

WEAK TIES, THE DISADVANTAGED, AND
BREAKING THROUGH THE BUSINESS
BARRIERS: LOOKING FOR THE
MISSING LINK TO A GREATER
EMPLOYMENT RATE AMONG
PEOPLE WITH MENTAL
RETARDATION

By

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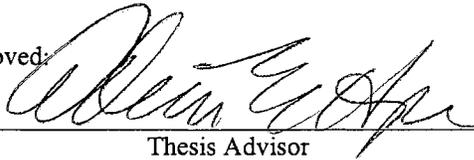
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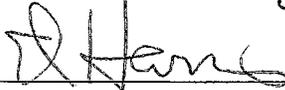
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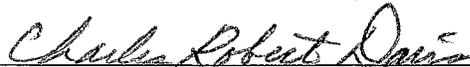
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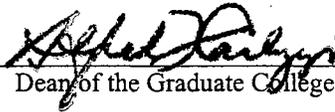
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. DESIGN OF THE STUDY	1
Historical Perspective	2
Statement of the Problem.....	10
Purpose of the Study	12
Conceptual Framework.....	13
Procedures.....	16
Significance of the Study.....	20
Summary	22
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	24
Granovetter's Network Analysis Theory.....	24
Braddock's Perpetuation Theory	25
Undocumented Mexican Immigrants.....	30
The Urban Poor.....	34
Women.....	42
Summary	46
III. DATA PRESENTATION.....	48
Case Study Procedures.....	50
Employer Demographics.....	51
Recruiting/Hiring Practices.....	57
Employer-Desired Competencies/Qualities.....	63
Employment of Individuals Who Have Mental Retardation	67
Summary of Responses to Survey Items.....	80
Chapter Summary	83
IV. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA.....	85
Background on the Businesses and National Employment Information	86
The Employment of Persons with Mental Retardation, the Perpetuation of Segregation and Looking for Weak-Tie Links	88
Summary of Analysis.....	93

Chapter	Page
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND COMMENTARY	95
Summary of the Study.....	95
Conclusions.....	99
Implications and Recommendations	102
Commentary.....	105
REFERENCES.....	107
APPENDIXES	
APPENDIX A—TABLE OF LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE OF PERSONS AGED 18 – 64	122
APPENDIX B—TABLE OF DATA ON DISABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT 1991/92, 1993/94, 1994/95, AND 1997	125
APPENDIX C—TABLES ON EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION OF WOMEN	127
APPENDIX D—RAW DATA RESULTS OF THE SURVEY	130
APPENDIX E—INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD REVIEW	138

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Where Employer Respondents Work	52
2. Employer Respondent Positions	53
3. Size of Business by Number of Employees.....	55
4. Types of Businesses with 1-5 Entry Level Positions Per Year.....	56
5. Number of Entry Level Positions Available per Year	57
6. Recruiting/Hiring Practices Used by Employer Respondents	58
7. Recruiting/Hiring Practices of Services Industry Respondents	59
8. Recruiting/Hiring Practices of Trade Industry Employers	60
9. Recruiting/Hiring Practices Most Often Used Among Employer Respondents	61
10. Hiring Practices Most Often Relied Upon by Trade Industry Respondents...	62
11. Hiring Practices Most Often Relied Upon by Service Industry Respondents.....	62
12. All “Soft Skill” Comments	65
13. Services Industries Reporting Importance of “Soft Skills”	65
14. Businesses where Abilities are Important.....	66
15. Businesses where Knowledge is Important	66
16. Competencies/Qualities Most Important to Employers.....	67
17. Business Which Consider Soft Skills as Most Important.....	67
18. Number of Employees with Mental Retardation	69

Figure	Page
19. Types of Businesses with Employees Who Have Mental Retardation.....	69
20. Businesses Where Persons with MR Have Applied	71
21. % of Businesses with Applicants with MR in Last Year.....	71
22. Major Concerns in Hiring Someone with Mental Retardation	74
23. How to Help More People with Mental Retardation	75
24. Linkages Reported by Employer Respondents to Have Been Used by Applicants with MR to Enter a Job Opening.....	78
25. How a Person with MR Found Out About a Job Opening According to Employer Respondents	79
26. How a Person with MR Found Out About a Job Opening According to Employer Respondents (Collapsed)	79
27. Survey Questions Not Answered by Employer Respondents.....	82

CHAPTER I

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

People with the label of mental retardation (“or . . . cognitive, intellectual, or developmental disability” [Taylor, 1995, p. 4]) have, since the inception of the United State, been “major targets of social prejudice” (Taylor, 1995, p. 4) and regularly discriminated against and pushed to the periphery of the general community in every area of life, including the realm of employment (see Data on Disability and Employment table in Appendix B; Westmorland & Pennock, 1995). Although a plethora of new laws have been passed in the U.S. over the last 35 or more years – written with the specific intent of helping to assimilate those with disabilities into all aspects of society, the unemployment rate of those with mental retardation is still as high as if no legislation had ever been penned onto paper and enacted into law (See Labor Force Participation Rate Table in Appendix A; Leslie, 1995; Conyers, Ellwanger, Ferguson, Nemeth, Sanderson, Vagnettie, & Pratt, 1999). President Clinton, himself, in a speech at the signing of the Work Incentives Improvement and Ticket to Work Act of 1999, acknowledged that “three out of four people with significant disabilities are not working” though they are ready, willing and able (“No one should . . .”, 2000, p. 6).

Historical Perspective

The plight of the mentally retarded person in the U.S. has come a long way since its beginnings. In the emerging American nation, mental retardation was acknowledged in various publications. One such publication was John Winthrop's 1630 draft of his Modell of Christian Charity in which he suggested that there are God created differences among mankind for God ordained reasons (Scheerenberger, 1983). One difference that began to be publicly acknowledged was that of people with much lower cognitive ability. Words such as "idiot" in the country's first book of coded laws—Body of Liberties, 1641—began to circulate to describe what later was termed as mental retardation (Scheerenberger, 1983). Other early- writing terminology included "crasey brained," in the 1679 Plymouth Colony Records and "witless person" during the 1692 Salem witchcraft trials (Scheerenberger, 1983). These and other similarly derogatory sounding names were the official nomenclature for the mentally retarded in the earliest of times in the American colonies.

As the country progressed into the 1750's mentally retarded persons were commonly forced into some sort of servitude. It was not until the year 1751, under the influence of Benjamin Franklin, that an area in one hospital was specifically set aside for the mentally infirm. With the year 1766, in what is now the state of Virginia, came the first institution dedicated solely to the needs of mentally incapable people. Then Governor Francis Fauquier felt that such an institution should be built to accommodate "these miserable Objects, who cannot help themselves" (Scheerenberger, 1983, p. 95).

Toward the latter end of the 1700's and into the early 1800's, Benjamin Rush, a co-signer of the Declaration of Independence became the most influential man to work on

behalf of the mentally infirm, due, in part, to the fact that his own brother and one of his sons suffered from severe mental disturbances and spent much of their lives in a mental hospital. Rush advocated that those in mental institutions be taught an occupational activity such as “to spring or turn a wheel to grind cord, or dig in the garden” (Scheerenberger, 1983, p. 97). He also developed devices to help ease crazed madness or motor movements in need of restraint in his continuing quest for the humane treatment of mentally ill or retarded patients.

After Benjamin Rush, others rose, as well, to advocate on behalf of mentally retarded persons. The majority of the mentally retarded, before 1820, were auctioned to other people to care for them on a bidding basis or were loaded into a cart to be hauled off to another town to be cared for or were left in the care of their parents or relatives without financial backing from state and local governments. These methods ended up leaving these individuals largely in the hands of those that exploited them, cared little for their needs and ran up burdensome expenses for cities and states. Thus, almshouses, poor houses and county homes were constructed and then expediently filled with “the sick, insane, and mentally retarded” (Scheerenberger, 1983, p. 100). Unfortunately, most of these public houses were in deplorable condition, although the caretakers were kind and well intended. With the pervasiveness of such degrading conditions, major leaders of the mid-1800s began to come forth and, in their indignation, pushed for reforms. The most significant of these reformers included Samuel Gridley Howe, known for his successful teaching techniques and legislative push for the establishment of specialized training facilities; Charles Sumner, known for his help in the founding of the first public residential program; Horace Mann, signer of the 1857 mandatory education bill who had

a deep concern for the mentally infirm; and Dorothea Dix, whose tireless visits to jails, almshouses and poor houses, and mental hospitals and relentless pleas to legislative bodies strongly impacted states' recognition that they should take the responsibility for their mentally needy persons. Along with these reformers, the Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane also pushed for the funding of facilities for the "comfort and improvement" of the "Idiotic and Imbecile" (Scheerenberger, 1983, p. 105). The prevailing push at this time was to "make the deviant undeviant" (White & Wolfensberger, 1969, p. 7).

As the nation moved past the Civil War and into the 1880s, the mentally retarded began to be seen as a "special parasite" and a "great evil to humanity" (Scheerenberger, 1983, p. 116). No longer were they viewed as societal unfortunates who could be trained to be productive members of the community but rather as "deviants" who must be "sheltered from society" (White & Wolfensberger, 1969, p.7). The latter nineteenth century brought with it proposals such as preventing mentally retarded persons from reproducing and the annulment of their marriages. Despite the mid-century reforms in which the emphasis was "hope through education," the new emphasis became "control and prevention" (Scheerenberger, 1983, p. 119) and the "protection of society from the deviant" (White & Wolfensberger, 1969, p.7). As a result, typical governmental facilities for the care of the mentally retarded remained as degradingly deplorable as ever.

The emergence of special education for the mentally retarded in the public school system was also a product of the late 1800s. Providence, Rhode Island is credited with the first, although the School System of Cleveland, Ohio may have begun such a class 20 years prior (Rosen, Clark & Kivitz, 1976). As these programs began to become more

numerous, the driving philosophy remained largely the same: teach the basic, though somewhat modified, academic subjects; train the senses; train the industrial realm; and study nature. Teachers were carefully chosen and had to be in

good physical health, original in devising ways and means, versatile in presenting subjects, gentle and patient in the constant repetitions necessary to fix ideas in the minds of their pupils, and above all, have an enduring love in their hearts for their pupils, a devotion to their vocation and faith that their efforts will be crowned with success. (Esten, 1900, p. 12).

With the onset of the twentieth century and up to World War II, negative attitudes toward the mentally retarded persisted, along with the accompanying dire consequences within the governmental institutions for those labeled as such. Characteristic of this period of time was the emergence of intelligence testing and levels of classification. The first, most widely used intelligence assessment was that of Alfred Binet and his student Theodore Simon, the Binet-Simon test, which appeared in 1905 (La Griffe du Lion, 2000). Eleven years later Lewis M. Terman, the head of Stanford's department of psychology, published a revision of Binet's intelligence scale – the Stanford-Binet Test of Intelligence (Begab & Richardson, 1975; Thorndike, Hagen & Sattler, 1986). From this I.Q. test came a new classification system by which to distinguish the brighter from the less intelligent. Terms such as idiots (functional level of a 2 year old or IQ below 20), imbeciles (functional level of a 2 – 7 year old or IQ of 20 - 50), and morons (functional level of a 7 – 12 year old or 50 - 75) (Phillips, 1966; Maloney & Ward, 1979; La Griffe du Lion, 2000) replaced the all-encompassing term “feeble minded.” During this period of time, too, the colony concept of housing the mentally retarded in more home-like

settings began to take root (Fernald, 1903). Farm colonies were established for the men and houses in the community were rented for the women. In these more home-like settings, the residents were able to learn the practical “home” skills that would better equip them to enter the outside world and become productive. Their self-supporting productivity would, in turn, enable them to remain in the general community – liberating them, thus, from a life of institutionalization. The success of the colony programs led to the establishment of additional alternative placement programs that greatly benefited the mentally retarded (Fernald, 1903; Trent, 1994).

Along with the expansion of community programs in the 1920s came the public schools’ favorable response towards trying to help the mentally retarded as well. Laws began to be passed requiring that mentally retarded children receive special education. New Jersey was the first state to pass such a law. New York and other states followed, although the mandates were implemented haphazardly (Sarason & Doris, 1979). In 1915 financial help in the amount of \$100 per enrolled special education child was provided in Minnesota. Pennsylvania passed laws to lead the way in districts working collaboratively to meet their students’ special needs. “By the mid 1920s special education had . . . become a state responsibility, legislatively and operationally” (Scheerenberger, 1983, p. 166). The momentum carried into the 1930s, by which time 16 states had passed legislation related to special education.

The early 1940s were marked by American involvement in World War II, and occupational opportunities abounded for the mentally retarded where previously none had existed. With the massive shortage of industrial manpower due to the draft, mentally retarded young people filled in admirably and in some cases became extremely efficient

(Coakley, 1945). Others worked as ranch hands, kitchen helpers, railroad track setters and welders. Those left in institutions contributed to the war effort by farming, reaping the crops and canning. The job openings, however, were short lived. At war's end, employment preferences were given to the returning servicemen and the successful assimilation of these mentally retarded citizens into the general community came to an abrupt end (Doll, 1947).

As the nation moved into the post-war period and on into the 1950s the professionals in the field of mental retardation continued ongoing discourse over the numerical intelligence quotient (I.Q.) and its ability to accurately assess intelligence. Characteristic of this time, too, was the unprecedented amount of grant funded research that was taking place into almost "every behavioral aspect of mental retardation" (Scheerenberger, 1983, p. 220). Also, the control methods of old – namely sterilization, restricted marriage, and the emphasis on institutionalization – were phasing out as the focus shifted to the development of services that could be offered in the community. The establishment of community services included various diagnostic clinics, sheltered workshops, day care centers and residential camps, among other programs. The greatest services gains, however, were made in the realm of public education where it was decided that the mildly mentally retarded should be educated to be fully participating and properly behaved in every aspect of society. This process was to also include training in being responsible, tax-contributing employees in a free-market economy. Based on the successful transition of the mentally retarded into the open industrial positions and the quality output of the products that they helped to produce during the World War II worker shortages, it was believed that "the handicapped, when cared for and educated, represent, next to

unemployed women, the largest reservoir of unused manpower upon which to draw” (Scheerenberger, 1983, p. 23).

Government Responses and an Overview of Landmark Disability Legislation

As the 1960s and the subsequent three decades set in, the numbers of—and services to—the “feebleminded” citizens swelled. On October 12, 1961, President John F. Kennedy appointed a 26-member panel on mental retardation made up of the brightest minds of the day from every related area “to advise him on how the federal government could best meet the needs of this neglected population” (The President’s Committee on Mental Retardation, 2000, p. 86). By 1962, the panel issued its first report with 112 recommendations ranging from research to preventive methods to better education programs. Then, in an address to Congress in 1963, “President Kennedy called for a ‘bold new approach’ to the care of mentally retarded people” (Schultz, 1987, p. 93). Within 13 years of Kennedy’s call, 11 agencies of the federal government were funding 135 programs for the mentally retarded. By 1980, four billion dollars per year were flowing from the federal level (Scheerenberger, 1983, p. 250). Fiscal year 1980-81 records 852,000 mentally retarded children as having “received special education services, 165,500 mentally retarded persons . . . vocational rehabilitation services, and 640,000 mentally retarded persons . . . some form of support or assistance through Social Security . . . , including approximately 130,000 mentally retarded persons in public institutions” (Scheerenberger, 1983, p. 256).

With the mounting numbers of services to the mentally retarded came the special education movement and its gain in legislative momentum. Hundreds of congressional bills were introduced on behalf of the handicapped. The first steps were taken in the mid-

to latter 1950's, with the passage of laws relating to cooperative research between the federal government and universities (P.L. 83-531), captioned films for the deaf (P.L. 85-905) and training of professional personnel (P.L. 85-926). The next major step was taken in 1963 when the Division of Handicapped Children and Youth within the U.S. Office of Education law was passed (P.L. 88-164). Other laws such as the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA; P.L. 89-10) and its ESEA Amendments of 1966 and the Education Amendments of 1974 (P.L. 93-380) followed – all of which monumentally increased the flow of federal monies for the needs of the handicapped (Wirtz, 1977; Weatherly, 1979).

The passage of these laws led then to the landmark legislation of Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA), signed on November 29, 1975, by President Gerald Ford. P.L. 94-142 is a never-ending guarantee from the federal government that all handicapped children from ages three to 21 are entitled to a free and appropriate education with federal funding to follow. This law, although passed in 1975, did not actually go into effect until September 1978. In 1990, P.L. 94-142 became known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and was then, seven years later, amended to the 1997 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments (P.L. 105-17). As financial support from the federal government for the education of handicapped students increased, so, too, did support from the states. Other important and related legislation that was passed includes the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-112; amended in 1992) – written to protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination in employment by federally funded agencies, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-336) – written to ensure that people with disabilities

have “equal opportunity in employment, public accommodations, transportation, state and local government services and telecommunication services” (“Americans with Disabilities Act,” 2000, p. 1). The most recent disability legislation signed into law came on December 17, 1999 – the Work Incentives Improvement and Ticket to Work Act (WIIA). This law, “hailed by the President [Clinton] as the most important disability rights legislation since the Americans with Disabilities Act, . . . allows individuals to keep their Medicaid or Medicare benefits when they become employed” (Rumpel, 2000, p. 5).

With the American economy having entered its ninth year of expansion in 1999, together with the resulting incline in civilian employment and decline in unemployment, most workers, regardless of their demographic group, have benefited (Martel & Kelter, February 2000, p. 10). This 30-year, 4.1-percent-unemployment-rate low, however, has not been of major benefit to a pool of capable people – the mentally retarded, whose Labor Force Participation Rate (see table in Appendix A) has been fluctuating around the paltry level of 30% over the last 20 years despite the country’s continuing need for “workers at all levels of training and education” (Harrison, 1998, p. 1) in the marketplace and the legislative enactments on their behalf.

Statement of the Problem

Throughout the past four decades, a myriad of mandates on behalf of persons with mental retardation has been legislated. Everything from entitlements of special education services from ages three to 21, to employment services, to keeping Medicaid/Medicare benefits upon becoming employed, has been enacted to help them to integrate into the mainstream of American society. And yet, after all of the hard fought passages of each of

the hundreds of legislative pieces—both major and minor, and over many years—those with mental retardation have still been left desolate at the doorway of potential employment opportunity (Leslie, 1995).

For the mentally retarded, the lengthy laws—at least in the arena of employment—have had seemingly little effect. The rate of un- or under-employment among the mentally retarded, as a disability group, continues in the record-high realm as if no laws had ever been passed. President Clinton, in an excerpt from his speech at the signing of the Work Incentive Improvement and Ticket to Work Act of 1999, probably said it best when he stated that, “In spite of the country’s good economic news, we know that three out of four people with significant disabilities are not working. They’re ready to work, they’re willing to work, and they are very able to work” (“No one should . . .”, 2000, p. 6). The unemployment rate of the mentally retarded hovered around a high percentage before initiatives and bills were beginning to be passed back in the 1950s and 1960s and now 35 years later the unemployment rate of the mentally retarded remains much the same (see Labor Force Participation Rate Table in Appendix A).

What, then, can explain the abysmal labor force participation rate among the mentally retarded? Is there another, perhaps unwritten, law that is in effect? In light of Granovetter’s (1973) Network Analysis theory and Braddock’s (1980) Perpetuation theory, the answer would be in the affirmative. Granovetter (1973) would characterize the continued under-employment of the mentally retarded as a function of the underdevelopment of what he calls “weak-ties.” “Weak-ties,” according to Granovetter (1973), refer to “acquaintances or friends of friends” by which one is more likely to be able to penetrate what Braddock (1980) indicates are the self-perpetuated segregated

cultures of the dominant. Braddock (1980) suggests that the dominant culture (in this case people without mental retardation in the business culture) “perpetuates” itself through the strong relational ties that naturally exist within the culture. The dominance of “strong ties” in any group, unfortunately, results in segregated settings that become closed off and an enclave in which only members of the dominant culture work and exist. In the case of perceived ability to work, individuals with mental retardation would be largely overlooked in hiring situations for jobs in which they are or could be qualified.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to use Granovetter’s (1973) Network Analysis theory to explain the inability of persons with mental retardation to penetrate, in greater numbers, what Braddock’s (1980) theory would term as the “self-perpetuated” (p. 179) dominant culture of the job market. To accomplish this purpose, the following will be done:

- 1) Gather data about the employment of individuals with mental retardation;
- 2) Use Granovetter’s (1973, 1974, 1995) “Network Analysis” theory and the meaning of his major terms of “strong ties” and weak-ties” and Braddock’s (1980) “Perpetration” theory and his “dominant culture” theme as the lens through which to analyze the information collected;
- 3) Discover other realities revealed; and
- 4) Assess the usefulness of Granovetter’s (1973) “Network Analysis” theory of “weak-ties” to explain the inability of the disability group of people with mental retardation to penetrate the “perpetuated dominant culture” (Braddock, 1980).

This study, then, is in pursuit of any insight that can be used to help open up greater employment possibilities for this untapped labor pool.

Conceptual Framework

This study is largely based on the conceptual framework of Mark Granovetter (1973, 1995), who, in his Harvard studies and sociological survey and subsequent analyses, found that “finding work is a social process” (1995, p.138) and that people obtain jobs largely through word-of-mouth. In fact, he found that the most effective “spreaders of information” (p. 134) are those outside of one’s own familiar group. These “weak-ties,” or “less formal interpersonal networks” (Wells & Crain, 1994, p. 533) or “acquaintances or friends of friends”, transmit and “diffuse . . . influence [and] information” (p. 533) that “ultimately reach[es] a larger number of people than if sent through ‘strong-ties’” (Granovetter, 1995, p. 53) or close friends who stay largely to their own group and pass information to only those same people. Granovetter (1995), who is often quoted in the replicated studies of others on how individuals become aware of the job opportunities that they take, stated that, “Members of any group suffering an unusual degree of unemployment . . . have the problem that friends will be disproportionately un- . . . employed, and thus in a poor position to offer job information” (p. 136). “Acquaintances, [on the other hand], . . . are more prone to move in different circles than one’s self” (p. 52) and information gets relayed onward and increasingly outward, and the process tends to take on the effect of a multiplier.

Granovetter’s theory of strengthening weak ties has been used by numerous researchers to explain how other disadvantaged segments of the population have been able to penetrate the otherwise seemingly impenetrable business barriers. Researchers such as Bian (1997), from the University of Minnesota found, for example, evidence that “job-seekers and their ultimate helpers are indirectly connected through intermediaries to

whom both are strongly tied” (p. 366). Another researcher, Lin, in his 1982 and 1990 studies, found that “power, wealth, and prestige possessed by others can be accessed through weak ties that link persons of different status” (Bian, 1997, pp. 366-7). Hurlbert, Haines, and Beggs (2000) state that, “Networks matter,” and that “ties drawn from social networks affect the process by which individuals are matched to jobs” (p. 598). Reingold (1999) found, in his studies concerning the employment problem of the urban poor, that “social networks operate to connect job-seekers and job vacancies” (p. 1907) and that anywhere from 26.7% to 61.5% of the urban poor found their jobs through word-of-mouth contacts (p. 1914).

Concurring with this study is a survey that found that nearly 77% of job-seekers will rely on word-of-mouth referrals (LaVine & Cassidy, 1999). Brown and Reingen (1987) discovered that “weak ties displayed an important bridging function, allowing information to travel from one distinct subgroup of referral actors to another subgroup in the broader social system” (p. 350). Montgomery (1994), in his research, noted that, “an increase in weak-tie interactions reduces inequality, thereby creating a more equitable distribution of employment across groups” (p. 1212). For Mexican migrants, Wilson (1998) brought to light that “new geographical locations [for work] are often accessed through the ‘strength of weak ties’ . . .” (p. 394). Research by Stoloff, Glanville, Bienenstock (1999), on women in the labor force indicates, “that social networks are crucial in the job matching process” (p. 92). Villar, Juan, Corominas, and Capell (2000), chime in with their research that “informal ties play a major role in the location of job openings and the placement of unemployed persons” (p. 299).

As is evident, and to use the words of Emirbayer and Goodwin (1994), “Recent years have witnessed the emergence of a powerful new approach to the study of social structure. This mode of inquiry, commonly known as ‘network analysis’, . . . has proven extremely useful in a strikingly wide range of substantive applications” (p. 1411). The research is extensive on the invaluable role of networking among others outside of one’s own immediate circle of friends and getting a job. Just as the urban poor, women, Mexican migrants and unemployed others have found their way into the labor market through word-of-mouth and strengthened weak-tie associations, so, too, perhaps, can persons with mental retardation if it can be discovered that they are lacking in strong weak-tie connections.

Interacting with Granovetter’s Network Analysis theory is Braddock’s (1980) Perpetuation theory, which, in effect, suggests that in every setting of society, any dominant culture naturally perpetuates itself, which has the exclusionary effect of leaving others out of the proverbial loop—in this case, the labor-market loop. Braddock’s premise stems from studies of racial segregation where he found that Blacks—intentionally or unintentionally—perpetuate their own segregation. They insulate themselves from others unlike themselves by not allowing outsiders to be among them. In the same way, the business culture self-perpetuates in that it largely hires only employees who are perceived as “capable” which effectively erects a barrier that makes it difficult for persons with mental retardation to penetrate. By considering Braddock’s (1980) theory of perpetual segregation alongside Granovetter’s (1973, 1986) work, “which shows the strong impact of ‘weak ties’” (Wells & Crain, 1994, p. 533) however,

there may be some hope by which those with mental retardation may make some headway into the heart of the realm of employment within the business community.

Procedures

In the following section, a brief on the background of the researcher will be included and the data needs, data collection, methodological approach, and data analysis will be discussed.

Researcher

My professional life began with a four-year stint in a private school setting in which I was, for the first year, the lead teacher for the seventh through twelfth grades and responsible for approximately six preparations per day. My second through fourth years were spent working with students with learning disabilities, applying intensive intervention techniques to help them overcome their disability. The third and fourth year I alone was given charge of the program. My fifth year I entered into the public educational realm and for the next eight years taught either Spanish or special education classes or a combination of the two. The thirteenth year marked the beginning of an administrative step as I took the position of a district special education coordinator in a large public school district in Oklahoma. I am now in my fourth year as a coordinator and enjoy serving the multicultural community.

My educational background includes a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish, graduation date of May 1985 at Oklahoma State University, and a Masters degree in Special Education (Learning Disabilities) from Oklahoma State University in 1989 and I will

soon have, upon completion of this dissertation, a doctorate in Educational Administration, also from Oklahoma State University.

The direction of this dissertation is the direct result of assigned responsibilities at work in the area of transitioning students from the secondary educational setting to that of post-school employment. The most perplexing problem for the district in the transitional-needs area of special education has been one of finding employment for the student who has mental retardation who is still in secondary school at an age when most of the rest of his/her peers are graduating and well on their way towards accomplishing their post-school employment objectives.

Data Needs

In this study, the specific aspect of Granovetter's (1973) "Network Analysis" theory that will be investigated is whether or not there is an under-development of what he calls "weak-ties" (acquaintance-level relationships)—the lack of which may be directly affecting the ability of people with mental retardation to penetrate what Braddock's (1980) Perpetuation theory terms as the "self-perpetuating" (p. 1711) dominant culture — in this case the "capable" culture of the business community. In this attempt to "find out what [employers who have hiring and supervisory authority over workers] think and know" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 5) about practices in relation to the hiring of the mentally retarded, a 13-item survey was developed. Of the 13 items, six are semi-structured, with a fixed set of response choices and one unstructured response choice at the end of each. The intent of these six items is to determine the type of business, the number of employees, recruiting methods and concrete background information, in general. The remaining seven items of the survey are exploratory in nature and thus

open-ended and less structured. These seven items are designed to elicit responses that are more in-depth and information producing with regard to “participants’ subjective understanding of their workplace experiences . . .” (Handler & White, 1999, p. 50) pertaining to the hiring patterns and strategies of employers in relation to persons with mental retardation.

Data Collection

The sample for this study was drawn from businesses in a large metropolitan city and several of its surrounding suburbs, and an outlying town of 60,000 that is within a 75-mile radius. One hundred businesses of a stratified random selection were contacted either in person or by telephone to obtain the name of the person who was typically responsible for the hiring of employees. The stratifying variables of the sample included: 1) employers who were known to have hired persons with mental retardation in the past so as to be sure that these were represented in the overall sample; and 2) employers of businesses along the major roadways of a large city and several of its surrounding suburbs and a town of 60,000 that is within 75 miles of the city who agreed to receive the survey upon being personally approached or telephoned. The selection of which businesses to approach was based on the visibility of the business and its accessibility from the major roadways.

An inquiry was made of the person with the authority to hire at each business as to his or her willingness to receive information about the survey and the survey itself. If amenable, the materials were left along with an attached, self-addressed and stamped envelope for the expedient return of the survey if the employer chose to participate. The survey was conducted in the spring of 2001.

Methodological Approach

Since this study is interested in the “understanding, knowledge, and insights” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 6) of the respondents, the qualitative research method will be employed. A mix of two questionnaire methods was used—the semi-structured, and the open-ended or unstructured. The semi-structured questions “offer a fixed set of response choices . . . [and] one . . . unrestricted response open to respondents to [express] in their own words” (Soriano, 1995, p. 20). The two main reasons for this type of questionnaire are: 1). To “make it easier and faster for respondents to respond since viable and presumably likely responses are offered” (p. 21); and 2). To “help respondents consider the full range of responses, thereby helping them select the best and most valid answer instead of choosing the first choice that comes to mind . . . ” (p. 21). The main advantage of the use of the semi-structured approach is that it provides for convenient response choices that can be expediently selected “which allow for unique responses to fall outside of the fixed choices” (p. 21).

The open-ended or unstructured questionnaire approach “allow[s] respondents to consider reasons for and against a specific proposal, thought, feeling, condition, or idea without constraints. Moreover, open-ended question[naires] allow responses to be complete and qualified in the words of the respondent . . . The main advantage of open-ended questions is the qualitative nature of the answers” (Soriano, 1995, p. 21).

The two particular strengths of the qualitative questioning method are that “they can lead to valid responses to questions that researchers [may not have previously thought of] . . . [and] . . . [they] reduce or eliminate the natural tendency of respondents to [write] socially appropriate [answers], which is called social desirability” (Soriano, 1995, p. 51).

Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of developing frequencies and percentages for the six semi-structured items. The answers to the seven open-ended, unstructured items were examined in light of the theories of Braddock and Granovetter. For example, the survey attempted to extract whether employee word-of-mouth information about job openings ever reaches directly to an individual with mental retardation or whether it stays largely among those of the employees' circle of individuals without mental retardation. Also, information on the type of ties that connected an employer to an employee who has mental retardation was examined. Possible emerging patterns were studied in the attempt to gain more insight and understanding into the reasons as to why persons with mental retardation are still largely left out of the U.S. labor market loop despite all of the laws, over the years, that have been passed on their behalf.

Significance of the Study

This study is an attempt to determine whether the under-development of what Granovetter (1973) calls "weak ties" can explain the lack of penetration of the mentally retarded into the dominant culture of the "segregated" (Braddock, 1980) community of the employed, and if so, hypothesize and strategize as to how to overcome the deficit using the new knowledge gained from the study.

Theory

Getting a job, according to Mark Granovetter (1995)--one of the most renowned and often quoted authoritative researchers on the topic, is a social process. This social

process is, in effect, networking, and the building blocks of any network are relational links (Knoke & Kuklinski, 1982). Relational links are what Granovetter (1973) terms as “ties.” These “ties” can either be “strong” or “weak”--the “strong” consisting of close friends and family and the “weak” being friends of friends or acquaintances. Strong weak-ties are the key to breaking through “self-perpetuating” dominant culture (Braddock, 1980) barriers--in this case, the business barriers.

Research

During job searches, weak ties have been found to be most useful in spreading information (Bian, 1997). Job seekers, including those from disadvantaged segments of the population and the employers who ultimately employ them, are more often than not “indirectly connected through intermediaries” (p. 367) or weak-tie relational links. This study should add to this research base on the effects of weak tie links in getting a job in that while several of the more visible disadvantaged people groups have been the object of numerous weak tie studies, there are very few, if any, studies specific to the weak tie links (or lack thereof) of individuals with mental retardation.

Practice

If it can be established that it is because of the lack of strong weak-tie relational links that the business barriers have been impenetrable for persons with mental retardation while others of disadvantaged segments of the population have, through the informational strength of their weak relational ties, been able to enter into the realm of employment, perhaps then inroads could be made to reverse the longstanding, low rate of employment of the mentally retarded and the gap to greater employment opportunities will be closed.

With the turnaround, then, the benefits to the business world in the booming economic climate of the U.S., not to mention the mentally retarded, themselves, would be innumerable.

Summary

The history of people who have mental retardation, since the beginnings of the U.S., could be characterized as long and arduous. From prisons to almshouses, to being banned from their hometowns, to community placements, they have been mostly maltreated and kept separate from the rest of society. Brewing beneath the surface, though, was a growing movement on their behalf that gained massive momentum in the 1960s. In an effort to encourage the assimilation of those with disabilities into the wider community, hundreds of legislative initiatives were proposed and numerous federally enacted laws were passed over the course of the next 35 or more years. Despite all of the help from the acts of Congress, however, the mentally retarded have been barely able to break into the business world – and this in spite of an expanding economy where workers are desperately needed. Their dismal rate of unemployment before the passage of all of the laws remains virtually unchanged 35 years after the passage of the laws.

Since the laws have not effected a change in the employment rate of people who have mental retardation, then, some other factor is inhibiting their higher employment numbers—thus the purpose of this study. Two social theories will be investigated as to whether they can explain the low rate of employment among this group of people. The first is Granovetter’s (1973) “Network Analysis” theory, which proposes that it is through strong “weak-ties” or “friends of friends” that one is able to penetrate what the author of the second theory calls the “self-perpetuating” dominant culture (Braddock, 1980)—the

dominant culture in this case being the business community. If this study finds that these two theories are interacting to influence the inability of people who have mental retardation to get a job, then the information can be used to give insight into solving the problem.

Reporting Overview

In Chapter II the related literature on weak ties will be reviewed. Chapter III will present the data from the survey. An analysis of the data will be presented in Chapter IV. And Chapter V will wrap up the study with a summary and conclusions and its implications will be discussed.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Social theories have long been used to explain social phenomena. Perhaps, too, they will be able to explain the low employment rates among people who have mental retardation. And where as it looked like, for a long time, that the lack of disability law could have been linked to the low employment rate of people with mental retardation, time has proven otherwise. After three and a half or four decades of legislative enactments and billions of dollars poured into programs for those with disabilities, the unemployment figures among the mentally retarded have remained virtually the same. Laws designed on their behalf have not enabled a greater number of them to assimilate into the realm of employment in the general community. For people with mental retardation, the barrier is still a reality: The business culture is still basically impenetrable. Thus, this study will focus in on this--the unemployment problem of the mentally retarded, largely through the lens of Granovetter's (1973) "Network Analysis" theory, and, to a smaller degree, Braddock's (1980) "Perpetuation" theory. Within these two social theories may lay factor(s) affecting their lagging employment rate. Finding those factors that may be having an effect on this plummeted employment rate is the purpose of this paper-trail inquiry. The law has not been the link that bridged the employment gap for persons with mental retardation. Let the look for another link begin.

Granovetter's Network Analysis Theory

Social mobility, according to Grannoveter's (1973) Network Analysis theory, is made possible through a series of relational links (Knoke & Kuklinski, 1982) or "ties" which

form the necessary networks by which one can effectively connect to and ultimately penetrate cultures or organizations within a community. Granovetter's "ties" are of two types: the strong and the weak. The strong ties are those with whom one has the greatest familiarity. The strength of a tie could be characterized by a "combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services" (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1361). In other words, the more interpersonal interaction persons have with one another, the stronger their bonds of friendship. The stronger the bonds of friendship, the more tightly enclosed and similar-in-interests the circle of persons. The more tightly enclosed and heterogeneous the circle, the less allowance for the entrance of others. The less the allowance for the entrance of others, the lower the number of linkages or "set of persons . . ." (Knoke & Kuklinski, 1982, p. 12) with whom those of the circle come into contact. The lower the rate of contact with others on the outside, the less likely the infusion of new and different information, and equally as likely, the slower the outflow and diffusion of information, which thereby hinders the natural mode of operation of the network—a necessary resource in any socially-mobile person's repertoire. The strong-ties, however, are not the focus of this inquiry, but rather the weak-ties through which social barriers that have long been perpetuated are broken. But first, the premises of Braddock's perpetuation theory will be briefly discussed and intertwined with aspects of the theory of network analysis.

Braddock's Perpetuation Theory

Braddock's perpetuation theory was "derived . . . by focusing on the tendency of black Americans to perpetuate racial segregation" (Wells & Crain, 1994, p. 533). Black Americans, perhaps out of "uneasiness and uncertainty about new situations" (Pettigrew,

1965, p. 17), choose, many times, to maintain a physical distance from others, Wells and Crain found, and by doing so they become isolated. This racial segregation, then, tends—whether “intentionally or unintentionally—to become self-perpetuating” (Braddock, 1980, p. 179) from generation to generation. As a result of this self-chosen, self-perpetuated isolation, Black Americans miss out on opportunities to make contacts with others outside of their own sphere—similar to a typical strong-tie scenario. With few outside contacts, then, “access to informal networks that provide information about, and entrance to . . . employment” (Wells & Crain, 1994, p. 533) becomes limited. These informal sources of information, of course, are vital to occupational attainment in that through them job vacancies emerge from the unknown and into the realm of the known (Montgomery, 1992). If no initiations with outside links occur, then Black Americans will remain forever entombed within their own arena of understanding only. Blocking the entrance and exit ramps of informational exchange with different others leaves them in a world of limited opportunities. Thus the basic principle of perpetuation theory as derived by Braddock (1980) is that segregation is self-perpetuated—whether intentional or not—by cutting off or having little to no contact with members of other groups outside of one’s own.

Braddock’s perpetuation theory can be carried over and applied to many other contexts, including the inquiry at hand of what prevents the employment rate among the mentally retarded from increasing despite the many laws that have been passed over the past 30 plus years on their behalf. Could it be that businesses and the mentally retarded alike are cutting off contact with others unlike themselves and by doing so unwittingly

perpetuating the unemployment problem? The following research gives a glimpse into each group.

According to an article by Boyle (1997), four researchers found that when individuals with disabilities socially interact with the non-disabled, the degree of awkwardness and difficulty increases to the point where both want to withdraw from each other's company and the two tend, thereby, to avoid future encounters. The emotional and psychological distress that is created is too uncomfortable. Unfortunately, this bodes badly for many disabled persons in that they then become social isolates and may even "withdraw from employment opportunities . . . because they find this social interaction unpleasant" (Boyle, 1997, p. 260). This self-perpetuated segregation, like that of Black Americans, effectively cuts off most of their contact with the rest of society, which, again, limits their ability to access and strengthen any potential weak tie network associations—the activation of which "affect[s] the process by which individuals are matched to jobs" (Hurlbert, Haines & Beggs, 2000, p. 598).

As for the business world, it too is steeped in a self-perpetuated segregation of a slightly different sort, though the results for the mentally retarded and for those with disabilities, in general, are the same in that the segregation sets up a barrier that must be penetrated in order to be employed. Businesses operated with the fundamental belief that competition is at the core of industrial capitalism where "production quotas, rigid time schedules [and] new technologies . . ." (Oliver, 1990, p. 41) are the valued methods of work that only the able-bodies could cost-effectively perform. Those perceived as not able are presumed to be incompetent and are therefore largely excluded. Whether or not someone is "able" depends on the perceptions of the organizational managers and

coworkers and their view of what it has taken for workers in the past to get the job done (Weston, 1990). “Over time,” then, according to Stover (1996), “the jobs themselves are infused with qualities of particular groups of people that are believed to be intrinsic requirements of job tasks [and] employers [basically] ignore the actual skills, accomplishments, and capabilities of individuals whose culturally defined traits do not match those assigned to particular jobs” (p. 319). People with disabilities, in the eyes of managers, are “less capable of meeting their organizational demands” (McFarlin, 1991, p. 113). These particular attitudes among employers have been perpetuated to the point that people with disabilities are prevented from “gaining access to employment” (Harlan & Robert, 1998, p. 402). In the face of these forces, which operate to exclude the disabled, however, is a cranked-up economy that is looking for a labor supply. For the mentally retarded, the current economic conditions may be ripe for making inroads into the realm of employment. And this leads directly back to distinguishing and discussing Granovetter’s business realm, barrier-breaking weak ties.

Granovetter’s (1973) weak ties, as opposed to strong ties, are described as those relational links or “social ties” (Wasserman & Faust, 1994, p. 18) are further removed and less close, or friends of friends or “seldom-contacted acquaintances” (Brown & Reingen, 1987, p. 352). Strong weak ties are much more powerful in facilitating the getting of a job than strong ties. As Wegener (1991) noted from Heider’s (1958) work, “It is only through weak social ties that individuals may connect to persons with different characteristics. Applying this theory to occupational status, it seems that only weak social ties link a job seeker to persons with labor market information and influence beyond the job seeker’s own. In this sense, weak ties are said to be ‘strong’—they are

‘strong’ in facilitating attainment” (p. 60). The “‘strength of weak ties’ arises from their important bridging function that allows information to travel from one densely knit ‘clump’ of social structure composed of referral actors to another more cohesive segment of the broader referral system through a weak tie” (Brown & Reingen, 1987, p. 352). The term “actor” refers to social entities, which are “discrete individual, corporate, or collective social units” (Wasserman & Faust, 1994, p. 17). In other words, “weak ties connect an individual’s small clique of intimate friends with another, distant clique; as such, it is the weak ties that provide interconnectedness to a total system” (Roger, 1983, p. 297). Weak ties are the bridges that connect the cliques and “various social circles” (Granovetter, 1986, p. 87) and serve as conduits of otherwise unobtainable information to subgroups (Brown & Reingen, 1987, p. 353). A subgroup is defined in Wasserman and Faust (1994) as a “subset of actors” (p. 19). “If weak ties did not exist, a system would consist of disjointed subgroups inhibiting the widespread diffusion of information” (Brown and Reingen, 1987, p. 352). The examination of weak ties is important in that the interaction between a pair of actors and the ties between them often aggregate to form a large-scale, nonredundant network (Brown & Reingen, 1987; Podolny & Baron, 1997).

The stimulation of weak ties may be the “key to [the] successful desegregation” (Granovetter, 1986, p. 87) of largely impenetrable social structures—in this case, the labor market by persons with mental retardation. The greater the number of weak-tie interactions, “the more valuable the network is as a source of information” (Podolny & Baron, 1997, p. 674) and the greater the reduction of inequality which thereby creates a “more equitable distribution of employment” (Montgomery, 1994, p. 1212) across the many small groups and “nonrandom networks” (Wellman & Berkowitz, 1988, p. 42) of

which society is composed. Weak ties are important in the job search and the labor market in that they provide a greater “number of people who are potential recipients of job information” (Granovetter, 1995, p. 53) with diverse, and therefore useful, information from personal contacts and social resources in distant parts of the social structure (Montgomery, 1994; Lai, Lin & Leung, 1998). “Individuals with few weak ties will be deprived of information from distant parts of the social system and will be confined to the provincial news and views of their close friends. This deprivation will not only insulate them from the latest ideas and fashions but may put them in a disadvantaged position in the labor market, where advancement can depend . . . on knowing about appropriate job openings at just the right time” (Granovetter, 1982, p. 202).

“Weak ties,” according to Granovetter (1982), are “vital for an individual’s integration into modern society” (p. 203) and, as will become evident, “play an important role in determining labor-market outcomes” (Montgomery, 1992, p. 586). Research is replete with examples of even the most disadvantaged segments of society making effective use of weak network ties in the search for and attainment of work and in the access of other social mobility opportunities (Bian, 1997).

Undocumented Mexican Immigrants

Mexican migration within the United States is an illustrative case in point of the exceptional operational effect of the informational strength of weak ties, job-getting network principles. Wilson (1998), in her research on transnational, or undocumented Mexican immigrants, found, in a number of studies, “that migration is mediated by kinship and social networks” (p.394). Upon arrival to a particular destination the

acquaintances they then come into contact with at the work site or their informal places of gathering expand the information members of any given network may have about potential employment opportunities (Massey & Espinosa, 1997). According to Wilson (1998), her studies of “the strength of weak ties” and “social capital”—or the economic opportunities that arise from established human relationships (Waldinger, 1994; Sanders & Nee, 1996; Burt, 1997;)—among the Mexican migrants in the United States reveal at least five interrelated network principles that facilitate their entrance into the employment realm, even while “many U.S. born minorities remain unemployed” (Wilson, 1988, p. 402). These principles are:

- 1) Networks are multi-local and encompass a variety of geographical destinations.
- 2) Work sites are anchoring points of networks.
- 3) Networks expand over time through the strength of weak ties.
- 4) Networks constitute social capital for their members with strong weak ties through informational and aid/recruitment to jobs exchange.
- 5) Networks constitute social capital for members with strong strong ties clustered together in specific localities and work sites.

Case studies of these network principles in operation among job seeking, transnational Mexican immigrants illustrate the effectiveness of strong weak ties. In general and in illustration of Principle 1, it was found that acquaintance linkages at various destination points relay information on labor market conditions and opportunities (Massey, Goldring & Durand, 1994). Migration to any particular locale dries up or continues depending on the information received about whether or not there are jobs. Over time the importance of any one destination may change depending on that information.

With respect to Principle 2 and in relation to Principle 1, the work sites in which the first wave of immigrants find viable employment become the destinations of choice of the succeeding waves of immigrants from the same region of origination (Massey, Goldring & Durand, 1994). The word-of-mouth information exchange among members of the network of the first group becomes all important to the latter group in terms of access to, timing and future job placement (Waldinger, 1994; Burt, 1997; Wilson, 1998).

Principle 3 is a reflection of Granovetter's (1973, 1982) "strength of weak ties" in that it was observed that with the ticking of time and with one acquaintance passing on employment information to another, "networks expand . . . to encompass new geographic and work site locations" (Wilson, 1998, p. 400). The acquaintances served as bridges of information from one closely-knit group of Mexicans to another. Often, too, among the Mexican migrants, weak ties become strong ties through marriage or a baptism or another life cycle event—the union of which further expands the informational network of the transnational social system. When new members are encompassed into each other's existing networks through these weak-tie-to-strong-tie unions, both sides benefit. The affinal ties of the now united parties become additions to the number of network ties of each of the two as all of the relational links of each side are absorbed by each of the opposite side. These newly formed connections make the information that close and distant relatives have about job opportunities and other geographical locations more widely available.

In close alignment with the first three Mexican migrant network principles is Principle 4, where diffuse (absence of multiple interactions among members) networks have come to be seen as constituting social capital for their members (Wilson, 1998). Their diffuse

networks constitute social capital in that all of the extended help and exchange of information and constant recruitment to jobs among the Mexican-related network members ensures that their “own” will fill the occupational openings (Tilly & Tilly, 1998, p. 192). With the filling of each job vacancy more migration is created and with “each act of migration . . . additional social capital [is created which is] capable of instigating and sustaining [even] more migration” (Massey & Espinosa, 1997, p. 989). The more experience in the U. S. a migrant has the more likely that members of his network will begin to and continue to migrate themselves. Throughout this process migrants are passing on useful job information to their weak tie acquaintances that they have met along the way which enables additional migrants to access new geographical locations. According to Camp (as cited in Massey & Espinosa, 1997), since “about half of adult Mexicans are related to someone living in the United States . . . social capital . . . is very widely diffused throughout the Mexican population” (p. 989).

The fifth and the last of the Mexican migration network principles describes how dense (many interactions among members) networks also constitute social capital. Networks are dense when, through the strength of strong ties, those who are closely knit by kinship or are from the same origin because concentrated in particular locations and occupy much of the work in those places where they reside (Tilly & Tilly, 1998). This clustering occurs when information about the job openings is passed to the preferred close relatives. Only when other jobs become available will others—outside of the close-relative realm and through word of mouth recruitment—be placed. In dense network situations, however, the acquaintances will be the last to hear of any openings.

For the undocumented Mexican immigrant, getting access to a job in a multitude of locations in the United States is “due to the constant expansion of networks through incorporating (and acting upon) information provided by acquaintances” (Wilson, 1998, p. 401). It is mostly from these weak tie contacts that new information “about previously unknown parts of the social system” (Wilson, 1998, p. 401) filters through the Mexican migrant networks and facilitates the workers in “finding new frontiers [in response] to a demand for cheap labor in parts of the United States far from its southwestern border” (Job Search, 1997). In the words of Burt (1997), the labor-market benefits that the Mexican migrants offer one another is derived from their position in the [weak tie] exchanges of “certain people [being] connected to certain others, trusting certain others, obligated to support certain others, dependent on exchange with certain others” (p. 340).

The Urban Poor

Another disadvantaged group of people with a historical problem of labor market woes is the urban poor—the greater proportion of which are welfare recipients who are non-white and female (Holzer, 1987) “blacks, Hispanics and the less educated” (Anonymous, 1997, p. 47), “new immigrants” (Reingold, 1999, p. 1908)—most of which are Hispanics and non-native born blacks, and some whites, though mostly older (Fusfeld & Bates, 1984, p. 2). Here too, though, social networks have been found to play a part in explaining “why some residents of poor urban communities are able to find stable employment . . . [thus making networks] . . . an important part of the current urban poverty debate” (Reingold, 1998, p. 1907).

Similar to people who have mental retardation, the primary problems that the inner-city poor and minority households face in the realm of the labor market are

“unemployment, involuntary part-time employment, . . . low earnings” (Anonymous, 1997, p. 48) and “lower employment rates” (O’Regan & Quigley, 1996, p. 692). According to a September 1997 article in the *Monthly Labor Review* (Anonymous), in 1995, 7.5 million (or approximately 20 percent) of the 36 million people living in poverty in the United States spent at least a half of a year looking for work or worked making a low wage. Of those who worked full-time in the labor force for at least half of a year, 4 of 10 of these 3.9 million experienced some form of unemployment (Anonymous, 1997, p. 47; Stoll, 1998, p. 2225). More men than women comprised the working poor, though the poverty rate for women was greater (6.4 versus 5.6 percent), and white workers made up about three-fourths of the working poor, though the poverty rate for blacks was two and a half times higher and that of the Hispanics three times higher (Anonymous, 1997, p. 48). The poverty rates among white working men and women were equal at 5.1 percent; among black working men and women 9.4 and 15 percent respectively; and among Hispanic working men and women 16 and 13.4 percent respectively (Anonymous, 1997). In general, the less educated the worker, the greater the poverty rate by nearly a 3-to-1 ration (17.2 percent without a high school diploma versus 6.1 percent with a high school diploma) (Anonymous, 1997). The employment problem among the urban poor—and especially those who are a minority—is acute.

The joblessness of the urban underclass, according to the often quoted Wilson, has resulted from a “shift in the economy from an urban manufacturing-dominated economy to a suburban service-dominated economy” (Whitman, 1996, p. 45) and other economical structural changes (see Holzer, 1996, pp. 2-3) in which low-wage, “low skill requirements” (Immergluck, 1998, p. 35; Stoll, 1998, p. 2221) manufacturing jobs were

driven from the urban to suburban areas. Though the cause is not entirely known, it is conjectured that the decline of the manufacturing industry is due to the “relocation of capital in labour-intensive industries to low labour-cost countries” (Jordan as cited in Ashton, 1986, p. 88) together with “quantum shifts in productivity” (Ashton, 1986, p. 88). Regardless of the causes, however, only a relatively small proportion of workers are now needed to produce a “high level of output of manufactured goods” (Ashton, 1986, p. 88).

Interrelated with this process of “deindustrialization” (Immergluck, 1998, p. 35) is the “growth of the service sector . . . [in which] . . . the increase in jobs has been in the professional, scientific and business services, community services and the leisure industries” (Ashton, 1986, p. 88). With the increase in such work specific areas as finance, health, education, welfare, eating and drinking establishments—most of which require a more educated employee (Cohn & Fossett, 1996, p. 572)—and the simultaneous and “steady” (Arnott, 1998, p. 1172) “migration of establishments out of central-city neighborhoods” (Immergluck, 1998, p. 35)—some of which include the residue manufacturing jobs that require only a moderate amount of skill—millions in the inner city have been left with little or no opportunity for work (O’Regan & Quigley, 1996; Whitman, 1996; Immergluck, 1998;).

Although the demand for labor has not disappeared, it has “reformed along new geographical, sectoral, and organizational lines that [have] put jobs beyond the grasp of many . . . workers” (Indergaard, 1999, p. 4) in “central cities of major metropolitan areas” (Trost, 1997, p. 99). The shift of businesses away from the inner city and “concentrated neighborhoods of color” (Tilly & Tilly, 1998, p. 193) and into the suburbs has been due

partly to the cost of land or highway accessibility as well as “factors related to the race and class composition of the areas chosen: They avoid areas in which they perceive high crime, question workforce quality, or simply feel uncomfortable” (p. 193). Upon relocation into non-minority suburbs, then, employers hire non-minority employees. Left in the inner city, destitute of work and socially and spatially isolated, are the urban poor who, in the words of a job developer, ““ don’t have work experience or a long work history in any one place . . . (see also Holzer, 1996, p. 85) limited or no skills, little education and often no car”” (Indergaard, 1999, p. 12), along with the stigma of being associated with an inner city residence (Tilly & Tilly, 1998)—all of which contribute negatively to the effectiveness of information networks (Hoelster, 1982; Gable, Thompson & Iwanicki, 1983; Immergluck, 1998). Networks, as discussed earlier and as demonstrated by a number of researchers “operate as crucial resources for individuals . . . [by] help[ing] them to find a job . . . ; provid[ing] access to influential people; and . . . promoting bargaining skills that enlarge the range and influence of networks even more” (Patterson, 1998, p. 18). As Granovetter (1992) notes, for the poor, the lack of network ties and work on a regular basis forms a vicious circle: without long-term jobs, networks of acquaintances with non-blacks and non-segregated others who are better situated to know about many job openings (Braddock & McPartland, 1987) do not materialize and without a network of these outside-of-the-segregated-group acquaintances, poor (largely inner city) individuals do not get informational access needed to get a job. Employers are not prone to spending much time or money on the recruitment of a relatively uneducated employee to fill a lower level job, according to Braddock and McPartland (1987). They will fill these jobs in the easiest and most inexpensive way, which is through informal

referrals and “walk-in” applications, and which makes it all the more important for the urban poor to connect into the word-of-mouth informational network.

Also, to illustrate the importance of spatial proximity or distance in establishing network connection, Tilly and Tilly (1998) write that “For a neighborhood employer—say, a small shop paying close to the minimum wage—the particular set of neighborhood residents who obtain jobs is greatly shaped by networks. But the shop’s location itself is the main factor determining who will work there. After all, most potential workers cannot afford to travel far for a minimum wage job . . . ! [As is evident] the networks that form a key information source are in part spatially determined” (p. 193) and in order for workers to improve access to entry level jobs in local labor markets they must have these connections to the recruitment networks by which employers rely on heavily to secure what is, in their view, a reliable labor force (Melendez & Harrison, 1998).

While millions of mostly minority workers in the urban areas were left to endure the departure of numerous businesses and vastly diminished opportunities for employment (Whitman, 1996; Stewart, ed., 1997), the job difficulties that the poor inner city blacks have encountered have been much more troublesome than for any other ethnic group or race (Stoll, 1998). As the better-paid manufacturing jobs moved out of the inner city, so too did the black elite, taking with them their doctor offices, Laundromats, drug stores, and all the thriving local stores, which at one time catered to black clientele only because of forced segregation (Whitman, 1996). Catering to a minority clientele, however, was found to be considerably less profitable than “competing in the broader, racially diverse economy” (Bates, 1997, p. 160). The effects of this inner-city business abandonment has left the remaining blacks economically devastated and with an “oversupply of . . .

workers relative to the number of jobs . . .” (Stoll, 1998, p. 2221) and more isolated than ever. With the increase in the central city isolation of poor blacks has come the subsequent decrease in “contact with both non-minority (white) and non-poor households” (O’Regan & Quigley, 1996, p. 694)—the exposure to which a greater chance of becoming employed (via the verbal relay of reliable job information and the employed person’s exertion of influence in the workplace on behalf of an unemployed contact) is likely (Levin, n.d.).

In addition to the problems of spatial isolation and having few employed friends by which to be informed of job openings, black workers are often disdained by both black and white employers (Whitman, 1996). Perceived to be “more troublesome and less compliant employees than the members of many immigrant groups” (Kirschenman & Neckerman, 1991, p. 93), many employers prefer to hire even “newly arrived Mexican immigrants” (Whitman, 1996, p. 46) and Hispanics, in general, than they do blacks (Holzer, 1996). This preference for hiring Hispanics over blacks is in spite of the fact that Hispanic applicants are usually less educated and have “weaker interactive skills . . . than [do] . . . the native-born [black] workers” (Holzer, 1996, p. 93). Black employers, themselves, in one study conducted in Chicago, were reported to also have hesitations in hiring blacks—their complaint being that “black males from the ghetto are lazy, dismiss certain jobs as beneath them, are often late or absent from work, and often fail drug tests” (Whitman, 1999, p. 45). “While minimal skills are necessary for productivity . . . non-cognitive work traits [such as the] proper level of subordination, discipline, supremacy of cognitive over affective modes of response, and motivation according to external reward structures” (Levin, n.d., p. 222; Braddock & McPartland, 1987) are apparently considered

even more important. In another study a researcher found that “of white-owned firms in minority areas, only 29 percent employ more than 75 percent minority workforces” (Immergluck, 1998, p. 46). For black men from metropolitan areas, getting and keeping a job is indeed difficult.

Perhaps the biggest factor affecting the unemployment problem of inner city blacks, however, is their inability “to make inroads into established American networks (Patterson, 1998, p. 18). Unlike even their newcomer (to the country) counterparts—who, upon arrival, have been able to connect to the critical networks from which flow information between the newly arrived and settlers on one hand, and between workers and white ethnic employers or immigrant owners on the other hand (Bailey & Waldinger, 1991; Waldinger, 1994)—“Afro-Americans . . . have been almost completely isolated from this national (networking) process [in which ties are developed] that extend [one’s] network ranges, especially in job searches . . .” (Patterson, 1998, p. 18). Immigrants have found that, by networking, the quality and quantity of information is greater which increases their ability to access employment opportunities and simultaneously reduces the risk employers face (because of typically not knowing anything about a worker before recruitment) in the hiring and training process (Bailey & Waldinger, 1991). The rapid buildup among their ranks in a number of occupations and industries in some cities has been as a result of network recruitment (Waldinger, 1991). The majority of black Americans, however, though they have been in the United States for nearly three centuries, continue to live largely in spatial isolation (Bickford & Massey, 1991; Farley & Frey, 1994; Paterson, 1998)—much to their own job-related detriment (Braddock & McPartland, 1987; Waldinger, 1994; Wells & Crain, 1994; Trost, 1997).

Getting a job, according to Granovetter (1985), is an “economic action [that] is embedded in structures [or networks] of social relations” (p. 481). By embeddedness it is met that the relational links are ones in which there is trust and ones among people of reputation (Granovetter, 1985). “Not surprisingly, whites have the largest networks [(and the lowest unemployment rate) and] Afro-Americans [have] the smallest [networks (and the highest unemployment rate)]” (Patterson, 1998, p. 19; Labor Force Statistics, 1999; Reingold, 1999) among all ethnic groups. Interestingly enough, and unfortunately for Afro-Americans, they (blacks) “do not compensate for their isolation from other groups by relying more heavily on kinsmen” (Patterson, 1998, p. 19) but rather have “fewer kin and fewer non-kin than whites . . . and their networks have a lower proportion of kin than those of whites,” according to network scholar, Peter Marsden (Patterson, 1998, p. 19).

For the inner city black, not only do their relatively small number of contacts with occupational or other-group acquaintances and comparatively smaller networks of friends and relatives prove to be economically disadvantageous, but the very structural set-up within the realm of employment itself presents still further job-getting hindrances, according to Granovetter (1974), in that they are under-represented in many firms and industries. Granovetter, in this his first edition of *Getting a Job*, goes on to explain that if those already employed do not interact with blacks, then no blacks will enter into employment in these work sites through personal contact. However, “Once a core of blacks (or whatever group is in question) has become established, . . . a multiplier effect can be anticipated, as they recruit friends and relatives, who do the same, and so on. Once achieved, this situation is self-sustaining” (p. 133). This was written in 1974, however, 22 years later Holzer (1996) found that black job applicants were still much less

likely to be hired on in firms than the job applicants who were either white or Hispanic. As Patterson (1998) puts it, “Afro-Americans as a group are systematically unconnected to the essential network resources that most other Americans take for granted” (p. 17). This disconnect narrows the social circle of blacks and makes the obtainment of information about jobs from other environments significantly less likely which diminishes the probability of getting a job (Forsé as cited in Villar, Juan, Corominas & Capell, 2000). Just as Braddock’s (1980) theory of the perpetuation of segregation predicts, by barely networking and not developing and strengthening their weak ties among others outside of themselves, inner city blacks, especially, will continue to be left out of the labor market to a greater degree than any other group in the inner city.

Women

The last of the major groups of disadvantaged people to be discussed are women. Research indicates that women, like other minorities, contend with discriminatory hiring and job assignment practices as well as with being paid a significantly less amount of money than men who have the same or less level of education (Albelda & Tilly, 1997; Reid, 1998; see tables in Appendix C). The poverty rate among women ranks among the highest, and particularly among Black and Hispanic women—the majority of which live within the limits of central cities (Thompson, 1997). As with other minorities in a similar situation, the suburbanization of the low-skill jobs in combination with the inability (due to transportation costs and child-care responsibilities [Albelda & Tilly, 1997; Thompson, 1997; Handler & White, 1999]) to access these relocated jobs has adversely affected the labor force participation rate of these inner-city women. For women who do work, nearly half are employed in “clerical and service jobs” (Albelda & Tilly, 1997, p. 46) and other

low-paid occupations which are viewed as women's work and therefore considered as "less important and given lower wages" (Reid, 1998, p.530). The more dominated by women an occupation is, the less value these jobs have in the broader culture, according to research done by Reid (1998). She found that "for every 1% increase in the percent White female in a man's job, the hourly rate of pay for White men [and Black men and women and White women themselves, but not Latinos of either gender] decreases by about \$0.01" (p. 522). An increase of 80 percentage points would translate to an \$0.80 an hour cost in pay with the yearly loss in wages totaling close to \$1,600. A decrease of 80 percentage points, on the other hand, would translate to a corresponding increase in pay of \$0.80 an hour and \$1,600 a year.

In addition to being a negative influence on the wages of others, women encounter the employer-erected barriers of being "excluded from certain jobs because those jobs are higher skilled and higher paying than other jobs" (Reid, 1998, p. 531). This then forces them to take the low skill/low wage job leftovers.

Other evidence of the discriminatory devaluation of women in the world of work is found in the disparity of their wages. Albelda and Tilly (1997) note that "women average \$10.46 per hour to men's \$13.32" (p. 46). Furthermore, women who are high school dropouts earn just one dollar more than men who have less than even one year of a formal education; "a female high school graduate earns less than a male high school dropout" (Albelda & Tilly, 1997, p. 46); and the wages of a woman with a bachelor's degree could be equated to those of a man with an associate's degree. No matter where a woman is on the educational scale, her pay lags behind that of her male counterpart—and this in spite

of the fact that “women in the workforce are actually slightly more educated than men” (Albelda & Tilly, 1997, p. 46).

As it is with other disadvantaged groups, and as research has shown, if women are to attain “desirable occupational outcomes” (Campbell, 1988, p. 184), it is essential that they, too, connect up with quality social contact. Making “inroads into established American networks” (p. 18), after all, is not successfully achieved by relying on educational enhancement alone, according to Patterson (1998). Employers are known to “recruit new workers largely via social network referrals, rather than through direct applications and job training and placement agencies” (Handler & White, 1999, p. 49).

The networks of women, however, are more often than not made up of what Granovetter (1973, 1974) calls strong ties. For example, women who are non-employed mothers rely heavily on a network of neighbors. All women—even those who are young, single and employed—are reported to have networks in which there is a heavier concentration on kin and which contain fewer coworkers than men (Campbell, 1988). A “system that relies so heavily on informal [neighbor and kin] networks of support [though] appears to be impractical for many low-income women who are embedded in informal networks with members who are themselves struggling to make ends meet in the low-wage labor market” (Handler & White, 1999, p. 49). The strength of a personal network lies in its diversity, according to Granovetter’s (1973, 1982) argument of the strength of weak ties. Weak ties are more valuable than strong ties in that they are more effective in connecting the socially distant to job search contacts. Keeping to kin and neighbors only severely limits a woman’s ability to use networks to find out about job openings. Thus, if poverty-stricken women, in particular, are to access the labor market

in greater numbers, they must establish and rely on links with others who are unlike themselves and who are outside of their immediate circle of neighbors and kin. The wider the network range and “the greater the diversity and quality of social resources that are available through a woman’s social network,” (Stoloff, Glanville, & Bienenstock, 1999, p. 92) the more access she will have to the “critical element[s]” (Campbell, 1988, p. 181), or acquaintances who have job information and workplace influence, which makes it more likely that she will be working for pay (Stoloff, Glanville, & Bienenstock, 1999).

The importance of informal networks to the hiring process—especially for low-skilled positions—is well documented. Employers are known to regularly rely on an informal referral process rather than on advertising or other formal means. In one study, 88% of the employers interviewed stated that they recruited workers through referrals, and 64% said that this was the hiring strategy that they used most often (Handler & White, 1999, p. 55). In some same study employees who were interviewed noted that their firm’s current employees recommended their own replacements and provided referrals when new openings occurred. Using employee referrals saves employers both time and energy in finding and screening for qualified and cohesive persons to fill the open positions.

There are, “unfortunately, qualified candidates who [never] come to the attention of employers, or who are perceived by employers as coming from less qualified social groups [and, as a result], have a difficult time getting hired Welfare recipients, [especially, are often viewed] as less qualified than other workers [and for this reason employers are] less willing to take risks with an individual job candidate if her welfare status has been emphasized” (Handler & White, 1999, p. 70). Thus, for poverty-stricken women, especially—as with all economically disadvantaged groups—“planning and

managing social contacts and cultivating personal relationships in order to get a job” (Villar, Juan, Corominas, & Capell, 2000, p. 389) is all the more imperative. As researchers Hurlbert, Haines, and Beggs (2000) found that, “networks matter [because they link activated [weak] ties to [desirable job search] outcomes” (p. 598).

Summary

Granovetter (1995) stated that “despite modernization, technology, and the dizzying pace of social change, one constant in the world is that where and how [one] spend[s her] working hours . . . depends very much on how [she is] embedded in networks of social contact” (p. 141). His research showed that among those who found jobs, those who used weak ties (friends of friends, acquaintances) were able to get better jobs than those who used strong ties (close friends, relatives). This led to his “strength of weak ties argument which became an extension of his overall original proposition of the importance of social network ties in attaining occupational outcomes. The “strength” of the weak ties lies in the probability that they will reach a far greater number of and more sectors of dissimilar individuals, and span diverse geographical locations that “connect persons who do not know one another” (Stoloff, Glanville, & Bienenstock, 1999, p. 92). This widened range of contacts “provide[s] access to the non-redundant information[al flow] that arguably improves job-search outcomes” (Gable, Thompson, & Iwanicki, 1983; Braddock, Crain, McPartland, & Dawkins, 1986; Braddock & McPartland, 1987; Wells & Crain, 1994; Hurlbert, Haines, & Beggs, 2000, p. 600).

The literature reviewed for the research for this study is replete with evidence supporting Granovetter’s proposition of the strength of weak ties in finding and getting a job due to the “access [weak ties afford] to informal networks that provide information

about, and entrance to . . . employment” (Wells & Crain, 1994, p. 533). Complementing Granovetter’s theory is Braddock’s premise that the more segregated an individual or group of people is and generationally remains, the less success there will be of gaining an occupational outcome—and this due to the lack of the “development of effective, informed social networks that facilitate acquisition of occupational information and awareness, which is crucial for adult occupational success” (Gable, Thompson, & Iwanicki, 1983, p. 231). In relation to the three most economically disadvantaged people groups of America discussed in this paper, the research is consistent with the theories espoused by Granovetter and Braddock in that the more weak ties individuals have, and the less segregated their circle of associations, the greater the probability of an eventual occupational outcome. As for those who have mental retardation, whether or not their high rate of unemployment is attributable to their lack of weak tie links remains to be seen in the next chapters of this study.

CHAPTER III

DATA PRESENTATION

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether Granovetter's (1973) Network Analysis/strength of weak ties theory and Braddock's (1980) Perpetuation (of segregation) theory could explain the continual low rate of employment among the mentally retarded. Though numerous laws—over the past 30 years especially—have been passed on behalf of helping those with mental retardation to assimilate into society, they are still among the most unemployed groups of disadvantaged people in the United States.

Granovetter's theoretical premise is that the more diffused the weak ties (friends of friends or acquaintances), the greater the diversity of contacts, which results in a greater amount of access to previously unknown information about jobs that are open and where they are open. In complement of Granovetter's theory of the importance of weak ties in getting a job is Braddock's theory of the importance of getting outside of the constriction of one's own immediate circle of friends and associates so as to have more access to people who are better situated in positions of employment and who would thereby be more likely to have job-opportunity information. Staying within one's own group, according to Braddock, only perpetuates segregation—much to the job-search detriment of the would-be seeker.

Upon review of the literature related to weak ties and the perpetuation of segregation, it was discovered that strengthened weak ties and less segregation worked to the job-getting advantage of disadvantaged people groups in that they were able to make inroads into the realm of employment (Granovetter, 1973, 1995; Braddock, 1980; Brown &

Reingen, 1987; Montgomery, 1994; Wells & Crain, 1994; Bian, 1997; Wilson, 1998; Reingold, 1999; Stoloff, Glanville, Bienenstock, 1999; Hurlbert, Haines, & Beggs, 2000; Villar, Juan, Corominas, & Capell, 2000). Thus the collection of the empirical information for this study focused in on finding out about the hiring patterns and strategies of employers in relation to those who have mental retardation and whether or not any intermediary weak tie links were instrumental in the hiring among those employed.

One hundred employers with hiring authority from businesses of various sizes and industries, in a large metropolitan city and several of its surrounding suburbs and a smaller town of 60,000 that is within a 75-mile radius of the city, were solicited in person or by telephone to anonymously participate in filling out a written questionnaire/employer survey. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was offered for the expedient return of the survey. The businesses that were selected were those that were more visible and easily accessible from the major arterial roads. In addition, several businesses that are known to have employed someone with mental retardation were selected so as to be sure that these were represented in the sample. These businesses were made known through communicative contact with vocational rehabilitation counselors and Gatesway residential directors.

A compilation of the empirical data that was gathered from each of the returned surveys is presented in this chapter. The purposes of empirical data collection and presentation were to analyze the findings through the lens of the literature related to Granovetter's weak tie theory as well as Braddock's Perpetuation theory and to use what

has been found to speculate on the relationship of weak ties and the unemployment problem among citizens who have mental retardation.

Case Study Procedures

An exploratory case study method of inquiry was employed to research whether a lack of weak ties and—to a lesser degree—the perpetuation of segregation have any relationship to the unemployment problem of the disadvantaged group of the mentally retarded. Empirical information that was considered relevant to the problem was collected through the use of an anonymous questionnaire survey that was distributed to 100 employers. The survey instrument consisted of 13 items: six of the questions were semi-structured and designed to elicit information about the basic back ground of each particular business and the other seven were less structured, open-ended questions that were designed to gain more of an in-depth understanding into the hiring patterns and strategies of area employers with regards to those who have mental retardation. It was decided that by conducting the survey anonymously, the respondent would be given the freedom to answer the open-ended questions more honestly and without fear of what the researcher might think should the employer want to respond in a “politically incorrect” manner. Personally interviewing the employer could have caused the employer to answer in a “socially acceptable” way.

Of the 100 surveys distributed, 30 or 30% were returned. According to DSS Research, a market research and information provider based in Arlington, Texas, “Surveys covering . . . socially relevant issues typically have response rates of 30% to 35% . . .” (Mail survey, 2001, p. 1). Of those returned, 16 or 53% were only partially completed. The

questions that were most often left blank were questions #10 and #2, which were open-ended in design and probed for: 1) the specifics of how a person with mental retardation who is or was employed with the employer's business had heard that there was a job opening; and 2) what could be done to help employ more people with mental retardation.

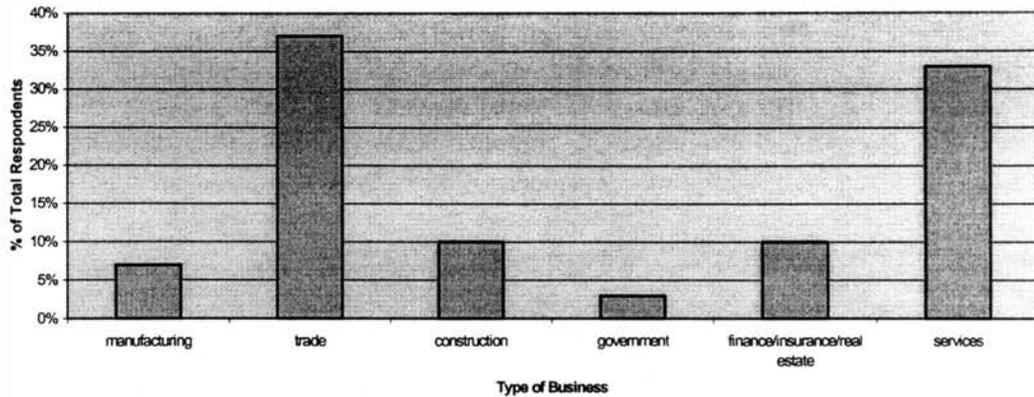
The following information is a reporting of the written responses from the surveys that were returned. The data that came in is organized into three subsections: 1). Employer Demographics; 2). Recruiting/Hiring Practices; and 3). The Employment of Persons Who Have Mental Retardation.

Employer Demographics

Type of Employer

In response to the type of employer, 11 of 30 respondents, or just over one-third of the total, indicated that their company was involved in some kind of trade (wholesale/retail). Another 10 employers comprised the service sector and six of those 10 were restaurants. The other four were listed as computer repair, newspaper deliverer, high school library media, and marketing of telecom products and services. Together the services and trade industries made up slightly more than two-third's (70%) of the 30 participants. Three employers each equally represented the construction and finance-related areas. Two employers came from the manufacturing realm and one reported being governmental.

Figure 1. Where Employer Respondents Work



Employer Position in the Company

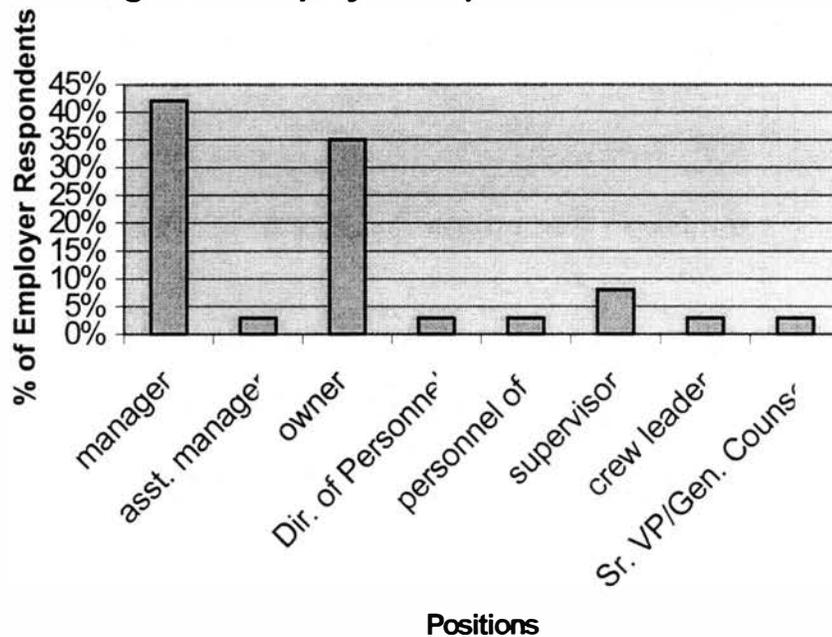
Employers were asked to identify their position in the company that they represent. Twenty-nine of the 30 employers who returned the survey responded to this last question. The one employer who did not respond was unresponsive to every one of the back page items of the survey. Of the 29 respondents to item #13 of the survey, 12 (or 41%) of them were managers. Seven of the managers represented the trade industries, three of them represented the restaurants, one represented a manufacturing business, and one represented a finance/insurance/real estate entity. Four of the 12 (33%) managers reported on paper that there were employees with mental retardation currently working for them. One employer respondent from the governmental realm wrote that s/he was an assistant manager. The managers, in general, accounted for approximately 45% of the 29 employer participants.

Owners, on the other hand, accounted for another 34% (10 of 29) of all employer respondents to this survey item. They were representative of three services businesses, one finance/insurance/real estate business, three trade businesses, two construction

businesses, and one manufacturing business. Two of the 10 (20%) owners indicated earlier in the survey that they currently employed persons with mental retardation.

The remaining six employer respondents to the survey were made up of one director of personnel representing a hotel/restaurant of 115 plus employees and who currently employs persons who have mental retardation; another from a personnel office in a finance/insurance/real estate industry; two supervisors from the services economic sector; a crew leader representing a construction company; and a senior vice president/general counsel from a services industry. Added together, these six made up 21% of the 29 respondent total.

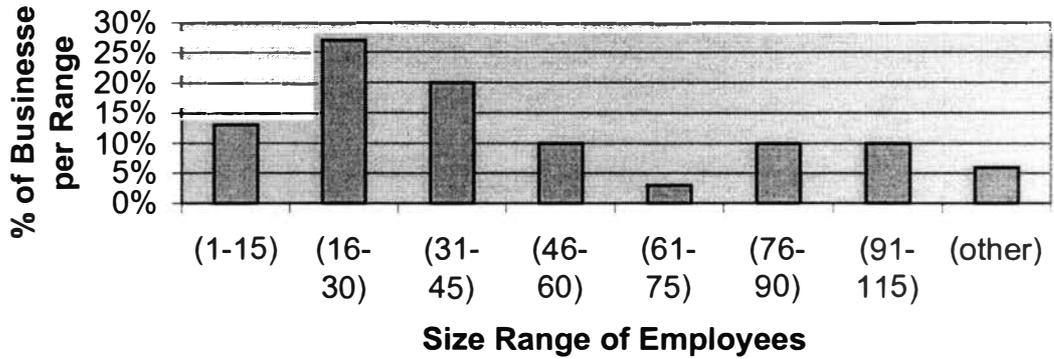
Figure 2. Employer Respondent Positions



Number of Employees

With regard to the number of employees of the businesses represented in the sample, three (75%) services and one (25%) trade-related business relayed that they had 1–15 total employees. Making up the 16–30 range of the number of employees were four services oriented businesses, two construction related businesses, and one trade and finance/insurance/real estate each. Of the four service businesses, three (75%) were restaurants. The services made up 50% of the total in the 16–30 categorical range. In the 31–45 range, four of six (66%) were trade related and each of the other two comprised 17% of the total reporting. They were in the finance/insurance/real estate and construction areas. Three businesses—one trade and two manufacturing—made up the 46–60 total employee range; one finance/insurance/real estate business made up the 61–75 employee range; three trade businesses made up the 76–90 number of employees range; the 91–115 number of employees range contained two service businesses and one governmental; and the two reporting in the category of “other” were a trade business with more than 500 employees and a hotel/restaurant with above 115 total employees. Overall, the services-related businesses dominated the two lower ranges of 1–15 and 16–30 total employees at 58% of the total businesses reporting in those ranges. The service sector also dominated the upper ranges of 91–115 and over with 60% of the total businesses reporting. Though service oriented businesses made up one-third of all employers surveyed, none happened to fall in the mid- ranges of 31–90 employees. They were either comparatively smaller or bigger businesses.

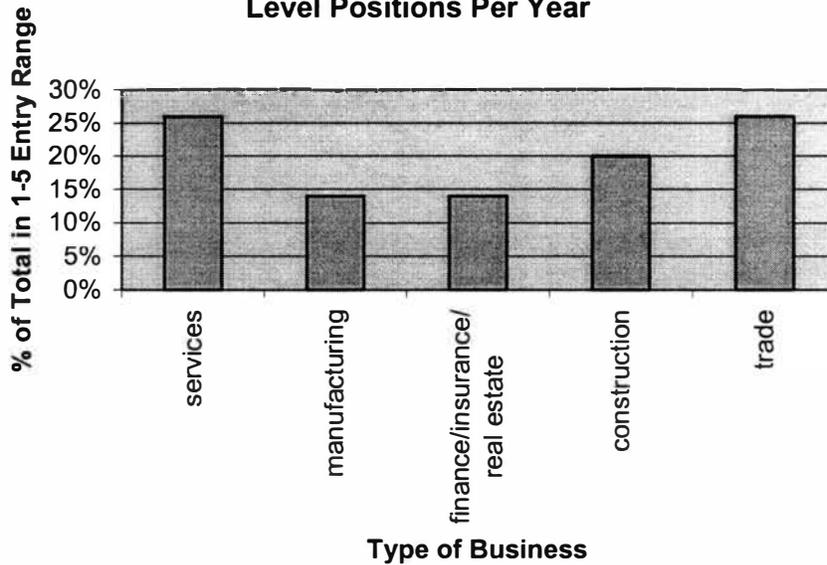
Figure 3. Size of Business by Number of Employees



Entry Level Positions Available Per Year

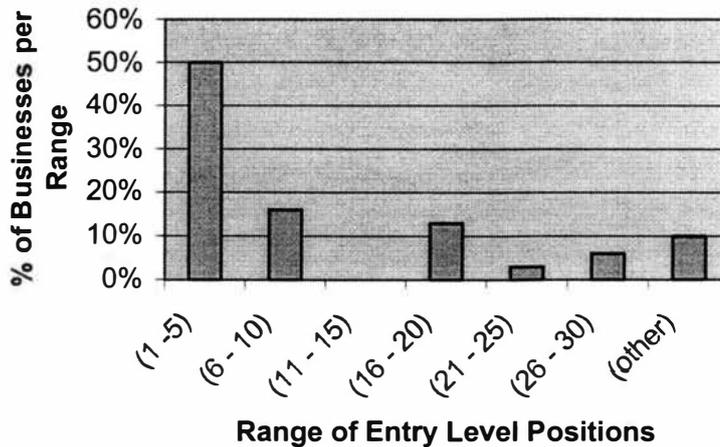
When questioned on the number of entry-level positions that become available per year, fifty percent (15 of 30) of the respondents indicated that their businesses have 1–5 positions available per year. Of the 15, eight (four each) or 52% of the businesses were trade and service oriented; two each (13% each) were manufacturing and finance/insurance/real estate related; and three (20%) were in the realm of construction.

Figure 4. Types of Businesses with 1-5 Entry Level Positions Per Year



A total of five (16%) businesses reported in the 6–10 range of entry-level positions available per year there were a total of five businesses. Of these, two (40%) were trade, one (20%) was governmental, one (20%) was service-oriented, and one (20%) was finance/insurance/real estate related. Together the trade and services industries comprised 60% of the five businesses reporting 6–10 entry-level openings. The remaining entry-level position categories include 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26-30, and “other.” No employer reported entry-level positions available in the 11 – 15 number range. Four businesses indicated that they had 16–20 entry-level positions available per year—75% of which were in the trade sector and 25% in the services sector. One employer of a restaurant marked the 21–25 range, and one trade and one service industry each indicated that there were 26–30 entry-level positions available per year in their places of work. Three others listed “other:” they consisted of one trade and two service oriented businesses. Only the trade and service industries reported more than 15 entry-level positions as being available per year.

Figure 5. Number of Entry Level Positions Available Per Year



With half of the employer respondents having reported 1-5 entry level positions per year and another 16% reporting 6-10, it appears that most of the respondents were from a small business background. Also, finding out the number of entry-level positions that become available per year in each business was an area of interest so as to be able to pinpoint whether the businesses with a smaller or greater number of openings were more prone towards hiring individuals with mental retardation.

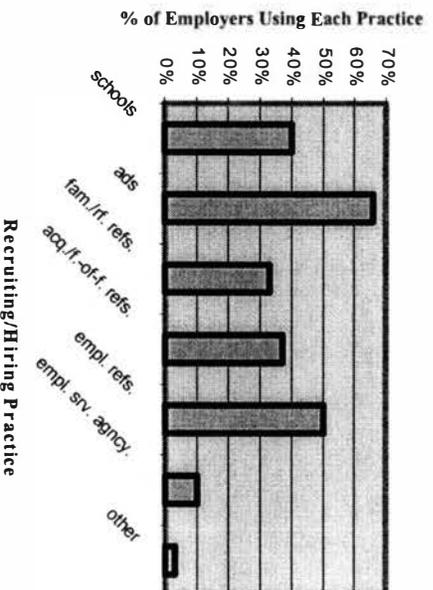
Recruiting/Hiring Practices

Recruiting/Hiring Practices

Employers were asked to check all of the recruiting and hiring practices on which they rely. Of all of the practices, Ads were the most heavily relied upon with 19 of the 30 (or 63%) employers recording in this row. The next most heavily relied upon recruiting practice was Employee Referrals with half of the employers reporting in this row on the survey. Then came Schools (40%), Acquaintances/friends-of-friends Referrals (37%),

Family/close friend Referrals (33%), Employment Service Agency (10%), and Other (walk-in; 3%).

**Figure 6. Recruiting/Hiring Practices Used
By Employer Respondents**



Ads-Relying on the practice of using ads to recruit and hire employees the most were businesses that were services (70%) and trade (72%) related. Sixty-six percent of all of the finance/insurance/real estate related employers stated that they use Ads, as do 25% of the construction-related employers, 50% of the all of the manufacturing employers, and 100% (1 of 1) of the governmental.

Employee Referrals- Of the second most heavily used recruitment and hiring practices—Employee Referrals—the 50% of employers who marked this row was made up of 45% of the total trade-related businesses, 60% of the service businesses, 66% of the finance/insurance/real estate businesses, 50% of the manufacturing businesses, and 33% of the construction businesses.

Schools- Schools were the third most relied on recruiting technique and was used by every one of the types of businesses that were represented by the employer respondents in this study with the one exception being the governmentally-related business.

Acquaintances/Friends-of-Friends Referrals- Acquaintances/friends-of-friends referrals were marked by 60% of the service industries, 27% of the trade industries, 50% of the manufacturing businesses, and 33% of the finance/insurance/real estate industries represented.

Family/Close Friend Referrals- Family/close friend referrals were the fifth most used hiring technique and was relied on by 60% of the service employers, 27% of the trade employers, and 33% of the construction employers.

Employment Service Agency- Regarding the use of an employment service agency one of each of the services (10%), trade (9%), and manufacturing (50%) industries mentioned its use, making it the least most relied on hiring technique mentioned on the survey.

Other- In the row tagged as “Other,” one trade-related business of 31–45 employers mentioned the use of “walk-ins” for its recruiting/hiring practice.

Figure 7. Recruiting/Hiring Practices of Services Industry Respondents

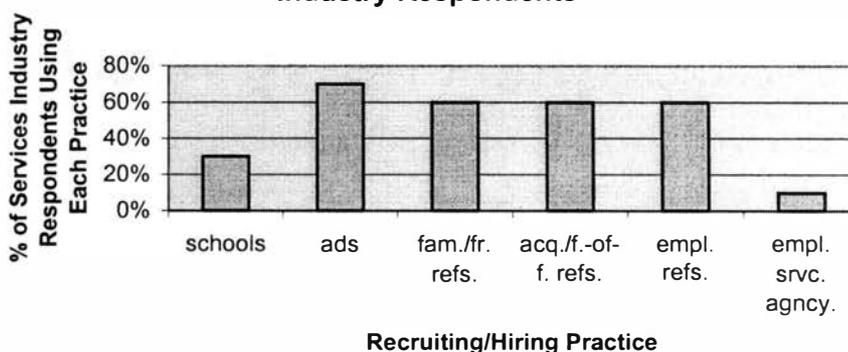
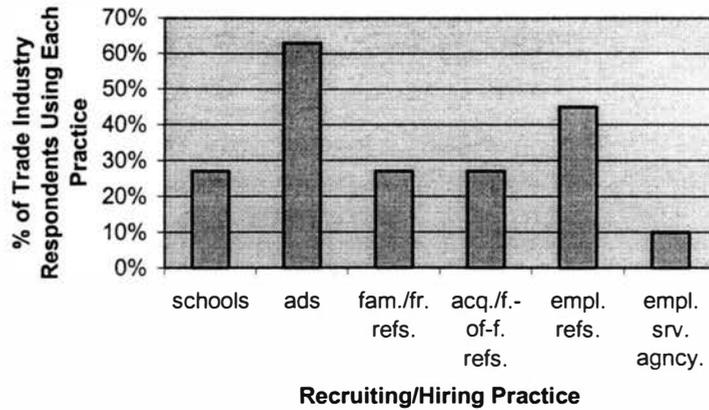


Figure 8. Recruiting/Hiring Practices of Trade Industry Employers



In terms of which recruiting/hiring practices each type of business particularly relies on, the services and trade segments make use of every method mentioned in the survey. The manufacturing industries made use of every recruitment/hiring practice mentioned except for the family/close friend referral method. Making use of all but the family/close friend referral and employment service agency recruitment/hiring practices were the finance/insurance/real estate industries. The construction companies marked that they make use of all methods except the acquaintances/friends-of-friends referrals and employment service agencies. The last and only governmental entity indicated that it makes use of ads only.

In specific reference to the use of any kind of referrals, 20 of the 30 employers surveyed showed that they use family/close friend, acquaintances/friends-of-friends, and employee referrals. Of those three, referrals from employees were used by exactly half (15 of 30) of all the employers—the most used method by the businesses among all the referral choices. Eight employers of these 15 (or 53%) also relied on family/close friend referrals. Eighty percent of all the businesses using family/close friend referrals also

relied on employee referrals. Sixty-three percent of employers who relied on acquaintances/friends-of-friends referrals also relied on employee referrals. Sixteen percent (5 of 30) of the employers relied on all three of the referral recruitment/hiring practices. Fifty-seven percent of the businesses surveyed, which reported to have persons with mental retardation working for them, used each of the referral recruitment/hiring practices and ads. Twenty-eight percent used schools and none used an employment service agency.

Hiring Technique Most Heavily Relied Upon

In answer to the hiring technique(s) that was (were) most often relied upon, the use of ads were, again, the most popular method with 10 different employers from the trade, construction, and services realm indicating as such. Seventy percent of the ten businesses were trade related. Seven of the total 11 (or 63%) trade-related businesses surveyed made up this 70% preferring to rely on ads most often. The sole business of the ten that employed anyone with mental retardation was a large hotel/restaurant services business.

Figure 9. Recruiting/Hiring Practices Most Often Used Among Employer Respondents



Schools were the next most often relied upon technique of recruitment and hiring with a total of six businesses reporting in this row. These businesses were made up of 66% of the construction and finance/insurance/real estate employers who were surveyed. One of the two manufacturing industries marked this row, as did one of 10 of the services. The manufacturing business was the only one to have mentioned having an employee with mental retardation.

Employee referrals followed as the third most preferred method of hiring with five businesses making use of these most often. Two were trade related and three were service-related industries. All three service industries were restaurants. Of the five businesses, three (or 66%) of them marked that they had individuals who had mental retardation working for them.

Figure 10. Hiring Practices Most Often Relied Upon by Trade Industry Respondents

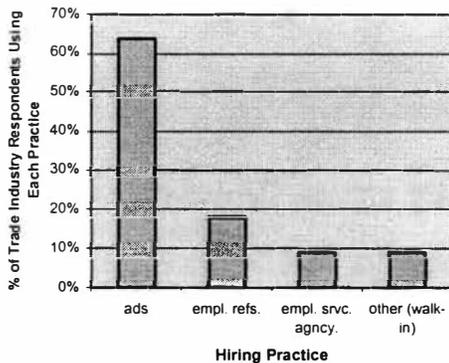
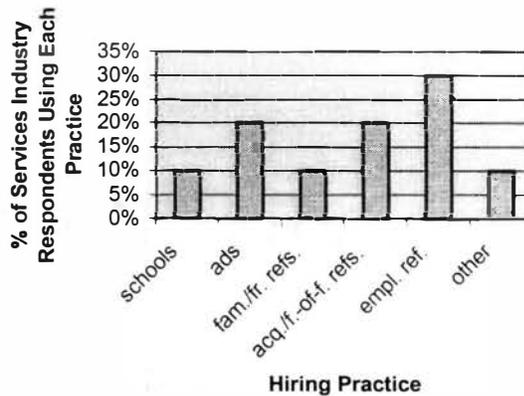


Figure 11. Hiring Practices Most Often Relied Upon by Services Industry Respondents



The next most often used hiring technique used was in the “Other” row where one trade industry indicated that it used walk-ins (in addition to ads) and two services industries mentioned that they use “anything that works” (see Appendix D, survey question #8). None of these had employees with mental retardation.

Two sets of two employers each marked that they most often use acquaintances/friends-of-friends referrals and an employment service agency. The former was made up of services businesses—one of which has at least one employee with mental retardation—and the latter was made up of a trade and a manufacturing business—neither of which had any individuals with mental retardation working for them.

The last and least of the most often used hiring techniques was the family/close friend referral. Only one service-related business marked this method (along with employee referrals) as one of its most often used methods of hiring and it employed at least one person with mental retardation. In all, three of the 30 employers who returned the survey did not fill in anything on this question: one was governmental, one was finance/insurance/real estate related, and one was a business of trade.

Employer-Desired Competencies/Qualities

The questionnaire survey targeted for the competencies and qualities that employers look for most when considering the hiring of an applicant. The 62 respondent comments that came in were compiled and consolidated into three categorical groups: “soft skills” (relational/social skills), abilities (physically and mentally able to proficiently perform a duty), and knowledge (acquaintance with or understanding of something).

Soft-Skill Comments-Of the 62 comments, more than a majority (38 of 62 or 61%) fell into the “soft skills” column. Thirty-five of the 38 (88%) “soft skill” comments came from the trade and services industries. Of the 18 (47%) “soft skill” comments that were particular to the services sector, 15 (or 83%) were from the restaurant businesses. The restaurateurs listed “appearance,” “attitude,” “customer service skills,” “dependability,” “reliability,” “personality/pleasant,” “willingness,” and “work ethic” as among the most

important qualities that a potential hiree must have. Three different restaurant employers penned in “appearance” as a desirable quality and two employers put down “dependability.” Every other “soft-skill” comment, including such comments as “social skills,” “willingness,” and “reliability,” were reported by one restaurant employer each.

The trade industries’ “soft skill” comments comprised 17 (or 44%) of the total 38 comments given. Trade-business comments included the pertinence of qualities such as “appearance,” “availability,” “behavior,” “communication kills,” “completing the job,” “dependability,” “desire,” “eagerness and energy,” “friendliness,” “self-motivation,” “willingness,” and “work ethic.” Four different trade-realm businesses mentioned “willingness.” “Work ethic” was mentioned by two different trade industries and every other “soft skill” quality was mentioned by one trade business each.

The remaining three “soft-skill” comments came from the manufacturing and construction realms—two comments and one comment respectively. The two manufacturing businesses wrote “physical condition” and “attitude,” while the construction business wrote in “desire.” These three amounted to 12% of the total “soft skill” comments. For the raw data on the “soft skills” comments see Appendix D, Question #6, “soft skills” column.

Figure 12. All “Soft Skill” Comments

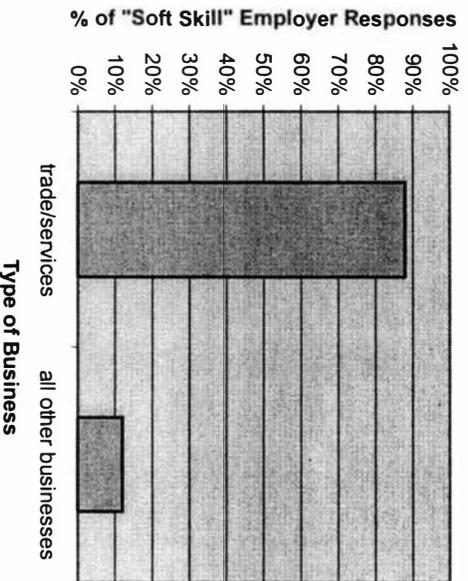
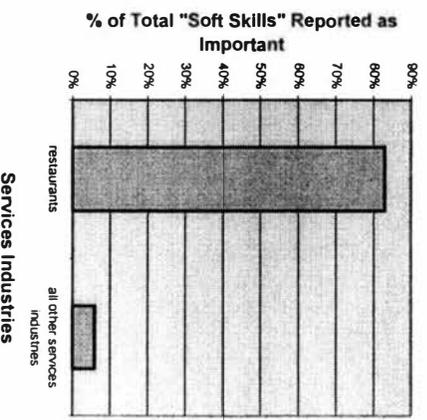


Figure 13. Services Industries Reporting Importance of “Soft Skills”



Abilities-Comments classified in the “abilities” categorical group added up to a total of nine (or 15%) of the 62 competencies and qualities most often sought by employers when they consider the hiring of an applicant. Again, the trade and services areas made up nearly all of the comments (8 of the 9 or 89%). A governmental employer was the other respondent in the “abilities” column. Most of the comments centered on specific abilities relative to the function of the job such as “ability in floral arrangement,” “put up merchandise,” “drive,” and “sell.” Several other comments were abilities related but less specific (e.g. “ability,” “basic skills,” “learn,” and “job skills”; see Appendix D, Question #6, “Abilities” column). The one non-trade or services comment came from a governmentally related business which listed the “ability to pass a test” as a required quality. Of the three categorical groups, “abilities” comments were the least mentioned.

Knowledge-The middle amount of comments mentioned were named under the “knowledge” categorical group, which totaled to 15 of the 62 (or 24%) overall experientially-related comments that were written. The trade and the finance/insurance/real estate industries accounted for 8 of the 15 (53%) “knowledge”

related comments, with four comments each coming from these two types of businesses. Three of the four comments from the trade industries placed importance on knowing about money (see Appendix D, Question #6, “Knowledge” column). The four-comment focus of the finance/insurance/real estate industries was on the knowledge of finance and stocks, real estate, training, and education.

Another six of the 15 (or 40%) comments in the “knowledge” column came from the construction and services sectors with three comments coming from each. These two industries were largely concerned with the education and training and the understanding of the job, in general, and concerned, more concretely, with the knowledge of construction needs and the computer. (See Appendix D, Question #6, “Knowledge” column.) The last of the 15 “knowledge” column comments was from a manufacturing employer who listed knowledge of equipment as a must.

Figure 14. Businesses Where Abilities are Important

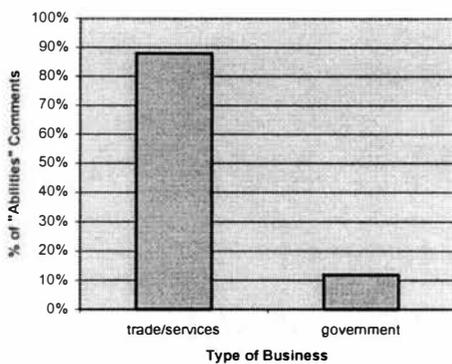
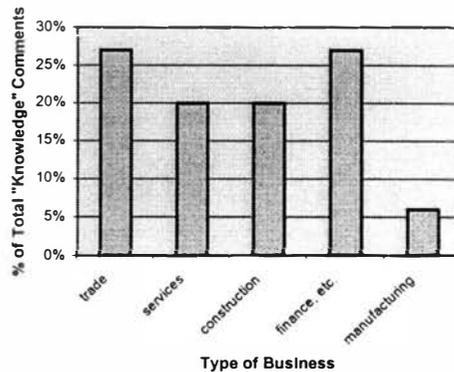


Figure 15. Businesses Where Knowledge is Important



Summary-The comments in the “knowledge” column were almost evenly spread (3 or 4 comments each) among all of the types of businesses with the exception of manufacturing (1 comment). Comments in the “abilities” and “soft skill” columns were heavily tilted on the trade and services side. The trade and services industries indicated

“soft skills” items as important 3 to 3½ times more often than either “abilities” or “knowledge” related items. The construction industries had a 3:1 ratio of importance placed on “knowledge” items over “soft skill” items. The finance/insurance/real estate realm comments were 100% in the “knowledge” column as was the governmental in the “abilities” column. Manufacturing was 2:1 on “soft skill” items as compared to “knowledge” items. No “abilities” items were listed as “most considered when hiring” in the manufacturing realm. For a full disclosure of the raw data generated from Question #6 see Appendix D.

Figure 16. Competencies/Qualities Most Important to Employers

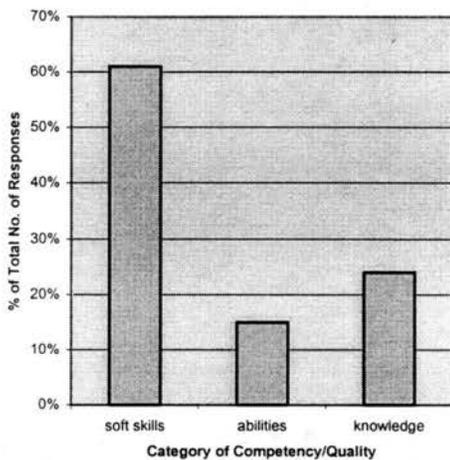
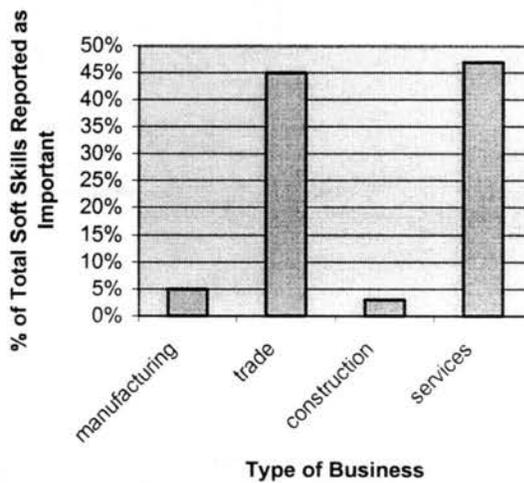


Figure 17. Businesses Which Consider Soft Skills as Most Important



Employment of Individuals Who Have Mental Retardation

Number of Employees Who Have Mental Retardation

Employers were asked for the number of their employees with mental retardation. A full 76% of the respondents indicated that there was zero. Every type of business that was represented by the employer participants was included in this zero count. Nine of the total 11 (82%) trade-oriented businesses did not have any employees with mental

retardation and six of the 10 (60%) services businesses were void of employees with mental retardation. Every business that was governmental, finance/insurance/real estate, and construction related reported zero employees with mental retardation. One of the two manufacturing companies was without, as well. The only businesses reporting that they had employees with mental retardation were in the services and trade sectors and one in the manufacturing sector. Of the service businesses, all four were restaurants and all indicated that they had 1–2 employees with mental retardation. Three of these four restaurant businesses were relatively small (under 31 employees) while one was bigger with over 115-plus employees. Four of the six (or 66%) restaurants that ended up being a part of this survey employed someone with mental retardation. The two restaurants that had no employees with mental retardation were in the 16–30 range of total employees. Four of 10 (or 40%) of all of the service businesses employed someone with mental retardation. The four service businesses that were not restaurants and that did not have any employees with mental retardation ranged in employee size from under 31 total employees to over 91 or more employees.

The two trade businesses that reported employees with mental retardation were in the 1–2 range and the 3–4 range. In the 1–2 range was the business that indicated that it employed over 500 people. The one and only business in the 3–4 range was a business employing 31–45 people. Those that did not employ anyone with mental retardation included three—each of size range 31–45 and 76–90 employees, and one each of size ranges 1–15, 16–30, and 46–60 employees.

The last of the businesses that were found to employ people who have mental retardation was a manufacturing business with 46–60 employees. Of the 23% (7 of 30

employer respondents) of the employers that indicated that they employed persons who have mental retardation, 57% (4 of 7) were restaurants from the services sector, 20% (2 of 7) were trade oriented, and 14% (1 of 7) were/was in the manufacturing realm. One trade business of 76–90 employees indicated that although it did not have any employees with mental retardation, it did employ two physically handicapped persons.

Figure 18. Number of Employees with Mental Retardation

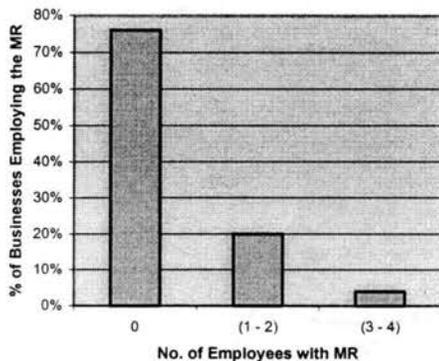
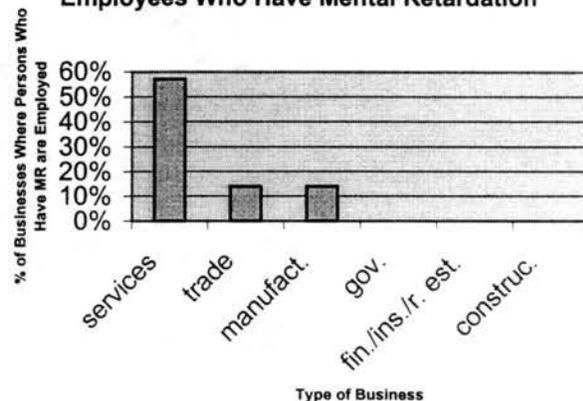


Figure 19. Types of Businesses with Employees Who Have Mental Retardation



Number of Persons with Mental Retardation Having Applied in the Last Year

Concerning the number of persons with mental retardation who have applied within the last year, 17 of 29 (or 59%) employer respondents replied that there were no applicants with mental retardation. The remaining 12 (41%) respondents indicated that there were applicants with mental retardation, with 11 of the 12 reporting in the 1–3 applicant range and one reporting in the 7–9 range.

Of the 12 total businesses that indicated having applicants who have mental retardation, six businesses were trade related, four were restaurants (services), and of the remaining two, one was in the construction realm and one was in the manufacturing realm. The lone business in the 7–9 range of the number of applicants with mental

retardation who have applied in the last year was a restaurant with 16–30 employees—one or two of which have mental retardation.

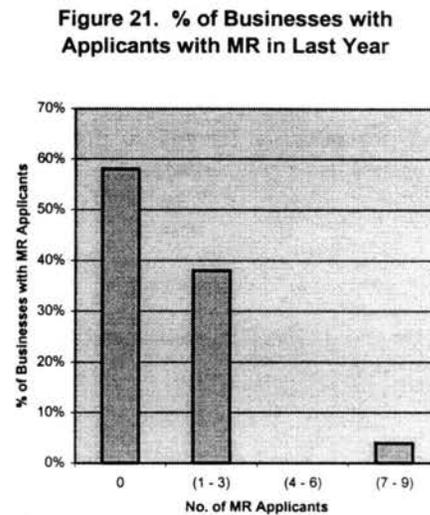
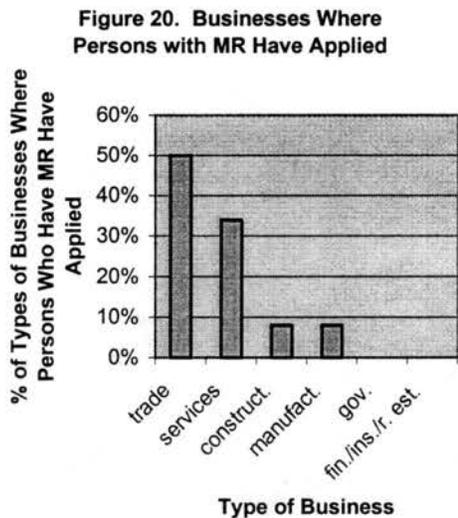
The six trade related businesses with 1–3 applicants with mental retardation include three businesses with 31–45 total employees and three businesses with 76–90 total employees. Despite more than half (6 of 11) of the trade industries reporting applicants with mental retardation in the last year, only one of the six actually had any employees with mental retardation—and this being a business of 31–45 employees.

Of the three restaurants reporting that they had 1–3 applicants with mental retardation in the last year, two of them had employees with mental retardation. One of the two was a small restaurant with 1–15 employees and the other was a hotel/restaurant with 115 plus employees. The one restaurant not employing anyone with mental retardation—though it reported 1–3 applicants with mental retardation—ranged in size from 16–30 employees.

The last two of the 12 businesses reporting 1–3 applicants with mental retardation in the last year were a construction business and a manufacturing business. Of these two, only the manufacturing business has 1–2 employees with mental retardation among its 46–60 employee total.

Overall, of the total 12 businesses reporting that applicants with mental retardation had applied in the last year, only five of the businesses currently employ people who have mental retardation. Every one of these five businesses was of a different size in terms of the number of employees. The other seven reporting applicants with mental retardation in the last year indicated that they had zero employees with mental retardation. The two businesses that reported that they had several employees with mental retardation but did

not indicate applicants with mental retardation in the last year were a small restaurant of under 16 employees and a “no mark” by a company with 500 plus employees.



How a Person with Mental Retardation Can Become Employed

When questioned on how a person with mental retardation could become an employee in the business represented by the employer, the written comments were telling. Eight of the 30 (or 26%) comments, by 28 of the 30 employer respondents, centered on the desire of employers to have someone outside of themselves to train the potential employees who have mental retardation. Several employers mentioned or alluded to specific agency services that provide job coaches to do the training and follow up work. One owner mentioned that s/he has no time to train---thus the need for the agency’s help.

Another seven employers wrote on the blank line of the survey that an individual with mental retardation simply needs to apply if s/he would like to become an employee in the company. One of the seven employers mentioned that a job coach or relative could apply on behalf of an applicant who has mental retardation. Six different employers wrote comments like, “No way that I am aware of,” or “ Not really a possibility,”—these by the

two trade businesses—or that it would not be possible for persons with mental retardation to become employees in their businesses because selling was involved (trade); they could not pass a test (government); and because of lack of ability (finance/insurance/real estate). Another three employers mentioned that if they could do “simple jobs” or “part-time/odd jobs” or be on the “clean-up crew” (see Appendix D, survey question #9) then perhaps they could become employed. Other comments ranged from “the ability to work the schedule” to “good communication, reliable, and honest” to “knowledge/willingness to work,” and “not sure.” Two employers chose not to answer this question. One of these employers was a director of personnel from a hotel/restaurant business of 115 plus employees who “inherited” several employees with mental retardation. The other was from a trade business of 31–45 employees.

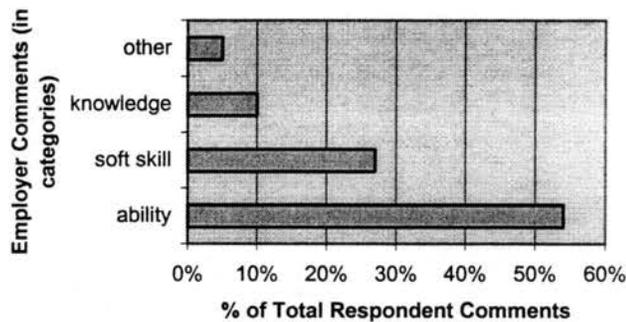
Employer Concerns in Hiring Individuals Who Have Mental Retardation

The major concerns that the 27 employers who responded on the contemplation of hiring a person who has mental retardation focussed heavily on ability. Twenty of the 37 (or 54%) comments from 20 of the 27 different employer respondents wrote down such concerns as the ability to “drive;” “measure, figure, follow instructions;” “understand directions/communicate;” “work on own;” “get along with others/reading/sorting by number and alphabet;” “sell;” “find way in large area;” “deal with customers and answer questions;” “handle money/skill level;” and “move from one task to another.” Ten of the 20 businesses wrote “ability” by itself. Another 10 of the 37 (27%) comments could be considered as soft skills. Four of these 10 employer comments mentioned only “social skills” and came from four businesses—two trade, one construction, and one services related (a restaurant). Another two of the 10 soft skill comments came from a

finance/insurance/real estate business and a trade related business which both mentioned “stability” and the late adding, “in scheduling and public ware.” Two more comments from a restaurant and a construction business state on the line “stay on the job.” “Willingness to do small, easy tasks;” was written by the same finance/insurance/real estate business that wrote of the concern for “stability.” A tenth comment of the soft-skill 10 came from a service-related business, which wrote as a concern that an employee with mental retardation should have “the desire to perform competently.”

Four of the 37 (10%) comments by three different businesses attributed their concerns in hiring a person with mental retardation to “lack of knowledge” and “lack of knowledge of equipment,” and then “training.” These came from the more technically oriented industries of finance/insurance/real estate, manufacturing, and construction. Completing the 37 comments were two (5%) other employers: one—of a trade related business—who wrote that “health” was the concern in hiring a person who has mental retardation; and another—a manufacturing business employer—who wrote that there was a “lack of continuous repetitive work,” presumably in his place of employment, that could be offered as a job to be done. Three employers chose not to participate in answering the major concerns that they would have in hiring a person who has mental retardation. These three employers represented companies that were governmental, service, and trade oriented in nature. Two of the three (the governmental and hotel/restaurant) were larger businesses—the former employing 91–115 employees and the latter employing 115 plus employees.

Figure 22. Major Concerns in Hiring Someone with Mental Retardation



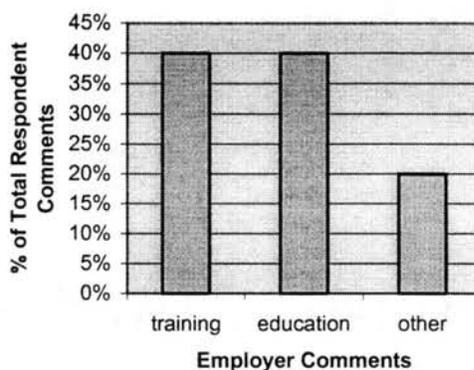
Employing More Individuals Who Have Mental Retardation

Another survey item sought opinions from the employer respondents on what could be done to help employ more people with mental retardation. This question was the second most left-unanswered item of the survey in that 50% (15 of 30) did not respond. Of the 50% who did respond, six of 15 (40%) employers wrote training related comments. Another 40% wrote comments that related to education. Three of the 15 (or 20%) wrote less specific comments such as “depends on individual,” “no clue,” and one comment that was more thought provoking: “Provide incentives to employment agencies and employers.” These comments were supplied by three different categories of companies that employed at least 61, 91, and 500 employees.

Of the training-related comments on what could be done to help employ more people with mental retardation, three different employers from three different types of businesses (a services business of 16–30 employees; a finance/insurance/real estate business, also of 16-30 employees; and a trade related business of 76–90 employees) responded that people with mental retardation could “learn odd jobs.” The latter two businesses expressed earlier in the survey (in Question #9) that they did not believe that it is possible

for a person with mental retardation to become employed in their business. The finance-related business specifically mentioned that it would be due to the lack of ability (that a person with mental retardation could not work for the business). Another services related employer in a business of 91–115 employees wrote “Get training from someone besides the supervisor.” This employer turned out to be a supervisor, as noted in Question #13. Still another employer—an owner of a construction company with 31–45 employees—stated that he had not met any mentally retarded people with training.” A third company employer—another owner in a trade-related business of 76–90 employees—wrote down, “retail training program” as a way to help more people with mental retardation become employed.

Figure 23. How to Help More People with Mental Retardation



The education-related comments by 40% (6 of 15) of the respondents to the question of what could be done to help employ more people with mental retardation were simply state in two cases: and owner of a finance/insurance/real estate business of 31–45 employees wrote, “knowledge,” and a manager of a restaurant of 16–30 employees wrote, “education.” An owner of a services business of 1–15 employees opined that the public and employers should be educated of “their [those with mental retardation] abilities and

[that there should be] job coaches to aid employer[s].” A director of personnel from a hotel/restaurant of 115 plus employees thinks that “more awareness of how individuals with mental retardation could benefit businesses” would help employ more people with mental retardation. This same employer, however, was only one of two who did not offer an answer in item #9 on the survey to how a person with mental retardation could become an employee in his business. Two other employers answered similarly by writing “more contact with businesses by schools or organizations that have mentally retarded people to place in jobs” would help employ more people with mental retardation. One was an owner of a restaurant employing 16–30 employees and one was a supervisor of a high school library of 1–15 employees. Of the 15 employers who responded to item #12 on the survey, three of them currently employ at least one person with mental retardation. Every one of these three indicated that helping to employ more people with mental retardation could be done through educationally related means.

How Individuals Who Have Mental Retardation Heard of a Job Opening

Employers were asked to describe how a person with mental retardation who is or has been employed in the business heard about a job opening. Of the 18 replies from 14 different businesses, 12 replies indicated that a family member or another closely associated person served as the link to employment. All 12 of the reported linkages of the mentally retarded employees to their eventual employer are linkages as the result of those with whom the individual with mental retardation was closest to or with whom s/he had been spending the majority of time. Four businesses reported that a family member was the connecting point of the employee with mental retardation to the employer. Two

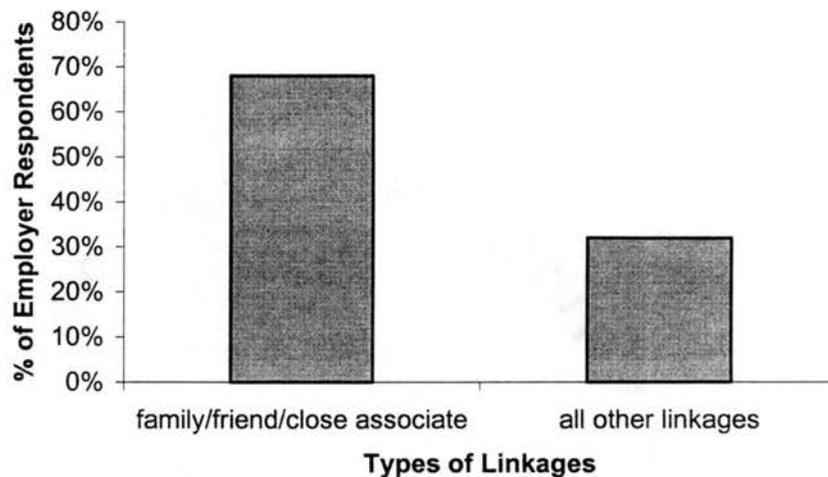
of those businesses—a trade related and service (restaurant) related—indicated that they each currently employ someone with mental retardation.

Two of the same four businesses which reported a family member as the link to a job opening for a person with mental retardation reported that a friend of an individual with mental retardation was also a link. Both of these businesses are those same two that currently employ person(s) with mental retardation. They are the trade- and services (restaurant) related businesses mentioned in the previous paragraph. Two other industries—a manufacturer and another trade related industry—reported, too, that a friend was the employee-with-mental retardation-to-employer connector. Both of these businesses also currently employ 1–2 people with mental retardation.

Another three businesses wrote in the blank that it was through a group home agency that they became linked to an individual with mental retardation who wanted to work—and through a job coach from the agency in particular, in one case. Two of these businesses which found employees with mental retardation through a group home agency were services related businesses and one was a trade related business. Two of the three—both of which are restaurants—employed 1–15 people and currently employ 1–2 people with mental retardation.

A final trade business—though it did not show that it currently has any employees who are mentally retarded—indicated that a past employee who had mental retardation heard about the job opening through the strong-tie link of a teacher. This business employs 31–45 people.

Figure 24. Linkages Reported by Employer Respondents to Have Been Used by Applicants with MR to Enter a Job Opening



The rest of the 18 comments on how a person with mental retardation who is, or was, employed in a business and initially heard about the job opening came from five different employers, with one additional comment coming from one of these five employers. Two of the employers—one who represented a manufacturing company and the other a service business—put down “N/A.” They were from businesses of 46-60 and 91-115 employees. Similarly, a construction business of 31-45 employees wrote, “None employed.” Another business—a restaurant of 16-30 employees—wrote in the blank the ever-conventional comment of “ads in the paper.” A trade business of 500 employees wrote that an employee with mental retardation found out about a job opening as a “walk-in.” A sixth business of 115 plus employees—the hotel/restaurant combination—contributed that the employees with mental retardation working there were already hired when the hotel was purchased.

Figure 25. How a Person with MR Found Out About a Job Opening According to Employer Respondents

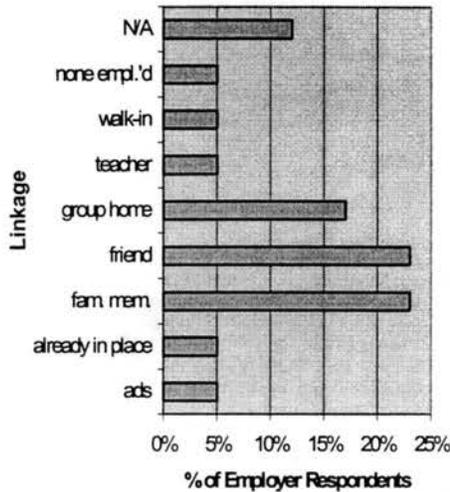
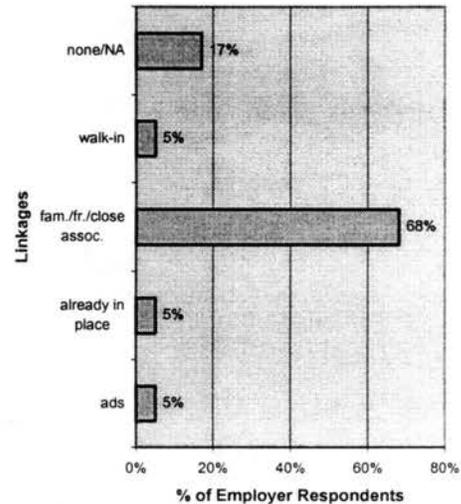


Figure 26. How a Person with MR Found Out About a Job Opening According to Employer Respondents (Collapsed)



Non-Answers and Summary of Item (Question #10)

Of the 30 employers who returned their surveys, 16 of them (or 53%) did not participate in answering this question on how a person with mental retardation had heard about a job opening in their business. It was the least answered item of the 13 items that were on the survey. It is the only one where more than half of the respondents did not answer. Of the 14 employees who did answer this item, nine of them (or 64%) indicated that some kind of family member or closely associated person to the individual with mental retardation connected the job opening in their business with the eventual employee who has mental retardation. No acquaintances or friends-of-friends were mentioned by any of the reporting employers.

The 18 total comments that came in from the 14 employers who answered this item are made up of eight comments by the services industries, seven by the trade industries, two by the manufacturing industries, and one by a construction industry. Seventy percent

of the ten services businesses responded to this item, as did 36% of the 11 trade businesses, 100% (2 out of 2) of the manufacturing businesses, and 33% of the construction businesses in the study. None of the finance/insurance/real estate, or governmental industries was among the respondents. None of these two industry types marked that they had any employees with mental retardation. Seven of the businesses responding to this item did not currently have any employees with mental retardation, although four of these seven had marked that they had had persons with mental retardation who had applied within the last year.

Summary of Responses to Survey Items

In summary of the responses to all of the survey items, questions #1 - #7 on the front sheet of the survey were answered by 100% of the respondents with the exception of one non-response on item #5 by business "v" of the 500 plus employee realm in the hotel/restaurant industry. Most of the questions on the front side of the survey consisted of the semi-structured items that simply needed a check mark.

Starting onto the back sheet of the survey, the responses to two of the items, especially, fell off by 50% or more. Non-responses to the other four back-page items were less severe, ranging from a 3%-10% fall-off in the rate of response (see Appendix D on Unanswered Items). The two questions left largely (comparatively speaking) unanswered were the more open-ended items that asked the employer how a person with mental retardation that is, or has been, employed by the respondent's business heard of the job opening (item #10) and what could be done to help employ more people with mental retardation (#12), respectively. The seven businesses that indicated that they had current employees with mental retardation all answered the first of these two questions

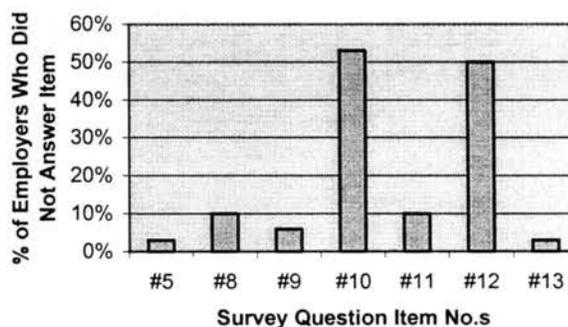
(on how the employed person who has mental retardation heard about the job opening[# 10]). The second of these two questions (concerning what could be done to employ more persons who have mental retardation [#12]), however, was left unanswered by three of these seven businesses that reported that they currently employed persons with mental retardation. Curiously enough three businesses with the current experience of having employed persons with mental retardation could not come up with any ideas on how to help employ more people with mental retardation. Of the 16 employers who did not answer the survey item (Question #10) on how an individual with mental retardation heard of a job opening and the 15 employers who did not answer the survey item (Question #12) on what could be done to help employ more people with mental retardation, nine of them were the same employers.

The four other back-page questions that were left unanswered by anywhere from one to three employers were the survey items that dealt with the hiring techniques most often relied on (#8), how a person who has mental retardation could become employed in the respondent's business (#9), the concerns in hiring a person who has mental retardation (#11), and position of respondent in the company (#13). The item (Question #8) concerning the most relied upon hiring technique was not answered by three employees—one of which did not answer any question on the back page (trade company “BB”) and another (governmental company “e”) that did not answer four of the six back-page questions. The only comparative anomaly was company “k” which is a finance/insurance/real estate business of 61–75 employees. The survey item (Question #9) on how a person with mental retardation could become an employee in the respondent's work force was not answered by employer “AA”—a hotel/restaurant

business of 115 plus employees which currently employs persons with mental retardation—nor was it answered by trade business “BB” of 31-45 employees. The same two employers from hotel/restaurant business “AA” and trade business “BB” and again governmental business “e” did not answer the survey item (Question #11) on the major concerns that an employer would have in hiring a person who was mentally retarded. The survey item on the respondents’ position in the company was left unanswered by only trade business “BB.” Trade-company “BB” was the only employer that did not participate in any of the back-page questions whatsoever. Business “e”—the lone governmental industry and employing 91–115 employees—was the second-most non-participatory employer in that it did not answer four of six back page questions.

In all, of the 390 potential responses that could have been answered by the 30 employer respondents to each of the 13 items on the survey, 41 non-responses were noted (see Unanswered Items chart in Appendix D). This puts the overall response rate among the 30 employer respondents at 89%. In other words, of every item that could have been answered by every one of the 30 employer participants, only 11% of the items on the returned surveys were not answered.

Figure 27. Survey Questions Not Answered by Employer Respondents



Chapter Summary

The information presented in this chapter represent data on the demographic, recruiting/hiring practices, and employment tendencies of employers in relation to the hiring of individuals who have mental retardation. The data was taken from a questionnaire survey of 30 employers from businesses located along the accessible roadways of a city of approximately 500,000 inhabitants, along with several of its bordering suburbs, and one town of 60,000 persons which is within a 75-mile radius of the city. The 13-item survey was originally distributed to 100 employers and had a return rate of 30%.

Demographically, the greatest portion (83%) of employer respondents was from the trade and services industries. Most (78%) of the written comments on the survey came from managers and owners of business with 1-45 employees. Sixty-six percent of the reporting businesses have not more that ten entry-level positions available per year.

In terms of the recruiting/hiring practices that typify the businesses of this study ads were the most heavily relied on technique of employee recruitment followed closely by that of employee referrals. The use of schools, acquaintances/friends-of-friends referrals, and family/close friend referrals, respectively, were the next most used recruiting techniques. When questioned on the competencies and qualities most wanted in an employee, 61% (38) of the total 62 written comments centered on the importance of “soft skills.” Another 24% of the 62 quality-concerned comments were “knowledge” related, and 15% of the 62 comments placed emphasis on “abilities” as the most important of the competencies.

Concerning the employment of individuals who have mental retardation, 77% of the responding employers indicated that they did not employ anyone who has mental retardation. Six (20%) employers reported that they employ 1-2 persons with mental retardation (four of which were restaurants) and one (3%) trade employer reported employing 3-4 persons who have mental retardation. Though twelve businesses indicated that they had had people who have mental retardation apply for a job, again, only seven of those businesses actually employ anyone with mental retardation. Nearly one-third of the employers were concerned about whether or not someone with mental retardation would arrive with the training needed to work in their businesses and over two-thirds of the employer respondents are deterred in hiring individuals with mental retardation by the perception of their lack of ability. Of the businesses which currently, or in the past, have had employees who have mental retardation, 73% indicated that they (the employees who have mental retardation) heard about the job opening through a family member or another closely associated person such as a teacher or a job coach.

The written comments of the 30 employers who participated in this study—though the sample is small—gives the reader a birds eye view into the minds of a number of employers from various business backgrounds relative to the employment of individuals who have mental retardation. It is hoped that their comments will lead to practical improvements in the employment outcomes of the disadvantaged group of persons who have mental retardation.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The findings from the empirical information gathered from the employer surveys and presented in Chapter III were analyzed item by item and then as a whole through the theoretical lenses of Granovetter's (1973, 1974, 1995) Network Analysis theory and Braddock's (1980) Perpetuation theory. The employer survey was designed to elicit basic background information on each business represented from the respondents as well as collect information regarding employers' hiring patterns and strategies in relation to the employment of persons with mental retardation. Once the information was recorded, the relationship between weak ties and the perpetuation of segregation on the employment rate of the mentally retarded was examined and the effects on their ability to obtain a job explored.

As the surveys came in, the empirical information was coded and compiled into various "categories of themes [or] concepts" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 251) in the effort to look closely into the details and accompanying quotes of the participants. A "two-step process of thinking about data" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 251) was followed to analyze the incoming information. As stated by Rubin and Rubin (1995): 1) the material within categories must be examined and compared; and 2) the material must be compared across categories. After analyzing the information inside each category, linkages were then sought across the different categories (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). As themes and concepts began to intertwine and come to light, they were "collectively described [or] analyzed" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 254) and then "interpreted in terms of the literature and [the Network Analysis and Perpetuation] theories" (p. 251) as espoused by Granovetter (1973,

1974, 1995) and Braddock (1980) respectively. The implications of the information that came to mind while researching and writing were noted, as well.

The overall goal of this analysis was to understand why the unemployment rate of persons with mental retardation is still as low as it was 35 years ago before many laws were passed on their behalf in the effort to assimilate them into the general community. Themes from the empirical information were sought that “both explain the research arena and fit together” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 254) in an understandable way.

Background on the Businesses and National Employment Information

The 30 businesses of the employer respondents are representative of six categories of industries: manufacturing, trade, construction, government, finance/insurance/real estate, and services. Together the trade and services businesses accounted for 21 of the 30 (70%) employer participants. Sixty-six percent of the businesses had 1 – 10 entry level positions available per year and the remaining 34% of the businesses had 16 – 30 entry level positions or more. The 34% of businesses with 16 – 30 or more entry-level positions available per year were all trade and services businesses. The greater number of openings in the trade and services industries is consistent with the employment outlook finding for 1998-2008 from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (<http://stats.bls.gov>) which has projected that services and retail trade will account for the most job growth with 14,821,000 new openings over the 10 year period. By the year 2008, the service-producing industries, alone, will account for an estimate 120,000,000 total jobs nation wide—a 33% increase in services-related employment from the 81,000,000 jobs in 1988 and a 16% services-related employment growth from the 101,000,000 jobs in 1998. Business services comprise the biggest piece of the services industry pie (Martel &

Kelter, 2000) with 4,562,000 job openings of the total 11,754,000 projected openings by year 2008. More specifically, eating and drinking establishments (restaurants) will account for 1,321,000 new job openings by 2008. Added to the jobs from employment growth are the job openings from replacement needs, which will surpass the employment-growth job openings.

Accounting for 20% of all jobs are 11 occupations that require only short-term on-the-job training. Four of those 11 occupations include janitors and cleaners; stock clerks and order fillers; food counter workers; and food preparation workers—all of which could be easily filled by people who have mental retardation. New York City is a case in point in that a New York Times article by Steven Greenhouse (2000, October) reported that “the fastest job growth [in New York City has] been among low-wage service employees, like restaurant workers, security guards, day care workers and home attendants for the elderly” (p. 1). Approximately 7½ million out of the 20 million new (low-wage service) jobs projected through to 2008 are in the short-term on-the-job training category. Another nearly four million new jobs of the 20-million projection will require only moderate-to-long-term on-the-job training or work experience in a related occupation (Employment Outlook: 1998-2000, Bureau of Labor Statistics, p. 5).

The continued growth of the job market is complemented by the continuous growth of the population and labor force. While the growth of the population is expected to increase by 10%-from 1998 to 2008—so too is the labor force expected to increase by 10% within the same time period. With respect to “the more than two million Americans of working age who have cognitive disabilities” (Johnson, 1999, p. 1), 17%--or “some 337,000 adults with mental retardation—hold jobs” (Johnson, 1999 p. 1). Almost half of

these 337,000 identified adults have jobs in competitive employment while the other near half have subsidized jobs for people who have disabilities (Johnson, 1999).

The Employment of Persons with Mental Retardation, the Perpetuation of Segregation and Looking for Weak-Tie Links

Despite the growth in the number of job-openings in the labor market on the low-wage, low educational, and short-term on-the-job training level in especially the services industries, few are being filled with workers who have mental retardation, according to the empirical information gathered from the surveys that were distributed and returned for the purposes of this study. Of the 30 employer participants in this study, only seven (23%) reported that they currently employ anyone with mental retardation—and 58% of these employers were restaurants. Another seven different employers indicated that someone with mental retardation had applied for a job in their business—71% of which were trade related. And still one other employer (from a restaurant) indicated that someone with mental retardation had worked for the company in the past. This would suggest that information about some job openings in some types of businesses is getting out to the disadvantaged population group or the mentally retarded. However, the spread of the information is on a limited scale. Of the 15 different businesses (50% of the total employer respondents) which either employed someone with mental retardation currently or in the past or had applicants with mental retardation who had at least applied, 40% were restaurants, 47% were trade businesses, and 7% each were a manufacturing company and a construction company. Only the restaurants of those 15 businesses—which include all six of the restaurants in the study—consistently hired applicants who have mental retardation: eighty-three percent either currently or in the past had employees

with mental retardation. The trade-related businesses, on the other hand—though seven of the total 11 of them in the study had some association with an applicant or employee with mental retardation at some point in time—only 29% of these seven had current hires with mental retardation and only 18% overall among all of the trade industries.

With barely one-fifth of all surveyed businesses offering employment to persons with mental retardation—though 50% of them have had contact with persons who have mental retardation seeking employment—the fact that there are barriers preventing their penetration into the labor market is evident. Much like the difficulties of the inner city disadvantaged group of American blacks have experienced, so, too, do those with mental retardation experience the same difficulties. Whereas there is a definite widespread disconnect among the American inner-city blacks with employers, so too is there widespread disconnect among those with mental retardation and employers within this 30-business study. The empirical information from the surveys of this study indicates—as was evident from the literature review on the employment woes and lack of weak tie links of inner-city blacks—that there were—in the case of the mentally retarded employees known about by the employers in this study—no weak tie links whatsoever to connect them to employers and their job openings. Although 20 of the 30 employers indicated that they relied on some kind of personal-referral hiring technique, the most relied on referral technique was that of employee referrals. The employees of the businesses surveyed, according to what the employers wrote, do not appear to be referring anyone with mental retardation for the jobs that become available. The world of the employer and employee and the world of the person who has mental retardation are

largely lacking any common connection—the two worlds remain mostly among their own.

The few employers who reported that persons with mental retardation were working for them indicated that they seem to have secured their jobs through their strong ties (family member; friend; group home agency; or teacher, according to employer respondents). The employers in this study and their employees—by recommending for hire those that are most like themselves and barely any who are mentally retarded—are, in the words of Braddock (1980), perpetuating the segregation of their own (non-mentally retarded) kind. In this study, there is no evidence of weak-tie interaction between the employers and anyone with mental retardation. Only a minuscule amount of employment information is trickling to those who have mental retardation—and that through their strong ties. Their weak ties—at least in this study's sample—are non-existent which limits the amount of new employment information that reaches them, according to Granovetter's (1973, 1974, 1995) Network Analysis theory.

Individuals who have mental retardation make up a group of people who are left informationally isolated—much like their American black and disadvantaged, inner-city counterparts. However, whereas the inner-city blacks are perceived by employers to lack soft skills such as punctuality and trustworthiness and are therefore shunned (Kirschenman & Neckerman, 1991; Holzer, 1996; Handler & Robert, 1998; Immergluck, 1998), the mentally retarded are shunned for their perceived lack of ability, according to the employer respondents of this study. Fifty-four percent of the comments by the employers in this study on the major concerns that they would have in hiring a person who has mental retardation focused on the abilities that were particular to the place of

employment. The ability to “drive” or “understand directions” or “sort” or “sell” or “measure or handle money” were just a few of the employer concerns.

The soft skills comments of concerns ranked second with 27% of the total number of comments. Despite the expressed concerns, 22 (73%) employer respondents implied that a person with mental retardation could become an employee in their business (see Question #9 in Appendix D). Seven of the 22 employers said that a mentally retarded person could become employed by applying—but five of those seven do not have any employees with mental retardation, even though three of these five indicated that one to three people with mental retardation (see Question #3 in Appendix D) had applied. Another eight employers wrote that with training from someone other than their company someone with mental retardation could become an employee. Only one of these eight employees reported having an employee with mental retardation. Three more employers mentioned that simple and odd jobs could be occupied by those with mental retardation, but again, none of these three currently employ anyone with mental retardation nor had anyone with mental retardation applied.

Overall, in the sample of this study, it appears that the word about job openings is not getting out to persons with mental retardation, and when, on occasion, it does, employers are generally not hiring them. The weak ties of these who have mental retardation are noticeably absent and the employers of this study seem to self-perpetuate their segregation by keeping to the comfort-level hiring of those with whom they are most alike. Not one employer from this 30-business sample who presently or in the past has employed an individual who has mental retardation indicated that the job opening was filed by an employee’s or acquaintance’s world-of-mouth referral. The 23% of the

participatory employers who did employ a person who has mental retardation indicated that it was through a family member or friend or another closely associated person such as a teacher or personnel from a group home agency that the job opening became known.

Of these 23% businesses employing anyone who has mental retardation, 57% of them were restaurants. Another 29% were trade (wholesale/retail) related businesses, and 14% were manufacturing oriented. Three of the four restaurants hire less than eleven new employees a year and half of the restaurants hire less than five new employees a year. One of these three restaurants employed 16-30 people and two of these restaurants employed under 16 people. The only big restaurant(/hotel) with employees who have mental retardation was an establishment of 115-plus employees in which the Director of Personnel indicated that s/he had inherited them when the business was bought out. According to the comments by the restaurant-businesses respondents, education and training by someone outside of themselves would facilitate the hiring of person with mental retardation. Thus, at least within this survey sample, an individual with mental retardation—with some training—would be more likely to be hired by a relatively smaller restaurant if working in a restaurant was of interest.

The two trade-related business with hirees who have mental retardation included, among them, a business of 31-45 employees that has 6-10 entry-level positions per year. The owner of this trade company marked that s/he had 3-4 persons who have mental retardation currently employed which is more than any other business participant of this study. The other trade-related business currently employing people who have mental is a company of 500-plus employees with an unspecified number of openings per year.

Despite the large size of the company, however, the manager reported only 1-2 employees with mental retardation.

The manufacturing business, which indicated any (1-2) employees working within who had mental retardation, is a company of 46-60 employees, with 1-5 entry-level positions available per year. The manager of this business, too, wrote that having someone to train persons who have mental retardation would help them in their plight to become employed.

In summary, all of the employers of this study who employ individuals who have mental retardation hired one to two from this group of disadvantaged people regardless of the size of their business. The size of the company, according to this study, does not seem to be a factor of how many—or whether—individuals with mental retardation end up becoming employed. In addition, the desire of the employers for outside training and education of the potential employees who have mental retardation was a reoccurring comment that threaded throughout the surveys. And finally, every person who has mental retardation and were employed in the businesses of this survey sample became employed through the efforts of a family member or friend or another closely associated, strong-tie link.

Summary of Analysis

The empirical information gathered from the returned employer surveys was analyzed through the theoretical thoughts of Granovetter's (1973, 1974, 1995) Network Analysis theory and Braddock's (1980) Perpetuation of Segregation theory. Upon analyzation, the data confirmed that, indeed, there is a lack of weak ties between those who would like to work and who have mental retardation and those who constitute the would-be employers.

The majority of personal referrals that reach the ears of employers are those of the employees. The data did not indicate that any employee brought to the attention or recommended to an employer the hiring of a person with mental retardation. The few businesses that had employees with mental retardation were all connected through the gracious efforts of a strong tie that was associated with the person with mental retardation. The segregation of the business world's own continues to be perpetuated. Strong ties alone have not been enough to break through the employment barriers that have been built up.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS,
IMPLICATIONS AND COMMENTARY

Becoming employed is, in large part, attributable to what Granovetter (1973) terms as strong weak ties and using them to break through the perpetuated barriers of the self-segregated business world. The use of weak tie connections have facilitated the employment among some of the most disadvantaged groups of people—namely undocumented Mexican immigrants, the urban poor, and women. Still widely unemployed, however, are people who have mental retardation. Many laws were passed on their behalf—but to no avail—they remain mostly without work. This study, therefore, sought to find the missing link between the person with mental retardation and the employer, in general. It strove to gain insight from employers into their hiring patterns and strategies in relation to persons with mental retardation. Contained within this chapter are the summary, conclusion, recommendations, implication and commentary as gleaned from the compilation of the empirical information gathered for the purpose of this study.

Summary of the Study

This study entailed the questionnaire survey interview of employers, or those with hiring authority, in businesses of various sized and industries. The collection of the data and its presentation and analysis focused in on finding on what could account for the low rate of employment among the mentally retarded despite the many laws that have been passed on their behalf.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role that weak ties (Granovetter, 1973, 1974, 1995) play in helping disadvantaged groups of people overcome the perpetuated barriers of the business world and then find whether or not they have any role in facilitating the employment of a person with mental retardation. The following are the specifics of what was accomplished:

- I. Data about the employment of individuals with mental retardation was gathered;
- II. Granovetter's (1973, 1974, 1995) Network Analysis theory and the meaning of his major terms of "strong ties" and "weak ties" and Braddock's (1980) Perpetuation theory and his "dominant culture" theme were used as the lenses through which to analyze the information collected;
- III. Other realities were revealed/discovered; and
- IV. Granovetter's and Braddock's theories were assessed for their usefulness in explaining the inability of the disability group of those with mental retardation to raise its rate of employment.

For these purposes to be accomplished it was necessary to gather empirical information.

Data Needs

Data needs included empirical information on the basic backgrounds of the businesses and the hiring patterns and strategies of employers or those with hiring authority in relation to those who have mental retardation.

Data Sources

Empirical information was collected from employers or those with hiring authority from businesses of various sizes and industries. The businesses were located along the major roadways of a city of nearly 500,000 people and several of its surrounding suburbs and an outlying community of 60,000 people that is within a 75-mile radius of the city. Whereas several businesses were selected based on the fact that it was known that they had hired persons with mental retardation in the past, the majority of those selected were based on their visibility and accessibility from along the larger road arteries of the city, its suburbs, and the outlying town within the 75-mile radius from the city.

The data collected from the survey was for the purpose of sifting through in search of answers as to why the rate of employment among those of the disadvantaged group of the mentally retarded continues to be so low despite the numerous laws passed on their behalf over the past 35 years. To assist in the assessment, the data was held up under the theoretical lenses of Granovetter's (1973, 1974, 1995) weak tie theory and Braddock's (1980) Perpetuation theory.

Data Interpretation and Presentation

Preceding the collection of the data, a thorough review of the related literature was conducted. Then data was collected from written comments through the use of more open-ended questions of the survey and indicator check(s) on the semi-structured questions of the survey. The questions centered on gaining knowledge pertaining to: 1). demographics; 2). recruiting/hiring practices; and 3). information specific to the employment of individuals who have mental retardation. The empirical data was

compartmentalized and presented into three subsections with the aforementioned headings and looked at in light of the related literature. Lastly, the data was examined under the theoretical microscopes of Granovetter's and Braddock's theories for the discovery of employment-related revelations relevant to the employment problems of individuals who have mental retardation.

Each survey was alphabetically coded with a single or double letter and the responses were compiled onto a single (reformatted) survey to assist in the analysis of the data. The entirety of the responses is presented in appendix D. Various categories of responses were compiled and recorded into a table by percentages for ease of reading the information.

Data Analysis

The empirical information from the survey was analyzed item-by-item and then cross-analyzed holistically. Background information on the businesses from which the employers in this study came was first extracted from the survey data. Then, using Granovetter's (1973, 1974, 1995) Network Analysis theory and Braddock's (1980) Perpetuation theory, the data was analyzed for the role that weak ties may play in facilitating the employment of a person with mental retardation as well as the role that the perpetuation of segregation may be playing in preventing their occupational attainment.

The design of the survey was driven by the desire to evoke information relevant to what was learned in the literature reviewed in Chapter II. Also, in an effort to prevent the potential tendency of respondents to answer the open-ended and mildly discomforting questions in "socially acceptable" ways should the researcher be present at the time of response, the questionnaire survey was administered and returned in anonymity.

Conclusions

To keep in alignment with the purposes set forth from the outset of this study, the focus will be on the findings from employer respondents pertaining to their employment of individuals with mental retardation, the relevance of Granovetter's (1973) strength of weak ties and Braddock's (1980) theory of the perpetuation of segregation in relation to the low employment rate among people who have mental retardation, the empirical information that emerged in addition to that supporting Granovetter and Braddock, and the identification of other areas in need of further examination and study.

The Employment of Individuals with Mental Retardation

The employment rate of individuals with mental retardation—much like that of the undocumented Mexican immigrants, the urban poor, and women (Westmorland & Pennock, 1995; Albelda & Tilly, 1997; Reingold, 1997; Immergluck, 1998; Stoll, 1998; Handler & White, 1999)—was found to be low in the research of the literature review and low from the employer surveys that were sent out and returned for this study. Reports from the employers in this study all indicated that of those with mental retardation who happened to be employed, 58% of them worked in restaurant-related businesses, 28% worked in a type of trade business, and the remaining 14% worked in manufacturing. Employers were largely concerned with the actual abilities of individuals with mental retardation as potential employees and with what training they would bring with them to the job. They indicated a need to be further educated on how persons with mental retardation could practically benefit their businesses. Although 73% of the employer respondents commented positively on how a person with mental retardation could

become an employee in their business, only 23% of them actually employed anyone with mental retardation. The employers seemed resistant to the perceived multi-faceted risk.

Relevance of Weak Ties and the Perpetuation of Segregation to Low Employment Rate Among the Mentally Retarded

Research shows that a large number of job seekers rely on word-of-mouth referrals to find out about the job market openings (Granovetter, 1973, 1995; Braddock, 1980; Montgomery, 1992; Patterson, 1998). Many of those involved in the hiring process also use word-of-mouth to find their candidates—especially for low-skilled positions. In this study at hand, 66% of the employer respondents indicated that they use some kind of a word-of-mouth referral. Of these, 75% (50% of the overall total employer respondents) specified that they use the referrals of their employees to fill their job openings. There was no evidence, however, of any weak tie links from employees of businesses and anyone with mental retardation. All employers with employees who have mental retardation reported that they (the employees with mental retardation) were connected to the job openings of their businesses through strong tie relationships.

Only 23% of the employer respondents in this study indicated that they currently employed individuals with mental retardation. Job information on the openings appears to remain mostly within the segregated confines of those with whom employees of the businesses associate. Those with mental retardation are not among them.

In the mind of the employers of this study, questions and concerns about the abilities of an individual with mental retardation and the benefits s/he could bring to their businesses seem to persist. They indicated that they needed to be made more aware and

educated on what those who have mental retardation can reasonably offer. Until then, though, the barriers will continue to be perpetuated and impenetrable.

Effects of Ties and Perpetuated Segregation on the Ability of Persons with Mental Retardation to Get a Job

Through the survey in this study, no weak ties were found to play any role in connecting an individual with mental retardation and a job that they happened to hold. According to Granovetter (1973, 1974, 1995) and others, many job seekers find their jobs through weak ties and employers use the weak tie referrals of their employees. This would explain the low employment rate among those with mental retardation—there was no empirical evidence of any weak tie linkages to job openings. The seven businesses reporting that they have workers with mental retardation all wrote that it was through a friend, family member, teacher, or group home agency that their employee with mental retardation obtained a job. Those with mental retardation—as a group, in general—are receiving only what limited information that those with whom they are regularly surrounded offer. Barriers of business leader beliefs about the abilities of persons who have mental retardation still stand in the way of a greater employment rate among this group of disadvantaged people. Nothing in the survey indicated that employee referrals lead to the employment of anyone with mental retardation. The word about job openings is not getting out to the cognitively dissimilar segments of society. Segregation among those of the business world continues to be perpetuated—effectively preventing the probability of a greater number of those with mental retardation becoming employed.

Areas for Further Study

The focus of this study was on finding the missing link to a greater employment rate among the mentally retarded. Their weak-tie connections to employers were examined, and, to a lesser degree, the effects that the perpetuation of segregation may be having on their ability to break into the labor market in greater numbers. Further study could result by concentrating on the gathering of data from only employers who regularly hire (and keep on a long-term basis) employees who have mental retardation. In-depth inquiries could be conducted into their successes in hiring and keeping persons from this disadvantaged group of people and then analyzed and cross-analyzed to see what themes may develop. In this way further information that is relevant and helpful may be revealed.

Perhaps, too, an inquiry into the identification of the factors that account for the inhibition of the development of weak ties among the mentally retarded and society at large would provide additional informational insight that could lead to the practical employment help of this disadvantaged population.

Implications and Recommendations

Research leads to discovery and often spawns the expansion of theoretical bases, raises further questions for research, and stimulates improvement in practice. This study, too, attempts to push the existing theoretical boundaries, begs for the answers to unanswered questions, and strives to inspire the implementation of improvement in practice.

Theory

Granovetter's (1973, 1974, 1995) Network Analysis theory, with its emphasis on the strength of weak ties in getting a job, proved to be useful in uncovering and understanding various aspects and angles of the unemployment problem among those with mental retardation. In the same way, Braddock's (1980) Perpetuation theory was useful in expounding on the image and understanding of this presenting lack-of-job opportunity problem. The view of the data through these theoretical lenses was invaluable in illuminating the thematic patterns that became apparent from the collective data that was compiled from the surveys. Implications from these themes also emerged.

Research

The emphasis of the more recent (since 1990) research on weak ties has been on the role that they have played in facilitating major groups of disadvantaged people—such as undocumented Mexican immigrants, the urban poor, and women—into the realm of employment. The working hypothesis of this study is that weak tie links are important in overcoming the perpetuated segregation in the business realm. Thus, it is pertinent that weak-tie connections be established among persons who have mental retardation to help bridge them to employers. Using Granovetter's (1973, 1974, 1995) Network Analysis theory and Braddock's (1980) Perpetuation theory the survey data can be scrutinized for evidence of whether or not weak ties exist among those with mental retardation and the employers who participated in this study and whether or not segregation may be being perpetuated by the businesses and thereby erecting an inadvertent barrier to their becoming employed.

This study attempted to expand the theoretical bases of Network Analysis and Perpetuation theory research as they relate to persons who have mental retardation who try to penetrate the world of work. Research on weak ties and the perpetuation of segregation can, like with other disadvantaged groups, be applied to the employment plight of working age people who have mental retardation.

Practice

The findings from this study can be used to heighten the awareness of the educational community—and the public, in general—to the quest of persons with mental retardation for a place in the employment realm. Consistent with existing research on other disadvantaged groups, this study's findings seem to indicate that ties are also relevant in the employment outcomes of people who have mental retardation. Those with hiring authority from businesses who participated in this study and who employed persons with mental retardation—currently or in the past—were more often than not connected to the eventual employee with mental retardation by means of a tie, though, in this case, it was a strong (familial) tie. Recruitment through weak (acquaintances or friends-of-friends) ties was nearly as often used by the employers in this study as several other methods of recruitment. However, not one employer wrote that a person with mental retardation had found a job in their business through an acquaintance (weak tie). In addition, the majority of the businesses had no person with mental retardation apply within the last year. In light of the literature review, this would lead one to believe that information about job openings is not getting to them—which is a strong indication of the lack of weak ties among those who have mental retardation—and that businesses are perpetuating the hiring of those who are most similar to themselves. For the individual

with disadvantages, especially, the importance of establishing weak ties to penetrate the perpetuated barriers of the business world is well documented in the literature review for this study.

Commentary

This study presents only a minuscule amount of additional information to attach to the theoretical base of Network Analysis and Perpetuation theory. The fact that weak ties are more than just a little effective in breaking through the perpetuated business barriers and advantageous in the getting of a job is obvious from the literature review. The fact that those who have mental retardation are lacking in weak-tie connections has become apparent from this study. How to overcome the barriers presented by the perpetuation of segregation and establish weak tie connections was not an object of this study. Also, whether weak ties in and of themselves are enough to effect a positive change in the employment rate among those with mental retardation is yet to be answered. Although this study made a few weak-tie related discoveries with respect to the population of persons who have mental retardation, more complex questions came forth and are, too, in search of an answer.

As the transition (from school to work for students in special education) coordinator for a large public school district, perhaps, with the information gained from this study, practical application can be made on behalf of the graduating students who have mental retardation. Armed with the knowledge that 1). the comfort level of potential job-offering employers may be able to be increased by presenting them with students who are trained in the skills necessary for an entry-level position, 2). small restaurants or trade-related businesses may be more prone to hiring someone who has mental retardation,

3). strong relational links have typically been the avenue through which a job has been filled by persons who have mental retardation, and 4). strengthened ties with acquaintances and friends of friends often lead to greater employment opportunities, it is likely that inroads into raising the rate of employment among those who have mental retardation may be able to be made. By heightening the awareness of the work-study teachers—whose specific job it is to help transition these students into the world of work—of the findings of this sample study, practical solutions at the school sites can begin to be sought. One such solution, for example, could include intervening on behalf of these students by making a concerted effort to educate employers. This could be done by developing and presenting portfolios of the qualifications and experiences of each interested student. The infusion of this information into the market place would get the word out to the employers who could then pass the word on to other employers.

If employers and parents and teachers and advocates alike can become envisioned with the possibilities based on that which has been discovered from this study and work toward solving the employment problem of individuals with mental retardation, the potential for positive change could prove to be exponential. At long last, the assimilation of this group of disadvantaged people into the employment realm of the general society will become the long-awaited reality.

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APPENDIX A

TABLE OF LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE OF PERSONS AGED 18 - 64

TABLE 4.
Estimated Population and Labor Force Participation (LFP) Rate of Persons Aged 18-64,
by Disability Status and for Selected Discrete Conditions Identified as Main Cause of Activity Limitation, 1983-1994.

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
	LFP %											
ALL LISTINGS	75.0	76.3	77.0	77.8	78.5	78.5	78.8	78.0	78.6	78.3	78.6	78.6
Persons without disabilities	79.1	80.3	81.1	81.8	81.7	82.4	82.4	82.7	82.7	82.0	83.0	82.7
Persons with disabilities	48.6	49.9	49.7	52.1	50.5	51.6	52.6	52.6	52.2	51.9	52.1	51.8
Orthopedic impairments of back or neck	62.9	63.2	66.1	69.5	65.6	63.0	67.3	64.9	63.1	62.3	63.0	62.5
Intervertebral disc disorders	62.0	64.7	62.2	61.8	62.1	62.6	65.3	62.3	61.2	60.8	59.3	59.8
Orthopedic impairments of lower extremity	70.1	69.4	68.9	72.5	68.7	70.7	69.5	70.9	73.4	71.2	72.0	69.4
Heart disease, excluding hypertension	36.6	42.5	42.5	41.5	39.2	38.4	39.3	38.6	39.5	38.1	40.6	41.5
Osteoarthritis and allied disorders	43.2	39.5	39.5	39.8	43.3	42.7	44.9	45.9	47.5	45.7	44.8	45.2
Asthma	59.3	60.4	62.2	60.9	62.7	62.7	67.2	67.3	65.1	66.4	64.7	70.8
Orthopedic impairments of shoulder and/or upper extremities	71.9	77.3	68.6	70.2	73.3	75.9	72.8	70.3	70.7	64.1	68.3	68.6
Diabetes mellitus	45.0	46.3	46.2	45.3	43.9	43.4	49.8	43.5	46.7	41.3	39.6	41.1
Hypertensive disease	36.5	41.1	37.3	43.2	42.6	39.8	42.7	43.7	44.2	44.0	47.7	38.2
Mental retardation/ Down's syndrome	25.8	33.2	31.2	30.4	23.6	23.9	37.1	29.8	30.4	40.4	36.3	33.5
Rheumatoid arthritis and other inflammatory polyarthropathies	40.3	37.8	44.9	51.7	38.7	40.5	35.7	46.1	46.4	45.8	40.5	44.0
Epilepsy	40.4	42.3	38.1	37.1	34.2	36.9	40.2	38.2	39.7	38.4	35.3	37.3
Neurotic disorders	20.6	18.7	17.5	32.7	15.5	20.8	22.1	17.5	24.3	27.7	28.3	28.3
Curvature of spine or back	67.3	67.8	61.6	61.0	57.2	64.2	68.1	72.7	67.8	64.8	65.7	59.2
Spondylosis and allied disorders	48.1	37.7	37.1	43.9	45.3	49.2	52.7	53.8	38.9	45.3	43.9	40.9
Carpal tunnel syndrome	55.8	72.9	39.8	93.2	71.4	77.4	66.0	64.5	65.3	67.1	80.7	73.9
Cerebrovascular disease	17.7	14.9	19.8	15.1	24.7	17.1	24.8	21.7	17.7	14.0	12.9	23.3
Depressive disorders	31.2	37.2	13.9	12.7	28.3	28.9	28.0	30.5	33.4	23.0	34.1	25.4
Emphysema	30.7	32.5	29.2	39.9	27.6	25.9	26.5	25.0	32.5	22.4	30.6	27.1
Peripheral enthesopathies and allied syndromes	66.1	63.2	69.7	77.6	67.8	71.0	67.2	68.4	70.1	74.0	67.6	73.3
Multiple sclerosis	22.1	28.9	39.1	28.6	21.4	31.9	25.8	38.0	30.0	38.1	32.3	36.9
Schizophrenic psychoses	17.7	23.8	20.0	14.9	17.5	4.4	16.1	18.1	13.9	15.6	11.2	11.9
Orthopedic impairment of hip or pelvis	63.9	69.1	54.8	67.3	55.4	65.0	56.7	65.6	57.9	60.6	66.4	59.3
Migraine	48.7	46.1	57.0	63.5	44.5	62.7	70.4	50.1	60.6	51.0	58.7	69.2
Affective psychoses	27.9	14.9	22.4	38.1	28.4	36.3	33.2	23.1	24.0	32.1	26.5	30.9
Hernia	63.6	67.7	59.2	66.9	69.1	60.8	57.8	62.8	67.1	67.3	73.4	76.0
Toxic poisoning and other adverse effects	39.0	43.9	50.3	53.8	64.2	62.3	37.2	82.3	31.1	50.3	64.3	46.2
Nervousness	12.0	23.2	21.8	19.2	24.4	27.7	15.3	14.6	9.0	22.8	13.9	13.7
Cerebral palsy	42.8	45.4	41.6	49.4	34.2	46.9	47.3	31.1	48.9	29.9	34.4	30.7
Blindness in both eyes	36.2	15.8	48.7	35.2	23.3	24.5	39.4	33.2	24.5	35.0	16.0	28.9
Allergic rhinitis	64.4	64.1	65.8	73.8	79.7	91.4	57.8	70.9	81.3	72.8	61.7	80.9
Blindness or visual impairment in one eye	62.3	61.6	71.4	61.6	62.4	70.5	70.4	65.1	75.3	62.4	69.2	69.0
Tuberculosis, all sites	39.0	33.9	40.5	47.2	31.2	57.2	37.3	60.5	50.8	32.8	39.7	37.8
Malignant neoplasm of female breast	42.5	30.5	36.9	51.9	24.3	46.3	35.2	49.6	51.0	43.3	52.6	46.4
Deformity of lower extremity	65.2	65.7	60.8	73.0	79.7	69.6	70.4	66.8	73.7	68.6	70.9	63.2
Adjustment reaction	54.0	23.2	37.3	64.1	89.5	49.0	45.2	44.2	52.6	47.4	47.1	43.6
Chronic injuries or late effects of injuries	46.5	71.1	52.2	61.4	57.2	59.1	61.2	62.2	52.4	60.8	59.1	56.8
Headache	36.7	45.9	41.0	30.9	53.5	44.1	45.6	54.2	45.0	49.1	47.5	40.6
Deafness or hearing impairment in one ear only	80.6	76.6	69.9	78.9	67.2	87.9	68.5	57.3	69.2	84.0	67.9	80.0

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Absence or loss, lower extremity	42.2	43.0	49.0	43.8	51.2	38.8	39.7	45.9	57.2	47.4	50.6	35.0
Disorders of synovium, tendon, and bursa	53.8	55.4	54.9	55.4	57.0	60.1	76.2	78.6	75.4	64.0	64.1	76.3
Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis	28.0	22.3	22.9	68.5	38.5	39.2	13.6	33.9	25.9	31.7	56.6	30.7
Alcohol or drug dependence	28.7	34.8	30.5	20.0	41.5	50.2	54.3	39.5	16.5	26.3	22.1	45.4
Enteritis and colitis	39.9	50.6	69.4	73.1	61.9	57.5	49.7	62.3	54.1	63.8	50.3	47.7
Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)	41.6	30.2	32.5	53.2	31.9	51.6	50.8	65.5	52.1	62.8	41.1	50.1
Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome, and nephrosis	30.2	24.4	34.9	47.7	43.1	40.4	33.0	32.7	34.7	27.4	25.4	20.1
Malignant neoplasm of respiratory and intrathoracic organs	30.1	29.7	38.2	28.5	16.2	21.6	39.5	24.6	26.5	28.5	14.3	45.0
Visual impairment in both eyes	40.2	62.9	52.2	55.1	43.6	39.1	42.5	50.3	32.0	66.2	47.5	59.8
Benign neoplasms	29.1	26.0	43.5	54.7	60.5	60.8	52.9	37.0	42.0	56.6	56.0	54.0
Hearing impairment in both ears	57.7	57.5	55.8	65.7	69.2	66.6	67.2	78.8	69.0	66.8	82.0	58.7

Conditions listed in order of prevalence in 1994.

Source: National Health Interview Survey. Found at Disability Statistics Center, <http://dsc.ucsf.edu/UCSF/tab.taf?function=searchCon&url=REP10T4>

APPENDIX B

TABLE OF DATA ON DISABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT:
1991/92, 1993/94, 1994/95, AND 1997

TABLE 1. DATA ON DISABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT: 1991/92, 1993/94, 1994/95, AND 1997
(From the Survey of Income and Program Participation)

	1991/92		1993/94		1994/95		1997	
	Number (thous.)	Percent emplyd						
With 1+ sel. conditions	4,484	42.8	5,173	42.5	5,521	42.8	6,403	38.8
Learning disability	1,941	57.2	1,885	55.9	1,811	54.5	2,760	52.0
Mental retardation	860	30.8	932	34.4	890	34.5	1,223	29.3
Alzheimer's, sen/dem	104	31.6	152	21.0	137	33.9	642	23.5
Other mental cond.	2,524	29.8	3,097	34.0	3,563	35.8	3,569	29.3
With a develop. disab.	1,060	31.8	1,149	33.6	1,104	35.3	1,501	30.7
With a housework dis.	9,312	32.2	10,080	33.2	10,536	34.7	9,571	27.9
Unable to do houswk	1,193	13.8	1,472	18.5	1,316	14.7	1,965	12.4
Able to do houswk	8,120	34.9	8,608	35.7	9,219	37.5	7,606	31.9
With a disability based on a physical condition (Definition 1)	22,628	50.2	24,563	51.3	23,806	50.4	22,321	48.1
Severe	8,798	30.7	9,657	32.8	9,580	34.1	10,220	29.4
Not severe	13,830	62.7	14,906	63.9	14,226	61.6	12,101	63.9
Limited in kind or amount of work	17,143	42.6	18,293	40.3	20,312	43.3	16,081	34.1
Unable to work	7,327	-	8,419	-	8,621	-	9,371	-
Able to work	9,816	74.3	9,874	74.6	11,691	75.3	6,710	81.8
Had Medicare or SSI	4,437	9.4	5,381	10.4	5,728	12.1	6,677	12.4
Covered by Medicare	2,397	5.7	2,718	7.1	2,819	7.5	3,923	11.1
Received SSI	2,503	12.2	3,162	13.0	3,497	15.8	3,627	12.9

APPENDIX C

TABLES ON EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION OF WOMEN

Table 4.1 Unequal Payoffs
Hourly wage by education and gender, March 1994

	Men	Women	Female/male ratio
Less than 1st grade	\$ 5.32	\$ 4.47	.84
1st-8th grade	9.06	7.33	.81
High school dropout	8.28	6.31	.76
High school graduate	11.35	8.48	.75
College, less than Bachelor's	12.76	9.99	.78
Bachelor's degree	18.15	14.25	.79
Master's degree	20.35	17.80	.87
Professional degree	23.09	21.23	.92
All levels of education	13.32	10.46	.79

Source: Calculated by authors from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1994.

Table 4.2 Occupational Segregation Continues
Employed men and women by occupation, 1974 and 1994

Occupations as a percent of employed persons	Women		Men	
	1974	1994	1974	1994
Managerial	5.0%	12.4%	12.1%	14.0%
Professional	12.6%	16.3%	9.9%	12.5%
Technical	2.5%	3.6%	2.4%	2.8%
Sales	11.0%	12.8%	10.1%	11.4%
Administrative support	31.6%	26.0%	6.0%	5.9%
Service	20.6%	17.8%	8.1%	10.3%
Precision production, craft, and repair*	1.8%	2.2%	19.7%	18.4%
Operators, fabricators, and laborers**	13.3%	7.7%	24.4%	20.4%
Farming, forestry, and fishing	1.6%	1.2%	6.2%	4.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total employed (in thousands)	33,769	56,610	53,024	66,450

*Skilled workers in manufacturing and construction.

**Includes unskilled workers in manufacturing and construction.

Source: Diane E. Herz and Barbara H. Wootton, "Women in the Workforce: An Overview," in *The American Woman, 1996-97*, ed. Cynthia Costello and Barbara Kivimae Krimgold (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1996), table I-3.

Table 4.3 Fast Growing, Low Paying, Part 1

Projected 1992-2005 growth rate and current women's earnings for all industries and for industries that disproportionately hire women

Industry	Women as % of workforce, 1994	Projected employment growth, 1992-2005	Women's average annual earnings, 1993
All industries	46%	22%	\$17,223
Retail trade	51	23	10,152
Finance, insurance, real estate	59	21	22,221
Services	62	47	17,582
Personal services	69	24	9,312
Personnel supply services	61	57	10,219
Health services	78	47	21,310
Educational services	68	27	17,982
Social services	81	89	16,797
Government	43	18	24,222

Source: *Statistical Abstract*, 1995, tables 653-54; calculated by authors from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March 1994.

Table 4.4 Fast Growing, Low Paying, Part 2

Selected fast-growing occupations with projected 1992-2005 growth rate and current median weekly earnings of full-time workers

Occupation	Projected employment growth, 1991-2005	Women's median weekly earnings (full-time workers), 1995
All occupations	22%	\$406
Home health aides*	138	285
Personal and home care aides*	130	193
Childcare workers	66	182
Legal secretaries	57	395
Nursing aides, orderlies, attendants	45	275
Food preparation workers	43	263
Registered nurses	42	693
Waiters and waitresses	36	258
Receptionists and information clerks	34	336

*These are two of the three occupations projected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to be the fastest-growing in the country. The third is "human services workers"; our source does not give earnings for this occupation.

Sources: *Statistical Abstract*, 1995, tables 650-51; Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, January 1996, table 39. In cases where earnings for a specific occupation are not reported, earnings for a closely related occupation are substituted.

APPENDIX D

RAW DATA RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

EMPLOYER SURVEY AND RESPONSES

DIRECTIONS:

Your input is important in the ongoing effort to improve transition services from the high school setting to post-school employment for the mentally retarded. Your completion and expedient return of this form would be greatly appreciated. Please ✓ the applicable space per item or provide answer(s) to the questions. (The return of the completed survey implies your consent.)

1). Type of employer:

Manufacturing: f CC
Transportation/Public Utilities:
Mining:
Trade (wholesale/retail): a b i j n o q t v x BB
Construction: m p r
Government (federal/state/local): e
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate: g h k
Services (please specify): c-(computer repair); l-(Newspaper deliverer); DD-(marketing-telecom products & services)
Other: restaurant- d s u w z AA-(hotel, too); y-(library media @ HS)

2). Entry level positions available per year:

1 – 5: c f g k m o p r t u w x z BB CC
6 – 10: a e h j s
11 – 15:
16 – 20: b n q DD
21 – 25: d
26 – 30: i l
other: v AA y-(as available)

3). Number of employees:

1 - 15: u w x y
16 - 30: c d h m o p s z
31 - 45: b g j n r BB
46 - 60: a f CC
61 - 75: k
76 - 90: i q t
91 - 115: e l DD
other: v-(500+); AA

4). Number of employees with mental retardation:

0: a b c d e g h i k l m n o p q r t x y z BB CC DD
1 - 2: f s u v w AA
3 - 4: j
5 - 6:
7 - 8:
9 - 10:
other: q-(2 physically handicapped)

5). Number of persons with mental retardation who have applied within the last year:

0: a c e g h k l m o p u x y z BB CC DD
1 - 3: b d f i j n q r t w AA
4 - 6:
7 - 9: s
10 - 12:
13 - 15:
16 - 18:
other:

6. Which competency(ies) or quality(ies) do you look for most when considering the hiring of an applicant?

<i>“Soft Skills”</i>	<i>Abilities</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>
Appearance: d t u w	Ability: q	Computer skills: c
Attendance: y	Basic skills: y	Construction needs (painting, electrical, plumbing, wall paper, building): m
Attitude: u CC	Drive: l	Equipment: f
Availability: t	Flower arrange: o	Finance/Stocks: g
Behavior: t	Job duties: AA	Money: a i q
Communication skills: BB	Learn: x	Real estate: h
Complete job: n	Pass test: e	Training: k r
Concentration: y	Put up merchandise: i	Education: k DD
Customer service skills: i AA	Sell: x	Understand golf: x
Dependability: s w x		Understand job: p DD
Desire: j p		
Eagerness: v		
Energetic: v		
Experience: z		
Friendly: v		
Good references: z		
Personality: d		
Physical condition: CC		
Pleasant: s		
Punctuality: y		
Reliability: z		
Self motivated: v		
Social/people skills: a w		
Willing: b j n q s		
Work ethic: j u BB		

7). On which of the following recruitment/hiring practices do you rely?
(Check all that apply).

Schools (HS, Trade/Tech, Post-secondary): c f g h k m o r t v y AA
Ads (Paper, Web, Magazine): a b c d e f g i j k n p q s v x y z AA DD
Family/close friend referrals: a l p t u v w y z AA
Acquaintances/friends-of-friends referrals: d g l s t u v x y AA CC
Employee referrals: f g h i l o p t u v w x y z DD
Employment Service Agency: l t CC
Other: walk-in -BB

8). Which hiring technique(s) do you rely on most often?

Schools (HS, Trade/Tech, Post-secondary): c f g h m r
Ads (Paper, Web, Magazine): a b i j n p q x AA DD
Family/close friend referrals: u
Acquaintances/friends-of-friends referrals: s y(w-o-m)*
Employee referrals: o u v w z DD
Employment Service Agency: t CC
Other: n-(walk-ins) d l-(anything that works)

*word-of-mouth

9). How could a person with mental retardation become an employee in your business?

Apply: d q s t v y-(w/ job coach or relative) DD
Ability to work schedule: t
Good communication, reliable, honest: z
Knowledge to work: m
Not possible because: a-(selling involved); e-(can't pass test); h k-(lack of ability); i-(no way that I am aware of); x-(not really a possibility)
Not sure: CC
Simple jobs: g ; part-time/odd jobs-c ; clean-up crew-p
Someone to train them: b f l n o r; u-(through Gatesway because of job coach to train them/owner has no time); w-(through a service which provides training & follow-up)
Willingness to work: j

10). If a person who has mental retardation is/has been employed by your business, describe how s/he heard of the job opening.

Ads in paper: z
Employees already there when hotel purchased: AA
Family member: b d j s
Friend: f j s v
Group home agency: t u w-(job coach)
N/A: CC DD; None employed: r
Teacher: b
Walk-in: v

11). What major concerns would you have in hiring a person who was mentally retarded?

Ability: b c i j k o n q s DD l-(to drive); a-(to sell); m-(to measure, figure, follow instructions); u-(to understand directions/communicate); v-(to find way in large area) w-(to work on own) p y-(to get along with others) y-(to reading/sort by no. & alph.) x-(to deal with customers & answer questions) z-(to handle \$/skill level) CC-(to move from one task to another throughout the workday; variety of short-term tasks)
Acceptance: j-(by coworkers & shoppers)
Desire to perform competently: DD
Health: t
Lack of knowledge: h f-(of equipment)
Lack of continuous repetitive work: CC
Social skills: a j p w
Stability: g t-(in scheduling/public ware)
Stay on job: d-(“None; have had some; they don’t stay long; quit early on”) p
Training: h r
Willingness to do small, easy tasks: g

12). What could be done to help employ more people with mental retardation?

Depends on individual: v
Education: s
Educate public/employers of their abilities and job coaches to aid employer: u
Get training from someone besides supervisor: l
Knowledge: g
Learn odd jobs: c h i
More awareness of how individuals with MR could benefit businesses: AA
More contact with businesses by schools or organizations that have MR people to place in jobs: y z
No clue: k
Not met any MR's with training: r
Retail training program: t

13). What is your position in the company?

Manager: a b d f h i n q s v w x
Assistant manager: e
Owner: c g j m o r t u z CC
Director of personnel: AA
Personnel office: k
Supervisor: l-(area) y-(library)
Crew leader: p
Senior Vice President/General Counsel: DD

Thank you for completing this survey. Your input will help us to develop a more effective community plan for improving transition services to the mentally retarded citizens of our community.

**Return to:
 Julie Longjohn
 Special Education/Transition Coordinator
 Tulsa Public Schools
 3027 South New Haven
 Tulsa, Oklahoma 74147**

APPENDIX E

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPLICATION

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 3/12/02

Date : Tuesday, March 13, 2001

IRB Application No ED0192

Proposal Title: WEAK TIES, THE DISADVANTAGED AND BREAKING THROUGH THE BUSINESS
BARRIERS: LOOKING FOR THE MISSING LINK TO A GREATER EMPLOYMENT
RATE AMONG THE MENTALLY RETARDED

Principal
Investigator(s) :

Julie Longjohn
1423 N. Benja Min
Stillwater, OK 74075

Adrienne Hyle
314 Willard Hall
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and
Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) : Approved

Signature:



Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

Tuesday, March 13, 2001

Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

VITA

Julie M. Longjohn

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: WEAK TIES, THE DISADVANTAGED, AND BREAKING THROUGH THE BUSINESS BARRIERS: LOOKING FOR THE MISSING LINK TO A GREATER EMPLOYMENT RATE AMONG PEOPLE WITH MENTAL RETARDATION

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, On June 13, 1962, the daughter of Peter C. and Elaine A. Longjohn.

Education: Graduated from North Hills High School, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in May 1980; received Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May 1985. Received Master of Science degree with a major in Applied Behavioral Studies, specialization in Learning Disabilities at Oklahoma State University in December 1989. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree with a major in Educational Administration at Oklahoma State University in August 2001.

Experience: Raised in Wisconsin, Ohio, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania; employed in various educational settings as a Spanish and/or special education teacher; Tulsa Public Schools, district Coordinator of Special Services, 1997 to present.

Professional Memberships: Tulsa Area Resource Professionals