision and reminders to keep working (refer to Question 6, Part II) while they also agreed that people with disabilities are efficient workers (refer to Question 11, Part II), 79.1%, (n=19). People without disabilities were treated by people with disabilities fairly (refer to Question 9, Part II). Ninety percent (n=20) of the employees considered their coworkers with disabilities to be productive and valuable workers (refer to Question 13, Part II) and

90% (n = 20) also agreed that they meet the same work requirements as everyone else (refer to Question 14, Part II). Seventy - seven percent, (n = 17) respondents agreed that people with disabilities take suggestions well is shown in Table 8 (refer to Question 15, Part II) .

Relationships Between Demographic Variables and Employee Perceptions

An item analysis using Pearson - r was computed to examine if there was a relationship between employees' amount of experience in working with people with disabilities and any of the questions in part II. A significant relationship ($r = .40$, $df = 22$, $p < .05$) was found between the number of years of experience and question number 13, part II (See Table 9).

No other significant differences were found between employees' experience and other variables such as people with disabilities needing more assistance, fitting in with nondisabled coworkers, and people with disabilities being able to work independently to name a few (See Table 10).

Employee Comments

Employees who responded to the open-ended questionnaire in Part I were given the opportunity to provide any additional comments. Two of the employees 8%, (n =2) completed the comments section of the survey. According to one subject people with disabilities work harder than those individuals without disabilities. Another respondent commented about ways to improve job motivation and quality of work of people with disabilities. The comment was that "companies should provide some type of job related programs that would encourage individuals [people with disabilities] and give them something to work towards on the job". Possibly implementing a job incentive program to help enhance job performance and overall productivity.

Discussion

The employers in this study appeared to have an overall positive perception of people with disabilities and supported employment. Specifically, in the questions that involved hiring a person with disabilities employers disagreed with statements indicating ulterior motives for supported employment other than for productivity. For example, question 14 stated that employment was based on filling a quota, 100% disagreed with this statement with a group mean of 3.13 indicating four respondents strongly disagreeing. Other examples were: question five, tax advantage program with 3.00 (disagree); question 11, saving money by paying minimum wage scoring 2.88 (disagree); and question 14, just a trial of supported employment scoring 3.00 (disagree).

Employer experience did appear to have an influence on the knowledge of legislative issues and mandates in supported employment programs in that subjects felt they were understanding and aware of what the law dictates. Experience also had an effect on employer perceptions in the area of the type of work people with disabilities are capable of completing. Experienced employers in supervisory positions, one to five years, consistently reported that people with disabilities do not necessarily perform better in lower level, repetitive type of jobs as stereotypes would imply. Due to the lack of participation and subject representation no correlation between education level and employer perceptions of people with disabilities can be drawn.

Employees had the same overall positive outcome on perceptions of working with people with disabilities and the quality and acceptance of these people. Employees, from their responses to the perception survey questions are accepting of people with disabilities, (100.0%) and treat them equally (95.8%).

Employee results did show that there is a relationship between the amount of experience working with people with disabilities and the perception of people with

disabilities in the workplace. Employees, in general terms, were very accepting of employees with disabilities and treating them equally. These results were able to demonstrate a sense of harmony among employees both disabled and nondisabled.

The types of disabilities were also represented in this study. The frequency distribution results demonstrated that mental impairments were the most common disability represented in supported employment. Closely following behind was emotional disturbance and hearing impairments. With these three disabilities being the most highly represented, the variety in which employer and employee perceptions are based could have been limited. Such an overall positive response to supported employment could be a direct result of the type of disability people are working with and not employing people with disabilities in general.

Limitations

The question regarding the influence of employers' educational level on their perceptions concerning people with disabilities was unable to be answered in this study. None of the participants had special education training or advanced degrees. The small number of participants is considered a limitation of the study. Such a small subject size was not conducive to gathering a variety of information in terms of educational levels of the employers as well as the number of years of experience, positive and negative experiences with supported employment programs, and additional comments that could prove valuable to the study. Due to the small number of participants generalization of the results of this study to a larger population of employers or employees is cautioned.

There were similar limitations in the employee part of the study as were in the employer part of the study. Having only 24 subjects eliminated the variety of people to survey, as well as the ability to generalize the data beyond this sample.

The list in which the subjects were chosen was provided by an individual in supported employment job placement. The limitation in this list was that all the names, addresses, and phone numbers were not current. Knowledge of this being slightly out-dated was not known until the research was well underway.

Future Suggestions and Recommendations

Supported employment implementation is fairly new in the workplace, therefore the amount of prior research is limited to review. Supported employment program implementation is growing and more research is needed to help ensure its presence in all work environments and to help ensure its success. The more research conducted on supported employment and program implementation the better the understanding we will gain in the people with disabilities and successful employment.

There are many suggestions for the future and potential research. Of the research that has been completed, it has been predominantly in the hotel and food service industries. One future suggestion would be a study that would help to define where other supported employment programs are used and people with disabilities are successfully employed.

Second, personally visiting the companies with the research instruments to distribute and collect would help to increase the level of participation and rate of return. Employers might be more willing to participate if they felt it was more worth their time or if given an incentive.

Finally, a future recommendation would be a study which would research why businesses do not use supported employment programs when it is or could be a possibility. Research is beginning to show that supported employment programs are being implemented but not at the rate possible and not in all aspects of the working community.

The information that was obtained through this study was important in knowing that the majority of people are willing to work with people with disabilities and perceive them in a positive way. Understanding how people with disabilities and without disabilities work together will assist in making more people with disabilities employable and more independent.

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Appendix A
Employer Questionnaire

Part II

Employer Survey

Page 1 of 2

Please take your time and choose the response which best represents your opinion. SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, and SD=Strongly Disagree.

	SA	A	D	SD
1. Had a job opening that needed to be filled	SA	A	D	SD
2. People with disabilities are considered objectively at time of employment	SA	A	D	SD
3. Met requirement to filling a quota by employing a person(s) with a disability	SA	A	D	SD
4. Knowledge of supported employment programs and legislative mandates (ADA, IDEA)	SA	A	D	SD
5. Desired to take advantage of Tax Credit Program incentive	SA	A	D	SD
6. Believe people with disabilities deserve the chance to work	SA	A	D	SD
7. Believe that hiring a person with a disability would require unnecessary accomodation expenses	SA	A	D	SD

CONTINUED ON BACK

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

	SA	A	D	SD
8. Presently do not have the <i>manpower</i> to train a person with a disability	SA	A	D	SD
9. Belief that a person with a disability could complete the job	SA	A	D	SD
10. Enhanced an Equal Opportunity Employment image	SA	A	D	SD
11. Believe that the company can save money by paying minimum wage to a person with a disability	SA	A	D	SD
12. Believe that people with disabilities can perform at the same level as others	SA	A	D	SD
13. Can hire a person with a disability to do more repetitive, lower level type of job	SA	A	D	SD
14. Have never hired a person with a disability so decided to try supported employment	SA	A	D	SD
15. Believe that hiring a person with a disability would be a burden on his/her co-workers	SA	A	D	SD

Appendix B

Employer Demographic Survey

Part I**Demographic Information**

Please choose the most accurate response for each question. The information that you will provide will be confidential and is only for demographic information about the participants in the study to help clarify characteristics of the sample.

Your Job Title:

Number of people you supervise

with disabilities: _____ without
disabilities: _____

1. How many years, months, weeks have you supervised people with disabilities? (please be specific)

_____ 0 - 8 weeks	_____ 1 - 3 years
_____ 8 - 12 weeks	_____ 3 - 5 years
_____ 4 - 6 months	_____ 5 +(please specify)
_____ 6 - 12 months	

2. Prior to your present place of employment, have you ever supervised people with disabilities alongside of people without disabilities? If so, please explain.

_____ Yes _____ No

3. Do you have any background formal education of people with disabilities and/or special education? If so, please explain

_____ Employment Training Program
_____ Some college level experience in Special Education
_____ Master's level experience
_____ other

If not, where you provided with any training prior of working with people with disabilities prior to your current supervisory position?

4. How often do you have contact with your employees (disabled and nondisabled) working together?

_____ once a day

- _____ once a week
- _____ once a month
- _____ other (please specify)

5. How often do you have contact, one-on-one, with your employees with disabilities?

- _____ once a day
- _____ once a week
- _____ once a month
- _____ other (please specify)

Please include any information you may feel is pertinent to this study that is not already included above.

Appendix C

Employee Questionnaire

Part II

Employee Survey

Page 1 of 2

Please take your time and answer each question with the response that best reflects your opinion. SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, D=Disagree, and SD=Strongly Disagree.

	SA	A	D	SD
1. People with disabilities need more assistance than other workers	SA	A	D	SD
2. People with disabilities work best with rote memory/repetative type work	SA	A	D	SD
3. People with disabilities appear to <i>fit in</i> with the rest of the workers	SA	A	D	SD
4. People with disabilities can work independently	SA	A	D	SD
5. People with disabilities are capable of doing the same job as their co-workers	SA	A	D	SD
6. People with disabilities need constant supervision and reminders to keep working	SA	A	D	SD
7. People with disabilities are considered <i>part of the team</i> at work	SA	A	D	SD
8. People with disabilities are treated equally at work	SA	A	D	SD
9. People with disabilities treat others equally at work	SA	A	D	SD
10. People with disabilities are more likely to make mistakes on the job	SA	A	D	SD

CONTINUED ON BACK

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

	SA	A	D	SD
11. People with disabilities are efficient workers.	SA	A	D	SD
12. People with disabilities are easy to work with	SA	A	D	SD
13. People with disabilities are productive and valued workers	SA	A	D	SD
14. People with disabilities must meet the same work requirements as everyone else	SA	A	D	SD
15. People with disabilities take work suggestions well	SA	A	D	SD

Appendix D

Employee Demographic Survey

Part I**Demographic Information**

Please choose the most accurate response. The information that you will provide will be confidential and is only for demographic information about the participants in the study to help clarify characteristics of the sample.

Your Job Title: _____

1. How many years, months, weeks, have you worked with a person with a disability?

_____	0 - 8 weeks	_____	1 year
_____	2 - 4 months	_____	1 1/2 - 3 years
_____	4 - 6 months	_____	4 - 6 years
_____	6 - 12 months	_____	other (please specify)

2. Prior to your present place of employment, have you ever worked with people with disabilities? If so, please briefly explain.

_____ Yes _____ No

3. How many of your co-workers are people with disabilities?

_____	0	_____	8 - 10 people
_____	1 - 5 people	_____	10 + (please specify)
_____	5 - 8 people		

4. What are some of the types of disabilities, that you know, that are present in your place of employment?

_____	visual impairment	_____	physical disability
_____	hearing impairment	_____	other (please specify)
_____	emotional disturbance		
_____	mental impairment		

5. How long have you been employed, by this business, and been working with a person with disabilities?

_____	less than 6 months	_____	3 - 5 years
_____	more than 6 months	_____	(please indicate if not listed)
_____	1 - 2 years		

Continued on next page

6. What is your estimated ratio of people with disabilities to people without disabilities among your immediate position?(among co-workers)

Please include any information you may feel is pertinent to this study that is not already included above.

Appendix E

Employer Cover Letter

September 1, 1996

Dear _____ :

My name is Jennifer McIntyre and I am currently in the Longwood College Graduate Program for Special Education. In working towards my graduate thesis, I am conducting a research project on supported employment and the perceptions of those who work with people with disabilities.

I am inviting _____ to participate in this study, in addition to other neighborhood businesses, to help better understand reasons for employing people with disabilities and the perceptions of their non-disabled co-workers. Your participation in this study is important to people with disabilities and their future career opportunities in the workforce. Your involvement in the study will be ***completely anonymous***.

If _____ and its' employees, decides to participate in the study, additional information will be provided and will also give you the opportunity to ask any questions or voice any concerns. Enclosed you will find a consent form for you to fill out and return within a week in the self-addressed stamped envelope. In a few days you will receive additional consent forms and surveys for you and the non-disabled co-workers to complete. The forms are brief and the survey should take no more than 5 minutes to fill out. I realize that your time is valuable and appreciate your participation. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jennifer McIntyre

Appendix F

Employer and Employee Results

Table 1

Employer Profile

Category	N	%
Employers' Experience Supervising People with Disabilities		
Experience in current job		
0 - 8 weeks	1	14.3
1 - 5 years	6	15.2
Prior Experience		
Yes	4	50.0
No	4	50.0
Formal Education in Special Education		
Employment Training	1	13.0
None	7	87.0
Provided with current job training		
Yes	4	50.0
No	4	50.0
Disabled & Nondisabled employer contact		
Once a day	5	57.1
Once a month or longer	3	42.9

Table 1

Employer Profile

Category	N	%
One on One Contact		
Once a day	6	66.7
Other	2	34.3

Table 2

Employer Means to Perception Responses

Perception Questions	Mean Scores
1. Had an opening that needed to be filled	2.38
2. People with disabilities are considered objectively at time of employment	1.88
3. Met requirement to filling a quota by employing a person with a disability	3.13
4. Knowledge of supported employment legislative mandates	2.29
5. Desired to take advantage of Tax Credit Program	3.00
6. Believe people with disabilities deserve the chance to work	1.38
7. Believe that hiring a person with a disability would require unnecessary accommodation expenses	3.25
8. Presently do not have the manpower to train a person with a disability	2.88
9. Belief that a person with a disability could complete the job	1.88
10. Enhanced an Equal Opportunity Employment image	2.14
11. Believe that the company can save money by paying minimum wage to a person with a disability	2.88

Table 2

Employer Means to Perception Responses

Perception Questions	Mean Scores
12. Believe that people with disabilities can perform at the same level as others	2.57
13. Can hire a person with a disability to do more repetitive, lower level type job	2.57
14. Have never hired a person with a disability so decided to try supported employment	3.00
15. Believe that hiring a person with a disability would be a burden on his/her coworkers	3.13
Strongly Agree = 1 Agree = 2 Disagree = 3 Strongly Disagree = 4	

Table 3

Employer Perception Responses

Employer Questions	SA & A %	SA & A n =	SD & D %	SD & D n =
1. Had a job opening that needed to be filled	62.5	5	37.5	3
2. People with disabilities are considered objectively at time of employment	100.0	8	0.0	0
3. Met requirement to filling a quota by employing a person with a disability	37.5	3	62.5	5
4. Knowledge of supported employment programs and legislative mandates	71.4	5	28.6	3
5. Desired to take advantage of Tax Credit Program incentive	28.6	2	71.5	6
6. Believe people with disabilities deserve the chance to work	100.0	8	0.0	0

Table 3

Employer Perception Responses

Employer Questions	SA & A %	SA & A n =	SD & D %	SD & D n =
7. Believe that hiring a person with a disability would require unnecessary accommodation expenses	12.5	1	87.5	7
8. Presently do not have the manpower to train a person with a disability	25.0	2	75.0	6
9. Belief that a person with a disability could complete the job	87.5	7	12.5	1
10. Enhanced an Equal Opportunity Employment image	85.7	6	14.3	2
11. Believe that the company can save money by paying minimum wage to a person with a disability	25.0	2	75.0	6
12. Believe that people with disabilities can perform at the same level as others	28.6	2	71.4	6

Table 3

Employer Perception Responses

Employer Questions	SA & A %	SA & A n =	SD & D %	SD & D n =
13. Can hire a person with a disability to do more repetitive, lower level job	42.9	3	57.1	5
14. Have never hired a person with a disability so decided to try supported employment	25.0	2	75.0	6
15. Believe that hiring a person with a disability would be a burden on his/her coworkers	0.0	0	100.0	8

Table 4

Relationship Between Demographic Variables and Employer Views

Question	df	r
4. Knowledge of supported employment programs and legislative mandates (ADA, IDEA)	4	.82*
13. Can hire a person with a disability to do more repetitive, lower level type of job	4	.95*

$p < .05$

Table 5

Part II, Employer Demographic Variables

Questions	df	r
1. Had a job opening that needed to be filled	4	.32
2. People with disabilities are considered objectively at time of employment	4	.00
3. Met requirement to filling a quota by employing a person(s) with a disability	4	.36
5. Desired to take advantage of Tax Credit Program incentive	4	.17
6. Believe people with disabilities deserve the chance to work	4	.55
7. Believe that hiring a person with a disability would require unnecessary accommodation expenses	4	.55
8. Presently do not have the manpower to train a person with a disability	4	.55
9. Belief that a person with a disability could complete the job	4	.62

Table 5

Part II, Employer Demographic Variables

Questions	df	r
10. Enhanced an Equal Opportunity Employment image	4	.32
11. Believe that the company can save money by paying minimum wage to a person with a disability	4	.57
12. Believe that people with disabilities can perform at the same level as others	4	.57
14. Have never hired a person with a disability so decided to try supported employment	4	.32
15. Believe that hiring a person with a disability would be a burden on his/her coworkers	4	.32

* p < .05

Table 6

Employee Profile

Category	n	%
Employee experiences in working with people with disabilities		
Current experience		
0 - 8 weeks	2	8.3
2 - 4 months	3	12.5
6 - 12 months	1	4.2
1 year	5	20.8
4 - 6 years	9	37.5
Other	4	16.7
Prior experience with people with disabilities		
Yes	12	50.0
No	12	50.0
Coworkers with disabilities		
5 - 8 people	15	65.2
8 - 10 people	7	34.8
Represented Disabilities		
Hearing impairment	12	50.0
Emotional Disturbance	12	50.0
Mental Impairment	18	75.0
Physical Impairment	7	29.4
Length of Employment		
Less than 6 months	8	33.0
More than 6 months	1	4.0
1 - 2 years	6	25.1

Table 6

Employee Profile

Category	n	%
3 - 5 years	4	16.6
Other	5	21.3

Table 7

Employee Means to Perception Responses

Perception Questions	Mean Scores
1. People with disabilities need more assistance than other workers	1.83
2. People with disabilities work best with rote memory/repetitive type work	1.83
3. People with disabilities appear to fit in with the rest of the workers	2.5
4. People with disabilities can work independently	2.17
5. People with disabilities are capable of doing the same job as their coworkers	2.5
6. People with disabilities need constant supervision and reminders to keep working	2.00
7. People with disabilities are considered part of the team at work	1.83
8. People with disabilities are treated equally at work	2.00
9. People with disabilities treat others equally at work	1.83
10. People with disabilities are more likely to make mistakes on the job	2.00

Table 7

Employee Means to Perception Responses

Perception Questions	Mean Scores
11. People with disabilities are efficient workers	1.83
12. People with disabilities are easy to work with	2.00
13. People with disabilities are productive and valued workers	1.83
14. People with disabilities must meet the same work requirements as everyone else	2.00
15. People with disabilities take work suggestions well	2.00

Table 8

Employee Perception Responses

Employee Questions	SA & A %	SA & A n =	SD & D %	SD & D n =
1. People with disabilities need more assistance than other workers	75.0	18	25.0	7
2. People with disabilities work best with rote memory/repetitive type work	83.3	20	16.7	4
3. People with disabilities appear to fit in with the rest of the workers	58.3	14	41.7	10
4. People with disabilities can work independently	62.5	15	37.5	9
5. People with disabilities are capable of doing the same job as their coworkers	54.2	13	45.8	11
6. People with disabilities need constant supervision and reminders to keep working	54.2	13	45.9	11
7. People with disabilities are considered part of the team at work	100.0	24	0.0	0

Table 8

Employee Perception Responses

Employee Questions	SA & A %	SA & A n =	SD & D %	SD & D n =
8. People with disabilities are treated equally at work	95.8	23	4.2	1
9. People with disabilities treat others equally at work	100.0	24	0.0	0
10. People with disabilities are more likely to make mistakes on the job	45.8	11	54.2	13
11. People with disabilities are efficient workers	79.1	19	20.8	5
12. People with disabilities are easy to work with	90.9	20	9.1	4
13. People with disabilities are productive valued workers	90.9	20	9.1	4
14. People with disabilities must meet the same requirements as everyone else.	90.9	20	9.1	4
15. People with disabilities take work suggestions well	77.2	17	22.7	7

Table 9

Relationship Between Demographic Variables and Employer Views

Question	df	r
12. People with disabilities are easy to work with	22	.40*

p < .05

Table 10

Part II, Employee Demographic Variables

Question	df	r
1. People with disabilities need more assistance than other workers	22	.46
2. People with disabilities work best with rote memory/repetitive type work	22	.14
3. People with disabilities appear to fit in with the rest of the workers	22	.09
4. People with disabilities can work independently	22	.35
5. People with disabilities are capable of doing the same job as their coworkers	22	.36
6. People with disabilities need constant supervision and reminders to keep working	22	.17

Table 10

Part II, Employee Demographic Variables

Question	df	r
7. People with disabilities are considered part of the team at work	22	.05
8. People with disabilities are treated equally at work	22	.21
9. People with disabilities treat others equally at work	22	.15
10. People with disabilities are more likely to make mistakes on the job	22	.20
11. People with disabilities are efficient workers	22	.26
13. People with disabilities are productive and valued workers	22	.05