

Why Employers Discriminate Against Applicants with Disabilities

by

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Abstract

Discrimination against people with disabilities persists despite legal protections from the ADA. Existing research cites negative perceptions, concerns about awkward interactions, and worries about firing employees with disabilities as some of employer's top concerns. Many of these studies encompass the definition of a disability to that of both a mental disability and a physical disability. This paper, however, constrains its definition of a disability to that of only a physical disability and specifically examines *why* discrimination persists against applicants with physical disabilities. We hypothesize that employers view applicants with a disability as financial burdens to their firms due to increased costs of training or hiring and therefore discriminate against them. We test this hypothesis through experimental studies. Study 1 reveals that participants actually view the applicant with a disability as more favorable than the applicant without a disability. Nevertheless, Study 2 suggests that participants who answer that they are more likely to hire the applicant with a disability do so as a result of higher social desirability motives. Lastly, Study 3 combines the results from Study 1 and Study 2. The findings from Study 3 show that participants are marginally more likely to hire the applicant with a disability but are also more comfortable in firing them when given an excuse. This supports our argument of social desirability: people say that they are more willing to hire disabled applicants because they feel this is the right thing to say. In reality, however, they are likely continuing to discriminate.

Introduction

People with disabilities have been discriminated against in the workplace for centuries. Various disability groups can be seen dated back to the 1800s (Meldon, 2017). However, it wasn't until the 1900s that major reforms took place. Fortunately, working conditions have improved due to the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (LP Weicker Jr, 1991) and the subsequent ADA Amendments Act in 2008 (Long, 2008). Despite this, the United States Department of Labor reports that a large discrepancy still exists between people with disabilities and those without a disability. In 2017, for example, only 18.7 percent of persons with a disability were employed compared to a 65.9 percent employment-population ratio for persons without a disability (BLS, 2019). This ratio most recently increased to 19.1 percent for persons with a disability in 2018 while the ratio for the employment of persons without a disability stayed at 65.9 percent (BLS, 2019).

Why Employment for People with Disability Matters

The employment of people with disabilities matters because it affects their economic, social, and political outcomes. From an economic standpoint, studies have shown that while people with disabilities, on average, make lower earnings, their employment is estimated to raise household income levels by 49 percent compared to 13 percent for people without disabilities. This, in turn, lowers their probability of avoiding poverty by 20 percentage points compared to 17 points for those without a disability (Schur, 2002). In terms of a social standpoint, people with disabilities are a lot less likely to socialize with friends, relatives, or neighbors. They are also less likely to go to restaurants or partake in recreational and other group activities (Taylor, Krane,

Orkis, 2010). Most workplaces and jobs, however, mandate interactions between co-workers. This then helps reduce social isolation and instead builds social capital (Putnam 2000). From a political standpoint, several studies have shown that people with disabilities continue to be sidelined when it comes to political participation. However, studies also show that employment increases civic skills and adds exposure to political recruitment which can increase the probability of political participation (Schlozman, Verba, Brady, 1999). Had the disability gap been fully closed, research also suggests that there would have been 3.0 million more voters in 2008 and 3.2 million more voters in 2010, potentially affecting several public outcomes and legislation (Schur, Adya, 2012).

Psychology and Forms of Discrimination

Social psychologists define discrimination as the phenomenon of treating a person (or a group of persons) in an unjustifiable negative behavior, action or judgment based on certain characteristics of that person (Ramiah, Hewstone, Dovidio, Penner, 2010). These characteristics can be anything such as race, gender, religion, sexuality, class, or in our case disability. Interestingly, psychologists have found that perpetrators discriminate against category members simply because they belong to that category group, not because they particularly deserve it. This notion of deservingness, however, is not objectively defined. Nevertheless, perpetrators justify discrimination through this idea of deservingness while others, including the victims, may not necessarily agree (Ramiah, Hewstone, Dovidio, Penner, 2010).

Discrimination also occurs either implicitly or explicitly. Implicit discrimination happens when the perpetrator discriminates unconsciously and does not control for the act of discriminating (Bertrand, Chugh, Mullainathan, 2005). Explicit discrimination, on the other

hand, occurs when the perpetrator is consciously aware of harboring stereotypes. Explicit discrimination may be expressed in a variety of ways. One form of explicit discrimination can be either verbal or non-verbal (Darley, Fazio, 1980) through facial expressions or by avoiding eye contact (Cuddy, Fiske, 2007). Explicit discrimination may also be manifested by simply refusing equal access to opportunities (Sidanius, Pratto, 1999). Researching *why* such discrimination continually happens to applicants with physical disabilities is our main topic of interest.

Why Might Discrimination Against those with Disabilities Persist?

Literature reviews cite various reasons for why employers continue to discriminate against the disabled. A common concern across many studies is simply fear and negative expectations from employers. More specifically, employers worry that firing a person with a disability would be difficult to do once hired (Hernandez, Keys, Balcazar, 2000; Loprest, Maag, 2001). Furthermore, studies have shown concerns regarding the possibility that people with disabilities may not have the required skills to competently perform on the job (Houtenville, Kalargyrou, 2011).

Another reason commonly cited for this continued discrimination is a perceived increase in costs of training and or hiring (Siperstein, Romano, Mohler, Parker, 2006). Since the adaption of the ADA, businesses that serve the public need to provide accessibility within its building, alter its facilities, and remove any barriers to make their facility readily available for people with disabilities. Furthermore, businesses need to provide any types of auxiliary aids and services to ensure proper communication for those who have hearing, vision, or speech impairments (ADA, 2019). Businesses that do not serve the public, too, have to comply with accessible design standards when constructing or altering facilities (ADA, 2019). Consequently, these

requirements can be perceived as costly for employers, especially for small to medium-sized firms.

Current Research

We test the hypothesis that employers are less willing to hire applicants with disabilities than applicants without a disability due to a perceived increase in the cost of training and or hiring. However, many of these studies encompass the definition of a disability to that of both a physical and mental disability. Thus, this paper will specifically focus on only physical disabilities and test to see if the findings from previous studies still hold true under this constraint.

More specifically, we hypothesize that the employer will view the applicant with a disability as a financial burden to the firm and thus will be unwilling to offer the job. If for example, the disabled applicant is incapable of walking and requires a wheelchair, then the applicant will most likely need physical accommodations in the workplace. Consequently, the cost of accommodations and training will increase. On the other hand, if the applicant does not have a disability, we hypothesize that the employer will view the applicant without bias and therefore be more willing to offer the job.

We tested this hypothesis in two experiments. First, we tested for differences in participants' responses in a survey. The survey began by showing two resumes -- one resume with a disability and one resume without a disability -- and these surveys were randomly distributed to participants who then answered questions regarding their opinions on the applicant. The second study replicated the first study's design and questions, but this time, we considered the possibility of potential biases in the participant's response. Hence, Study 2 screened and

tested for three possible mechanisms (sympathy, shifting standards, and social desirability) by using existing scales from prior literature reviews. In this way, we tested to see if the increased cost in training and or hiring is an authentic reason behind why employers continue to discriminate and further validated the participants' response by screening for potential biases in their answers.

Study 1

Study 1 aims to test for statistical differences among participants' response. The independent variable is the Disability and Non-Disability condition. The dependent variable is the participants' response. We expect participants to prefer the candidate in the Non-disability condition and generally give more favorable responses in the survey than the participants in the disability condition.

Methods

Participants. Adult volunteers were surveyed and pooled through Amazon Mechanical Turk. All participants were paid \$0.75 for their contribution. A total of 220 responses were recorded. Certain responses, however, were invalid due to the use of bots, duplicate responses, and so forth. Hence, the statistical program R was used to clean the data. The final number of participants was 46. The demographic characteristics of the sample are represented in Table 1.

Table 1
Participant demographic characteristics

	TOTAL N=46
Age	
18-34	67%
35-49	20%
50-64	11%
65+	2%
Ethnicity	
White	76%
Black	9%
Other	15%
Employment Status	
Full time	76%
Part time	9%
Other	15%
Gender	
Male	63%
Female	35%
Unknown	2%

Procedure. Two resumes were drafted for the study. The resumes were exactly identical except for one condition. In the “leadership and extracurricular” section of the resume, one of the resumes indicated that the candidate had a disability while the second resume did not (Appendix A and B). Participants were randomly assigned to either the disability resume or non-disability resume (disability $n=24$, non-disability $n=22$).

All participants were instructed to carefully review the resume and then asked to imagine that the applicant is applying to their firm as they answered the survey. After completing the

survey, participants were asked questions regarding attention checks. The study ended with their demographic information.

Results

T-tests were performed to determine whether a statistical difference existed between the responses of the two groups. First, we found that participants in the disability condition ($M=5.62$) were more likely to hire the candidate than those in the non-disability condition ($M=4.77$), $t(44)=2.12$, $p=0.039$, 95% CI [0.04, 1.66]. Participants in the disability condition also believed that the candidates would better live up to their standard of performance on the job ($M=4.25$) than the candidates without a disability ($M=3.77$), $t(44)=2.37$, $p=0.021$, 95% CI [0.07, 0.88]. Further, we found that participants viewed elements of the disability candidate resume ($M=2.54$) marginally more favorably compared to the candidate without a disability ($M=2.30$), $t(44)=1.56$, $p=0.124$, 95% CI [-0.06, 0.54].

Second, participants also believed that the candidate *without* a disability would require more training and assistance ($M=3.00$) than the candidate with a disability ($M=2.37$), $t(44)=-2.177$, $p=0.034$, CI [-1.20, -0.04]. Similarly, participants believed that the candidate without the disability would be marginally *more* time consuming to train ($M=2.68$) than the candidate with a disability ($M=2.166$), $t(44)=-1.51$, $p=0.136$, 95% CI [-1.19, 0.16].

However, we found no differences in how much participants believed it would cost to train the candidate with a disability ($M=24.75$) versus the candidate without a disability ($M=21.95$), $t(44)=0.41$, $p=0.678$, 95% CI [-10.69, 16.28]. We also found no differences in expected fit with their company's culture (disability $M=5.70$; non-disability $M=5.36$), $t(44)=1.22$, $p=0.227$, 95% CI [-0.22, 0.91], nor how much the firm would need to change in its

culture if the applicant was hired (disability $M=1.53$; non-disability $M=1.39$), $t(44)=0.71$, $p=0.479$, 95% CI [-0.26, 0.54]. Finally, we found no differences in participants comfort firing the candidate if they did not work out, (disability $M=3.54$; non-disability $M=2.95$), $t(44)=1.08$, $p=0.282$, 95% CI [-0.49, 1.67].

Discussion

Study 1 showed that on average, participants favored the disability candidate more than the non-disability candidate. This goes against the hypothesis that participants would discriminate against an applicant with a disability. Further, we also find that the applicant with the disability was perceived to be marginally *less* time-consuming to train, which again goes against our hypothesis.

Consequently, we theorized that these unexpected results may have been due to sympathy towards the disability candidate, shifting standards, and or social desirability. Thus, Study 2 tests for these three different mechanisms to see if any of these factors have influenced participants' response.

Study 2

The first part of Study 2 replicated Study 1's design. The same resumes and surveys were randomly distributed to participants. However, study 2 specifically aimed to validate the participants' response by testing for the three different mechanisms discussed above.

The first mechanism that we tested for is sympathy. We hypothesized that participants may have felt sympathetic towards the applicant with the disability and thus looked more favorably upon this candidate than did the participants who reviewed the applicant without a disability. To test for sympathy, participants in both groups were asked to what extent they felt

sympathetic, compassionate, tender, and soft-hearted towards the applicant (Batson, Fultz, Schoenrade, 1987) on a 7 point scale (1= not at all, 7 = extremely).

The second mechanism that we tested for is shifting standards. Shifting standard occurs when people's judgments shift depending on relative comparisons (Biernat, Manis, 1994). For instance, if a student from an affluent background with resources and access to private tutors scores a 1500/1600 on his SAT's, then people might view this outcome as decent or even expected. However, if a student from a very poor background with no resources and no access to private tutor scores a 1200/1600 on his SAT 's, then people may shift their standards and view this outcome as exceptionally well-done. To test for this mechanism, we asked participants what GPA (out of 4.0) would normally be expected to qualify for a position at their firm. In addition, we asked participants how many years of work experience (0 to 5 years) would normally be needed to qualify for a position at their firm.

The third mechanism that we tested for is social desirability. Social desirability occurs when participants in a survey answer questions in a way that is viewed as favorable or socially right. We tested this mechanism by using a social desirability scale pulled from a prior literature review (Hays, Hayashi, Stewart, 1989). Social desirability was measured on a 5 point scale (1 = definitely false, 5= definitely true).

In addition to these three mechanisms, we measured how "warm and competent" the participants viewed their respective applicants by using a warmth and competence scale (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, Xu). We incorporated this scale (out of 5; 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) because social psychologists posit that all groups of stereotypes form along these two dimensions --warmth and competence. Hence, this scale was used to perceive how the participants viewed

the applicants and to test whether a statistical difference existed among the two groups (disability condition and non-disability condition). Lastly, we incorporated a stereotype endorsement scale (Li, Moore, 1998) to measure how much the participants believed in stereotypes about the disabled. Participants were asked four questions in regards to their stereotype endorsements of people with disabilities on a 7 point scale as well. These two scales were used to ultimately determine how much stereotypes people have against disabled people.

All these mechanisms used to screen the participants' responses is important in verifying our hypothesis. Since respondents may answer the survey differently from what they truly believe or think, the questions and scales we have in place will help screen for that. Furthermore, this procedure will test for any significant difference among participants' views and or stereotypes regarding people with disabilities.

Methods

Participants. Adult volunteers were again surveyed and pooled through Amazon Mechanical Turk. All participants were paid \$0.75 for their contribution. A total of 196 responses were recorded. The data was similarly cleaned out using R for invalid responses. The final number of participants was 46. The demographic characteristics of the sample are represented in Table 2.

Table 2
Participant demographic characteristics

	TOTAL N=46
Age	
18-34	74%
35-49	22%
50-64	4%
65+	0%
Ethnicity	
White	50%
Black	15%
Other	35%
Employment Status	
Full time	70%
Part time	9%
Other	41%
Gender	
Male	61%
Female	35%
Unknown	4%

Procedure. Participants were given the same survey and questions as participants in Study 1. However, participants in study 2 were additionally tested for shifting standards, sympathy, and social desirability. Participants were randomly assigned to either the disability resume or non-disability resume (disability $n=27$, non-disability $n=19$).

All participants were instructed to carefully review the resume and then asked to imagine that the applicant is applying to their firm as they answered the survey. After completing the

survey, participants were asked questions regarding attention checks and ended with their demographic information.

Results

Replication. T-tests were performed to determine whether a statistical difference existed between the responses of the disability and non-disability groups. No difference was found between participants in the disability group ($M=6.03$) and participants in the non-disability group ($M=5.84$) for willingness to hire the candidate, $t(44)=0.85$, $p=0.397$, 95% CI [-0.26, 0.65]. Participants in the disability condition ($M=4.18$) and participants in the non-disability condition ($M=4.10$) also showed no difference as to whether which candidate would better live up to their standard of performance on the job, $t(44)=0.47$, $p=0.636$, 95% CI [-0.25, 0.41]. Likewise, there was no difference in the participant's preference over which elements of the applicant's resume they favored more (disability $M=2.71$; non-disability $M=2.76$), $t(44)=-0.33$, $p=0.741$, 95% CI [-0.35, 0.25].

In addition, participants in the second study also showed no difference in the amount of training and assistance the applicants would need (disability $M=3.14$; non-disability $M=3.10$), $t(44)=0.14$, $p=0.883$, 95% CI [-0.54, 0.62]. Furthermore, participants responded that no difference existed in the amount of time it would take to train the applicants (disability $M=2.85$; non-disability $M=2.89$), $t(44)=-0.12$, $p=0.903$, 95% CI [-0.75, 0.66].

Moreover, we found no differences in how much participants believed it would cost to train the candidate with a disability ($M=38.18$) compared to the applicant without a disability ($M=28.31$), $t(44)=1.18$, $p=0.240$, 95% CI [-6.86, 26.6]. We also found that there are no differences in cultural fit for applicants with a disability ($M=5.96$) than the candidate without a

disability ($M=5.89$), $t(44)=0.30$, $p=0.762$, 95% CI [-0.38, 0.52]. Similarly, there was no differences in a need for the firm to change its culture if the applicant was hired (disability $M=2.20$; non-disability $M=2.00$), $t(44)=0.68$, $p=0.494$, 95% CI [-0.39, 0.80]. Lastly, we found that participants were more comfortable firing the candidate if they did not work out, (disability $M=5.51$; non-disability $M=4.63$), $t(44)=2.08$, $p=0.043$, 95% CI [0.02, 1.74].

Alternate Mechanisms. In the second study, we found no differences in terms of sympathy (disability $M=4.59$; non-disability $M=4.22$), $t(44)=0.74$, $p=0.462$, 95% CI [-0.63, 1.37]. Participants in the disability group responded that they expected a higher GPA for candidates to qualify at their firms ($M=3.21$) than the non-disability groups ($M=3.00$) but no differences were found $t(44)=1.25$, $p=0.215$, 95% CI [-0.12, 0.54]. Similarly, no differences were found in the amount of years participants believed the applicant would need to qualify for the position (disability $M=2.59$; non-disability $M=2.63$), $t(44)=-0.11$, $p=0.912$, 95% CI [-0.74, 0.67]. There was also no difference in the stereotype endorsement scales (disability $M=5.30$; non-disability $M=5.11$), $t(44)=0.48$, $p=0.631$, 95% CI [-0.59, 0.96] nor the warmth and competence scale (disability $M=4.26$; non-disability $M=4.12$), $t(44)=1.00$, $p=0.319$, 95% CI [-0.13, 0.41].

However, there was a significant difference in the social desirability scales (disability $M=3.155$; non-disability $M=2.64$), $t(44)=2.031$, $p=0.048$, 95% CI [0.00, 1.02].

Discussion

Overall, we found no significant differences in willingness to hire the disabled versus non-disabled candidate. However, descriptively, the patterns followed what we found in Study 1: participants favored the disability candidate. More specifically, there were only two

discrepancies in the mean values between the two studies. In Study 1, participants answered that they favored the disability candidate for *all* the elements measured in the resume, while participants in Study 2 favored the disability candidate for six out of the eight elements measured (language skills and similar interests).

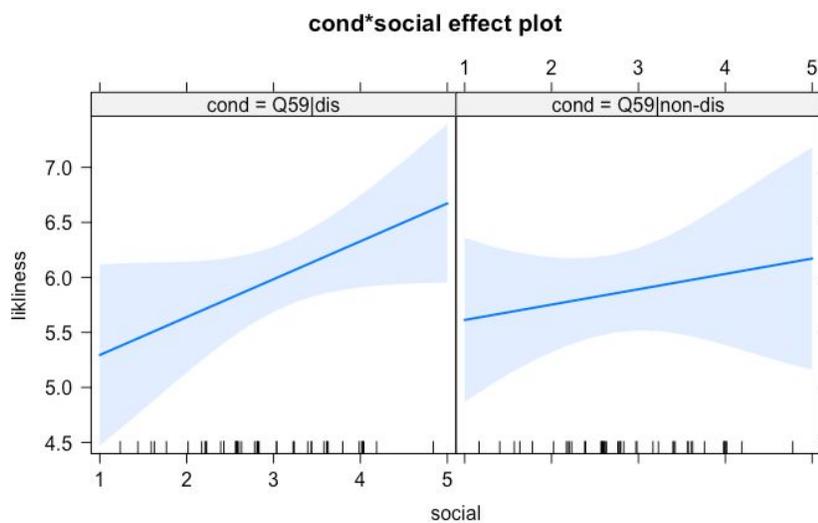
Furthermore, the question regarding how comfortable participants would be in firing the applicant was the only dependent variable that had a significant difference. This is interesting because despite favoring the disability candidate on some elements, participants responded that they'd be more comfortable with firing them. Nevertheless, the overall results again go against the hypothesis that participants would discriminate against the applicant with a physical disability.

For our costly to train hypothesis, Study 2 suggests mixed results. Participants in Study 1 answered that they believe the non-disability candidate would require more training and assistance to competently perform on the job, while participants in Study 2 showed no differences. Combined, this suggests cost may not be a factor.

Lastly, there was no significant difference between sympathy and shifting standards, but there was a significant difference in social desirability. A higher score on the social desirability test indicates that people care more about how they are perceived in the public and in the case of our study, participants in the disability condition scored higher on the social desirability test than participants in the non-disability condition. This result suggests that participants in the disability condition of Study 2 responded in ways that are viewed as favorable or socially right. Moreover, participants in Study 2 answered that they were more comfortable firing the disabled applicant. This result augments our social desirability argument because it shows that as soon as the

participant was given an excuse to fire the applicant, participants in the disability condition answered that they would be more comfortable in doing so.

Nevertheless, participants in Study 2 showed no difference in their likeliness to hire the applicants while participants in the disability condition of Study 1 responded that they were more likely to hire. Regardless, we ran a linear regression between the two dependent variables “social desirability” and “likeliness to hire.” The graph below shows the correlation that the more the participant cared about what people in public thought about them, the more likely they were to say that they liked the disabled applicant. However, the difference in the strength of the two correlations is not significantly different but this most likely because we did not have a big enough sample in our study. Thus, in conclusion, we reject the idea that cost is a factor but it seems that social desirability does matter when it comes to discriminating applicants with physical disabilities.



```

Call:
lm(formula = likliness ~ cond * social, data = mydata)

Residuals:
    Min       1Q   Median       3Q      Max
-1.91456 -0.32793  0.08275  0.29632  1.24748

Coefficients:
              Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)    5.2117     0.4002  13.023 2.43e-16 ***
cond_lin      -0.2617     0.4002  -0.654  0.517
social         0.2420     0.1335   1.813  0.077 .
cond_lin:social 0.1025     0.1335   0.768  0.447
---
Signif. codes:  0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 0.7422 on 42 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared:  0.1071,    Adjusted R-squared:  0.0433
F-statistic: 1.679 on 3 and 42 DF,  p-value: 0.1861

```

Study 3

Because the sample sizes were small in the previous studies, Study 3 combined all the responses from Study 1 and Study 2 and tested to see if any significant difference existed between the responses in a larger sample. Study 3 did not test for sympathy, social desirability, and shifting standards because those responses were tested in only Study 2. Similarly, results from the stereotype endorsement scales and warmth and competence were not tested for either.

Methods

Participants. Adult volunteers who participated in Study 1 and Study 2 were compiled into a larger sample. A total of 416 responses were recorded and the data was again cleaned using R. The final number of participants was 93. The demographic characteristics of the sample are represented in Table 3.

Table 3
Participant demographic characteristics

	TOTAL N=93
Age	
18-34	70%
35-49	22%
50-64	8%
65+	1%
Ethnicity	
White	60%
Black	13%
Other	27%
Employment Status	
Full time	74%
Part time	9%
Other	17%
Gender	
Male	63%
Female	33%
Unknown	3%

Procedure. The same procedures for Study 1 and Study 2 were followed. The resumes were identical and the questions that were asked on only *both* tests were analyzed. Hence, the different mechanisms tested for in Study 2 were excluded.

Results

T-tests were performed to test for a difference between the participants' response. Participants in the disability condition ($M=5.80$) responded that they were marginally more likely to hire the candidate than participants in the non-disability condition ($M=5.34$), $t(91)=1.83$,

$p=0.070$, 95% CI [-0.03, 0.94]. However, there was no difference between the participants' preference regarding the elements of the candidates (disability $M= 2.62$; non-disability $M=2.51$), $t(91)=1.04$, $p=0.297$, 95% CI [-0.10, 0.33]. Interestingly, participants in the disability condition answered that they believed the disability candidate would marginally live up to their standards more than the applicant without a disability (disability $M=4.18$; non-disability $M=3.93$), $t(91)=1.85$, $p=0.066$, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.51].

There was no difference in regards to the amount of training and assistance it would require the candidates to competently perform on the job (disability $M=2.80$; non-disability $M=3.04$), $t(91)=-1.19$, $p=0.236$, 95% CI [-0.65, 0.16]. Similarly, there was no difference in the amount of time it would take to train the applicants (disability $M=2.56$; non-disability $M=2.76$), $t(91)=-0.84$, $p=0.402$, 95% CI [-0.69, 0.28] nor the amount of budget that would need to be allocated for training (disability $M=31.86$; non-disability $M=25.27$), $t(91)=1.22$, $p=0.222$, 95% CI [-4.05, 17.21]. There was also no difference for how much it would cost to train either applicants (disability $M=1.82$; non-disability $M=1.81$), $t(91)=0.04$, $p=0.962$, 95% CI [-0.24, 0.25].

We also found no differences in expected fit with their company's culture (disability $M=5.80$; non-disability $M=5.65$), $t(91)=0.81$, $p=0.415$, 95% CI [-0.21, 0.51], nor how much the firm would need to change its culture if the applicant was hired (disability $M=1.89$; non-disability $M=1.67$), $t(91)=1.12$, $p=0.262$, 95% CI [-0.16, 0.58]. However, we found that participants in the disability group were more comfortable with firing the candidate than participants in the non-disability group (disability $M=4.60$; non-disability $M=3.72$), $t(91)=2.28$, $p=0.024$, 95% CI [0.11, 1.64].

Discussion

The compiled results from Study 3 were mostly similar to the results from Study 1 and Study 2. More specifically, Study 3 demonstrated that in a larger sample, participants in the disability condition were marginally more likely to hire the applicant, but simultaneously were significantly more comfortable in firing the applicant. This again suggests evidence for social desirability: participants know the “right answer” for hiring, but when given an excuse, participants reveal that they are also more comfortable in firing the applicant with the physical disability.

General Discussion

The purpose of our experiment was to gain insight as to why people continue to discriminate against applicants with physical disabilities despite legal protections from the ADA. We hypothesized that increased costs of training and or hiring would deter employers from hiring as they would view the applicant as a financial burden to their firms. However, in Study 1, participants on average *avored* the disability candidate more than the non-disability candidate. Furthermore, there was no significant difference as to the costs of training. However, we were limited by a small sample size; hence, in Study 3, we aggregated the responses from Study 1 and 2. We again found that participants on average favored the disability candidate, and there was no significant difference as to the increased costs for hiring and or training.

Theoretical Implications

The causes driving discrimination, including different types of discrimination, deserve continued investigation. For instance, in Studies 1 and 2, we do *not* find evidence that perceived cost drives disability discrimination. Further, in Study 2, we tested three additional mechanisms:

Sympathy, Shifting Standards, and Social Desirability. Interestingly, we found in Study 2 that Sympathy and Shifting Standards had no significant difference, but that Social Desirability was definitely at play. The regression between Social Desirability and the Likelihood to Hire showed that people who had higher social desirability answered that they were more likely to hire the applicant. Nevertheless, the difference in the strength of the two correlations between the disability and non-disability participants was not significantly different, but this was most likely due to the small sample size.

Future work should consider the role of different mechanisms. For instance, shifting standards have been known to drive forms of gender and racial discrimination. People would use different evaluative standards with the stereotype that men are more competent than women, women are more verbally able than men, whites are more verbally able than blacks, and blacks are more athletic than whites (Biernat, Manis, 1994). Nevertheless, this phenomenon does not seem to apply to disability discrimination. Likewise, feelings of sympathy do not seem to affect disability discrimination either.

Interestingly, our results go against the literature reviews that suggest increased costs as a major concern among employers for not hiring people with disabilities. For further accurate testing, future studies should consider doing analyses by industry. For instance, participants who work in the retail industry can be surveyed and their results can be compared to those who work in other industries such as information technology or finance. Doing so will provide a better understanding if cost is an industry-specific issue, or if costs no longer matter at all.

Practical Implications

As our study shows, we should neither look to target costs or shifting standards when trying to prevent disability discrimination. Instead, we should look to fix the stereotypes and stigma surrounding people with disabilities. Interestingly, though various disability groups have existed since the 1800s, people with disabilities -- or the topic of disability for that matter -- has never received much attention. This is fascinating given that one in four adults in the U.S live with a disability (CDC, 2018). Of course, the degree of disability and the type of disability will widely vary. As a result, some people may have an invisible disability that does not affect their daily lives so they may prefer to not be as vocal about it. Other people may have apparent physical disabilities that impact their everyday lives and thus choose to be more outspoken. Whatever the case, people with disabilities should not be discriminated against just as people should not be discriminated against their race, gender, religion, class, etc.

Thus, to prevent further discrimination, we should aim to demystify the stereotypes around people with disabilities by helping employers better understand the facts and benefits of hiring people with disabilities. For instance, employers often worry that hiring people with disabilities will negatively impact the image of their firm. However, studies show that consumers positively view businesses that hire individuals with disabilities and even report having positive interactions with people with disabilities in a work environment (Siperstein, Romano, Mohler, Parker, 2006). Moreover, research has shown that people with disabilities exhibit lower turnover, strong loyalty, punctuality, and dependability once hired (Lindsay, Cagliostro, Albarico, Mortaji, Karon, 2018). Such findings should be made better known to employers across the country and in doing so, endeavor to fix the stigma surrounding people with disabilities.

Limitations

One limitation of our study is the online survey component. Collecting responses online can result in lower accuracy than traditional studies. For instance, there were several participants who skipped questions or never completed the survey. Likewise, though we collected a total of 416 responses, the final number of responses that we actually used in our analysis was 93. This was because we cleaned out for bots, duplicate responses, duplicate IP's, and so forth. The resulting small sample size was another limitation of our study.

In addition, the fact that our participants were not all employers posed another challenge. The findings from our results could have been more telling had all our participants been employers in the HR department of their respective firms. Nevertheless, this was not the case as we had participants who were students, homemakers, and part-time workers.

Conclusion

Overall, our findings suggest that cost is not a factor for continued disability discrimination, but our results from Study 2 suggest that social desirability does matter. Therefore, future studies should endeavor to research ways to fix the stigma and stereotypes surrounding people with disabilities so that social desirability ultimately becomes irrelevant. Furthermore, endeavors should be made so that employers have a better understanding of the common misconceptions of employing people with disabilities. Likewise, efforts should be made to help employers realize the true benefits of hiring people with disabilities. In doing so, I truly hope to prevent further discrimination against people with disabilities going forward.

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Appendices

A: Resume With Disability Condition



EDUCATION

University of California, Berkeley
Bachelor of Arts in Economics
 Cumulative GPA: 3.67/4.0

Berkeley, CA
May 2017

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Wells Fargo

Summer Analyst

San Francisco, CA

May 2016 - August 2016

- Identified a client company's strength and weaknesses with 4 interns to accurately assess the client's potential to service debt
- Conducted a presentation about the client company's key risk factors, reputation, and financial standing to senior managers
- Participated in team meetings to better understand the client's needs and scheduled timelines for deliverable deadlines
- Engaged in training sessions, webinars, and networking events to enhance professional network within Wells Fargo

Campus Ambassador

Ambassador

Berkeley, CA

January 2014 - October 2015

- Selected by university to lead campus tours to visiting students and parents and introduced them to our curriculum
- Provided information to prospective families about the school's overall program and further answered all questions
- Received training on all of the university's facilities, dorms, buildings, and major departments to become an ambassador
- Improved personal leadership by learning the necessary skills to interact with new people on a weekly basis

Sweetgreen

Service Team Member

Los Angeles, CA

May 2013 - August 2013

- Assisted in handling store merchandise, maintained store cleanliness, and reported to manager for necessary store needs
- Coordinated with manager on administrative tasks such as scheduling and employee training to improve store functions
- Helped new employees with trainings by familiarizing them with the store's policies, routines, and other basic operations
- Nurtured organizational skills and teamwork by collectively working together to ensure greater customer satisfaction

LEADERSHIP & EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Special Olympics

Member

Berkeley, CA

January 2015 - Present

- Participate in weekly Special Olympics event such as Bowling and Basketball as a member with a physical disability
- Work closely with volunteers to exercise and engage in activities with other members with various disabilities
- Strengthen relationship with disability community and increase teamwork skills through sports related activities

UC Jazz Ensemble

Percussionist

Berkeley, CA

September 2016 - Present

- Performed 6 jazz concerts on campus as a percussionist playing classical pieces like "Fly Me to the Moon"
- Held weekly ensemble meetings with 5 other musicians and assisted in arranging and composing pieces for concerts
- Collaborated with team members and faculty to recruit new students and supervised the auditioning process

YMCA

Summer Cabin and Program Counselor

San Francisco, CA

June 2015 - August 2015

- Supervised activities such as camping, hiking and archery for participants while ensuring a safe and fun environment
- Learned how to settle conflict amongst participants and enhanced teamwork skills by working with other counselors
- Attended mandatory comprehensive child safety training programs and was held to high standards of camp policies

Neighborhood Youth Association (NYA)

Youth Leadership Academy

Venice, CA

September 2011 - May 2012

- Supported elementary and middle school students by tutoring them on elective classes such as math and science
- Worked alongside NYA staff to help these students prepare for high-school level classes, activities, and extracurriculars
- Developed communication and leadership skills by listening to the needs of the student and tended to them accordingly

SKILLS & INTERESTS

Computer: Microsoft Suite (Excel, Powerpoint, Word), Tableau, R, Bloomberg Terminal, Capital IQ, Adobe Suite

Languages: Fluent in English and basic working proficiency in Spanish

Interests: L.A. Dodgers, Karaoke, *Friends*, Thai Food, Street Fashion, Traveling, and Reading (Fiction & Thrillers)

B: Part of Resume Without Disability Condition

LEADERSHIP & EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Pi Sigma Epsilon

Berkeley, CA

Member

January 2015 - Present

- Participated in professional, social, and community service events to complete candidate focused initiation process
- Worked closely with senior mentors to practice interviewing and prepared for recruiting and networking events
- Strengthened professional network with members and alumni while gaining exposure to diverse business industries