IMPACT OF PHYSICAL DISABILITY AND DRESS ON PERCEPTIONS OF FEMALE JOB APPLICANTS

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This work is dedicated to my family and friends
with my sincere thanks for their
patience, love and support.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In many situations, particularly that of a job interview, information available to a perceiver about an observed person is limited. As a result, first impressions are likely to be made largely on the basis of nonverbal cues. Research reported in the personnel literature indicates that interviewers rely primarily on nonverbal cues, particularly physical appearance, to make their selection decisions (Hatfield and Gatewood, 1978).

However, this emphasis on physical appearance places individuals with physical disabilities at a relative disadvantage during a job interview. These individuals are often perceived as different in appearance from societal norms. This difference may lead to strained interaction, the formation of negative attitudes, and job discrimination.

Dress, on the other hand, represents a particularly salient source of positive information about an applicant. Popular books, magazines, and newspapers have all presented information on the importance of dress in job acquisition. Research has also suggested that dress functions to improve the professional image of able-bodied women during a job interview (Dillon, 1980; Forsythe, Drake, and Cox, 1984; Rucker, Taber, and Harrison, 1981; Workman, 1984-85). Rucker, Taber, and Harrison (1981, 63) observed that "while people typically fail to recognize specific dress cues as determinants of their impressions",

dress is still a critical factor in the job interview situation. Little research has been conducted to determine if dress functions in the same manner for female job applicants when a visible, physical disability is present.

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to examine the impact of a physical disability and dress on perceivers' impressions of female job applicants in a simulated job interview. Respondents included a group a employers, a group of rehabilitation personnel, and a group of university students with physical disabilities. The theoretical research question for this study was to determine if dress, appropriate for a job interview, was capable of providing positive appearance cues sufficient to override the negative information often associated with a physical disability. From a practical standpoint, this research determined if women with physical disabilities should follow the same prescriptives for interview attire as nondisabled women.

Objectives

The objectives for the study were:

1. To determine the impact of dress on employers' impressions of the employment characteristics and management potential of female job applicants.
2. To determine the impact of a visible physical disability on employers' impressions of the employment characteristics and management potential of female job applicants.
3. To examine the interaction between dress and a visible physical

disability and their combined effects on employers' impressions of female job applicants.

4. To determine the impact of dress on rehabilitation personnels' and physically disabled university students' impressions of the employment characteristics and management potential of female job applicants.

5. To determine the impact of a visible physical disability on rehabilitation personnels' and physically disabled university students' impressions of the employment charactersitics and management potential of female job applicants.

6. To examine the interaction between dress and visible physical disability and their combined effect on rehabilitation personnels' and physically disabled university students' impressions of female job applicants.

The results to meet objectives one, two, and three will be presented in chapter four. The results to meet objectives four, five, and six will be presented in chapter five.

Limitations

Nine videotaped simulated interviews were used as the stimulus in this study. The use of a videotaped stimulus limited the generalizability of the findings. The use of videotapes allowed the researcher to control some of the extraneous variables while presenting more cues about the stimulus than could be obtained through photographs or slides (Forsythe, Drake, and Hogan, 1985). However, videotaping reduced the number of cues available and prevented face-to-face interaction. The findings were also limited to certain occupational groups, rehabilitation personnel, and university students.

Assumptions

The following assumptions existed for the study:

1. Facial features, hair color, and other physical characteristics of the applicants in the videotapes may have influenced measurement of the dependent variables.
2. Gestures and facial expressions of the applicants in the videotapes may have influenced measurement of the dependent variables.

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CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL MODEL

Introduction

Forming an impression of the personality of others is essentially a task of integrating information provided by a complex stimulus (Anderson and Jacobson, 1965). Individuals are presented with discrete bits of information from the complex stimulus that must be combined into a single, wholistic impression. An examination of the manner in which these bits of information are integrated should provide some insight into the impression formation process. The purpose of this chapter is to present the theoretical framework for the research. This chapter also provides an impression formation model which takes into account the manner in which cues available to a perceiver are utilized when a cue with negative social connotations (such as a physical disability) attached to it is presented to a perceiver.

Attribution Theory

Attribution theory provides a framework for this examination of physical appearance cues on impression formation. This perspective primarily focuses on the integration of cues given by a complex stimulus such that the perceiver arrives at an impression of an observed person (Heider, 1958). From the impression formed, the future behavior of the observed person can be predicted. Prediction of future behavior is important because it aids the perceiver in making his world more controllable (Heider, 1958). It allows the perceiver to interpret

the actions of others and form a reaction or behavioral response to observed persons.

Heider (1958) maintained that how a person is perceived by an individual depends on the characteristics of the observed person, the context in which he is perceived (situation), the manner (mediation) in which he is perceived (e.g. light and sound waves), and the characteristics of the perceiver. Cues provided by the complex stimulus include physical appearance, situation, gestures, and verbal messages. From the combination of cues, the stable factors that cause behavior (ie. traits, abilities, situation, or luck) can be inferred and an impression formed (Heider, 1958).

The process of causal analysis is used to infer the stable factors underlying behavior by determining whether the person or the situation is responsible for the behavior (Fiske and Taylor, 1984). When a personal attribution is made, it implies that factors within the person being observed (e.g. traits, abilities, motives, intentions) are responsible for the behavior. Situational attribution implies that aspects of the situation over which the person being observed has no control (e.g. definition of the situation, difficulty of the task, or opportunity) are responsible (Heider, 1958).

Once the stable factors that cause behavior have been inferred, traits can be assigned. Through determination of causality and the assignment of traits, perceivers can make a decision as to whether the observed person's behavior is likely to be repeated. Attributing behavior to characteristics within the observed person is likely to lead the perceiver to believe that a particular behavior will be repeated in other situations. On the other hand, attributing behavior

to aspects of the situation may lead the perceiver to believe that behavior will most likely be repeated only in a particular situation.

Salience Effects

Various factors influence which cues are chosen and combined when perceivers are presented with information to be interpreted, weighted, and organized (Lennon and Miller, 1984-85). The manner in which these cues are combined is based on the unique interaction of biology, maturation, sex-role development, past experience, and socialization of the perceiver as well as the unique qualities of the situation (Stanley, 1986).

Findings presented by Anderson and Jacobson (1965) indicate that cues are given differential weights when being used to form impressions. The concept of salience effects has been offered as one explanation for the differential weighting given to stimuli. Pryor and Kriss (1977) have conceptualized the salience of an object as that quality of a stimulus that attracts a perceiver's attention. In other words, if something is salient, it receives a greater amount of attention than other cues available to the perceiver (Pryor and Kriss, 1977).

Recent research has revealed this salience effect as a surprisingly strong influence on our social perceptions (Jones and Nisbett, 1972; Taylor and Fiske, 1975; Pryor and Kriss, 1977). Research conducted by Jones and Nisbett (1972) indicates that an observer will utilize information that is salient to him when explaining the reasons behind an observed person's behavior. Each perceiver chooses those cues that are most salient or important to him to use in determining causality and assigning (attributing) traits to

others. Cues which are most salient are given the most weight when forming an impression.

Anderson and Jacobson (1965) also pointed out that the weight given a cue can vary with the type of impression to be formed. Findings presented by Hamilton and Fallot (1974) are consistent with this assertion. Their research indicated that subjects gave greater weight to information when it was salient for a particular type of impression being formed. When making judgments of liking, information from the social dimension (eg. good-natured, warm, sociable, helpful) was salient and given greater weight. On the other hand, when making judgments of respectableness, information from the intellectual dimension (e.g. intelligent, practical, imaginative) became salient and was given greater weight.

For the most part, the influence of salience on perceptions has been documented in a number of studies that have used Gestalt laws of "figural emphasis". Gestalt principles hold that certain stimuli tend to be seen as figural or standing out from their surroundings (McArthur and Solomon, 1978). These "figural" stimuli become the focus of a perceiver's attention and thus, also become salient.

McArthur and Post (1977) used laws of figural emphasis to propose that perceptually salient information influences causal analysis. They predicted that observers would attribute the behavior of an actor to personal disposition if he was the focus of attention (figural) by virture of some salient physical attribute. The manipulations of physical salience included brightness of light, motion, pattern complexity in clothing, and contextual novelty (defined as a novel stimulus in the presence of several similar stimuli. As predicted the

first three experiments revealed that more personal attributions were made when the actor was brightly lit, set in motion, or wearing a patterned shirt as opposed to a solid colored shirt. A reversal of the prediction was found in the fourth experiment. The behavior of the actor who was salient by virtue of contextual novelty was attributed more to situational factors than the behavior of the less salient actors. The researchers explained these contradictory findings by concluding that the presence of several similar stimuli invoked the Gestalt tendency to group similar stimuli together. The homogenous group became more salient and induced perceivers to focus their attention on the group rather than the novel cue.

McArthur and Solomon (1978) pointed out that documentation of salience effects have not been obtained in significant social situations. Rather, most of the effects have been demonstrated in "boring, redundant, and commonplace" getting acquainted situations (McArthur and Solomon, 1978, 1279). To test the generalizability of salience effects to a more interesting and unusual social situation, McArthur and Solomon (1978) predicted that the tendency to make a personal attribution to a salient stimulus person should yield a greater tendency to blame a salient victim than a nonsalient victim. Salience manipulations included a person wearing a leg brace or a person with red hair engaged in a heated argument with a control person. Their hypothesis was supported. McArthur and Solomon (1978) concluded that causal attribution will vary with the salience of the individuals involved in the interaction even when the situation is more meaningful.

Further research was conducted to define the extent to which salience effects can be generalized. Taylor, Crocker, Fiske, Sprinzen, and Winkler (1979) conducted a series of experiments to test the boundary conditions of salience effects. They determined that salience effects continue to be found when the perceiver is distracted, when he is involved in the discussion, when he is highly interested in the conversation, and even when his impressions are assessed the next day. These findings led Taylor, Crocker, Fiske, Sprinzen, and Winkler (1979, 357) to conclude that salience effects have a high degree of external generalizability and that they have a "significant impact on both trivial and important social judgments".

Physical Appearance and First Impressions

Early impression formation models attempted to predict judgments of a stimulus person from trait adjectives presented as descriptive of him (Asch, 1946; Anderson and Jacobson, 1965; Rosenberg, Nelson, and Vivekananthan, 1968; Hamilton and Fallot, 1974). However, use of a list of trait adjectives to evoke an impression of personality fails to take into account the information available from physical appearance cues.

Physical appearance is an important factor in impression formation and attribution. Research indicates that cues provided by physical appearance are indeed a significant influence on the impressions formed of others (Hamid, 1968; Conner, Peters, and Nagasawa, 1975). In addition, research by Walster, Aronson, Abrams, and Rottman (1966) suggests that appearance also influences a perceiver's overt behavior toward an observed person.

Four factors which influence the use of appearance cues in causal attribution and impression formation have been delineated. First, research suggests that we are most attracted to others whose appearance is similar to ours because we assume similarity of attitudes, values, and beliefs (Byrne, 1971).

Second, there is a tendency to view others in a global or Gestalt manner which implies that a total impression is formed without the perceiver actually being aware of the specific cues used to form that impression. Appearance cues (including dress and physical disability) that are inconsistent with global perceptions are likely to result in dissonance and lead to mistrust and negative attitudes (Rucker, McGee, Hopkins, Harrison, and Utts, 1985).

Third, the tendency to stereotype or categorize others is useful to perceivers for simplifying and sorting incoming information and for reducing uncertainty in initial interactions with other. Categorizations are often made on the basis of the presence or absence of appearance cues (Kaiser, 1983-84).

Research indicates that the impact of a target cue on categorization decreases as the number of other cues increases (Thornton, 1944). Argyle and Henry (1971) provided evidence that the salience of a target cue will sometimes diminish in context of other cues. Lennon and Miller (1984-85) examined the manner in which the impact of target physical appearance cues changed as a function of the number and type of other identifiable physical appearance cues available. Their results imply that the salience of a given cue in impression formation will be influenced by the presence or absence of other cues. For example, "if several good intellectual cues are

available it is likely that the absence of any one of them will be accomodated by the others. If only one intellectual cue is present, it will certainly assume more individual importance" (Lennon and Miller, 1984-85, 7).

Finally, appearance cues have been shown to influence the perceptual salience of stimulus cues used in causal analysis (McArthur and Post, 1977). Research indicates that decisions about a person's knowledge and abilities are likely to be made on the basis of overt behavior such as clothing behavior (Workman 1984-85). From these decisions, inferences about intentions (or future employment behavior) may also be made (Forsythe, 1981; Forsythe, Drake, and Cox, 1984). For example, when a woman wears a skirted suit, personal dispositions such as intelligence or ambition will likely be inferred because the skirted suit has come to symbolize professionalism in the business world. Wearing this acceptable form of dress signifies that the woman is aware of acceptable standards. She may then be perceived as someone who is most likely to adhere to standards in other professional situations (Johnson and Roach-Higgins, 1987).

Physical Disability and Salience Effects

Physical attractiveness is one aspect of appearance that has been identified as being relatively important to the attribution of personal characteristics. There exists a strong belief that attractive people automatically have good inner qualities. After a review of the literature, Moran, McCullers, and Banilivy (1982) concluded that physically attractive people are seen in a positive light and attributed a wide range of positively valued characteristics, such as sociability and high intelligence. Physically unattractive people are

often associated with negative attributes that have nothing to do with physical appearance.

This concept is evident when considering the impressions formed of people with disabilities. Certain undesirable qualities are often attributed to these individuals merely because they are physically impaired (Livneh, 1982). One possible explanation for this tendency is that the disability is seen as figural or standing out against ground (situation) and salient stimuli are seen as causal (McArthur and Solomon, 1978). Put more simply, perceivers tend to form negative impressions of persons with disabilities because it is assumed that the disabling condition is the overwhelming influence on behavior. Contributing factors such as situation, role, or architectural barriers are often completely ignored when determining the cause of behavior (Wright, 1983). It is this type of attribution that has perpetuated the notion that an undamaged mind cannot function normally in a damaged body (Vash, 1981)

In addition, there is some evidence that suggests that impressions formed from information provided by a physical salient attribute tend to be more evaluatively extreme (Pryor and Kriss, 1977). In other words, an individual whose appearance deviates from the norm on any one of a number of attributes will create more extreme (positive or negative) impressions than one whose appearance is more commonplace (McArthur and Solomon, 1978). This finding is consistent with the Gestalt principle which holds that stronger feelings are more often attached to figures (stimuli) than to grounds (situation) resulting in the formation of more extremely positive or negative impressions (Taylor and Fiske, 1975).

Dress, Physical Disability, and Salience Effects

Limited research has been conducted to examine the effect of dress on causal attribution and impression formation when a physical disability is present.

Miller (1982) used the theory of person perception developed by McArthur and Post (1977) to investigate the impact of physical impairment and clothing on impression formation. He predicted that relative to nonimpaired stimulus persons, the behavior of impaired stimulus persons would be attributed to personal rather than situational causes. Miller's findings indicated that both of the physical appearance variables (hearing aid and clothing) influenced aspects of impression formation dealing with causal attributions. There was little evidence of significant influence of dress on the impressions formed of the person wearing the hearing aid. However, interaction between the physical appearance variables on the situational attributions suggests that dress may be used to influence the salience of impairment on some aspects of impression formation. Miller recommended the use of the procedures developed to study causal attribution in person perception to examine the effects of physical appearance on impression formation. He also indicated that the range of physical impairments that might be affected by clothing manipulations still needs to be determined.

Model

An impression formation model has been developed to facilitate understanding of the attribution process and its influence on impression formation when a novel cue such as a physical disability is present. The model consists of six component parts: 1) the

perceiver's environment, 2) the cues given, 3)the mediation, 4) the perceiver, 5) the causal attribution, and 6) the impression formed. Figure 1 presents a pictorial representation of the interaction between these parts.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The Perceiver's Environment

In this model, the perceiver's environment includes the characteristics of the observed persons surrounding the perceiver and the context in which these persons are observed (Heider, 1958). Characteristics of observed persons include clothing, physical body, hair, nonverbal gestures, and facial expression. Examples of context (situation) include job interview, party, church, or school, etc.

The Cues Given

The presence of an observed person within any given situation presents the perceiver with a complex set of cues that the perceiver must somehow integrate to form an impression. Various combinations of cues are possible. This model is concerned with the integration of cues when the presence or absence of a physical disability and two types of dress are presented in the same situation. Two combinations of cues are possible. The types of cues combined may be similar to one another or they may be dissimilar. Examples of the combination of similar cues includes: 1. absence of a novel cue (such as a visible physical disability) and situation-appropriate dress; and 2. presence of a novel cue and situation-inappropriate dress. Dissimilar cue combinations include: 1. absence of a novel cue and

situation-inappropriate dress; and 2. presence of a novel cue and situation-appropriate dress.

The Mediation

The manner in which a person is perceived also has some bearing on the impression formed. Light waves and sound waves act as a filter between the observed person and the perceiver influencing and distorting the messages being sent and received (Heider, 1958).

The Perceiver

Characteristics of the perceiver are critical to this process of impression formation since each perceiver develops his own unique ideas, opinions, and beliefs about which traits belong together. The interaction of biology, maturation, sex-role development, past experiences and socialization creates a unique perceiver (Stanley, 1986). This interaction of factors determines the kinds of cues that become most salient or important to the perceiver. The perceiver uses those cues most salient to him to form an impression of the observed person.

The Causal Attribution

To further simplify the enormous amount of information presented, a perceiver may consciously or unconsciously use salient cues to make a personal or situational attribution. The perceiver attempts to assign the cause of behavior to attributes within the person being observed (e.g. traits, abilities, motivations, intentions) or to aspects of the situation over which the observed person has no control (e.g. being in an interview, difficulty of the task, opportunity, luck). This causal analysis allows the perceiver to determine if the behavior is likely to be repeated and provides a basis for the perceivers' reaction to the

observed person. Causal analysis tends to be mediated by the salience of the cues used as a basis for making the attribution (McArthur and Post, 1977; Solomon, 1978).

The Impression Formed

The interaction of these first five components influences the perceiver's impression of the observed person. The way in which cues are combined may influence the relationship between figure (observed person) and ground (situation). Similar or consistent cues may be viewed as a group deemphasizing the figure-ground relationship. Dissimilar cues, on the other hand, may create dissonance and emphasize the differences between figure (observed person) and ground (situation).

When a novel cue (such as a visible physical disability) is absent and clothing is appropriate for the given situation, the cues are perceived as similar and consistent. This combination tends to result in the formation of a positive impression (Forsythe, 1981; Rucker, McGee, Hopkins, Harrison, and Utts, 1985).

When a novel cue is present and dress is inappropriate for the situation, there is also similarity and consistency among the cues. Kaiser (1985) remarked that the resulting impression would likely be negative. There is at present little empirical data to support this assertion. Her assertion is plausible in light of cognitive consistency theory which contends that perceivers will be psychologically comfortable only when overt behavior is consistent with expected role (Festinger, 1957). In this case, the negative information provided by the inappropriate clothing is reinforcing the negative information provided by the novel cue.

When the novel cue is absent and dress is inappropriate for the situation, there is inconsistency that usually results in the formation of a negative impression (Kerr and Dell, 1976; Rucker, McGee, Hopkins, Harrison, and Utts, 1985). When a novel cue is present but dress is appropriate for the situation, the cues are dissimilar and inconsistent. However, there is at present, limited research on the impact of the combination of these cues on impression formation. Research conducted by Christman (1987) is contributing to this lack of empirical evidence. Further empirical investigation may be necessary to fully understand the impact of this type of combination of cues.

Conclusion

This paper has presented an impression formation model as one explanation for perceivers' actual assignment of meanings to four combinations of clothing and other appearance cues. Attribution theory provided a framework for the investigation of the relationships among cues and their subsequent impact on impression formation.

Based on an examination of the literature, it is predicted that dress will influence the figure-ground relationship when a physical disability is present. This influence should manifest itself in the type of impressions formed of observed persons. If the disability becomes less figural, as a result of dress manipulations, it may become less salient and dress can then become the primary cue on which to base the assignment of traits. When dress is appropriate for the situation, it will provide a salient source of positive information on which to base impressions. As a result, perceivers may form more positive impressions about people with physical disabilities. Furthermore, dress manipulations may encourage perceivers to consider situational

factors when making judgements about observed persons. This consideration may lessen the impact of the physical disability. Through impression management, dress cues can be used to "stage" appearances so that perceivers will focus on selected cues and form an impression desirable to the wearer (Kaiser, 1983-84).

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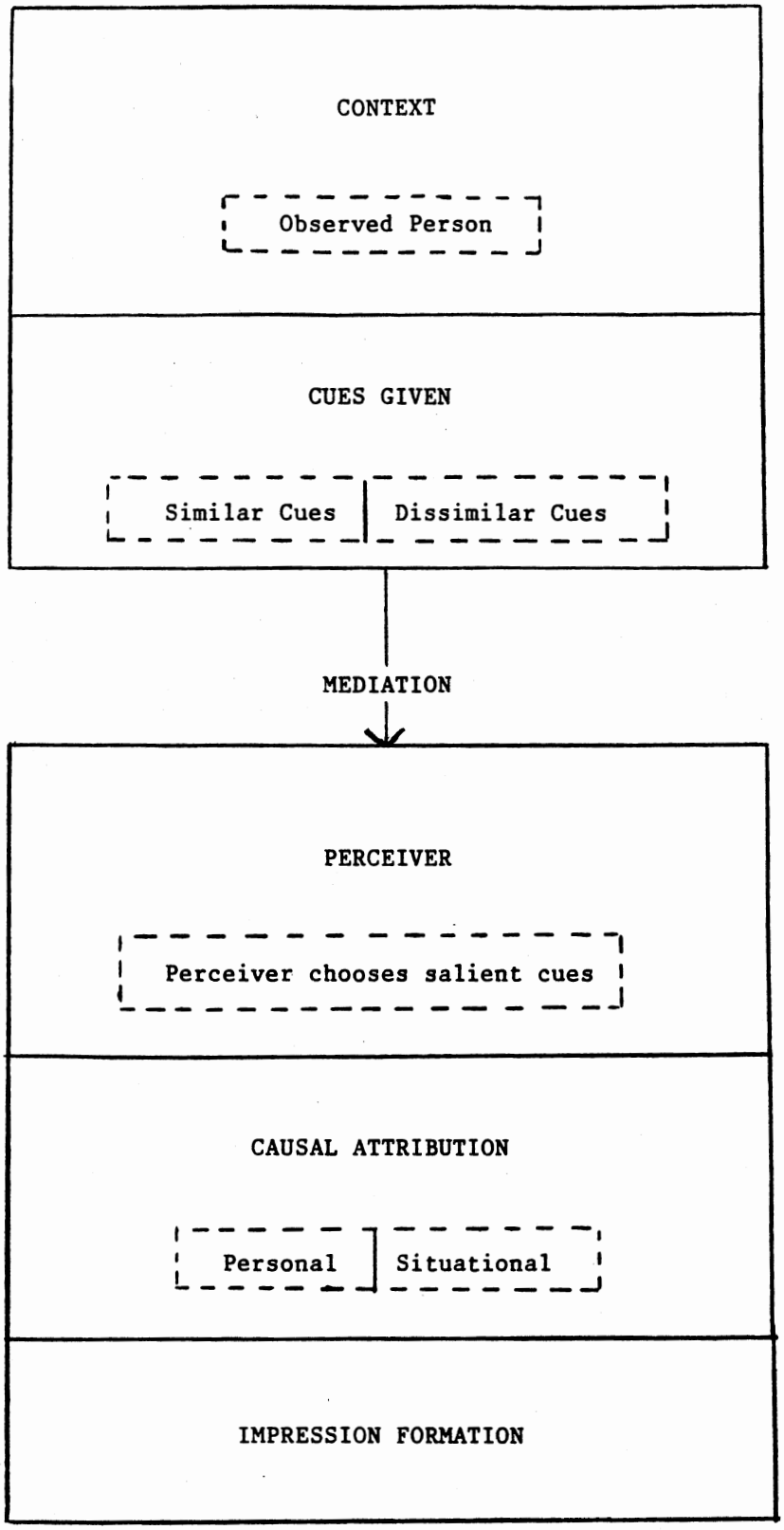

Figure 1. Impression Formation Model

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review of literature includes research pertaining to the process of person perception, the nature of attitudes, attitudes toward individuals with disabilities, and attitude measurement.

Person Perception

Stanley (1986), developed a model of person perception which outlines four factors that influence a perceiver's behavior toward an observed person. She put forth three aspects of development that are important in the creation of unique perceivers. Cognitive, perceptual, and sex-role development make up the intrapersonal aspect. This aspect focuses on the interaction of biology and environment during maturation, discrimination, and differentiation of stimuli, and learned gender behavioral expectations (Stanley, 1986). The second aspect, interpersonal development, focuses on self-concept, self-presentation, self-esteem, and body cathexis. The socialization aspect takes into account demographic and psychographic information about the sender and receiver including age, occupation, education, income, and group membership, and related culturally-learned behavioral expectations. Finally, Stanley (1986) also included the social context component which accounts for situations and motives involved in interaction.

The Nature of Attitudes

One of the most important problems in the study of behavior concerns the definition of attitudes and their role in behavior. While

the existence of attitudes is widely recognized, many researchers have had difficulty in offering a formal definition. One reason for this difficulty is that most psychologists have generally categorized attitudes as hypothetical constructs (Mills, 1969). In other words, an attitude is presumed to actually exist but it is not directly observable.

There are several definitions of attitudes currently in use. Secord and Backman, (1964, 6) defined an attitude as "a relatively stable and enduring predispostion to behave or react in a certain way toward persons, objects, institutions, or issues". Mills (1969, 125) simplified this definition stating that "an attitude simply represents a person's readiness to respond toward an object in a favorable or unfavorable manner". Allen, Guy, and Edgley (1980, 272) concluded that an attitude is a "spontaneous response to one's perception of the social situation in which he or she is interacting".

In an attempt to provide a clearer, more comprehensive definition, some researchers have conceptualized attitudes as having an affective, cognitive, and behavioral component (Allen, Guy, and Edgley, 1980). Favorable or unfavorable feelings toward an object reflect the affective component. An individual's tendency to approach or avoid an object reflects the behavioral component. The cognitive component is made up of all of our thoughts and ideas (including opinions and beliefs) about an object.

In order to study attitudes and attitude change, researchers have found it necessary to make a distinction between attitudes and

opinions. An opinion is conceived of as capable of being verbalized and an overt manifestation of an underlying attitude (Mills, 1969). More specifically, even though we cannot directly observe an attitude, we can infer its existence from verbal expressions of opinions. In addition, opinions tend to be situational and easier to change than attitudes (Allen, Guy, and Edgley, 1980).

The common assumption also exists that there is a close connection between attitudes and behavior. "That is, knowledge of an individual's attitudes allows us to predict his or her behavior" (Allen, Guy, and Edgley, 1980, 275). The unique background and development of the individual (Stanley, 1986) influences the formation of his attitudes which, in turn, affects his behavioral responses toward observed persons. Attitudes determine the perceiver's standards and goals (Sherif and Sherif, 1957). They define what is preferred, what is desirable or undesirable, and what should be avoided (Mills, 1969). However, Allen, Guy, and Edgley (1980) cautioned that the relationship between attitudes and behavior is also dependent on situational factors such as norms, roles, group membership, and reference groups. Therefore, it may not always be possible to predict behavior from expressed attitudes.

Allen, Guy, and Edgley (1980) also made a case for attitude research by pointing out some of the values of such research. First, attitudes influence perception and learning. Perception tends to be consistent with existing attitudes. Second, attitudes often define groups. Individuals seem to be most attracted to others who have attitudes similar to their own. Third, attitudes also function to inhibit certain types of behavior. Fourth, attitudes permit

researchers to explain why individuals behave differently in the same situation. Finally, attitudes may be formed out of behavior. Allen, Guy, and Edgley (1980) cited research by Hyman and Sheatsley (1964) which indicated that changes in discriminatory practices led to changes in discriminatory attitudes.

The Sources of Attitudes Toward the Disabled

Of utmost importance to the investigation of the impact of physical disability on impression formation is an understanding of the nature and origin of attitudes toward people with disabilities. Several attempts have been made to categorize the different sources of influence on attitudes toward people with disabilities. Livneh (1982) offered the following classification system for the various sources of attitudes. Research findings which lend further support to Livneh's (1982) classifications have also been cited.

1. Sociocultural conditioning. The prevailing social and cultural norms often influence the formation of attitudes toward persons with disabilities. The ancient Greeks believed that the physically impaired were inferior and often killed handicapped children (Gellman, 1959). Medieval Christians, on the other hand, felt that being disabled aided moral virture (Harasymiw, Horne, and Lewis, 1976). Cultural diffusion has permitted the transmittal of these attitudes from generation to generation. Current cultural attitudes toward people with disabilities appear to reflect a similar ambivalence. While some regard disability as a sign of weakness or inferiority, others see it as an indication of strength, courage, or virtue (Comer and Piliavin, 1975; Harasymiw, Horne, and Lewis, 1976).

2. Childhood influences. Parents who live in constant fear that a child might become disabled may be communicating this fear to their children. Communication of these fears often fosters the unconscious belief that disability is contagious and leads to the discrimination and avoidance of persons with disabilities (Gellman, 1959; Wright, 1983).

3. Psychodynamic mechanisms. Livneh (1982) outlined several mainly unconscious processes as possible explanations for the attitudes of the able-bodied toward persons with disabilities.

a. Requirement of mourning. Able-bodied persons often expect a person with a disability to suffer and show the appropriate grieving for the loss of the normal functions of the body. Signs of adjustment or normalcy on the part of the person with the disability may lead the able-bodied to form negative attitudes (Dembo, Leviton, and Wright, 1975).

b. Spread phenomenon. This term is used to describe the phenomenon of the power of a single characteristic to evoke unrelated inferences about a person (Dembo, Leviton, and Wright, 1975). A negative attribute, like a disability, often leads to the negative association of unrelated traits such as emotional maladjustment.

c. Fear of social ostracism. Able-bodied individuals fear that association with a person with a disability may imply some psychological maladjustment on the part of the nondisabled person.

d. Guilt of being "able-bodied". Association with people with disabilities often lead the nondisabled to feel guilty for not being disabled. These feelings of guilt often lead to negative

attitudes and further dissociation from the presence of the person with a disability.

e. Association of responsibility with etiology. If the individual with the disability is perceived as the cause of his own deviance, then he is viewed more negatively by the able-bodied (Parker and Hansen, 1981).

4. Disability as punishment for sin. The Hebrews believed that the sick and disabled were being punished for their sins (Gellman, 1959). This type of belief has fostered the notion that people with disabilities are evil or dangerous and must be avoided. In addition, a nondisabled person may feel guilty for not being punished for an evil act by being rendered disabled. As a result, an able-bodied person may avoid individuals with disabilities so as not to be reminded of his sin.

5. Anxiety-provoking unstructured situations. Interaction with a person with a disability often presents a vague situation with uncertain social outcomes. Not knowing what to expect during interaction with a person with a physical disability can create strained interaction and promote the formation of negative attitudes (Doob and Ecker, 1970).

In addition, Langer, Fiske, Taylor, and Chanowitz (1976) concluded that the presence of a physical disability may evoke the desire to stare. Staring behavior is in direct conflict with social norms, though. As a result, this conflict makes the interaction situation awkward and uneasy for both participants and often leads to the formation of negative attitudes toward the individual with the disability.

6. Aesthetic aversion. Some types of disabilities (such as amputation, body deformity, and cerebral palsy) evoke feelings of discomfort and revulsion. The emphasis on physical fitness, health, and beauty in our culture only serves to reinforce these negative feelings.

7. Threats to body image integrity. Seeing a person with a physical disability creates feelings of discomfort because of the incongruence between the expected "normal" body and the actual perceived reality. The presence of a disability reminds the nondisabled person that he too could become disabled.

8. Minority group comparison. Individuals with disabilities are often labeled as a minority group. This stereotyping evokes social ostracism and prejudicial behavior from the nondisabled majority similar to behavior toward racial and ethnic minority groups (Barker, Wright, Meyerson, and Gonick, 1953; Yuker, 1965).

9. Disability as a reminder of death. The fear and anxiety associated with death is often evoked at the sight of a person with a disability. These fears subsequently lead to the formation of negative attitudes toward people with disabilities (Livneh, 1980).

10. Prejudice-inviting behaviors. The exhibiting of dependency, fear, insecurity, or inferiority on the part of the disabled person fosters stereotyping and negative attitudes in nondisabled people.

11. The influence of disability-related factors. The type of disability, level of severity, degree of visibility, or body part affected influences the formation of attitudes toward the disabled. In general, the more severe or visible the deformity, the more negative the attitudes formed (Harasymiw, Horne, and Lewis, 1976).

12. Demographic variables. Several demographic variables such as sex, age, education, socioeconomic status, occupation, and amount and type of contact have been examined to determine their influence on the formation of attitudes toward people with disabilities. There are inconsistencies in the literature. Some studies indicate the existence of negative attitudes among various groups that is manifested in discriminatory and prejudicial behavior toward people with disabilities (Barker, Wright, Meyerson, and Gonick, 1953; Chesler, 1965; Wright, 1983). Other studies report that attitudes tend to be mildly favorable (Comer and Piliavin, 1975; Jaffe, 1967; Mussen and Barker, 1944).

In general, research indicates that either females tend to hold more positive attitudes toward people with disabilities (Chesler, 1965; Yuker, Block, and Campbell, 1970) or that no significant differences exist between males and females (Bishop, 1969).

Siller (1963) found attitudes to be more positive at late childhood and adulthood and less favorable at early childhood, adolescence, and old age. However, Bishop (1969) found no significant relationship between age and attitudes toward people with disabilities.

There are indications that attitudes toward the physically disabled become more favorable as educational level increases (Jabin, 1965). On the other hand, the research of Palmerton and Frumpkin (1969) indicates that higher levels of education may lead to the formation of more negative attitudes. Elston and Snow (1986) found no relationship between expressed attitudes and education. No significant relationship was found between socioeconomic status and attitudes toward people with physical disabilities.

English and Oberle (1971) reported that the attitudes of members of an occupation that places low emphasis on physique (typists) were significantly higher than those of members of an occupation that places a high emphasis on physique (airline stewardesses). Findings presented by Elston and Snow (1986) indicated no significant differences between attitudes of rehabilitation counselors and members of other occupational groups.

Some researchers have reported a positive relationship between attitudes and amount and type of contact with the physically disabled (Anthony, 1969; Chesler, 1965; Lyth, 1973; Siller, 1964). Other researchers have reported no significant relationship between contact with people with disabilities and attitudes (Drude, 1971).

13. Personality variables associated with attitudes. Livneh (1982) reported findings from several research studies on the link between personality traits in the nondisabled and the formation of their attitudes toward persons with disabilities. Briefly, the major findings include the following personality traits as being associated with the formation of attitudes toward the disabled: ethnocentrism - prejudice shown toward most ethnic and racial minorities (Chesler, 1965); authoritarianism - greater need to be associated with the strong or influential society members leads to rejection of the disabled (Noonan, Barry, and Davis, 1970); aggression - hostile tendencies result in more negative attitudes (Jabin, 1966); self-insight - insightful people tend to be more empathic and understanding (Siller, 1964); anxiety - individuals with higher levels of anxiety tend to be more rejecting of the disabled (Jabin, 1966); self-concept - individuals who are more confident in themselves tend to be more

accepting of the disabled (Siller, 1964; Yuker, Block, and Younng, 1966); ego strength - individuals who are insecure and have weak egos are more rejecting of the disabled (Siller, 1964); body satisfaction - lack of satisfaction with one's body leads to the development of negative attitudes (Cormack, 1967); ambiguity tolerance - greater inability to tolerate ambiguous situations was correlated with rejection of the disabled (Feinberg, 1967); social desirability - need for social approval and acceptance (Feinberg, 1967; Doob and Ecker, 1970); alienation - individuals who feel alienated from the world tend to be more hostile toward the disabled (Jabin, 1966); and intelligence level (English, 1971).

Common Misperceptions and Attitudes Toward the Disabled

Disabled people are often viewed by the able-bodied as "different" from the norm or ideal standard of beauty. As a result they are often labled inferior and given minority status (Henderson and Bryan, 1984). Yuker (1965) asserted that the prejudice associated with minority status is similar to that shown toward the people with disabilities. Commonalities include employment limitations, exclusion from educational opportunities as well as recreational and social activities (Wright, 1983).

The presence of a disability tends to evoke the impression that all individuals with disabilities are totally impaired and less intelligent (Henderson and Bryan, 1984). The common belief that an undamaged mind cannot function normally in a damaged body (Vash, 1981) can be explained by the spread phenomenon (Dembo, Leviton, and Wright, 1975). When little or no information is available to a perceiver, a

negative attribute (such as a physical disability) is likely to lead to the assignment of negative personality traits to the person with the disability. "Thus a person who has a disability may be thought of as less mature emotionally and less able intellectually" solely on the basis of a physical deviation (Wright, 1983, 32).

Other common misperceptions held by the able-bodied include the belief that individuals with disabilities need and want charity, are always unhappy and depressed, and prefer the company of others with disabilities (Henderson and Bryan, 1984). In fact, opinions expressed by individuals with disabilities indicate that they feel degraded and inferior when they become the reason for a charity drive (Henderson and Bryan, 1984). Furthermore, most people with disabilities tend to prefer the company of able-bodied individuals so as not to be constantly reminded of their disability.

Effect of Negative Attitudes on People with Disabilities

Numerous authors, focusing on the effects of negative attitudes on individuals with disabilities, point to the conclusion that attitudes held by able-bodied individuals influence the treatment of people with disabilities (Gellman, 1959; Noonan, Barry, and Davis, 1970; Siller, 1963; Wright, 1983). Each source cited clearly pointed out that negative attitudes produce devastating results such as loss of social status, humiliation, degradation, and dehumanization of people with disabilities. Henderson and Bryan (1984) remarked that negative attitudes held by the able-bodied are often manifested in avoidance behavior, pity, segregation, overprotection, and most importantly, job

discrimination. As a result, negative attitudes held by the nondisabled are a main deterrent to rehabilitation.

Employer Attitudes Toward the Disabled

The attitudes of potential employers are of primary concern to rehabilitation counselors. The return of the disabled to his former employment is of utmost importance. Kessler (1947, 101), on behalf of the physically disabled, stated,

> Work is not merely an activity; it is an emotional release, a stabilizing force in daily living. Inactivity destroys this energizing factor. This is the great social tragedy behind the degradation associated with unemployment.

Research indicates that, in general, employer attitudes are based on the same stereotypes as those of the general public (Parker and Hansen, 1981). If employers believe that people with disabilities are helpless, dependent, and less intelligent, they are likely to believe that they cannot become a productive part of the labor force.

Many employers frequently rationalize their attitudes toward the disabled on economic grounds, citing reduced productivity, economic liability, accident proneness, and the costs associated with aggravation of a preexisting injury as reasons not to hire the disabled (Kessler, 1947). Deegan and Brooks (1985) found that employers in hiring situations fear that the employee may need more sick leave and cause an increase in health insurance premiums and workman's compensation payments.

An investigation conducted by Rickard, Triandis, and Packard (1963) examined the hiring practices of personnel directors and school administrators along four dimensions, disability, sex, competence, and sociability. The researchers concluded that while the employers did

tend to discriminate against the applicants with disabilities, their hiring decisions were found to be tempered somewhat by the perceived competence of the applicant.

Whigham and Mattson (1969) found that while positive attitudes toward the disabled on the part of the employer did not necessarily result in actual employment, they were significantly related to previous experience with people with disabilities. Lyth (1973) also examined employers' approach to employment of people with disabilities. She conducted interviews to obtain information pertaining to employers' previous experiences with the disabled and the impact on subsequent hiring decisions. She obtained responses from employers ranging from "prepared to accept the disabled if they could do the job" to "try to hire the disabled for social reasons" to refusal to hire the disabled at all (Lyth, 1973, 68-69). This last response came from employers who had had previous unfortunate experience with the disabled. When rating successful employees with disabilities, employers described them as conscientious, flexible, loyal, and performing quality work. Unsuccessful employees with disabilities were described as poor co-workers, having a high rate of absence due to illness, and unsuitable for the job.

There is little objective data to support negative attitudes held by employers. In fact, evidence exists to refute statements made by employers concerning economic problems involved in hiring the disabled. Research suggests that when selectively placed, handicapped workers are equal to or better than nondisabled workers on job performance, persistance, motivation, attendance, and safety (Texas Rehabilitation Commission, 1974, 26). Feldman (1978) noted that former cancer

patients took fewer sick days and worked harder than other employees. Kessler (1947) reported that disabled employees did not have more accidents than the nondisabled. Of 3,376 cases studied, only 12 had had second injuries. Kessler (1947) stated that physical defects are not a major contributing cause of accidents.

Attitude Measurement

In view of the potential effect of the attitudes of able-bodied individuals toward people with disabilities, information on attitudes and the factors affecting their formation is necessary. Yet, as has been previously pointed out, results of research concerning the specific sources of positive and negative attitudes (particularly demographic variables) continue to be inconsistent and contradictory.

One possible explanation for the lack of consistency among research findings may lie in the scales used to measure attitudes toward people with disabilities. The Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale is most often used to measure subjects' attitudes toward persons with physical disabilities as a group in general, rather than specific disability groups (Elston, 1981). This scale is represented by the authors as measuring the extent to which subjects agree that people with disabilities are the same as the able-bodied. A higher score on the ATDP is supposed to indicate that the respondent is more positively orientated toward people with disabilities.

While this scale is the most widely used instrument, it has been criticized by several researchers. The ATDP was first published in 1960 by Yuker, Campbell, and Block as a 20-item Likert-type scale for which a total summative score is derived. The ATDP was expanded to thirty items in 1966 (Yuker, Block, and Campbell, 1970). However,

Siller, Chipman, Fergason, and Vann (1967) observed that the improvement in reliability was not substantial.

In addition, Siller, Chipman, Fergason, and Vann (1967) suggested two reasons why the instrument may be insensitive. The first methodological difficulty is that the general term "disability" may be too vague. Subjects seem to be unclear as to the types of disabilities that should be included in the definition. Smits, Conine, and Edwards (1971) raised this same issue. Their research indicated that there is a lack of uniformity among subjects regarding what areas of "exceptionality" should be included in the definition of disability. This finding led the researchers to question the validity of the major assumption underlying the ATDP.

Drude (1971) employed the ATDP to measure the attitudes of counselors in training. He observed that a large number of items are subject to more than one interpretation. Items 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 15, 18, 21, 25, and 29 could be taken to mean all, some, or most disabled persons. Drude (1971, 10) stated that "such ambiguity weakens the construct validity of the ATDP scores and limits conclusions and interpretations made about the scores". He further pointed out that the instrument was developed using college undergraduates rather than a more heterogenous group. This observation led him to also question the validity and generalizability of the ATDP scores to other populations.

The second methodological difficulty pointed out by Siller, Chipman, Fergason, and Vann (1967) pertained to the dimensionality of the attitude structure. The ATDP employs a single summative score that implies that attitudes are one-dimensional. These researchers are of

the opinion that attitudes are multidimensional and cannot be effectively examined using a single score.

In addition, Drude (1971) remarked that twenty-two of the statements could be interpreted as opinions rather than attitudes and that no attempt is made to score the two types of items separately. He commented that generally low ATDP scores have been regarded as negative attitudes when in fact, they may only mean that the nondisabled believe that people with disabilities differ in some ways from the general public. Low scores may not be an indication of positive or negative feelings toward the disabled. Drude (1971) suggests using ATDP scores more as a measure of the kind of information the nondisabled hold about the disabled and less as a measure of positive or negative attitudes.

Research by Feinberg (1967) offers another explanation for the inconsistency of findings. He put forth one serious drawback to use of the ATDP scale as an attitude measurement that must be kept in mind. When verbalizing attitudes toward persons with disabilities, people do not normally express negative feelings. Feinberg (1967) and Comer and Piliavin (1975) pointed out that society has created strong norms concerning the careful and kind treatment of the disabled. These norms induce respondents to express more positive attitudes that society approves. Feinberg (1967) referred to this tendency as social desirability bias explaining that most people are able to select the most socially desirable response, not necessarily the response that truly reflects their attitudes. This bias confounds the data and the interpretation.

Feinberg (1967) employed Adaptation-Level theory as a means for examining the connection between the expression of attitudes and social

desirability needs. Adaptation-Level theory holds that attitudes change as a function of changes in three sources of stimulation. Sources of stimulation include: (1) stimuli immediately confronting the perceiver, (2) stimuli forming the background or context of the situation, and (3) residual stimuli from traits, opinions, habits, biases (such as social desirability), and past experiences of the perceiver. He viewed attitudes, not as fixed traits, but rather as flexible response sets toward objects which can shift in accordance with changes in any of the sources of stimulation. In other words, attitudes may fluctuate as the perceiver's focus of attention shifts, the situation changes, or opinions, habits and biases change.

For focal stimuli, Feinberg (1967) chose three attitude-toward-disability scales which varied in terms of test structure (objective, semi-projective, projective). The background sources of stimulation were provided by varying the type of test instruction each respondent received. The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability scale (Marlowe and Crowne, 1964) was given as a residual measure. Feinberg (1967) hypothesized that measured attitudes would be a result of the pooled interactions among personal factors (social desirability), focal stimuli (attitude instrument), and background stimuli (test instructions).

Feinberg's (1967) findings indicated that varying the residual, focal, and background stimuli resulted in a modification of expressed attitudes. For all instruments (including the ATDP), subjects having high social desirability needs responded with significantly more positive attitudes toward people with disabilities than did subjects classified as having low social desirability needs. These results led

Feinberg (1967, 380) to conclude that the "inconsistency of research findings in this area may have been due to the biasing effects of social desirability on the attitudes measured".

Another major problem in attitude research is the type of stimuli used to elicit expressions of attitudes (Jaffe, 1967). Jaffe (1967) cited a variety of stimuli used to represent persons with disabilities including: written descriptions, photographs, actual persons, and labels or terms. Advances in technology has also made possible the use of videotape as a stimulus. Each type of stimulus used has its own limitations.

To examine the effects of stimulus variables, Jaffe (1967) varied the type of stimulus (labels versus written sketch) portraying an amputee, a retarded person, and a former mental patient. Respondents also evaluated a sketch person described as not having any disability. His results indicated that the disabled persons portrayed in the sketch were evaluated significantly more favorably than the label or term. In addition, the amputee was rated significantly more favorably than all three of the other persons. Jaffe (1967) concluded that the greater amount of information presented in the written sketch and the portrayal of the disabled person as an individual reduced negative stereotyping.

In a study similar to Jaffe (1967), Golin (1970) found that attitudes toward persons described as physically disabled were equal to or more positive than those regarding nondisabled persons. She further found that the favorableness of information presented to the subjects significantly affected expressed attitudes. Golin (1970, 26) concluded that attitudes toward the physically disabled are not "invariably negative and may be influenced by the context in which they are

evoked". She suggested research to specify the conditions likely to evoke negative attitudes and behavior toward those individuals with physical disabilities.

Summary

Inconsistencies among the research findings concerning attitudes toward people with disabilities point to the need for further refinement of instruments represented to measure attitudes. Other factors such as specific anxieties, self-image, characteristic defenses, and personality structure of the able-bodied must also be considered when attempting to identify attitudes toward people with disabilities.

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CHAPTER IV

EMPLOYERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PHYSICAL DISABILITY, DRESS, AND FEMALE JOB APPLICANTS

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Request for reprints and copies of the videotapes should be sent to the first author who is now at the Consumer Affairs Department, Auburn University, 324 Spidle Hall, Auburn, Alabama, 36849.

Abstract

A dress (most, moderate, and inappropriate for a job interview) by physical condition (able-bodied, crutches, wheelchair) factorial design was used to determine employers' perceptions of female job applicants. Impression formation theory formed the theory base. Nine videotapes of a female job applicant in combinations of the three levels of dress and three levels of physical condition were used. Subjects rated the applicant on the employment characteristics: personality, power, competence, and professionalism, and on management potential. Significant interactions were found for the power, professionalism, and management potential factors. Significant main effects for dress and physical condition were also found. Employers rated the applicants significantly higher when dressed in the most and moderately appropriate levels than when dressed inappropriately for all dependent measures. Employers also rated the applicants in the disabled conditions significantly higher than the able-bodied applicant for all dependent measures. Examination of the strength of the relationship among the treatment manipulations and the dependent measures revealed that dress was the most powerful influence on subjects' perceptions of the applicants. Results were interpreted from the perspective of impression formation theory, particularly how individuals combine various cues to arrive at an impression of an observed person. Implications pertain specifically to rehabilitation personnel and others who work with individuals with disabilities as well as clothing designers. These individuals need to be made aware of the usefulness of dress to the rehabilitation process.

MANUSCRIPT ONE FOR PUBLICATION

EMPLOYERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PHYSICAL DISABILITY, DRESS, AND FEMALE JOB APPLICANTS

Introduction

Widespread discrimination against people with disabilities in the general labor market exists as well as severely restricted employment opportunities (Vash, 1981; Wright, 1983; Deeghan and Brooks, 1985). When a physical disability is considered in the hiring process, it most often operates as a negative factor, a reason not to hire someone (McCharren and Earp, 1985). Elston (1981) reported that the success of rehabilitating an individual for employment may rest ultimately on an employer's willingness to hire someone with a disability. However, if employers are influenced by the attitude that a handicap is the essential and salient characteristic of a potential employee, then the physical disability becomes the primary cue to judge ability, knowledge, or skill. Because a physical disability is inconsistent with society's norms for physical beauty, its presence often creates strained interaction between nondisabled and people with disabilities (Langer, Fiske, Taylor, and Chanowitz, 1976; Henderson and Bryan, 1984). Strained and uncomfortable social interaction may lead to the formation of negative impressions of individuals with disabilities (Livneh, 1982).

Other physical appearance cues, such as dress, also play an important role in the success or failure of an individual in the labor market (Molloy, 1977). The personnel literature suggests that many interviewers make their selection decisions during the first four minutes of an interview (Hatfield and Gatewood, 1978). If so, then interviewers are assigning traits to prospective employees on the basis of nonverbal cues such as clothing and physical appearance so that their future employment behavior can be predicted. Johnson and Roach-Higgins (1987, 2) concluded that "identifiable categories of physical appearance cues can be classified as appropriate or inappropriate for certain interactional situations" and that these categories are used as a basis to assign traits to job applicants. The decision to hire or not to hire is then based on the impression formed from the assignment of these traits.

Recent research indicates that clothing functions to improve the professional image and employment potential of able-bodied individuals during an interview (Dillon, 1980; Forsythe, 1981). Appropriate clothing is useful in conveying impressions of characteristics considered essential in the business world such as professionalism, ability, and competence of job applicants (Workman, 1984-85; Forsythe, Drake, and Cox, 1984). Williams (1977) stated that to be considered a proper candidate for top jobs, women must convey the qualities of an executive. Dress is capable of communicating some of these qualities.

Research further suggests that clothing has been successful in improving the impression of employment potential of men with

disabilities. Ray (1986) investigated the effects of dress on impressions of the employment potential of men confined to wheelchairs. She varied appropriateness of dress, credentials, and sex of the rater and found that dress affected the ratings made by persons in managerial level positions and subsequently, the decision to hire. When the physically impaired job applicants were dressed in appropriate business attire, the ratings made on personal characteristics were higher. Ray (1986) concluded that clothing is one of the most important factors influencing the perceptions of others.

One possible explanation for this impact of clothing on impression formation is that the manipulation of clothing cues can affect the salience of other cues in a perceiver's environment. In other words, the manipulation of clothing cues can change the focus of a perceiver's attention, influence the assignment of traits, and modify the impression formed (McArthur and Post, 1977). This influence of salience on perceptions has been documented in a number of studies that have used Gestalt laws of "figural emphasis" which hold that certain stimuli tend to be seen as figural or to stand out from their surroundings (Jones and Nisbett, 1972; Taylor and Fiske, 1975; McArthur and Solomon, 1978). As a result, perceivers tend to give salient stimuli a greater proportion of attention when determining the causes of behavior and forming impressions (Pryor and Kriss, 1977).

Miller (1982) applied a theory of person perception based on laws of figural emphasis (McArthur and Post, 1977) to examine the impact of clothing on the salience of a hearing aid in impression formation.

Miller's findings indicated that both of the physical appearance variables (hearing aid and clothing) influenced impression formation to some extent. However, there was little evidence of a significant impact of clothing on the impressions formed of the person wearing the hearing aid. One possible explanation for these findings is that a hearing aid is not a particularly obvious deviation from norms and may not be as perceptually salient. There is less social stigma attached to a hearing aid as there might be if a limb were missing or a wheelchair were present.

Little research has been conducted to determine if dress, in the presence of a highly visible physical disability, functions in the same manner for women with disabilities as it does for men with disabilities and able-bodied men and women. The concerns of women with disabilities are unique and deserve special consideration. The combined influence of a hostile economy, a discriminatory society, and a negative self-concept have led Deeghan and Brooks (1985) to conceptualize women with disabilities as being doubly handicapped.

Research indicates that women with disabilities fare worse than both men with disabilities and nondisabled women econonomically, socially and psychologically. Sixty-five to 76 percent of all disabled women are unemployed (Fine and Asch, 1985, 7). Women with disabilities are less likely to receive vocational education or on-the-job training than men with disabilities, less likely to find a job post disability, and are more likely to absorb a cut in pay (Deeghan and Brooks, 1985). In addition, they are less likely to marry, are more likely to report a

negative self-image, and are viewed more negatively by others than are men with disabilities (Fine and Asch, 1985).

However, if appropriate clothing is worn for a situation such as a job interview, it may provide salient positive appearance cues sufficient to override the negative information provided by the disability. If this happens, the perceiver may be more likely to form a more positive impression of the individual with the physical disability. This research examined the influence of clothing and physical condition on employers' impressions of employment characteristics and management potential of female job applicants in a simulated interview situation.

Theoretical Framework

Attribution theory provided a framework for this study of employers' impressions of job applicants. According to this perspective, perceivers must integrate cues given by a complex stimulus including physical appearance, situation, gestures, and verbal messages in order to form an impression so that future behavior can be predicted (Heider, 1958). The integration of these cues is based on the interaction of biology, maturation, sex-role development, past experience, socialization of the perceiver, and the situation (Stanley, 1986). The interaction of these factors determines what cues are most salient to perceivers. To simplify the impression formation process, each perceiver chooses salient cues to use in the assignment (attribution) of characteristics or traits to others. The subsequent impression formed is therefore a composite based on the choice of

salient verbal and nonverbal cues provided by the observed person and the situation (Heider, 1958).

Method

Experimental Design and Independent Variables

The study followed a 3 X 3 factorial design. The two independent variables manipulated were dress (most appropriate, moderately appropriate, and inappropriate for an entry-level managerial position) and physical condition (able-bodied applicant, applicant on crutches, and applicant in a wheelchair).

To determine the three levels of dress for the videotapes, eight line drawings were made such that hairstyle, pose, and facial expression were held constant. Folders were constructed containing the eight sketches, two nine-point scales (employment characteristics and appropriateness of dress for employment position), instructions, and biographical information. Thirty students in a fashion merchandising program responded to the pretest instruments.

Based on the results of the pretest, three levels of dress were specified. The most appropriate level was a traditional dark, tailored jacket and skirt, the moderately appropriate level was a traditional dark, tailored jacket and pants, the inappropriate level consisted of a light-colored sweater, tank top, and pants (Appendix A).

The three levels of physical condition were specified for the following reasons. An applicant with no visible physical disability was chosen as a control. The crutches manipulation was chosen as an example of a moderate physical impairment that could convey the

impression that the disability might be either temporary or permanent. The wheelchair manipulation was chosen to represent a permanent, obvious physical disability that tends to have negative social connotations attached to it.

Development of the Stimulus Tapes

During videotape production camera angles, facial expressions, and physical movements were controlled. Although the tapes were recorded without sound, a script was used so that each of the nine segments was identical to all others except for manipulation of the independent variables. The applicant entered the waiting room of an interviewer's office, handed a resume to a secretary, and was then given a form to fill out. The applicant proceeded to seat herself at a table, filled out the form and then returned it to the secretary. Showing time for each segment was approximately two minutes. All segments were shown in black and white so as not to introduce color as a biasing factor.

A graduate student in the Clothing, Textiles, and Merchandising department volunteered to portray the applicant in each segment. Due to concern that the individual chosen to be filmed might also influence subjects' responses, a second applicant was also chosen and another set of nine tapes produced. Both volunteers were similar with respect to age, hair color, height, and weight. Both volunteers were considered attractive but strikingly different with respect to hairstyle and facial features. Therefore, any applicant effect should be attributable to hair style, facial features, facial expression, posture, or physical gestures of the individuals.

Dependent Measures

Part I (Appendix B) consisted of adjectives that describe employment characteristics. These adjectives were taken from Rucker, McGee, Hopkins, Harrison, and Utts (1985), Forsythe, Drake, and Hogan (1985), Ericksen and Sirgy (1985), and Hakel and Schuh (1971).

Part II (Appendix B) was adapted from Johnson (1984) and assessed the subjects' perceptions of the management potential of the applicant. Two items were deleted and the response scale was changed from a five-point to a nine-point scale.

Part III (Appendix C) consisted of demographic information. Questions on sex, age, education, occupation, and personal and work experience with people with disabilities were included.

A job description and brief biography of the applicant was included which portrayed her as a recipient of a B.S. degree in Personnel Management from Oklahoma State University with a G.P.A. of 3.23/4.0 (Appendix B). She was also described as a participant in an internship program with an insurance company and a member of the Management Club. This biography was adapted from Johnson (1984).

Part IV (Appendix D) consisted of the Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons (ATDP) scale as developed by Yuker, Block, and Campbell (1960) (Appendix F). This scale was used to measure subjects' attitudes toward persons with physical disabilities as a group in general, rather than specific disability groups. An attempt was made to locate the norms that accompany this scale but a copy was unavailable.

Pilot Test

The instrument was pilot tested on 36 employees in business or professional positions in companies located in a large midwestern city. No terminology or clarity problems occurred for the employment characteristics scale and management potential scale. There were some clarity problems with the ATDP scale, but due to copyright restrictions, the instrument was not changed. Completion time was 15 to 20 minutes.

Procedures

Data Collection

Subjects were divided into groups as equally as possible according to the number of participants at each site and were then randomly assigned to view only one of the 18 segments. After viewing one two-minute segment each subject was given a packet containing the instructions, job description and biographical information, and Parts I, II, and III of the instrument. Upon completion of the first set of instruments, the ATDP was administered so as not to alert anyone to the true nature of the study.

Sample

A convenience sample of companies and organizations was compiled from local telephone books in four cities in Illinois. Twenty-five companies and organizations that represented a variety of employment situations were then selected and contacted by telephone or through personal interview to compile a list of their managerial personnel. Managerial personnel were then contacted and asked to participate if

they indicated that they were involved in making hiring decisions within their companies. The subjects were 180 people who interview, manage, or supervise employees in various companies and organizations in central Illinois. Forty-four percent of the subjects were males and 56 percent were females. They ranged in age from 20 to 69 and most had had at least two years of college (Table 1).

Insert Table 1 about here

Subjects were also assigned to one of three occupational groups according to their answer on the occupation question. The occupational groups were based on the Standard Industrial Classification in the Salary Survey Handbook (College Placement Council, 1986-87) provided by the University Placement Center. Employers in the industry group included personnel administrators and managers in manufacturing, engineering, and public utilities. Employers in health and education included hospital and university administrators. Employers in the business group included personnel administrators, managers and supervisors in insurance, real estate, retail, finance, sales, and marketing. Thirty-four worked in industry, 40 in health and education, and 106 in business positions.

Findings

Employment Characteristics

The twenty-two employment characteristics were subjected to factorial analysis. A principal components factorial analysis with

varimax rotation yielded four factors with eigenvalues greater than one (Table 2).

Insert Table 2 about here

The group of characteristics with the highest loadings on Factor 1 was labeled "personality", the group with the highest loadings on Factor 2, "power", the group with the highest loadings on Factor 3, "competence", and the group with the highest loadings on Factor 4, "professionalism". Reliability of the 22-item employment characteristics scale as a whole was determined by Cronbach's Alpha and found to be .953 (Stanley, 1971). Since the factor analysis of the characteristics created four new scales to measure each of these factors, Cronbach's Alpha was used again as a measure of reliability. The reliability of these scales was .922 (personality), .929 (power), .820 (competence), and .842 (professionalism).

A mean score for each subject for each factor was obtained by summing the raw score for each employment characteristic contributing to each factor and then dividing by the number of contributing characteristics. These scores ranged from one to nine, with a higher score denoting a more favorable rating. A 2-way analysis of variance (dress X physical condition) was performed on each factor to determine the effects of the independent variables on the subjects' ratings. Applicant effect was nested within dress and physical condition. The proportion of variation explained by each of the main effects and the

interactions was computed to provide specific information on the magnitude of each effect and determine which of the treatment manipulations was given more weight when the impressions were formed. To arrive at proportion of explained variation, the between sum of squares for each effect was divided by the total sum of squares. This resulting proportion is represented by eta squared (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, Bent, 1975). Table 3 presents the analyses of variance, F-values, significance levels, and proportion of explained variation for the employers' responses to the employment characteristics scale.

Insert Table 3 about here

Personality

The analysis of variance indicated main effects for dress, physical condition and applicant for the personality factor (Table 3). No significant dress by physical condition interaction effect was found.

A significant main effect for dress accounted for 19 percent of the explained variation (Table 3). Duncan's Multiple Range Test (Table 4) revealed that employers rated applicants in the most appropriate and moderately appropriately dress significantly higher than the applicant dressed inappropriately. The pattern of mean scores was similar along all three levels of physical condition indicating that dress was operating in a similar manner for all applicants' ratings on the personality factor. Findings were consistent with literature that

suggests that personality traits can be differentiated on the basis of dress (Miller, Feinberg, Davis, and Rowold, 1982) and that more favorable personality characteristics may be assigned on the basis of dress (Johnson and Roach-Higgins, 1987).

Insert Table 4 about here

The main effect for physical condition which accounted for nine percent of the variation was also significant. Post hoc comparisons (Table 4) showed the applicants on crutches and in the wheelchair were rated higher on personality characteristics than the able-bodied applicant.

There are several possible explanations for this unexpected finding. One of these is that some social desirability bias may be operating. Although the magnitude of the physical condition main effect was small, these results are consistent with evidence indicating that people with disabilities are evaluated slightly more favorably than able-bodied persons as a result of the perceiver's greater need to be seen in a socially desirable light (Feinberg, 1967) or societal norms for being kind to persons with disabilities (Comer and Piliavin, 1975). Another explanation for this finding might be a difference in employers' expectations for able-bodied applicants versus disabled applicants. Employers might have come to expect certain types of behavior (e.g. dress) for able-bodied applicants but not for applicants with disabilities (Wright, 1983). As a result, the applicants with the

physical disabilities may have been given higher scores simply for making an effort to dress in a more appropriate manner. Comer and Piliavin (1975) provided a third possibility. Their research suggests that perceivers may actually believe people with disabilities possess more favorable personality characteristics as a result of coping with a major crisis such as a physical disability.

Since a significant main effect for applicant was also found for this factor accounting for ten percent of the variation, the data were rerun using a 3 X 3 X 2 factorial analysis of variance to see if the result was spurious. Applicant effect remained significant but the proportion of explained variation was reduced to two percent. This finding suggests that when information was limited, employers used physical appearance characteristics such as hair style and facial features in conjunction with dress and physical condition to arrive at an impression of personality traits.

Power

For the power factor, significant main effects were found for dress, physical condition, and applicant, and a significant dress by physical condition interaction (Table 3). The significant interaction accounted for only six percent of the explained variation.

Insert Table 5 about here

Before examining the main effects, mean scores (Table 5) for the interaction effect were plotted (Figure 1). This graph shows that

dress is operating in a manner consistent with the literature for the able-bodied applicant (Molloy, 1977; Forsythe, 1981; Workman 1984-85;). As the level of appropriateness of dress decreased the attribution of traits related to power also decreased. A significant interaction effect occurred because dress did not operate in this manner for the disabled conditions. Specifically, the applicants on crutches and in the wheelchair were rated higher on power characteristics when wearing the moderately appropriate dress (dark jacket and pants).

Insert Figure 2 about here

Returning to the main effects, Table 3 shows that clothing accounted for most of the explained variation at 15 percent. Duncan's Multiple Range Test for the dress main effect revealed that while ratings for the most appropriate and moderately appropriate levels of dress were not significantly different from each other, they were significantly different from the inappropriate dress level (Table 4).

The main effect for physical condition accounted for only four percent of the variation. Post hoc comparisons (Table 3) revealed that employers' rated the applicant on crutches significantly higher that the able-bodied applicant. Mean scores for the applicant in the wheelchair were between the other two levels of physical condition but not significantly different from either.

A significant main effect for applicant accounted for 11 percent of the variation. Further examination using the 3 X 3 X 2 analysis of

variance, revealed no significant applicant effect suggesting that the earlier result may have been spurious.

Perception of characteristics relating to power appeared to be more affected by the dress manipulation than by level of physical condition or applicant as evidenced by the greater proportion of variation explained by dress. This finding is consistent with research that indicates that dress influences perceptions of power characteristics for able-bodied female applicants (Williams, 1977).

In addition, ratings of personality characteristics for all applicants in all levels of physical condition were consistently higher than ratings of power traits on the nine-point response scales with mean scores for power traits clustered around the mid-point (Table 5). These results suggest that perceivers may be using the same cues but in different ways to form impressions of personality and power traits. On the basis of limited information, subjects in this study assigned higher values on the personality factor than on the power factor regardless of dress or physical condition manipulation. One possible explanation for the lower mean scores for power is that the applicants were young females.

Competence

Analysis of variance revealed main effects for dress, physical condition, and applicant (Table 3). A significant main effect for dress accounted for 12 percent of the variation. Post hoc tests showed that this effect resulted from subjects rating the applicant in the inappropriate dress significantly lower than the applicants in the

other dress conditions (Table 4). Examination of the table of means (Table 5) showed an expected pattern of scores for the able-bodied applicant with the mean score for this applicant dropping sharply with each level of dress. Although means for the applicants on crutches and in the wheelchair followed a similar pattern, their scores did not drop as sharply for the dress manipulation. It is possible, as Golin's (1970) research pointed out, that the presentation of favorable information (e.g. dress) reduced the stereotypically negative ratings of the applicants with the disabilities. This finding is consistent with research indicating that dress is capable of influencing judgments of competence (Johnson and Roach-Higgins, 1987). It appears that dress is operating in a similar manner for all applicants on the competence factors.

In addition, there was a main effect for physical condition on this factor. The variation accounted for by physical condition was low at four percent. Post hoc analysis of the means (Table 4) again revealed that subjects rated the applicant on crutches and in the wheelchair significantly higher than the able-bodied on competence. This is interesting to note because some authors (Goffman, 1963; Wright 1983) have indicated that traits relating to competence are not typically assigned to individuals with physical disabilities. Again, it is possible that subjects reported socially desirable responses.

After re-examining the applicant effect in light of the 3 X 3 X 2 analysis of variance, it was no longer significant and accounted for a

negligible amount of the variation. This further analysis indicates that the original applicant effect was most likely spurious.

Finally, mean scores for this factor (Tables 4 and 5) were also clustered around the mid-point or neutral range in comparison to the mean scores for personality. Research indicating that men are generally thought to be more competent than women (particularly young women) with respect to work behavior offers one explanation for this pattern (Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, and Vogel, 1972). Sex-role stereotypes tend to foster the idea that women are poorly equipped to successfully handle managerial job responsibilities (Heilman and Guzzo, 1978).

Professionalism

For this factor, analysis of variance revealed main effects for dress, physical condition, and applicant, and a significant dress by physical condition interaction (Table 3). The significant interaction effect accounted for 11 percent of the variation. Mean scores for the interaction effect were plotted in Figure 2. This graph shows that dress is operating in a similar manner for the able-bodied applicant and the applicant on crutches. For these two applicants, the impression of professionalism decreased as the level of appropriateness of dress decreased. The significant interaction effect occurred because dress did not operate in the same manner for the wheelchair condition. The applicant in the wheelchair was rated higher on professionalism when wearing the moderately appropriate dress. This

might be explained by the employers' perceptions of pants as necessary to cover some deformity or for convenience or modesty purposes.

Insert Figure 3 about here

Analysis of variance (Table 3) revealed that the significant main effect for dress accounted for 44 percent of the explained variation indicating that dress was the cue given the most weight when forming impressions related to professionalism. Post hoc analysis (Table 4) showed that employers rated the applicant wearing the inappropriate dress significantly lower than the applicant in the most appropriate and moderately appropriate dress which were not significantly different from each other. These ratings were consistent across the physical condition manipulations. This finding supports the assumption that the most appropriate dress level (represented by a jacket and skirt in this study) is conveying impressions of traits related to professionalism such as businesslike and efficient (Molloy, 1977).

Only a slight significant main effect for physical condition was found accounting for 2 percent of the variation (Table 3). Duncan's Multiple Range Test presented in Table 4 indicates that the applicant on crutches was rated significantly higher than the able-bodied applicant. The score for the applicant in the wheelchair fell between the scores for the other two applicants but it was not significantly different from either.

A main effect for applicant was found but upon further analysis using the 3 X 3 X 2 analysis of variance, applicant effect was negated. This is an indication that the original finding was most likely spurious.

Management Potential

A composite score was obtained for the management potential scale by summing the responses to the six questions. Reliability using Crohnbach's Alpha for the management potential scale was found to be .861.

Table 3 presents the analysis of variance F-values, significance levels, and proportion of explained variation for the management potential scale. Analysis of variance revealed significant main effects for dress, physical condition, and applicant, and a significant dress by physical condition interaction. The significant interaction accounted for only six percent of the explained variation.

Insert Table 6 about here

Mean scores for the significant dress X physical condition interaction were plotted (Figure 3). This graph shows that dress was operating in a similar manner for the able-bodied applicant and the applicant on crutches. For these two applicants, the impression of management potential decreased as the level of appropriateness of dress decreased (Table 6). The interaction occurred because dress did not operate in the same manner for the applicant in the wheelchair.

Employers rated the applicant in the wheelchair higher on management potential when in the moderately appropriate level of dress.

Insert Figure 4 about here

For the dress main effect, Duncan's Multiple Range Test showed that subjects' rated the applicant in the inappropriate dress significantly lower than either the applicant in the most appropriate dress or the moderately appropriate dress (Table 7). These latter two means were not significantly different from each other. Dress effect accounted for 25 percent of the variation. This finding is consistent with the literature which indicates a perceived connection between "businesslike" clothing and the attainment of success on the job (Ericksen and Sirgy, 1985).

Insert Table 7 about here

The significant main effect for physical condition accounted for only five percent of the variation. Post hoc tests presented in Table 7 reveal that the ratings for the applicant on crutches and the applicant in the wheelchair were not significantly different from each other but were significantly higher than the mean for the able-bodied applicant. Jaffe (1967) provides one plausible explanation. His research indicated that ratings of individuals with disabilities were more favorable when the amount of information presented about

individual was increased. Since videotapes were used to elicit the impressions, it is possible that the amount of information provided by these tapes may have contributed to the more favorable ratings of the applicants with the disabilities. The positive information provided by dress may also have had some bearing (Golin, 1970).

Further examination of main effects for applicant using the 3 X 3 X 2 factorial design, revealed that the applicant effect remained significant but accounted for only four percent of the variation. This is an indication that respondents were again utilizing dress as a primary cue on which to base judgments of management potential.

Demographic Variables

One-way analysis of variance was performed on the following demographic variables, sex, age, education level, occupation, and work and personal experience with persons with physical disabilities to examine their influence on impressions of employment characteristics and management potential. To simplify analysis, sixteen occupations were collapsed into three groups according to the Industrial Classification Code devised by the College Placement Council (1986-87).

No significant differences were found for any of the dependent measures with respect to sex, age, or education level, or occupation of the respondents. No significant differences were detected among the ratings of employers who had work or personal experience with persons with disabilities and those who had not. It appears that these groups are utilizing cues in a similar manner to form impressions of female job applicants.

Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale

The Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale (ATDP) (Yuker, Block, and Campbell, 1960) was administered to determine the sample's general attitudes toward people with disabilities and to investigate the relationship between their attitudes and impressions of the applicants.

The ATDP, Form A, is a Likert-type scale containing 30 statements that refer to physically disabled persons in general. Subjects respond to each item on a six-point response scale (+3 though -3) and a single total score is derived. To arrive at this composite score, the sign of the items with positive wording is changed, the algebraic sum for all items is obtained and the sign of this sum is reversed. To eliminate negative values, a constant of 90 is added. The resulting score range is from 0 to 180 with a higher score indicating more positive attitudes toward persons with disabilities.

Reliability data for the instrument has been reported to range from .66 to .89. The scale is also supported as valid based on construct validity (Elston, 1981). While the scale is reputed to be both reliable and valid as well as the instrument being the most widely used to measure attitudes toward disabled persons, there are inconsistencies in the findings throughout the literature.

Table 8 presents a summary of the results of the ATDP. No significant relationships could be found between expressed attitudes and subjects' impressions of the applicants for any of the dependent measures. No significant differences were found with respect to any of the demographic variables. Perhaps these results could be attributed

to an interaction effect between some of the demographic variables and other variables uncontrolled in this study. Noonan, Barry, and Davis (1970) and Livneh (1982) suggest that there are numerous personality characteristics of perceivers, characteristics of the observed person, and environmental influences which interact with each other to determine attitudes.

Insert Table 8 about here

These results are not particularly surprising in light of previous research (see Elston, 1981 for comprehensive review of the literature). It is also possible that respondents were not expressing their true feelings toward persons with disabilities out of the need to present themselves in a socially desirable light (Feinberg, 1967). Elston (1981, 10) cited this bias as a limitation of the scale.

There is another possible explanation for the lack of significant findings. Comments from respondents revealed the following problems with the ATDP item list and its response scale. Subjects in the present study reported that the answer sheet was confusing in the way it was set up (+3 to -3 Likert-type response scale) and many were not sure if they had answered in the correct way. The questions, while intended to measure general attitudes, may not be specific enough. Respondents in this study were not sure if all questions related to physically disabled individuals and many commented that items were unclear. Subjects also commented that they would answer very

differently if the items concerned the mentally disabled versus the physically disabled. Since the response scale was a six-point Likert-type scale with no neutral response, subjects tended to choose the middle options (-1 or +1). And in some cases, they refused to give their opinions on some items. Elston (1981) cited these problems as limitations in his study.

Even though this scale is widely used, there are obvious limitations in generalizing any findings. While a scale of this type is very beneficial to many researchers, the present scale needs further refinement or a new scale needs to be developed that will overcome the limitations cited above.

Summary

The results of this study lend continued support for research in this area and for information presented in the popular literature. Past research indicates that appropriate dress is essential in creating the right impression. Johnson and Roach-Higgins (1987, 7) concluded that college recruiters believe that those applicants "who will work well within their own companies are those who are aware of dress standards and dress accordingly".

Analysis of variance yielded significant interactions for the power, professionalism, and management potential factors. However, the proportion of variation explained by these interactions was relatively low.

Data presented suggest a powerful dress effect. The fact that a wide spectrum of individuals were forming similar impressions of

employment characteristics and management potential indicates that dress was indeed a primary cue used. The proportion of the variation accounted for by dress was consistently higher than the proportion accounted for by the other independent variables.

For all dependent measures, the mean scores for the able-bodied applicant followed a pattern consistent with the literature. Means for the able-bodied stimuli were always highest when in the most appropriate dress, the traditional dark jacket and skirt, and lowest when in the inappropriate dress, a sweater and pants. However, the mean scores for the able-bodied applicant in the most appropriate and moderately appropriate levels of dress were not significantly different from each other. This finding suggests that the notion presented in the popular literature that pants are unacceptable apparel for a job interview (Molloy, 1977) may not be entirely accurate.

For the applicant on crutches, the pattern was not as consistent. Mean scores for this applicant were higher for the personality, competence, professionalism, and management potential factors when she was dressed most appropriately. However, for the power factor, the mean (while not significantly different) was higher when the applicant was in the moderately appropriate dress (jacket and pants). This finding suggests that the moderately appropriate dress while not as effective for an able-bodied person, is effective for a female applicant with a physical disability who wishes to convey traits associated with power. It is plausible that employers may have perceived the disability to be permanent instead of temporary or

perhaps they decided that the pants were necessary to cover some type of deformity and were therefore appropriate.

For the applicant in the wheelchair, there was also some inconsistency among the scores. This applicant was rated higher when wearing the moderately appropriate dress (jacket and pants) for all variables except competence. The applicant was rated higher on competence when wearing the most appropriate dress (dark jacket and skirt). However, it must be kept in mind that the means for the most appropriate and moderately appropriate levels of dress were not significantly different. This finding suggests that employers may have indeed come to believe that the traditional business suit (tailored jacket and skirt) is most appropriate. Employers may believe that the traditional jacket and skirt should be worn to convey the message that, upon experience, the employee is aware of the norms for business dress (Johnson and Roach-Higgins, 1987).

Based on an examination of the proportion of variation explained by dress, it is also evident that this study provides some empirical support for the theory that situation-appropriate clothing, in the presence of an inconsistent cue (physical disability) may be able to influence the salience of the other cue and the subsequent impression formed (see Model, Chapter 2). It seems that dress provided salient positive appearance cues sufficient to override the negative information provided by the disability. It is possible that the physical disability became less figural in the job interview context when applicants were dressed appropriately. Furthermore, appropriate

dress may have encouraged the employers to consider the situation (e.g. job interview) when rating the applicants. This consideration may have lessened the impact of the disability. Dress appears to be a greater influence than physical condition on traits related to impressions of power and professionalism than on traits related to personality and competence. On judgments of management potential and subsequent decisions to hire, dress had a greater impact than the presence of a physical disability.

Overall, the magnitude of the physical condition effect was low in comparison to the magnitude of the dress effect. These findings suggest that physical condition was not the primary cue used to form impressions of the female job applicants. One possible explanation for this finding is that interviewers who are experts in evaluating prospective employees on a variety of cues (verbal, nonverbal, resumes, etc.) have learned to avoid making judgments based on a physical condition over which the individual has no control (Johnson and Roach-Higgins, 1987). Instead, they may have come to base their judgments on cues which can be manipulated, such as dress, and which they may now believe to be better predictors of future behavior. If this is the case, then dress should be very effective in conveying a more appropriate image to an interviewer.

The higher scores for the applicants with the physical disabilities suggests that some additional factor or factors may be operating. Social-desirability bias is one possibility (Feinberg, 1967). Several studies have pointed out this bias as a definite and

pervasive influence on responses to scales (Taylor, 1961; Feinberg, 1967; Livneh, 1982). Feinberg (1967) went so far as to state that some of the inconsistency of research findings concerning attitudes toward the physically disabled may have been due to the biasing effects of social desirability.

However, since it is not possible to determine whether social desirability bias is responsible and not any one of several other perceiver characteristics, other explanations seem more likely. Findings presented by Comer and Piliavin (1975) suggest that able-bodied individuals do indeed rate people with disabilities more favorably than the nondisabled on some traits such as trustworthiness and intelligence. However, on traits related to power and success, the able-bodied repondents rated individuals with disabilities less favorably than the nondisabled (Comer and Piliavin, 1975).

In addition, an explanation consistent with the findings of Jaffe (1967) and Golin (1970) is also plausible. According to Jaffe (1967) and Golin (1970), it is possible that the amount and type of information presented about the individuals with the disabilities had an impact on their responses. Since respondents viewed a tape and made no direct contact with the individuals with the physical disabilities, they may have been more likely to rate the disabled applicants more favorably than the able-bodied applicant. Finally, it is possible that the models portraying the disabled applicants in the present study did not actually "look" disabled.

For two of the five dependent variables, personality and management potential, applicant effect remained significant after the data were rerun using a 3 X 3 X 2 analysis of variance. Although the relative magnitude of the applicant main effects were low in comparison to dress, this finding suggests that facial expression, posture, or demeanor are also utilized when forming an impression of traits related to personality and management potential and must be considered when wishing to convey a desired impression. These results are consistent and provide continued support for current impression formation theories which suggest that numerous physical appearance cues are taken into consideration when developing impressions of others (Lennon and Miller, 1984-85).

Conclusions

While it is still quite obvious that the traditional tailored suit (jacket and skirt) is most acceptable, it appears that a tailored jacket and pants are also acceptable since post hoc tests revealed no significant differences between the most appropriate and moderately appropriate levels of dress for any of the dependent variables. From a practical standpoint, it is encouraging that a jacket worn with pants appears to be quite acceptable for women with physical disabilities when applying for business and professional positions since this type of dress may be preferred for convenience or modesty purposes.

In addition, the revision of the ATDP or the development of a new scale to tap attitudes toward disabled persons might reveal other dimensions underlying the formation of impressions regarding persons

with disabilities. A measure of perceivers' social desirability needs might also offer some insight since this bias seems to be a decisive variable in attitude measurement (Feinberg, 1967). Utilizing the ATDP scale in conjunction with a scale to measure other personality variables (e.g. ethnocentrism, aggression, self-concept, etc.) might also provide insight into the relationship between attitudes and impressions.

Implications of this research pertain particularly to rehabilitation counselors and others working with persons with physical disabilities as well as those in the field of clothing design. The significance of clothing to the rehabilitation and employment process should not be overlooked since it has been shown to be important to the self-presentation of persons with disabilities. Rehabilitation workers may need to make individuals with disabilities aware of the importance of dress during a job interview. Designers and retailers need to provide clothing items for people with disabilities that make it possible for them to convey a more professional image during a job interview.

Since individuals with disabilities often find it difficult to obtain suitable apparel because of their special needs, nonverbal cues provided by inappropriate clothing may be sending negative information to perceivers. As a result, their clothing also deviates from the norm and reinforces the perception of negative characteristics associated with deviance from physical norms.

The manipulation of clothing cues to create a more consistent image in the mind of the perceiver may lead to the assignment of more positive traits. If clothing is appropriate, normative, and attractive, it may draw attention away from the disability.

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TABLE 1

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS FOR DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES FOR EMPLOYERS

Demographic Variable	N
Sex:	
Males	80
Females	100
Age:	
Under 30	42
30-39	58
40-49	44
Over 50	36
Education:	
High school diploma	56
2 to 4 years of college	89
Graduate study	35
Occupation:	
Employers in industry	34
Employers in health and education	40
Employers in business	106
Work Experience with Persons with Disabilities	
Yes	116
No	64
Personal Experience with Persons with Disabilities	
Yes	142
No	38

TABLE 2

FACTOR LOADINGS FOR EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

	Employment Characteristics	Factor Loadings			
		Personality	Power	Competence	Professionalism
5	Intelligent	.51210			
10	Consistent	.45390			
11	Self-Reliant	.50714			
17	Dependable	.80601			
18	Responsible	.81407			
19	Effective	.55618			
20	Stable	.81301			
21	Cooperative	.83026			
22	Trustworthy	.84887			
6	Powerful		.72530		
7	Strong		.68536		
8	Aggressive		.83837		
9	Bold		.82886		
12	Forceful		.78223		
13	Dynamic		.66486		
14	Decisive		.62871		
1	Expert			.77168	
2	Experienced			.81570	
4	Successful			.64542	
3	Professional				.61635
15	Businesslike				.79037
16	Efficient				.60084
Eigenvalue		11.17	2.47	1.24	1.01

TABLE 3

ANALYSES OF VARIANCE, F-VALUES, SIGNIFICANCE LEVELS AND PROPORTION OF EXPLAINED VARIATION FOR RESPONSES OF EMPLOYERS

	Dress Effect				Physical Condition Effect				Interaction				Applicant Effect			
	DF	F-Value	Signif-icance	ETA^2	DF	F-Value	Signif-icance	ETA^2	DF	F-Value	Signif-icance	ETA^2	DF	F-Value	Signif-icance	ETA^2
Employment Characteristics:																
Personality	2	26.59	.0001	.19	2	13.38	.0001	.09	4	1.63	NS	.02	9	1.63	.0032	.10
Power	2	19.48	.0001	.15	2	5.61	.0044	.04	4	3.63	.0073	.06	9	3.01	.0024	.11
Competence	2	14.26	.0001	.12	2	4.38	.0140	.04	4	1.67	NS	.03	9	3.43	.0007	.13
Professionalism	2	94.61	.0001	.44	2	3.68	.0274	.02	4	12.19	.0001	.11	9	2.59	.0082	.05
Management Potential	2	38.87	.0001	.25	2	8.32	.0004	.05	4	4.91	.0009	.06	9	4.91	.0003	.11

TABLE 4

MEAN SCORES AND DUNCAN'S MULTIPLE RANGE TEST FOR EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Independent Variables	Factor							
	Personality		Power		Competence		Professionalism	
	Mean	Duncan's Test	Mean	Duncan's Test	Mean	Duncan's Test	Mean	Duncan's Test
Dress								
Most appropriate	6.74	A	5.18	A	5.47	A	6.99	A
Moderately appropriate	6.77	A	5.12	A	5.04	A	7.00	A
Inappropriate	5.43	B	3.77	B	4.05	B	4.27	B
Physical Condition								
Able-Bodied	5.69	B	4.26	B	4.41	B	5.74	B
Crutches	6.69	A	5.12	A	4.97	A	6.34	A
Wheelchair	6.56	A	4.69	AB	5.19	A	6.18	AB

Note: N per cell = 60

Maximum score = 9

Means with same letter are not significantly different.

TABLE 5

MEAN SCORES FOR EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS FOR DRESS BY PHYSICAL CONDITION

Physical Condition	Dress		
	Most Appropriate	Moderately Appropriate	Inappropriate
Variable: Personality			
Able-Bodied	6.42	6.06	4.58
Crutches	7.28	7.01	5.77
Wheelchair	6.59	7.15	5.93
Variable: Power			
Able-bodied	5.48	4.46	2.86
Crutches	5.21	5.79	4.36
Wheelchair	4.68	5.29	4.09
Variable: Competence			
Able-bodied	5.31	4.80	3.10
Crutches	5.53	4.82	4.57
Wheelchair	5.52	5.51	4.48
Variable: Professionalism			
Able-bodied	7.37	7.08	2.77
Crutches	7.38	6.92	4.72
Wheelchair	6.25	6.97	5.32

TABLE 6

MEAN SCORES FOR MANAGEMENT POTENTIAL FOR DRESS
BY PHYSICAL CONDITION

Physical Condition	Dress		
	Most Appropriate	Moderately Appropriate	Inappropriate
Variable:			
Management Potential			
Able-Bodied	6.45	5.42	3.89
Crutches	6.58	6.51	4.93
Wheelchair	5.93	6.58	5.43

TABLE 7

MEAN SCORES AND DUNCAN'S MULTIPLE RANGE TEST FOR MANAGEMENT POTENTIAL

Independent Variables	Mean	
	Management Potential	
	Mean	Duncan's Test
Dress		
Most appropriate	6.21	A
Moderately appropriate	6.32	A
Inappropriate	4.75	B
Physical Condition		
Able-Bodied	5.29	B
Crutches	6.01	A
Wheelchair	5.98	A

Note: N per cell = 60

Maximum score = 9

Means with same letter are not significant.

TABLE 8

MEAN ATDP SCORES BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS FOR EMPLOYERS

Demographic Variable	N	ATDP
Sex:		
Males	80	124
Females	100	126
Age:		
Under 30	42	126
30-39	58	125
40-49	44	130
Over 50	36	117
Education:		
High school diploma	56	125
2 to 4 years of college	89	123
Graduate study	35	130
Occupation:		
Employers in industry	34	121
Employers in health and education	40	119
Employers in business	106	128
Work Experience with Persons with Disabilities:		
Yes	116	127
No	64	122
Personal Experience with Persons with Disabilities:		
Yes	142	125
No	38	126

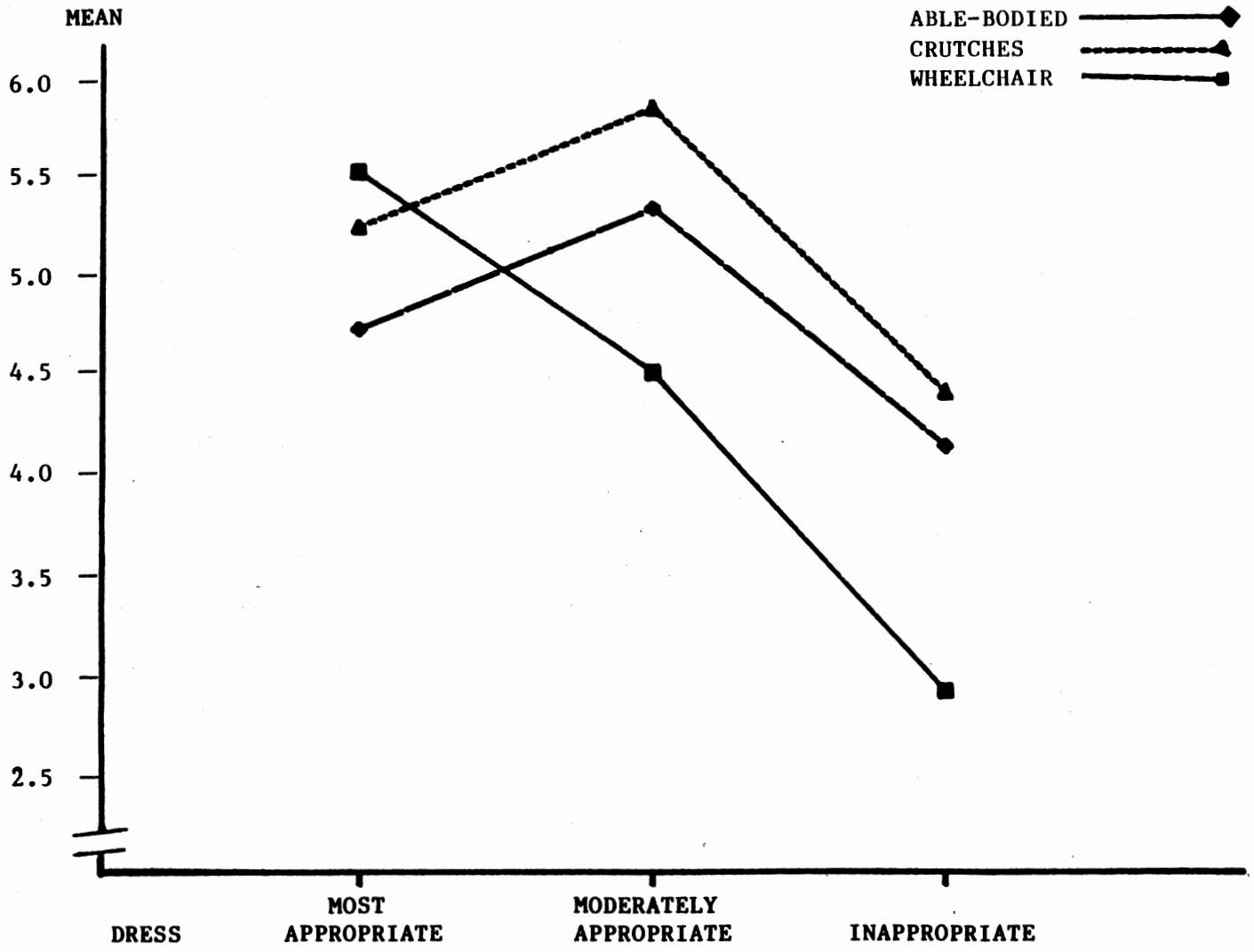

Figure 2. Dress by Physical Condition Interaction for Power

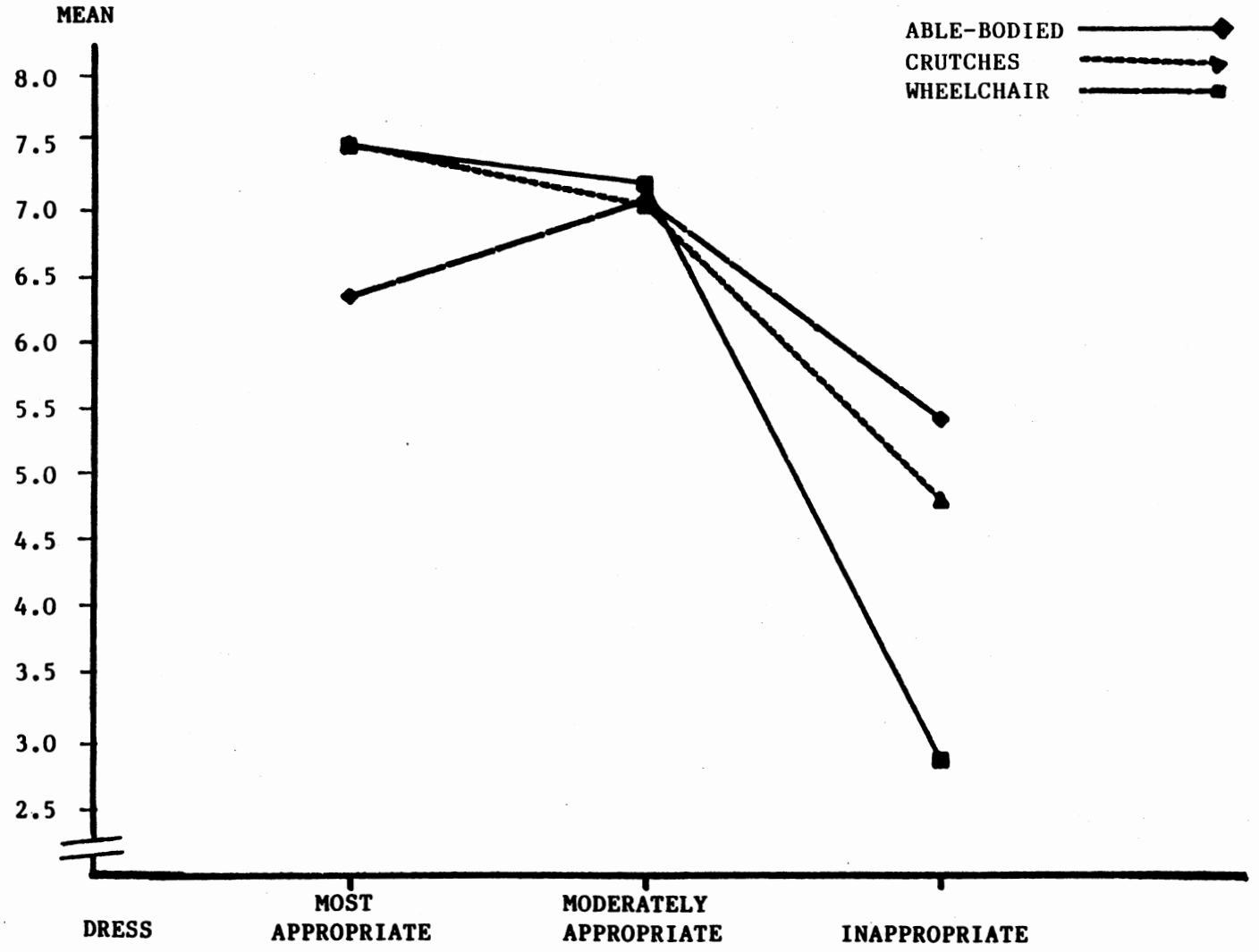

Figure 3. Dress by Physical Condition Interaction for Professionalism

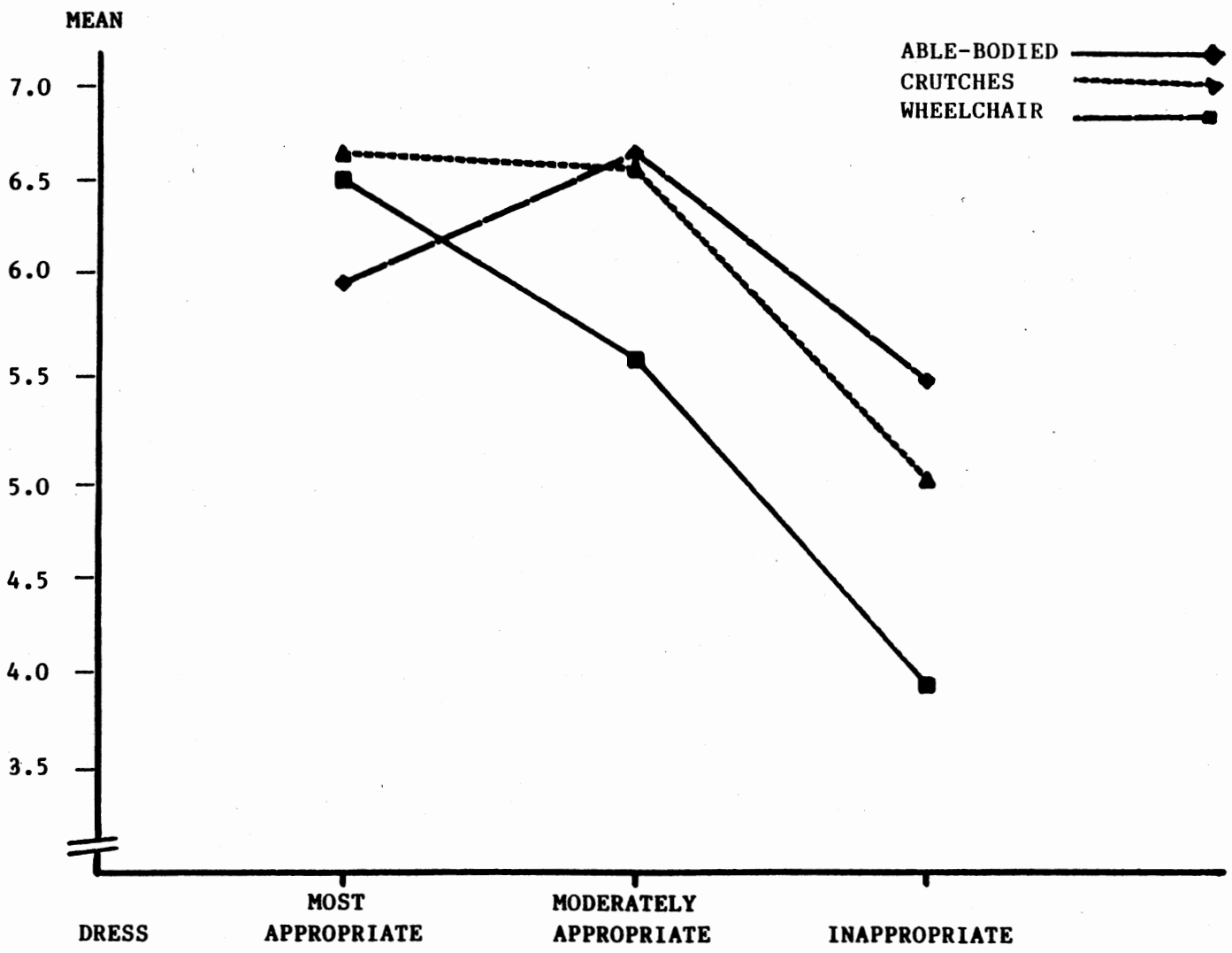

Figure 4. Dress by Physical Condition Interaction for Management Potential

CHAPTER V

REHABILITATION PERSONNEL AND DISABLED STUDENTS: PERCEPTIONS OF FEMALE JOB APPLICANTS

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and

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Request for reprints and copies of the videotapes should be sent to the first author who is now at the Consumer Affairs Department, Auburn University, 324 Spidle Hall, Auburn, Alabama, 36849.

Running Head: Physical Disability and Dress

Abstract

A dress (appropriate and inappropriate for a job interview) by physical condition (able-bodied and wheelchair) factorial design was used to examine rehabilitations personnel's and students' with disabilities perceptions of female job applicants. Impression formation theory formed the theory base for this examination of the way perceivers utilize nonverbal cues to assign traits to others. Four videotapes of a female job applicant in combinations of the two levels of dress and the two levels of physical condition were used. Subjects rated the applicant on the employment characteristics, personality, power, competence, and professionalism, and on management potential. Rehabilitation personnel rated the applicant significantly higher when dressed appropriately than when dressed inappropriately for all dependent measures. No significant differences were found with respect to physical condition. The student sample rated the applicant significantly higher when dressed appropriately than when dressed inappropriately for all dependent measures except competence. The students rated the applicant in the wheelchair significantly higher only on ratings of personality traits. Findings lend continued support for research that suggests that dress is capable of conveying positive information to perceivers. Results indicated that dress was the most powerful influence on the responses of both groups in this study. This information is particularly relevant to rehabilitation personnel who are counseling people with physical disabilities. It appears that dress might be very useful in improving the rehabilitation and employment potential of individuals with disabilities.

MANUSCRIPT TWO FOR PUBLICATION

REHABILITATION PERSONNEL AND DISABLED STUDENTS: PERCEPTIONS OF FEMALE JOB APPLICANTS

Introduction

In the job interview situation, information available to interviewers about prospective employees is usually limited. As a result, interviewers often make their hiring decisions largely on the basis of impressions formed from information provided by nonverbal cues (Hatfield and Gatewood, 1978). Physical appearance has been shown to be a significant nonverbal cue used in impression formation (Miller, 1982; Lennon and Miller, 1983-84; Ray, 1986; Christman, 1987).

During the job interview situation, dress represents one particularly salient source of information about the applicant. Research indicates that the impression of personal and employment characteristics can be conveyed through dress (Johnson and Roach-Higgins, 1987). It has been well established that dress is useful in improving the impression of employment potential for able-bodied women applying for business and professional positions (Dillon, 1980; Forsythe, Drake, and Cox, 1984; Rucker, Taber, and Harrison, 1981; Workman, 1984-85). This notion has also been reported extensively in the popular literature which has gone as far as recommending specific prescriptives for dress which will make the best initial impression on interviewers (Molloy, 1977). Rucker, Taber, and

Harrison (1981, 63) observed that "while people typically fail to recognize specific dress cues as determinants of their impressions", dress is still a critical factor in the job interview situation.

The presence of a visible physical disability provides another source of salient information about an individual. In a society where physical appearance is greatly emphasized, people with physical disabilities appear to be at a relative disadvantage during first impressions situations, particularly the job interview. Individuals with disabilities often appear different from society's norms for physical attractiveness. As a result, the presence of the disability tends to evoke the impression that all people with disabilities are inferior, less intelligent, less emotionally stable, and not able to function properly in the workplace (Langer, Fiske, Taylor, and Chanowitz, 1976; Wright, 1983).

Elston (1981) reported that the success of rehabilitating an individual for employment may rest ultimately with the employer's willingness to hire someone with a disability. Rehabilitation must begin, though, with rehabilitation personnel and with the individual himself. Before seeking employment, it is often necessary to provide rehabilitation services such as adjustment counseling, vocational counseling and vocational training (Elston, 1981).

In the past, clothing and appearance guidance has been overlooked as a rehabilitation tool even though research suggests that dress plays an important role in the way people with disabilities view themselves (Reich, 1976; Feather, Martin, and Miller, 1979;) and the way they are

viewed by others (Miller, 1982; Ray, 1986; Christman, 1987). Rusk and Taylor (1953, 35) pointed out the significance of dress to rehabilitation and social interaction stating that dress "helps to minimize the appearance of disability". Rusk and Taylor (1953) believed that the selection of appropriate dress was even more important for individuals with disabilities than for the able-bodied. Brown (1977), Fowler (1977), and Holder (1979) also endorsed the importance of dress as a rehabilitation tool. These researchers concluded that dress was capable of improving the self-concept and self-confidence of individuals with disabilities and appropriate clothing would not set them further apart from society.

Further research indicates that dress can be successfully used by females with physical disabilities to improve self-presentation during a job interview. Christman (1987) examined the impact of dress and physical disability on employers' perceptions of female job applicants. The data presented suggested a powerful dress effect and indicated that dress was the primary cue used to arrive at impressions of employment characteristics and judgments of management potential. Findings presented by Christman (1987) indicated that, for female applicants with physical disabilities, dress significantly improved the employers' ratings of the personality, powerfulness, competence, professionalism, and management potential of the applicants. Furthermore, from a practical standpoint, it appeared that a tailored jacket and pants were also quite acceptable attire for women with physical disabilities when applying for business and professional positions. This is encouraging

since this type of dress may be preferred for modesty or convenience purposes.

Since appearance training is not often stressed in rehabilitation programs, it is possible that people with disabilities and rehabilitation personnel are unaware of the role that dress may play in the employment process for individuals with disabilities. This research examined the impact of physical disability and dress on rehabilitation personnel and students with disabilities perceptions' of female job applicants in a simulated interview situation.

Method

Experimental Design and Independent Variables

The experiment followed a 2 x 2 factorial design. The two independent variables manipulated were dress (appropriate and inappropriate for an entry-level management position) and physical condition (a woman with no visible physical disability and a woman in a wheelchair).

To determine the two levels of dress for the videotapes, eight line drawings were made such that hairstyle, pose, and facial expression were held constant. Folders were constructed containing the eight sketches, two nine-point scales (employment characteristics and appropriateness of dress for employment position), instructions, and biographical information about the applicant in the sketch. Thirty students in a fashion merchandising program responded to the pretest instruments.

Based on the results of the pretest, two levels of dress were specified. The appropriate level was a traditional dark tailored jacket paired with dark tailored pants. The inappropriate level consisted of a light-colored sweater, tank top, and pants (Appendix A).

The two levels of physical condition were specified for the following reasons. An applicant with no visible physical disability was chosen as a control. The wheelchair manipulation was chosen to represent a permanent, obvious physical disability that tends to have negative social connotations attached to it.

Development of the Stimulus Tapes

During videotape production, camera angles, facial expressions, and physical movements were controlled. Although the tapes were recorded without sound, a script was used so that each of the nine segments was identical to all others except for manipulation of the independent variables. The applicant entered the waiting room of an interviewer's office, handed a resume to a secretary, and was given a form to fill out. The applicant proceeded to seat herself at a table, filled out the form and then returned it to the secretary. Showing time for each segment was approximately two minutes. All segments were shown in black and white so as not to introduce color as a biasing factor.

Dependent Measures

Part I of the instrument (Appendix B) consisted of adjectives that describe employment characteristics. These adjectives were taken from

Rucker, McGee, Hopkins, Harrison, and Utts (1985), Forsythe, Drake, and Hogan (1985), Ericksen and Sirgy, (1985), and Hakel and Schuh (1971).

Part II (Appendix B) was adapted from Johnson (1984) and assessed the subjects' perceptions of the management potential of the applicant. Two items were deleted and the scale was changed from a five-point to a nine-point scale.

Part III (Appendix E) consisted of demographic information. Questions on sex, age, education, type of disability and number of years with disability were included for the population of students with disabilities. Questions on sex, age, and education were included for the rehabilitation personnel (Appendix F).

A job description and brief biography of the applicant was included which described her as a recipient of a B.S. degree in Personnel Management from Oklahoma State University with a G.P.A. of 3.23/4.0 (Appendix B). She was also described as a participant in an internship program with an insurance company and a member of the Management Club. This biography was adapted from Johnson (1984).

Part IV (Appendix D) consisted of the Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons scale as developed by Yuker, Block, and Campbell (1960). This scale was used to measure subjects' attitudes toward persons with physical disabilities as a group in general, rather than specific disability groups. An attempt was made to locate the norms that accompany the scale but a copy was unavailable.

Pilot Test

The instrument was pilot tested during a previous study by

Christman (1987) using 36 employees in business or professional positions in companies located in a large midwestern city. No terminology or clarity problems occurred for the employment characteristics or management potential scale. There were some clarity problems with the ATDP scale, but due to copyright restrictions, the instrument was not changed. Completion time was 15 to 20 minutes.

Procedures

Data Collection

Subjects were divided as equally as possible according to the number of participants at each site and were then randomly assigned to view only one of the four segments. After viewing one two-minute segment each subject was given a folder containing instructions, a job description, the applicant's credentials and Parts I, II, III of the instrument. After completing and returning the first instruments, the ATDP was administered so as not to alert anyone to the true nature of the study.

Samples

Four universities in central Illinois with Offices for Disabled Student Concerns were contacted to determine if rehabilitation personnel would be willing to participate in the study. Rehabilitation personnel from two of these offices consented to participate. College students were selected to respond because they have the potential for being employed in the occupations under investigation in this study. For reasons of confidentiality, letters were sent from these two offices to their disabled student clients to determine if they would be

willing to participate. The Offices of Disabled Student Concerns at each university also provided the names of four other local agencies involved in rehabilitation programs for people with physical disabilities. Rehabilitation personnel were contacted at these agencies by telephone to determine if they would be willing to participate in the study. A total of forty rehabilitation personnel, 20 from the two agencies and 20 from the two universities consented to participate. In addition, twenty students with disabilities consented to participate.

Findings

The twenty-two employment characteristics were subjected to factorial analysis in a previous study (Christman, 1987). A principal components factorial analysis with varimax rotation yielded four factors with eigenvalues greater than one (Table 9). The following factors resulted from the analysis in the previous study.

Insert Table 9 about here

The group of characteristics with the highest loadings on Factor 1 was labeled "personality", the group with the highest loadings on Factor 2, "power", the group with the highest loadings on Factor 3, "competence", and the group with the highest loadings on Factor 4, "professionalism" (Christman, 1987). These factors were used to analyze the data in the present study and subjected to reliability analysis using the responses from the rehabilitation personnel and the

students. Reliability of the 22-item employment characteristics scale as a whole was determined by Cronbach's Alpha and found to be .958 for rehabilitation personnel responses and .951 for the disabled student population (Stanley, 1971). Since the factor analysis of the characteristics created four new scales to measure each of these factors, Cronbach's Alpha was used again as a measure of reliability. The reliability of these scales was .941 for rehabilitation personnel and .863 for disabled students responses on personality; .900 for rehabilitation personnel and .959 for disabled students' responses on power; .912 for rehabilitation personnel and .891 for disabled students' responses' on competence; and .884 for rehabilitation personnel responses and .725 for disabled students' responses on professional. Reliability of the management potential scale was found to be .850 for rehabilitation personnel responses and .764 for disabled students' responses.

A mean score for each subject for each factor was obtained by summing the raw score for each employment characteristic contributing to each factor and then dividing by the number of characteristics contributing to the factor. The scores ranged from one to nine, with a higher score denoting a more favorable rating. A 2-way analysis of variance (dress by physical condition) was performed on each factor to determine the effects of the independent variables on the subjects' ratings. The proportion of variation explained by each of the main effects and the interactions was computed to provide specific information on the magnitude of each effect and determine which of the

treatment manipulations (dress or physical condition) was given more weight when forming the impressions. To arrive at the proportion of explained variation, the between sum of squares for each effect was divided by the total sum of squares. This resulting proportion is represented by eta squared (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, and Bent, 1975).

Rehabilitation Personnel Responses

Table 10 presents the analyses of variance, F-values, significance levels, and proportion of explained variation (eta squared) for the rehabilitation personnel responses to the employment characteristics and management potential scales.

Insert Table 10 about here

Analysis of variance revealed significant main effects for dress for all dependent measures (Table 10). No significant main effects for physical condition and no significant interactions were found. The table of means (Table 11) revealed that rehabilitation personnel rated the applicant in the appropriate dress significantly higher than the applicant in the inappropriate dress on characteristics related to personality, power, competence, professionalism, and management potential.

Insert Table 11 about here

These findings are consistent with literature that suggests that more favorable personality characteristics are often assigned on the basis of dress (Johnson and Roach-Higgins, 1987). These findings also reinforce research which indicates that dress influences perceptions of characteristics related to power (Williams, 1977; Christman, 1987). Johnson and Roach-Higgins (1987) reported similar findings with respect to the influence of dress on judgments of competence. In addition, Christman (1987) reported that a tailored jacket and pants was capable of communicating traits related to professionalism such as businesslike and efficient. The findings regarding management potential indicate that dress is also influential for judgements of an applicant's future employment behavior and is consistent with existing research (Form and Stone, 1955; Ericksen and Sirgy, 1985; Christman, 1987).

Demographic Variables

Thirty percent of the rehabilitation personnel were males and 70 percent were females; 20 percent were under age 30, 40 percent were between 30 and 40 years of age, and 40 percent were over 40; 40 percent had a high school diploma, 45 percent had 2 to 4 years of college, and 15 percent held master's or Ph.D. degrees.

The demographic variables for the rehabilitation personnel groups were analyzed in a one-way analysis of variance. No significant relationships were found with respect to sex, age, or education. This finding indicated that these groups were utilizing the physical appearance cues in a similar manner.

Disabled Students' Responses

Table 12 presents the analyses of variance, F-values, significance levels, and proportion of variation explained (eta squared) for the students responses to the employment characteristics and management potential scales.

Insert Table 12 about here

Analysis of variance for disabled students' responses yielded significant main effects for dress for the personality, power, and professionalism factors and management potential (Table 12). No significant main effect for dress was found for the competence factor (Table 12). A significant main effect for physical condition was found only for the personality factor. No significant interactions were found. The main effects for dress were due to the subjects rating the applicant in the appropriate dress higher than the applicant in the inappropriate dress (Table 13).

Insert Table 13 about here

The significant main effect for physical condition for the personality factor occurred when the subjects rated the applicant in the wheelchair higher on personality characteristics than the able-bodied applicant (Table 12 and 13). This finding is consistent with research by Comer and Piliavin (1975) who reported that individuals with disabilities rated other disabled people more

favorably than the nondisabled on personality traits such as trustworthiness and intelligence. In addition, the main effect for dress accounted for 20% of the variation and the main effect for physical condition accounted for 19 percent of the variation. This finding suggests that on judgments of personality traits, both dress and physical condition were given equal weight when forming an impression.

It is also interesting to note that, while not significant, the students' rated the applicant in the wheelchair lower than the able-bodied applicant on management potential. Lower scores from the students with disabilities to questions such as "others would like to work with this applicant" or "this applicant has potential for success in this occupation" may indicate that the respondents are reacting to a first-hand awareness of the unfavorable perceptions of others in the workplace.

Demographic Variables

The sample of students with disabilities included: 45 percent males and 55 percent females; 45 percent were under 30 years of age, 40 percent were between 30 and 40 years of age, and 15 percent were over 40; 65 percent were undergraduates and 35 percent were graduate students. In addition, 70 percent reported a disability brought on by a traumatic accident and 30 percent reported disabilities related to the onset of disease such as stroke, diabetes, muscular dystrophy and cerebral palsy. The students were also divided according to time of onset of disability. Thirty-five percent had been disabled since birth

or shortly thereafter. Sixty-five percent reported that they had recently become disabled.

No significant relationships were found with respect to sex, age, education, type of disability, or onset of disability and responses to the dependent measures. This finding indicated that these groups were utilizing the physical appearance cues in a similar manner.

Atttitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale

The Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale (ATDP) (Yuker, Block and Campbell, 1960) was administered to determine the samples' general attitudes toward people with disabilities and to investigate the relationship between these attitudes and their impressions of female job applicants.

The ATDP, Form A, is a Likert-type scale containing thirty statements that refer to physically disabled persons in general. The scale is supposed to indicate the extent to which subjects agree that people with disabilities are the same as the able-bodied (on a scale of 0 to 180 with a higher score indicating more positive attitudes). The authors also represent the scale as being capable of measuring the attitudes people with disabilities have toward others with disabilities.

The mean ATDP scores for the rehabilitation personnel group and the student sample are presented in Table 14. Scores for the rehabilitation group ranged from 79 to 160 while scores for the students ranged from 120 to 166. On the whole, the scores for the

students were higher than the scores for rehabilitation personnel which is to be expected.

However, no significant relationship could be found between respondents' expressed attitudes and subjects' impressions of the applicants for any of the dependent measures. No significant differences were found with respect to the demographic variables for either sample. This is not surprising in light of previous research (see Elston, 1981 for a comprehensive review of the literature).

Insert Table 14 about here

It is likely that these results could be attributed to an interaction effect between some of the demographic variables and other variables uncontrolled in this study such as ethnocentrism, aggression, self-concept, etc. Golin (1970), Livneh (1982) and Noonan, Barry, and Davis (1970) pointed out that several factors, such as characteristics of the perceiver, the observed person, the environment, and the stimulus used to elicit responses, interact with each other to influence attitudes.

In addition, respondents commented on the following difficulties with the ATDP item list and its response scale. Subjects reported that the answer sheet was confusing in the way that it was set up (+3 to -3 Likert-type response scale) and many were not sure that they had answered in the correct way. The questions, while intended to measure general attitudes, were too vague. Respondents were not sure if all

questions related to physically disabled individuals and many commented that some items were unclear in their wording. Subjects also pointed out that they would respond quite differently if the items pertained to the physically disabled versus the mentally disabled. Since the response scale was a six-point scale with no neutral response, subjects tended to choose the middle options (+1 or -1). And in some cases, they refused to give their opinions at all. Elston (1981) cited some of these problems as limitations in his study.

Even though this scale is widely used, there are obvious limitations in generalizing any findings. While a scale of this type could be very beneficial to many researchers, the present scale needs further refinement or a new scale needs to be developed that will overcome the limitations cited above.

Summary

Rehabilitation personnel responses suggested a powerful dress effect. For all dependent measures, the applicants were rated significantly higher when dressed appropriately. Analysis of the proportion of explained variation indicated that dress was the primary cue used as a basis for forming impressions of employment characteristics and arriving at judgments of management potential. The absence of significant main effects for physical condition and significant interactions reinforces this conclusion. The proportion of the variance accounted for by dress on ratings of professionalism indicated that dress was indeed able to convey the impression of

traits considered essential in the business world (Williams, 1977; Ericksen and Sirgy, 1985).

While not significant, mean scores for the applicant in the wheelchair tended to be slightly higher than the able-bodied applicant for the personality, power, and professionalism factors and slightly lower for the competence factor and management potential. In addition, mean scores for all dependent measures were at or below the mid-point. This may be reflecting some ambivalence on the part of the respondents or the respondents may have felt that they did not have enough information to form an impression. It is also plausible that because the applicants were young females, the scores were low. Traditionally, young women have not been attributed characteristics related to power and success (Heilman and Guzzo, 1978). Past research further indicates that women (particularly young women) are not typically thought to be as competent as men to handle managerial duties (Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, and Vogel, 1972; Heilman and Guzzo, 1978; Christman, 1987).

For the dress manipulation, students' responses followed the same pattern as the responses of the rehabilitation personnel for measures of personality, power, professionalism, and management potential. The applicants were rated significantly higher when dressed appropriately. For the competence factor, the mean score for the applicant dressed appropriately was higher but not significantly so. These data do suggest that dress was influential when forming impressions.

This group's responses also followed those of the rehabilitation personnel with respect to physical condition for all dependent measures except personality. Students rated the applicant in the wheelchair significantly higher than the able-bodied only on personality. In addition, for the personality factor, the proportion of variation explained by dress and physical condition were nearly equal. These findings may indicate that the physical condition (disability) variable was also important when making judgments of personality.

Conclusions

Data presented suggest a powerful dress effect and indicate that dress was a primary cue used in forming impressions of female job applicants. Examination of the proportion of variation explained by dress and physical condition provides further support for the theory that situation-appropriate dress may be able to influence the salience of a physical disability in impression formation (see Model, Chapter 2). It appears that dress provided positive information sufficient to override the negative information provided by the disability. It is likely that the disability became less figural in the job interview context when the applicant was dressed appropriately. In addition, appropriate dress may have lessened the impact of the disability by inducing the respondents to consider situational factors.

These findings also lend continued support for research that suggests that it is possible for applicants to dress in manner which conveys the best initial impression to an interviewer. As early as 1918, Dearborn stated that dress helps people to get jobs, to lose

jobs, and to hold jobs. "The way we clothe ourselves is one of the surest indices of intelligence" (Dearborn, 1918, 70). Kaiser (1983-84) concluded that through manipulation of dress, clothing cues can be used to "stage" appearances so that perceivers will focus on selected cues and form an impression desirable to the wearer.

Implications pertain particularly to rehabilitation personnel. Results from a similar study conducted by the researcher revealed that a dark jacket and pants worn by an applicant on crutches and in a wheelchair were acceptable for a job interview (Christman, 1987). From a practical point of view, this finding is encouraging since this type of dress may be necessary for convenience or modesty purposes. Rehabilitation personnel need to be made aware of the impact of dress on impressions of employment characteristics and management potential so that information of this nature can be made available to people with disabilities.

The significance of dress to the total rehabilitation process of disabled persons should not be taken lightly (National Institute of Handicapped Research, 1981). Dress that minimizes the effect of the disability on the perceptions of others promotes positive social interaction (Miller, 1982) and may aid individuals with disabilities in obtaining employment. For this reason, rehabilitation personnel should consider the inclusion of appearance guidance structured in such a way as to take into consideration the special clothing needs of women with disabilities.

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TABLE 9

FACTOR LOADINGS FOR EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

	Employment Characteristics	Factor Loadings			
		Personality	Power	Competence	Professionalism
5	Intelligent	.51210			
10	Consistent	.45390			
11	Self-Reliant	.50714			
17	Dependable	.80601			
18	Responsible	.81407			
19	Effective	.55618			
20	Stable	.81301			
21	Cooperative	.83026			
22	Trustworthy	.84887			
6	Powerful		.72530		
7	Strong		.68536		
8	Aggressive		.83837		
9	Bold		.82886		
12	Forceful		.78223		
13	Dynamic		.66486		
14	Decisive		.62871		
1	Expert			.77168	
2	Experienced			.81570	
4	Successful			.64542	
3	Professional				.61635
15	Businesslike				.79037
16	Efficient				.60084
Eigenvalue		11.17	2.47	1.24	1.01

Note. From Employers perceptions of physical disability, dress, and female job applicants by L.A. Christman and D.H. Branson, 1987, unpublished manuscript, p. 92, Copyright 1987.

TABLE 10

ANALYSES OF VARIANCE, F-VALUES, SIGNIFICANCE LEVELS AND PROPORTION OF EXPLAINED VARIATION FOR RESPONSES OF REHABILTATION PERSONNEL

	Dress Effect				Physical Condition				Interaction			
	DF	F-Value	Signif-icance	ETA^2	DF	F-Value	Signif-icance	ETA^2	DF	F-Value	Signif-icance	ETA^2
Employment Characteristics:												
Personality	1	13.93	.0007	.27	1	1.06	NS	.02	1	.75	NS	.01
Power	1	13.86	.0007	.27	1	.75	NS	.01	1	.44	NS	.01
Competence	1	12.73	.0010	.26	1	.04	NS	.0007	1	.15	NS	.002
Professionalism	1	49.93	.0001	.58	1	.39	NS	.004	1	.31	NS	.003
Management Potential	1	11.89	.0015	.24	1	.50	NS	.009	1	2.05	NS	.04

TABLE 11

MEAN SCORES FOR RESPONSES OF REHABILITATION PERSONNEL

Independent Variables	Measure				
	Personality		Competence		Management Potential
Dress					
Appropriate	6.53	4.56	5.22	6.58	5.81
Inappropriate	4.78	2.96	3.35	3.18	4.38
Physical Condition					
Able-Bodied	5.41	3.57	4.33	4.73	5.24
Wheelchair	5.89	3.94	4.23	5.03	4.95

Note: N per cell = 10

Maximum score = 9

TABLE 12

ANALYSES OF VARIANCE, F-VALUES, SIGNIFICANCE LEVELS AND PROPORTION OF EXPLAINED VARIATIONS FOR RESPONSES OF DISABLED STUDENTS

	Dress Effect				Physical Effect				Interaction			
	DF	F-Value	Signif-icance	ETA^2	DF	F-Value	Signif-icance	ETA^2	DF	F-Value	Signif-icance	ETA^2
Employment Characteristics:												
Personality	1	5.44	.0330	.20	1	5.21	.0364	.19	1	.89	NS	.03
Power	1	6.94	.018	.27	1	1.65	NS	.06	1	1.44	NS	.05
Competence	1	1.93	NS	.09	1	2.97	NS	.13	1	1.64	NS	.07
Professionalism	1	8.74	.0093	.32	1	2.11	NS	.08	1	.65	NS	.02
Management Potential	1	8.94	.0087	.32	1	1.73	NS	.06	1	1.34	NS	.05

TABLE 13

MEAN SCORES FOR RESPONSES OF DISABLED STUDENTS

Independent Variables	Measure				
	Personality		Competence		Management Potential
Dress					
Appropriate	6.52	4.74	5.53	6.33	6.37
Inappropriate	5.48	2.96	4.70	4.50	5.12
Physical Condition					
Able-Bodied	5.49	3.41	4.60	4.97	6.02
Wheelchair	6.51	4.29	5.63	5.87	5.47

Note: N per cell = 5

Maximum score = 9

TABLE 14

MEAN ATDP SCORES BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Demographic Variable	N	ATDP
Rehabilitation Personnel:		
Sex:		
Males	12	127
Females	28	129
Age:		
Under 30	8	122
30-40 Years	16	132
Over 40	16	129
Education:		
High School Diploma	16	125
2-4 Years of College	18	129
Graduate Study	6	138
Students with Physical Disabilities		
Sex:		
Males	9	150
Females	11	145
Age:		
Under 30	9	146
30-40 Years	8	149
Over 40	3	147
Education:		
High School Diploma	13	145
Graduate School	7	152
Source of Disability:		
Trauma	14	147
Disease	6	150
Onset of Disability:		
At Birth	7	152
Recently disabled	13	145

APPENDIX A

STIMULUS SKETCHES

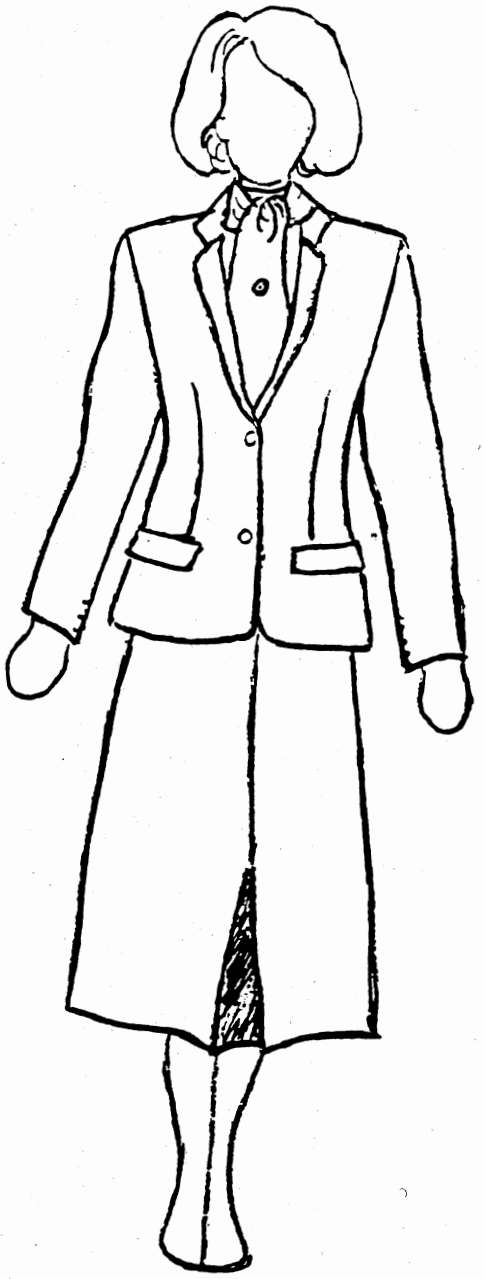

Figure 5. Most Appropriate Dress

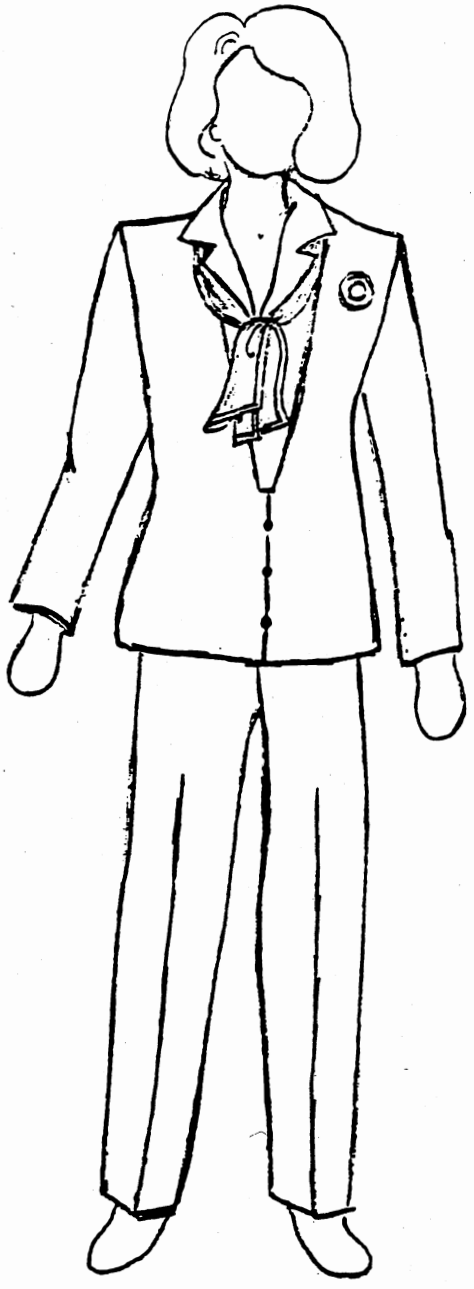

Figure 6. Moderately Appropriate Dress

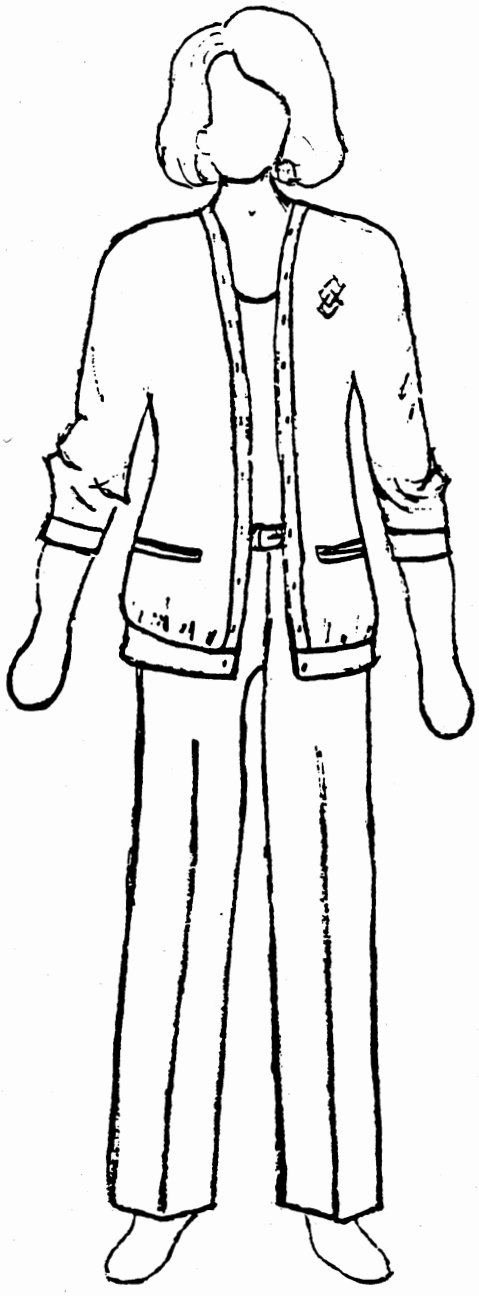

Figure 7. Inappropriate Dress

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

IMPRESSIONS OF PERSONALITY AND EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS: The following questionnaire deals with your impressions of the individual shown in the videotape. I am interested in how people use visual cues in forming impressions. Please view the videotape carefully and read the information given below before proceeding to the questions on the following pages. While some questions may seem difficult to answer on the basis of the limited information that you have, they are important; so please answer all questions. Please work quickly and indicate your first impressions. When you have finished the questionnaire, please return it to the researcher.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Applicant's Name: Ann M. Smith

Job Title: Department Manager

Position Description: Be responsible for scheduling and supervising sales personnel and working to see that goals for the department are met. Suggest and write sales objectives for the year; develop monthly sales plans and work schedules. Be able to handle both subordinates and customers effectively.

Education: Oklahoma State University - Stillwater, OK. B.S. in Personnel Management (1987).

Work Experience: Completed an internship program with Aetna Insurance Co., Witchita, Kansas.

Grade Point: 3.23/4.0 A = 4.0

Organizations and Activities: Member of Management Club. Treasurer - Student Government Association at Oklahoma State University.

I. EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Please rate the applicant on the following employment characteristics with 1 being least and 9 being most characteristic of the applicant.

	least characteristic								most characteristic	
Expert	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Experienced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Professional	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Successful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Powerful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Strong	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Aggressive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Bold	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Consistent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Self-reliant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Forceful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Dynamic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Decisive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Businesslike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Efficient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Dependable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Responsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Effective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Stable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Cooperative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____
Trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____

II. MANAGERIAL POTENTIAL

This second set of questions deals with your impressions of the managerial potential of the applicant. Circle the response that best represents you answer to the following questions.

1. This applicant would fit in well with other people in this occupation.

strongly disagree								strongly agree	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____

Please indicate how certain you are of the above rating by circling the appropriate response below.

not very certain								very certain	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____

2. This applicant has good leadership potential.

strongly disagree								strongly agree	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____

Please indicate how certain you are of the above rating by circling the appropriate reponse below.

not very certain								very certain	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____

3. This applicant has good potential for success in this occupation.

strongly disagree								strongly agree	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____

Please indicate how certain you are of the above rating by circling the appropriate response below.

not very certain								very certain	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____

4. Other people would like to work with this applicant.

strongly disagree								strongly agree	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____

Please indicate how certain you are of the above rating by circling the appropriate response below.

not very certain								very certain	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____

5. This applicant would work well only under the direct supervision of someone else.

strongly disagree								strongly agree	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____

Please indicate how certain you are of the above rating by circling the appropriate response below.

not very certain								very certain	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____

6. I would recommend hiring this applicant.

strongly disagree								strongly agree	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____

Please indicate how certain you are of the above rating by circling the appropriate response below.

not very certain								very certain	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	____

7. If there are additional comments you would like to make regarding the employment potential of this applicant, please write them below.

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C

EMPLOYERS' DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

III. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The following information is needed for statistical comparison. All responses will be kept confidential.

1. Please indicate your sex: Male _____; Female _____. _____

2. Please indicate your age group: _____

   under 20 _____ 20-29 _____

   30-39 _____ 40-49 _____

   50-59 _____ 60-69 _____

3. Please indicate your highest earned educational degree: _____

   less than high school diploma _____

   high school diploma _____

   bachelor's degree _____

   master's degree _____

   Ph.D. degree _____

   associate's degree _____

4. Please indicate your occupation: _____. _____

5. Please indicate the number of years you have been employed in your present occupation. _____. _____

6. Have you had any previous work experience with anyone who has a visible physical disability? Yes _____; No _____. _____

7. Have you had any previous personal experience with anyone who has a visible physical disability? Yes _____; No _____. _____

APPENDIX D

ATTITUDES TOWARD DISABLED PERSONS SCALE

ATDP SCALE

READ EACH STATEMENT AND PUT AN "X" IN THE APPROPRIATE COLUMN ON THE ANSWER SHEET. DO NOT MAKE ANY MARKS ON THE QUESTION SHEETS.

PLEASE ANSWER EVERY QUESTION

---

1. Disabled people are often unfriendly.
2. Disabled people should not have to compete for jobs with physically normal persons.
3. Disabled people are more emotional than other people.
4. Most disabled persons are more self-conscious than other people.
5. We should expect just as much from disabled as from non-disabled persons.
6. Disabled workers cannot be as successful as other workers.
7. Disabled people usually do not make much of a contribution to society.
8. Most non-disabled people would not want to marry anyone who is physically disabled.
9. Disabled people show as much enthusiasm as other people.
10. Disabled persons are usually more sensitive than other people.
11. Severely disabled persons are usually untidy.
12. Most disabled people feel that they are as good as other people.
13. The driving test given to a disabled person should be more severe than the one given to the non-disabled.
14. Disabled people are usually sociable.
15. Disabled persons usually are not as conscientious as physically normal persons.
16. Severely disabled persons probably worry more about their health than those who have minor disabilities.
17. Most disabled persons are not dissatisfied with themselves.
18. There are more misfits among disabled persons than among non-disabled persons.

ATDP SCALE

19. Most disabled persons do not get discouraged easily.

20. Most disabled persons resent physically normal people.

21. Disabled children should compete with physically normal children.

22. Most disabled persons can take care of themselves.

23. It would be best if disabled persons would live and work with non-disabled persons.

24. Most severely disabled people are just as ambitious as physically normal persons.

25. Disabled people are just as self-confident as other people.

26. Most disabled persons want more affection and praise than other people.

27. Physically disabled persons are often less intelligent than non-disabled ones.

28. Most disabled persons are different from non-disabled people.

29. Disabled persons don't want any more sympathy than other people.

30. The way disabled people act is irritating.

ATDP SCALE

Use this answer sheet to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements about disabled people on the attached list. Put an "X" through the appropriate number from +3 to -3 depending on how you feel in each case.

+3: I AGREE VERY MUCH	-1: I DISAGREE A LITTLE
+2: I AGREE PRETTY MUCH	-2: I DISAGREE PRETTY MUCH
+1: I AGREE A LITTLE	-3: I DISAGREE VERY MUCH

PLEASE ANSWER EVERY ITEM

(1)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3	(16)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3
(2)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3	(17)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3
(3)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3	(18)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3
(4)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3	(19)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3
(5)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3	(20)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3
(6)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3	(21)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3
(7)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3	(22)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3
(8)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3	(23)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3
(9)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3	(24)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3
(10)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3	(25)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3
(11)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3	(26)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3
(12)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3	(27)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3
(13)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3	(28)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3
(14)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3	(29)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3
(15)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3	(30)	-3	-2	-1	+1	+2	+3

APPENDIX E

STUDENTS' WITH DISABILITIES DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

III. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The following information is needed for statistical comparison. All responses will be kept confidential.

1. Please indicate your sex: Male _____; Female _____. _____

2. Please indicate your age group: _____

   under 20 _____ 20-29 _____

   30-39 _____ 40-49 _____

   50-59 _____ 60-69 _____

3. Please indicate your highest earned educational degree: _____

   less than high school diploma _____

   high school diploma _____

   bachelor's degree _____

   master's degree _____

   Ph.D. degree _____

   associate's degree _____

4. Please indicate the type of disabling condition you have: _____

   _____.

5. Please indicate how long you have had your disabling condition: _____

   _____.

APPENDIX F

REHABILITATION PERSONNEL'S DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

III. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The following information is needed for statistical comparison. All responses will be kept confidential.

1. Please indicate your sex: Male _____; Female _____. _____

2. Please indicate your age group: _____

   under 20 _____ 20-29 _____

   30-39 _____ 40-49 _____

   50-59 _____ 60-69 _____

3. Please indicate your highest earned educational degree: _____

   less than high school diploma _____

   high school diploma _____

   bachelor's degree _____

   master's degree _____

   Ph.D. degree _____

   associate's degree _____

4. Please indicate your occupation: _____. _____

VITA 2

LISA A. CHRISTMAN

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: IMPACT OF DRESS AND PHYSICAL DISABILITY ON PERCEPTIONS OF FEMALE JOB APPLICANTS

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Professional Organizations: American Home Economics Association, Association of College Professors of Textiles and Clothing, Omicron Nu, International Federation of Home Economics.