

SCREENING IN OR OUT APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES:
INTERPRETING SIGNALS DURING THE JOB APPLICATION PROCESS

by

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Abstract

During the job search, applicants receive many signals about a company through recruitment procedures and materials. These signals can alter applicants' perceptions and behaviors in the employment process. Of particular concern, applicants with disabilities often encounter signals encouraging or discouraging their participation in the application process. I conducted a study examining how people with and without disabilities interpret the signal, the Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability (VSD) form, during the job application process. Moreover, I examined whether perceived stigma of disabilities listed on the form affects individuals' likelihood to disclose a disability on the VSD form and apply for a job position requiring this form. Results indicate that respondents infer positive, negative, neutral, and conflicting interpretations of the VSD form during the job application process. Respondents noted the following themes in their interpretations of the VSD form: discrimination, privacy violation, assumption of dishonesty, legal reasons, person/job fit, equality, accommodations, and format. Individuals' perceived stigma of disabilities on the VSD form was not associated with their likelihood to apply for a position. However, perceived stigma of mental health disabilities, but not physical, was negatively associated with individuals' disclosure of a disability on the VSD form. With more insight on organizational signals, employers and policymakers can better design and develop recruitment materials to improve the application process for people with disabilities.

Keywords: Signals; recruitment; disability; Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability (VSD) form; stigma; disclosure

Introduction

This thesis investigated how individuals interpret and respond to signals during the anticipatory socialization stage of the socialization process – specifically the job application process. Guided by signal theory (Spence, 1973), I examined how individuals with and without disabilities interpret the commonly-used Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability (VSD) form during the job application process. I also investigated how interpretations of the VSD form were associated with individuals' disclosure on the VSD form and likelihood to apply for a job position. Using stigma theory (Jones, Hastorf, Markus, & Miller, 1984), I also examined whether perceived stigma of disabilities listed on the form and perceptions of screening influence an individual's likelihood to disclose a disability and apply for a position requiring this form. Moreover, I examined whether job desirability and screening moderate the relationship between perceived stigma of the disabilities on the VSD form and likelihood of disclosure.

I begin by discussing differential employment experiences of people with disabilities (PWD) and people without (PWOD). Next, I discuss signals/information PWDs and PWODs may receive when engaging in the anticipatory socialization stage (i.e., job search). I then use signal theory to discuss the specific signal examined in this study, the Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability (VSD) form. After discussing the purpose and history of the VSD form, I review the literature on disclosure and stigma in relation to disability research. The first set of hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4, H6) focuses on how disabled individuals manage stigma and disclosure relating to their disabilities. The second set of hypotheses and research questions (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, H5, RQ4) focuses on how all individuals, including those without disabilities, interpret the VSD form and how these perceptions affect the likelihood of applying for a position. Further, I position job desirability and screening perceptions as moderators of the

relationship between perceived stigma of the disabilities on the VSD form and likelihood of applying for a position requiring this health information. I conclude by explaining my methods and results. Theoretical and practical implications of the current study and future research are also discussed.

Literature Review

The World Health Organization estimates that approximately 15% of the world population identifies as having a disability (Disability & Health fact sheet, WHO, 2015). In the United States, people with disabilities (PWDs) comprise roughly one-fifth of the population yet are unemployed at a rate twice that of people without disabilities (Erickson, Lee, & Von Schrader, 2016). The employment rate for individuals with disabilities is 34% compared to a 75% for people without disabilities (PWODs) (Houtenville, Brucker, & Lauer, 2016). PWDs are also three times more likely to live below the poverty line than those without and earn \$10,000 less than PWODs as they are often employed in low-paying, dead-end jobs (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004).

To better understand the gap in employment between PWDs and PWODs, this study examines potential barriers PWDs face during the application process. Ali, Schur, and Blanck (2010) found that non-employed individuals with disabilities are just as likely to desire a job as their non-disabled counterparts, but less likely to actively pursue a job. According to Kaye, Jans, and Jones (2011), the key factor explaining employment discrepancies between those with disabilities and those without is discrimination during the hiring process. This study focuses on the information, referred to as signals, transmitted during the job application process. These signals, communicated via job applications, are used to recruit PWDs and PWODs alike. Job

seekers are often exposed to this information/signals during the anticipatory stage of the socialization process.

Anticipatory Socialization

Jablin's (1987) socialization model describes an individual's acclimation process to work in general and to specific jobs and organizations. Spanning childhood and adulthood, the model describes five stages of socialization: Vocational Anticipatory Socialization, Organizational Anticipatory Socialization, Encounter Stage, Metamorphosis, and Exit. The *Vocational Anticipatory Stage* begins early in life and lasts throughout one's lifetime. It comprises learning about occupations and work in general. Individuals obtain information about careers in childhood through various sources including family, educational institutions, part-time jobs, peers, and media. Central to this study, the *Anticipatory Socialization Stage* begins when individuals seek information about specific prospective employers in their job search. Once employed, new employees experience the *Encounter Stage*, a phase in which new employees are socialized into the organization. During this stage, newcomers experience uncertainty as they learn the social norms of the organization and their specific work roles and responsibilities. Next, individuals pass through the *Metamorphosis Stage*, a point in which an employee has much knowledge about the company and thus they are in a position to provide information as opposed to just seeking it. Finally, individuals enter the *Exit Stage*, a time when an individual withdraws and ultimately exits the organization, rescinding their employment.

The current study focuses on the *anticipatory socialization stage*. When an individual actively seeks a job, they are participating in anticipatory socialization (Jablin, 1987). The goal of communication during anticipatory socialization (i.e., the job search) is for both the applicant and organization to obtain information to help them assess person/job fit; that is, the organization

seeks information to evaluate whether the applicant is the appropriate person for the job and will fit in with the organization's culture. At the same time, the applicant seeks information, provided through signals, to determine whether the job and organization are the right place for him or her. Individuals typically obtain information about a specific job from organizational literature and from interactions with other applicants, interviewers, and current employees.

To date, research has focused on PWD's assimilation experiences *after* the hiring process (i.e., the encounter and metamorphosis stages of socialization). In response to the paucity of research focusing on PWD's experiences during the anticipatory socialization stage (i.e., job search), Harrison (2012) called for additional studies to examine experiences unique to people with disabilities. The present study focuses on applicants, including those without disabilities, role in anticipatory socialization, examining how they interpret and respond to recruitment materials during the job application process. Specifically, applicants respond to different "signals" the company communicates through its recruitment materials.

Signal Theory

According to signal theory (Spence, 1973), job seekers can be attracted to specific jobs based on the signals or cues organizations send through their recruitment materials and hiring practices. Applicants rely on signals to reduce uncertainty and to formulate judgments about the company. Initially developed in the field of economics, signal theory explained the effects of information gathered by buyers and sellers (Spence, 1974). Since its introduction in 1973, signal theory has expanded to account for recruitment behaviors communicated between organizations and potential applicants (Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart, 1991; Rynes & Miller, 1983; Spence, 1973). In the absence of other information, signal theory suggests that during the recruitment process applicants rely on peripheral cues, or salient signals that require little effort to process, to form an

impression about the organization. Signals may include branding, policies, mission statements, and requirements. Zhang and Wieema (2009) found that CEOs communicate the “unobservable qualities” of their firm to stakeholders via tangible financial statements. Moreover, McNall, Masuda, and Nicklin (2010) suggest that observable organizational policies including maternity leave and medical leave can be signals regarding unobservable characteristics such as care and concern for employees.

Organizations use signals to strategically market themselves. According to the theory, to appear competent, organizations intentionally communicate positive information that may otherwise be imperceptible to stakeholders. Related to the current study, Braddy, Meade, and Kroustalis (2006) demonstrated the importance of signals via an organizational recruitment website. Applicants’ drew inferences about the organization’s culture based on the website’s design features and content regarding organizational values, awards, policies, and goals. Through signaling, Dell, Ainspan, Bodenber, Troy, and Hickey (2001, p. 10) maintain that “the employer brand establishes the identity of the firm as an employer. It encompasses the firm’s values, systems, policies, and behaviors toward the objectives of attracting, motivating, and retaining the firm’s employees.”

Despite intentions, not all signals organizations communicate are interpreted positively. Because receivers/applicants are different, their responses to signals can also vary. *Receiver interpretation* is the process by which individuals assign signals subjective meanings. For example, Rynes (1991) described how job applicants depend on signals from recruiters to draw conclusions about the quality of an organization. Different applicants attend to different signals or perceive the same signal differently (Highhouse, Thornbury, & Little, 2007). Receivers/applicants may assign more importance to a signal that is consistent with their values

than an antithetical signal, or they may cognitively distort a signal so the message is more consistent with their viewpoints (Ehrhart & Zieger, 2005).

By 2050, the population of Americans aged 15–60, the age group from which most employees are drawn, is expected to decrease from 60% to 54% (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006). As the number of applicants per vacancy declines, organizations may experience greater pressure to develop strategic recruitment strategies to increase the number of applicants for a vacant position. The job market is marked by “information asymmetry.” Before becoming employed, a prospective employee may not fully assess the quality and culture of an organization (Spencer, 1974). To ensure both the applicant and employer receive sufficient information to make job-related decisions, they are motivated to reduce information asymmetry by detecting and analyzing signals. To compete in a competitive market, employers signal to applicants their competencies and strengths (Spence, 1974). If an applicant perceives the signals a company communicates as inconsistent, inaccurate, or unethical, they may refrain from applying for a position with said company. Signal theory suggests that recruiting practices and materials should express cues to the applicant about the nature and culture of the organization.

With respect to people with disabilities, credible and appealing signals have the potential to influence select populations (Tirole, 1990). If a signal is perceived as credible and the prospective employer as trustworthy, applicants assume decreased risk with future employment with the organization. This study focuses on individuals’ responses to a specific signal particularly relevant to PWDs - the Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability (VSD) form - during the application process.

VSD Form

Many organizations, including Marriott Hotels and Duke University, have adopted the Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability (VSD) form in their screening and hiring processes. The Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability form invites job applicants to voluntarily disclose whether they currently or previously have had a physical and/or mental health disability. The disabilities listed on the form range from HPV and schizophrenia to cancer and blindness. The VSD form lists 18 health disabilities -- 11 physical and seven mental. Endorsed by the US Department of Labor, the disability form was designed with the stated intention to promote diversity and encourage affirmative action in organizations (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014).

Since the VSD form's inception in 2014, little research has examined outcomes resulting from its use. Recently, Lockhart (2017) examined current employees' experiences with revealing invisible mental health disabilities through the VSD form. Using a phenomenological approach, Lockhart found people with invisible disabilities had different concerns about disclosure than those with visible conditions, including their relationships and disability identities. Moreover, six of the 10 participants interviewed reported disclosing their conditions via the VSD form. The current study extends these findings by examining prospective job *applicants'* experiences with the VSD form and how perceptions of the VSD form as a "signal" may affect their likelihood to reveal a disability and apply for a position.

As noted earlier, no research has empirically examined how applicants interpret the VSD form/signal. However, job seekers have turned to social media to express their confusion, dismay, or approval, providing anecdotal evidence on how people are reacting to the form. Upon analyzing the comments section in a 2014 *Wall Street Journal* article titled, "Are You Disabled? Your Boss Needs to Know?" I noted the following remarks posted in the comment sections:

Comment 1: “It is great that contractors want to know if you are disabled, but what happens when you don't know if you are disabled?”

Comment 2: “That is a bizarre rule.... I had cancer. I did not want anyone to think I was "disabled" because of that. There is no way I would have raised my hand and said ‘I am disabled’ -- because I wasn't.”

Comment 3: “If you offer the information, they MAY use it against you but mask their decision as "other more qualified candidates... At the outset, a business may not want to invest in an employee whose diagnosed depression would affect the bottom line.”

As this anecdotal evidence indicates, the form has generated a number of different questions and interpretations among job seekers. To understand what characteristics of the organization are “signaled” by the VSD form, I examined the following guiding research question:

RQ1: How do individuals interpret the VSD form during the job application process?

Disability, the American Disabilities Act, and the VSD Form

A chronic illness is “... a noncommunicable illness that is prolonged in duration, does not resolve spontaneously, and is rarely cured completely” (CDC, 2016, p. 2.). According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), approximately 117 million people in the United States have one or more chronic health disabilities and one in four Americans have two or more chronic health conditions. Disability is a general term encompassing impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. People with disabilities (PWD) include those with physical handicaps (e.g., wheelchair use or impaired vision) and intellectual impairments, as well as individuals who experience participation constraints (World Health Organization, 2013).

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed in 1990 to protect people with disabilities against discrimination. The act also mandated employers to accommodate workers with disabilities unless the accommodation would impose “an undue hardship” on the employer. Despite positive intentions, the ADA was unsuccessful in preventing discrimination against those with disabilities (ADA, 1990). When seeking justice for discrimination in the workplace, some employees were unable to satisfy the court’s narrow, statutory definition of “disability.” According to the ADA (1990), an individual is disabled if A. he or she has a “physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities... B. a record of such an impairment, or C. [is] regarded as having such an impairment” (ADA, 1990, para. 3). With this narrow classification of “disability,” employees who filed a grievance found it difficult to prove that their illness substantially limited a major life activity. “In narrowly interpreting the ADA, lower courts found that plaintiffs who suffered from diseases including cancer, multiple dystrophy, epilepsy, and depression were not disabled” (Kaminer, 2016, p. 209).

In response to the ADA’s shortcomings, federal legislators enacted the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) in 2008. The ADAAA expanded the definition of “disability” to ensure protection for a larger number of individuals. Although the language defining “disability” was not modified, the ADAA added instructional amendments indicating how courts should interpret disability under the ADAAA. The Rules of Construction of the ADAA state, “the definition of disability in the Act shall be construed in favor of broad coverage of individuals under the Act” (ADAA, 2008). The reformed act rejects that an employee’s disability should be evaluated based on its mitigated state. As stated in the ADAA, “the determination of whether an impairment substantially limits a major life activity shall be made without regard to the ameliorative effects of mitigating measures” (ADAA, 2008). Exceptions

apply to the ADAA rule. For example, medication or therapy are mitigating factors when determining whether a disability substantially limits a major life activity. Before ADAA, employees who could control their disorders such as bipolar or depression through medication and therapy (mitigating factors) would not satisfy the statutory definition of “disability.” Thus, these individuals were not granted protection under ADA. After the passage of ADAA, employees are evaluated on their health states in unmitigated states.

Although these changes to the ADA were helpful to disabled individuals, the changes positively affected physically disabled individuals more than mentally disabled individuals. Moreover, the employment gap has not drastically narrowed between individuals with and without disabilities (Stapleton and Burkhauser, 2003). In response to the low PWD employment rate, former President Barack Obama passed Executive Order 13548 (E.O 13558) in 2010 which requires federal contractors with more than 50 or more employees to meet hiring and retention quotas for individuals with disabilities. Federal contractors, which include businesses that provide goods or services to or on behalf of the government, are encouraged to ensure at least seven percent of their workforce are employees with disabilities. This regulation could potentially affect 171,000 federal contractors nationwide (Von Schrader, Malzer, & Bruyère, 2011). As stated in 2010, these agencies were expected to increase the national workforce by 100,000 individuals with disabilities by 2015 (Von Schrader, Malzer, & Bruyere, 2014). The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), however, did not enact these regulations until March 24, 2014. OFCCP regulations ensure the federal government acts in accordance with section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 503 is a law that prohibits any federal agency receiving governmental funding to discriminate against individuals with disabilities in employment settings.

The VSD form was designed to increase the employment and retention rates of people with disabilities. Hernandez, McDonald, Divilbiss, Horin, Velcoff, & Donoso (2008) found that employers are concerned about the “decrease in productivity, demand for supervision, and costs of accommodations” when hiring employees who are afflicted with chronic illnesses (p. 157). Given the prevalence and stigma associated with mental and physical health disorders, organizations need to better understand how applicants respond to the VSD form and the signals it conveys.

In addition to job applicants in the pre-employment stage, current employees must have the opportunity to self-identify on the VSD form once every five years (Office of Federal Register, 2011). Prior to this mandate, the onus of disclosure fell on the employee, especially if they desired accommodations or leave. To receive accommodations, an employee is required to disclose his or her condition (ADA, 2008). Despite this requirement, several PWDs refrain from disclosing, preventing them from receiving the appropriate accommodations (Clair, Beatty, & MacLean, 2005).

The VSD form is intended to collect disability information on applicants and employees to assist contractors in attaining the 7% utilization goal for recruiting and hiring purposes. “The two-page self-identification form provides: (1) information explaining why the applicant or employee is being asked to complete the form; (2) nonexclusive examples of disabilities to help applicants and employees assess whether they have a disability; and (3) information about reasonable accommodation laws” (Bromberg, 2014, p. 2).

When completing the VSD form, applicants must select one of three options for self-identification: 1. Yes, I have a disability (or previously had a disability) 2. No, I don't have a disability 3. I don't wish to answer. Contractors are required to use the VSD form without

alteration. On January 31, 2017, the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved the continuation of the VSD form for an additional three years. As of 2015, only 13 percent of contractors met or exceeded the 7 percent quota for employees with disabilities (Young & Kan, 2015). Because few companies are meeting the quota, a closer look at the VSD form and its outcomes are warranted. Specifically, understanding PWD's likelihood to disclose their disability on the VSD form can provide invaluable insight about the usefulness of the form.

Disclosing a Disability

The decision to disclose a disability in the workplace is difficult because such disclosure has the potential to affect work relations. Disclosure can result in positive outcomes such as desired workplace accommodations and/or social support. However, it can also lead to negative outcomes including stigmatization, lowered expectations, and isolation from colleagues (Farrell & Geist-Martin, 2005). Managing chronic disabilities in the workplace is important because these disabilities can negatively affect productivity, absenteeism, and retention of employees (Irvine, 2011). Research suggests there may be more negative than positive outcomes for individuals who disclose non-apparent disabilities than those with visible disabilities (Quinn & Earnshaw, 2011). Van Schrader (2011) found 68 percent of employees admit seeking an accommodation was the primary reason for divulging their disability. However, relevant to the present study, fear of stigmatization was identified as a significant factor in dissuading individuals from making requests for workplace accommodations. Unique to the workplace, individuals not only consider personal risks involved with disclosure, but also professional risks. Revealing a health issue in the organizational setting could potentially damage an individual's professional reputation.

Disclosure and Stigma. Public stigma is characterized by the negative societal representations of health issues (Link & Majcher-Angermeyer, 1987). Thus, it relates to the general public's negative attitudes and prejudices towards individuals with health disabilities (Link & Majcher-Angermeyer, 1987). An example of public stigma is the assumption that people with mental health issues are incompetent or unstable. Most people, including those suffering from the health problems, are aware of the negative stereotypes and stigma (Irvine, 2010). Stigma theory (Goffman, 1963; Jones, Hastorf, Markus, & Miller, 1984) explains "the behavior, perceptions, beliefs, and development of the social and psychological self of stigmatized persons" (Westbrook, Bauman, Shinnar, 1992, p. 633). This theory maintains that stigmatized individuals absorb negative feedback from society regarding their condition, which affects their self-perceptions and self-esteem. Individuals who interpret their disability as negative and stigmatizing likely experience diminished self-worth and self-esteem. Stigma theory assumes that if society holds negative perceptions regarding an attribute (i.e., disability), others will respond unfavorably to the person possessing this attribute. Possessing a stigmatized characteristic will lead to social disapproval. Moreover, in response to negative feedback from others, stigmatized individuals attempt to conceal or reveal their negative attributes. In the context of the workplace (Beatty & Kirby, 2006; Clair, Beatty, & MacLean, 2005), choosing to disclose, or refrain from revealing, a disability on the VSD form is a strategy to manage one's disability.

Disclosure represents a fine balance between receiving social support and accommodations on the one hand and fearing negative consequences that inhibit it on the other. Mental health issues tend to be more stigmatized than physical disorders (Farrell & Geist-Martin, 2005). For example, Britt (2000) found that military personnel, screened for physical and mental

health disabilities, perceived testing positive for a mental health issue more stigmatizing than screening positive for physical. Perceived stigmatization was also heightened when the screening took place in front of the individual's unit, rather than among personnel not in the unit.

Individuals typically seek to create and maintain a positive identity that corresponds with the group's norms/ideals. The stigma associated with a chronic health disability might devalue the individual's identity in the workplace. Thus, identity management defined by Pachankis (2007) as "the strict control of information related to the stigmatizing attribute" (p. 328) is critical for individuals who wish to maintain a reputable identity in the organization.

Although many employers espouse positive and supportive attitudes towards employees with disabilities, Hernandez, et al., (2008) found that employers were less likely to hire individuals with these conditions than those without. In their qualitative study, employers indicated they were concerned about the "decrease in productivity, demand for supervision, and costs of accommodations" incurred when hiring disabled employees. Not only can stigma result in discriminatory behaviors, but the affected individual also internalizes discrimination (Link & Majcher-Angermeyer, 1987). Individuals with health disabilities come to expect perceptions of incompetence and rejection from others. In fact, research suggests minorities are more aware of and sensitive to signals conveying discriminatory practices than non-minority populations (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Ryan, 2001). Stigma theory posits that stigmatized individuals monitor their environment for cues; these environment cues affect stigmatized individuals' perceptions of the climate (Crocker & Major, 1989). Thus, it is likely that perceived stigma is negatively associated with the likelihood of disclosing a disorder on the VSD form.

Extant research, however, has not examined the extent to which the target population of the present study, college students about to enter the job market, perceive stigma associated with

physical and mental health disabilities. Accordingly, I conducted a pilot study during the Fall 2017 semester to assess the degree of stigma individuals associate with the disabilities listed on the VSD form. Specifically, I distributed a survey to 312 students enrolled in communication classes at the University of Arizona using the Qualtrics online survey platform. Students received class credit for participating. Of the 312, 210 completed the survey, for a response rate of 67%. Perceived stigma was assessed in two ways. First, participants were asked to rate the perceived stigma associated with each of the disorders listed on the VSD form. This section was preceded with the following prompt: “Stigma refers to an attribute/condition that is profoundly discrediting to the individual possessing the attribute; the attribute is perceived as a mark of disgrace that devalues the individual. Please indicate the level of stigma you perceive is associated with each of the following conditions.” Participants responded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “no stigma at all” to “extreme level of stigma.” Second, the participants evaluated each disorder using the Social Distance Scale (Link, Cullen, Frank, & Wozniak, 1987). This scale asked respondents to rate their willingness to engage in seven scenarios with a person who has a specific disorder (e.g., How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who is blind? How would you feel about working with someone who is blind?). The scale uses a four-point Likert response ranging from “Definitely unwilling” to “Definitely willing” and the scores were summed for a possible range of 7-28. The full measure is attached in Appendix D.

Overall, results of the pilot study indicated more variance in stigma scores between subjects than between disorders. Specifically, the average stigma score across the disorders was 2.64 and the stigma score standard deviation between the disorders was only .30. In contrast, the average stigma score across individuals was 2.70, but the standard deviation between subjects

was 1.08. In other words, each individual tended to perceive similar levels of stigmas across the disorders, but the individuals significantly varied from one another with respect to the level of stigma they associated with the disorders overall. Social distance results were similar.

Specifically, the average social distance score across the disorders was 21.51 (range 4-28) and the standard deviation between the disorders was 2.15. However, the standard deviation between subjects (across the disorders) was 3.32, again indicating that variance between subjects was greater than variance between disorders. Overall, results from the pilot study supported conceptualizing and operationalizing perceived stigma as an individual-level between-subjects variable for the present study. As mentioned earlier, stigma theory maintains that individuals are unlikely to disclose a stigmatized characteristic (i.e., disability) if they perceive disclosure will lead to discrimination (Clair et al., 2005; Deaux & Ethier, 1998). Given that discrimination is often associated high perceived stigma of a disability, I predict the following:

H1: PWDs who do not disclose that they have a disability on the VSD form will perceive higher levels of stigma associated with disabilities than will PWDs who do disclose that they have a disability on the VSD form.

Research suggests that *anticipated responses* most strongly predict the likelihood of disclosure (Greene, 2009). As the name implies, anticipated responses refer to receivers' expected reactions to health disclosures. According to Greene (2009), "people do not share without attempting to estimate reactions of others for their own protection and safety."

Individuals depend on signals transmitted by the organization to gauge the organization's anticipated responses. Jans, Kaye, and Jones (2012) organized focus groups and found that participants with disabilities sought positive signals from organizations, including mission statements addressing disability and diversity initiatives, before disclosing their disabilities in the

hiring process. In the context of this study, an organization's use of the VSD form may signal to the applicant that the company will either favorably or unfavorably respond to health disclosures.

Accordingly, I examined the following research question:

RQ2: How are interpretations of the signal, the VSD form, associated with disclosure on the form?

The VSD form may encourage or discourage applicants from disclosing their disability. The anecdotal comments from individuals who posted on the *Wall Street Journal* site, suggest people view the VSD form as an employer's method to "screen in" or "screen out" applicants. Those who perceive it as "screening in" interpret the form as a strategy to increase the number of disabled individuals in the company, view the form as a way to promote diversity and inclusivity and, therefore, may be more likely disclose their disability. However, individuals who perceive it as a discriminatory measure to "screen out," meaning a strategy to decrease the number of disabled individuals in the company, may be less likely to disclose as their revelation could prevent them from securing the position. Because stigma theory assumes an inverse relationship between discrimination and disclosure, and the VSD form can signal a company's motives (i.e., screen in or screen out), I propose the following hypothesis:

H2: PWDs who perceive the VSD form as a "screening in" measure will disclose their disability on the VSD form whereas PWDS who perceive the form as a "screening out" measure will not disclose their disability on the VSD form.

Although individuals may perceive the disabilities listed on the form as stigmatizing, they may still perceive that the organization's intention is to increase the number of disabled workers through the VSD form. Thus, screening perceptions may moderate the association between perceived stigma and disclosure. Workplace culture can influence disclosure (Santuzzi & Waltz,

2016). Explicit promotion of organizational values and policies related to disability can influence employees' disclosure rates. Organizational policies that limit flexibility and promote negative attitudes among employees are associated with decrease disclosure rates among PWDs (Paetzold, García, Colella, Ren, Triana, & Ziebro, 2008). Policies (which may include the VSD form) regarding flexibility and accommodations may indicate if a disabled individual will be valued or threatened in an organization. Signals that convey disabilities are accepted and accommodated for in the workplace, and thus "screened in," may lead a worker to increase the amount of information they share regarding their disability (Kosciulek, 2007). Despite their perceptions of stigmatized conditions, individuals who perceive the VSD form as a "screening in" strategy will likely disclose their disabilities at higher rates than people who perceive the form as a "screening out" strategy. As such, I propose the following hypothesis:

H3: For PWDs, perceiving the VSD form as a "screening in" measure will moderate the negative association between perceived stigma and disclosure such that perceiving the form as a "screening in" measure will weaken the negative relationship.

Likelihood of Disclosure. My earlier hypotheses regarding disclosure were relevant to PWDs only. Because of concerns about obtaining a large enough sample of PWDs to test this hypothesis, I also examined hypotheses regarding *likelihood* of disclosure. Specifically, I predicted that perceived stigma associated with disabilities would be negatively associated with the perceived likelihood of disclosing on the VSD form. Accordingly, I posit the following hypothesis:

H4: Perceived stigma associated with disabilities will be negatively related to the perceived likelihood that someone with a disability will disclose that they have a disability on the VSD form.

Deciding to Apply for a Position

Individuals may interpret an organization's use of the VSD form (i.e., signal or cue) as an inclusive, 'screening in' procedure and thus may be more attracted to the position. Turban and Greening (1997) found organizations engaging in socially responsible actions were perceived as attractive employers with positive reputations by job applicants. Conversely, a participant may perceive the signal of a company's use of VSD form as a discriminatory measure designed to "screen out" applicants with disabilities, and thus may be less inclined to apply for a position. The VSD form acts as an artifact signaling the company's values and priorities. As addressed in the beginning of this proposal, little is known about how applicants interpret the VSD form.

Deciding to apply for a specific position is influenced by factors such as job characteristics, organizational attributes, and the applicants' perception of organizational attractiveness (Barber & Roehling, 1993; Ryan et al., 2015; Van Hooft, Born, Taris, & Van der Flier, 2006). Organizational attractions refer to an employer's attempt to highlight the strengths of the organization and downplay the cons to recruit and attract applicants. "Perceptions of organizational attractiveness refer to the degree to which a person favorably perceives an organization as a place to work" (Rynes, Bretz, Gerhart, 1991, p. 27), or the "general perceived desirability of working for an organization" (Aiman-Smith, Bauer, Cable, 2001). Research suggests organizational attractiveness is significantly related to job choice decisions. Hemphill and Kulik (2016) found that participants rated a fictitious company more positively when provided recruitment brochures on the organization's diversity initiatives than when receiving brochures without this information. Through signals, recruitment materials affect applicants' knowledge and perceptions of companies. Individuals typically obtain information about a specific job from organizational literature and interactions with other applicants, interviewers,

and current employees. Recruitment advertisements are typically the first point of information for job applicants (Reeve & Schultz, 2004).

Organizations are encouraged to modify their communication strategies to target specific groups for job vacancies. Few studies, however, consider how job advertisements are worded to attract the targeted applicant pool. Along these lines, Wille and Derous (2017) found ethnic minority applicants were less likely to apply for a position when a negatively meta-stereotyped trait was phrased in a dispositional, rather than a behavioral, way. Similarly, Schmidt, Chapman, Jones (2015) found job advertisements emphasizing needs and supplies elicited more applications and higher quality applicants than advertisements emphasizing demands and abilities. Need-supplies fit refers to physical and psychological resources, including accommodations, the employer can offer and the “needs, desires, and preferences” of the employee. As evidenced by these studies, the wording and content of job recruitment materials can promote or deter applicants.

Reeve and Schultz (2004) found applicants may perceive companies with a “long list of job seeker and selection process attributes” as too selective or discriminatory. Advertisements that emphasize job seeker attributes (such as disabilities) may discourage qualified applicants who lack confidence (Scoggins, 2008). Because individuals with disabilities often anticipate others to view them as incompetent, a company’s use of the VSD form may be a signal that discourages them from applying. Although federal forms like the VSD form are designed to protect those with disabilities from discrimination, its use might inadvertently reinforce condescending attitudes. The form could potentially reinforce a stereotype that individuals with disabilities are unable to compete or secure jobs without assistance. Kravitz (2008) found that new hires who are targeted by affirmative action programs can face stigmatization in the

organization because they are viewed as less competent than those who are not a part of such programs. Moreover, legislative protections may elicit responses of pity, a common, yet sometimes unwanted, emotion towards those with disabilities.

PWDs and PWODs may not apply for a position if they view use of the form as unethical and prejudiced, and therefore, discriminatory. In this case, applicants may believe the company's values do not align with their own, making the organization less attractive and, consequently, refrain from applying. Toward this end, to understand organizational characteristics signaled by the VSD form and applicants' behaviors in response to this form, I propose the following hypothesis and research question:

H5: For all individuals with and without a disability, those who interpret the form as a "screen in" strategy will be more likely to apply for the position than those who interpret the form as a "screen out" strategy.

RQ3: How are interpretations of the signal, the VSD form, associated with individuals' likelihood to apply to a position?

Job Desirability as a Moderator

Ali, Schur, and Blanck (2010) found that non-employed individuals with disabilities are as likely to desire a job as their non-disabled counterparts, but less likely to actively pursue a job. Moreover, these individuals share similar views as those without disabilities, prioritizing income and job security when searching for positions. PWDs are as likely as PWODs to desire jobs with flexibility, high income, and job security. Of those disabled and unemployed, eighty percent desire a job now or in the future, compared to 78% among non-disabled individuals. For individuals with mental disabilities, the rate is 90%. As previously noted, employees with disabilities may not wish to disclose their disability out of fear of lowered expectations and

increased likelihood of termination (Brohan et al. 2012; Dalgin and Bellini 2008; Dalgin and Gilbride 2003; Madaus et al. 2002). Among factors that may influence whether an individual reveals their disability to an employer, Van Schrader, Malzer and Bruyère (2014) found that the *risk of not being hired/being fired* was the most influential factor; 73% of respondents rated “not being hired” as a “very important” factor to consider when disclosing. Because individuals who highly desire jobs likely hope to be hired for the respective position, the more individuals desire a job, the less inclined they may be to disclosure their disability.

Because people with disabilities desire jobs at similar rates as those without disabilities and value similar job characteristics, we can predict job desirability will moderate the effect of stigma on disclosure. Specifically,

H6: For PWDs, job desirability will moderate the negative association between perceived stigma and disclosure such that higher levels of desirability will strengthen the negative relationship.

Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, and Jones (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of factors associated with applicants' attraction to particular jobs. Interestingly, broad job and organizational characteristics predicted an individual' acceptance of a job offer better than recruiter characteristics and perceptions of the recruitment process. These findings suggest that applicants may be more concerned about the company's title and reputation than the recruitment process when deciding whether to apply or accept a position. Contrary to this finding, much research suggests that job attractiveness is more important than company attractiveness when deciding to accept a position (Rynes & Miller, 1983). Research also indicates that company attractiveness does not explain a significant amount of variance in applicants' decision to accept a job position once job attractiveness, including the recruitment process, are taken into account.

Aside from these findings, Truxillo, Bauer, Campion, and Paronto (2002) found that job desirability can reduce the effect of selection unfairness on organizational attractiveness. In other words, applicants may ignore unjust selection practices and continue with the hiring process if they highly desire the job for which they applied (Truxillo et al, 2002).

Considering these mixed findings, I propose the following research question in lieu of a specific hypothesis:

RQ4: Does job desirability moderate the association between screening perceptions of the VSD form and likelihood of applying for all applicants?

Methods

This study investigated the association between perceived signals conveyed by the VSD form and participants likelihood to disclose a disability and apply for a position. I also examined the association between perceived stigma of health disabilities on the VSD form and the likelihood of disclosing a disability and applying for a position requiring this health information. The independent variables in this study are perceived stigma, signal interpretations, and screening perceptions, whereas the dependent variables are disclosure, likelihood of disclosure, and likelihood of applying. I also examined whether job desirability and screening strengthened or weakened the association between perceived stigma and disclosure as well as perceived stigma and applying. Job desirability and screening were moderator variables in this study.

Procedure

Participants were recruited from undergraduate online communication courses, disability resources centers at the University of Arizona and Pima Community College, and Amazon's Mechanical Turk (Mturk), an online crowdsourcing marketplace. Respondents recruited via Mturk have been found to be more representative of the American population than in-person

convenience samples (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012). Instructors of online classes and directors of the disability resources were contacted by the investigator to gain permission to recruit participants. The research project was approved by both University of Arizona's and Pima Community College's Institutional Review Boards. Compensation was not provided to respondents from the disability resource centers. Students in the online undergraduate classes received research or extra credit for their participation and MTurk respondents were compensated USD1.00 for their completion. To participate in the study, respondents were required to be at least 18 years old and currently be in college. This criterion was selected as targeted respondents are likely to apply for jobs in the near future and thus may encounter the VSD form during the application process.

Sample

The survey was distributed to 841 students enrolled in communication classes at the University of Arizona, students registered for disability resource centers at the University of Arizona and Pima Community College, and respondents from Mturk using the Qualtrics online survey platform. I removed 63 responses from the data because respondents had previously completed the survey. Of those 63 responses, 48 were duplicated responses from online undergraduate responses and 15 were duplicated responses from MTurk responses. I also removed 58 respondents because they provided incomplete or inaccurate information (e.g., answering the same response for every question). Three respondents were removed because they indicated they “would not provide their best answers” or they “can’t promise either way” to the following screening question: “Do you commit to providing your thoughtful and honest answers to the questions in the survey?”

The final sample consisted of 332 participants. Of the 332 respondents, 241 were recruited through online undergraduate classes, 42 were recruited through Mturk, 28 were recruited through Pima Community College's Access and Disability Resource Center, and 13 were recruited through the University of Arizona's Disability Resource Center. The majority of respondents identified as female (59.3%). Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 62 ($M = 24.42$). More than half of the sample classified as seniors (53.1%), 31.6% as juniors, 10.5% as sophomores, and 3.6% as freshmen. A respondent (1) reported being a graduate student. The majority (68.1%) of the sample identified as Caucasian, 16.9% as Hispanic, 8.1% as African American, 4.5% as Asian, 1.8% as American Indian or Alaska Native, 1.5% as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 5.1% as other. Most respondents reported they had not previously encountered the VSD form (48.5%) while 40.4% of respondents reported that they had previously encountered the VSD form, and 11.1% were not sure. Of the total respondents, 76 identified as having a disability. Participants indicated they had a disability by responding to the question, "Do you have any of the disabilities listed below?" in which 18 disabilities from the VSD form were listed. Power analyses using g*Power indicated that to achieve a power level of .80 for t-tests, a sample of size of 64 was required, for ANCOVAs a sample size of 269 was required, and for chi-square tests a sample of size 143 was required.

Measures

Interpretation of VSD form. RQ1 asked how job applicants interpret the VSD form. This was assessed by obtaining qualitative data in response to the following open-ended questions: "How do you feel about the VSD form?" and "Why do you think the organization asks applicants to complete the VSD form?" To gather quantitative data, respondents reported "which of the feeling(s)" they experienced while completing the VSD form. Respondents

selected from the following options: Confusion, enjoyment, anger, displeasure, appreciation, or none of the above. These responses were generated by examining anecdotal comments about the VSD form. The themes identified through coding were further coded as positive interpretation, negative interpretation, neutral interpretation, and conflicting interpretation.

Stigma. As previously noted, stigma refers to negative societal attitudes and prejudices towards individuals with a health disability. Perceived stigma was assessed using the same scale from the pilot study. First, respondents read the following prompt: “Stigma refers to an attribute/condition that is profoundly discrediting to the individual possessing the attribute; the attribute is perceived as a mark of disgrace that devalues the individual. Please indicate the level of stigma you perceive is associated with each of the following conditions.” Upon reading the prompt, respondents rated the degree of perceived stigma associated with each disability on the VSD form. The five-point Likert scaled ranged from “no stigma at all” to “extreme level of stigma.” The full measure is attached in Appendix C. To assess the dimensional structure of the stigma scale, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was completed using SPSS (principal components analysis with Varimax rotation). Results indicated stigma scores represented two factors -- stigma associated with mental health disabilities and stigma associated with physical health disabilities. Three items (i.e., diabetes, schizophrenia, and intellectual disability) loaded weakly on both physical and mental health disabilities. These items were removed from the remaining analysis, and a second EFA was computed, again resulting in two factors, accounting for 61% of the variance in stigma scores. Table 1 illustrates the final factor loadings. Based on these results, I created a mental stigma score (alpha = .84) and a physical stigma score (alpha = .90).

Table 1

Item Loadings for Physical Health and Mental Health Scales

| Item | Factor 1 | Factor 2 |
|---|------------|------------|
| Physical Health Items | | |
| Blindness | .84 | -.08 |
| Cancer | .66 | .08 |
| Cerebral palsy | .78 | .17 |
| Deafness | .86 | -.04 |
| Impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair | .69 | .26 |
| Missing limbs or partially missing limbs | .65 | .28 |
| Multiple sclerosis (MIS) | .74 | .29 |
| Muscular dystrophy | .74 | .24 |
| Epilepsy | .71 | .14 |
| Autism | .68 | .34 |
| Mental Health Items | | |
| Bipolar disorder | .11 | .83 |
| Major depression | .08 | .81 |
| Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) | .10 | .73 |
| HIV/AIDS | .20 | .68 |
| Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) | .25 | .76 |

Screening. I assessed screening with the following question: “Do you believe the form is designed to (1) increase the number of disabled individuals in the organization or (2) decrease the number of disabled individuals in the organization?” This provided a dichotomous “screening perception” variable. In regards to screening, 185 reported that the form was designed to decrease the number of disabled workers and 124 respondents indicated that the form was designed to increase the number of disabled workers in the organization. Consistent with these findings, analysis of the qualitative responses indicated 117 respondents viewed the form unfavorably, 82 viewed the form favorably, 68 respondents viewed the form neutrally, and 65 viewed the form conflictedly based on the signal- the VSD form.

Disclosure. For the purposes of this study, disclosure is defined as intentionally informing the organization that one has a health disability through the VSD form. For this study,

disclosure was categorized as either “disclosure” or “nondisclosure.” Respondents were asked if they have one or more of the disabilities listed on the VSD form in the demographic portion at the end of the survey. To be coded as “disclosure,” individuals with disabilities must select the following response on the VSD form: “Yes, I have a disability (or previously had a disability).” Selecting one of the two other responses: “No, I don’t have a disability” or “I don’t wish to answer” was coded as “nondisclosure.”

Likelihood of Disclosure. Respondents were asked about the likelihood they would disclose a disability on the VSD form. Specifically, PWDs were asked “How likely would you disclose your disability on the VSD form when applying for a job?” and PWODs were asked “If you had a disability, how likely would you to be disclose your condition on the VSD form when applying for a job?” Participants responded on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from “extremely likely” to “extremely unlikely.” In addition to asking about their own response to the VSD form (self/direct), I asked respondents to indicate how they think others would respond to the VSD form (other/indirect). Asking about perceptions of others (other/indirect) helps mitigate social desirability bias. When social desirability bias is present, responses for the indirect/other condition are perceived as more valid as respondents likely project their true beliefs and attitudes, especially if deemed unfavorable, on the indirect condition. Previous studies examining socially sensitive topics have used projective questions to control for such bias (e.g., Cruz, Shafer, & Strawser, 2000; Sias & Perry, 2004). To assess likelihood of disclosure(other), PWDs were asked, “How likely do you think it would be for someone else with a disability to disclose their condition on the VSD form when applying for a job?” and PWODs were asked, “How likely do you think it would be for someone with a disability to disclose their condition on the VSD form when applying for a job?” Respondents responded on a seven-point Likert scale

ranging from “extremely likely” to “extremely unlikely.” Paired t-test results indicated social desirability bias for the “self” conditions for both PWDs and PWODs. Specifically, PWDs reported they were more likely to disclose their disability ($M = 4.08, SD = 2.16$) than someone else with a disability ($M = 3.7, SD = 1.55, t(1,76) = 1.83, p < .05, d = .08$). Similarly, PWODs reported that if they had a disability, they would be more likely to disclose that disability ($M = 4.48, SD = 1.81$) than would someone else who had a disability ($M = 4.14, SD = 1.54, t(1, 256) = 3.62, p < .001, d = .20$). Based on these results, the “other” condition for likelihood to disclose was used for relevant hypothesis testing.

Likelihood to Apply. Likelihood to apply was a dependent variable in this study. Respondents were asked, “How likely would you be to apply for the ___ position?” One of four job positions were included in the question: Social Media Specialist, Public Relations Account Coordinator, Telemarketer, or Data Entry Clerk.

Job Desirability. Job desirability was a moderator variable in this study. Desirability refers to the degree to which a person favorably perceives a job. For this study, job desirability does not refer to a specific organization or place of work, but rather the nature of and tasks involved in the position.

To develop a job desirability manipulation, I conducted a second pilot study during Spring of 2018 to assess the desirability of entry-level communication-related jobs among undergraduate students. Accordingly, the second pilot study assessed the perceived desirability of the following positions: Social Media Specialist, Public Relations Account Coordinator, Telemarketer, and Data Entry Clerk. Seeking variance in desirability, I selected these four positions because they are often listed among the most and least desirable communication-related jobs. Respectively, social media specialist and public relations coordinator are listed among the

most desirable while telemarketer and data entry clerk are often listed among the least desirable (Profita, 2018, Best Jobs for Communication Majors). The descriptions were modeled after actual job advertisements posted on *Monster* and *Glassdoor* websites.

The survey was distributed to 82 students enrolled in communication classes at the University of Arizona using the Qualtrics online survey platform. The sample consisted of 63 women and 16 men whose ages ranged from 20 to 44 years. Of the 82 respondents, 81 percent (65) identified as Caucasian, six percent (5) as Asian, 2 percent (2) as African American, 10 percent (8) as other. Of the total respondents, 82 percent of the respondents identified as being college seniors. Students received class credit for participating. Participants were asked to read four job descriptions and answer subsequent questions including “How desirable do you find the ____ position?” Participants responded on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from “extremely undesirable” to “extremely desirable.” Participants were also asked “If you met the requirements for the ____ position, how likely would you be to apply for the _____ position?” Responses ranged from “extremely unlikely” to “extremely likely.”

Desirability was highest for the Public Relations Coordinator position ($M = 5.81$, $SD = 1.21$) and lowest for the Telemarketer position ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 1.45$). The mean score for Data Entry Clerk was 3.25 ($SD = 1.49$) and the mean score for the Social Media Specialist position was 5.60 ($SD = 1.41$). An ANOVA indicated that job desirability significantly differed between conditions, $F(3, 308) = 25.72$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .20$. Bonferroni tests indicated that as expected, the public relations and social media positions did not differ significantly from each other, but both were significantly more desirable than the data entry and telemarketer positions. Similarly, the data entry and telemarketer positions did not differ significantly from one another with respect to desirability. Results of the ranking questions (which is more/least desirable) were consistent with

these results. Specifically, 53% of the students ranked PR Coordinator as the most desirable position and 58% rated Telemarketer as the least desirable. Given these results, the four conditions were collapsed into two - high desirability (PR and Social Media) and low desirability (Data Entry and Telemarketer).

Study Design

The study used an experimental design in which participants were asked to imagine they have been invited to apply for one of the four jobs-- telemarketer, data entry clerk, public relations coordinator or social media specialist. Other than manipulating the job position and description, the survey was identical for all respondents.

After providing informed consent, respondents were asked to read the job description and complete an application, consisting of common demographic questions (e.g., major, expected graduation date, relevant coursework, most recent job title). For the complete list of questions, see Appendix H. Then respondents read and responded to the VSD form. In my brief review of companies using the VSD form for hiring purposes, this form is often presented after demographic and experience related questions, but before the submission page on the electronic application. As presented on the VSD form, respondents indicated “Yes, I have a disability (or previously had a disability),” “No I don’t have a disability,” or “I don’t wish to answer.”

Upon completing the VSD form, respondents moved to the next section of the survey. In that section, respondents were asked about their likelihood of applying for the position. In addition, they responded to the manipulation check question: “How desirable do you find the ____ position?” Responses ranged from “extremely undesirable” to “extremely desirable.”

After the desirability measures, respondents responded to open-ended questions about how they perceived the VSD form. Next, similar to the pilot study, respondents rated the

perceived stigma of disabilities on the VSD form and then provided demographic information, including age, race, gender, year in school, and whether or not they have one of the disabilities listed on the VSD form. Respondents were asked to indicate specifically which disorder(s) they have by selecting the box next to the disorders that apply. Moreover, respondents indicated whether they have previously encountered the VSD form when applying for a job vacancy.

Analysis and Results

Prior to main hypothesis testing, I conducted preliminary correlation analysis to identify demographic variables that might be covariates. Correlations indicated age ($M = 24.42, SD = 8.05$) was positively associated with likelihood of disclosing ($r = .40, p < .05$). Accordingly, age was included as a covariate in relevant statistical tests. I also examined the data to evaluate whether respondents from the different populations responded differently to determine whether I could aggregate the samples for primary analyses. A MANOVA indicated the samples did not differ significantly with respect to perceived stigma, job desirability, screening perceptions, disclosure, likelihood of disclosure, and likelihood of applying, $F(3,301) = .20, p = .89$. Chi-squared analysis demonstrated that the samples did not differ in their screening perceptions, $X^2 = 4.70, p = .19$, nor did they (PWDs) differ with respect to disclosure, $X^2 = 6.56, p = .08$. Accordingly, data from the four samples were aggregated.

Table 2 reports means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations for continuous variables.

Table 2:

Table 2
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

| | M | SD | Stigma-Physical | Stigma-Mental | Likelihood of Disclosure | Likelihood of Disclosure-Other | Likelihood of Applying | Job Desirability |
|--|---|----|-----------------|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
|--|---|----|-----------------|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------|------|---|--------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| Stigma- Physical | 3.23 | 0.95 | 1 | .397** | 0.097 | -0.136* | 0.043 | -0.013 |
| Stigma- Mental | 3.43 | 0.95 | | 1 | .144** | -0.127* | -0.036 | -0.01 |
| Likelihood of Disclosure | 0.25 | 0.43 | | | 1 | -0.041 | 0.043 | 0.021 |
| Likelihood of Disclosure- Other | 4.05 | 1.55 | | | | 1 | 0.049 | 0.159** |
| Likelihood of Applying | 4.04 | 2 | | | | | 1 | 0.677** |
| Job Desirability | 3.94 | 1.98 | | | | | | 1 |

**p<.01, 2-tailed

*p<.05, 2-tailed

Interpretation of VSD Form

Interpretation of VSD form. RQ1 asked how potential job applicants interpret the VSD form. First, I asked respondents to report “which of the feeling(s)” they experienced while completing the VSD form. Respondents selected from the following options: Confusion, enjoyment, anger, displeasure, appreciation, or none of the above. Respondents could select more than one option. Descriptive statistics indicated that 30.4 percent of respondents reported experiencing displeasure, 17.5% reported confusion, 17.2% reported appreciation, 6.3% reported anger, 2.7% reported enjoyment, and 25.9% reported none of the above. Among people with disabilities, the most commonly reported feeling was displeasure (35.3%).

Next, I completed a thematic analysis of participant’s responses to the open-ended questions. Respondents received the following prompts: “How do you feel about the VSD form?” and “Why do you think the organization asks applicants to complete the VSD form?” The author reviewed the responses and created analytic memos (i.e., notes that help record interpretations and ideas). Initially, the author’s analytic memos identified nine emergent themes from the responses. After another analysis of the responses, however, further delineation was needed. One additional theme, person-job fit, was added to the data. According to Hayes and Krippendorff (2007), reliable indexes should not be limited by the number of categories available

for coding. By limiting the scope and number of categories, results can lack generalizability and become biased based on the researcher's preferences for categories.

To ensure the coding reliability of the primary coder/author, an outside coder not familiar with the study coded 20.5% of the responses. The secondary coder is a graduate student familiar with qualitative analyses. The secondary coder relied on the codebook created by the author to analyze the data and was asked to provide suggestions about additional categories or definitions. As suggested by the secondary coder, the format of the VSD form should be analyzed in terms of valence. The primary coder agreed with this modification. Coders assessed the format of the form based on positive, neutral, negative, or conflicting assessments.

A total of 332 participants provided their opinions and perceptions of the VSD form. We used thematic coding to analyze written responses by participants. Thematic analysis allows researchers "to explore the understanding of an issue or the significance of an idea." (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 24). The primary author coded the data and identified ten primary themes: Discrimination, Privacy Violation, Assumption of Dishonesty, Legal Reasons, Format, Format Problems, Format Strengths, Accommodations, Equality, and Person-Job Fit. The second coder coded 20.5% of the response. Intercoder reliability was established using Cohen's kappa. Following guidelines for intercoder agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977), the author and secondary coder reached substantial agreement on 68 codes. During the initial coding, the coders reached approximately 80 percent agreement ($k = .809$). During the second round of coding, the coders achieved 87.4% intra-reliability ($k = .874$). Upon reaching intercoder reliability, the primary coder further coded these themes into positive, negative, neutral, and conflicting codes/interpretations. Discrimination, privacy violation, assumption of dishonesty, and format problems were coded as negative interpretations; legal reasons, person-job fit, and format were

coded as neutral interpretations; and accommodations, equality, and format strengths were coded as positive interpretations. Of the total PWDs, 28.9% perceived neutral interpretations and 34.2% perceived negative, whereas 28.40% of PWODs perceived positive interpretations and 34.0% perceived negative. In total, 24.7% of all individuals perceived positive interpretations, 20.5% perceived neutral interpretations, 35.2% perceived negative interpretations, and 19.6% perceived conflicting interpretations.

Table 3 indicates the code book used in this analysis. In the next section, I identify and describe the codes in my analysis.

Table 3
Code book for qualitative responses

| VSD Form Responses | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Behavioral Type | Definition | Example |
| Discrimination | Discrimination refers to the unjust or prejudicial treatment of people with disabilities | I don't want to be judged. So they can screen out people with disabilities |
| Privacy Violation | The information sought is too personal and private | Prying into my personal life I am not comfortable sharing this private information. |
| Legal | Legal/governmental purposes of the VSD form | There is a financial incentive/gain. To meet a governmental quota |
| Person-Job Fit | The organization's assessment of the candidate's compatibility with the company, seeking information from the applicant | They want to know more about the applicant, gain information. See if there are any factors that may prevent them from doing the job |
| Accommodations | The organization's actions to assist an employee and/or improve working conditions | To help the person with a disability Facilitate the employee in case of an emergency |
| Equality | Equality refers to parity of employment opportunities and treatment between people with disabilities and those without. | To help people be treated equal. It gives equal opportunity to people with disabilities. |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Assumption of Dishonesty | The assumption that individuals will not provide honest responses on the VSD form. | People are not going tell the truth. People will lie and not disclose. |
| Attitude- Positive Assessment (no explanation) | A positive stance of the form is taken without explanation | It is good. It is important. |
| Attitude- Neutral Assessment (no explanation) | A neutral stance of the form is taken without explanation. | It is okay. I don't have an opinion. |
| Attitude, Negative Assessment (no explanation) | A negative stance of the form is taken without explanation. | I don't like it. It's stupid. |
| Format- Positive Assessment | A positive assessment of the format of the form- this may include the wording, structure, and length of the form | It is organized. I liked that they listed disabilities |
| Format- Neutral Assessment | A neutral assessment of the format of the form- this may include the wording, structure, and length of the form | It is vague. It has three options. |
| Format- Negative Assessment | A negative assessment of the format of the form—this may include the wording, structure, and number of disabilities listed | I don't know whether I have a disability based on this form. The number of disabilities is not exhaustive |

Negative Interpretations

Discrimination. Of the negative interpretations of the VSD form, 112 indicated discrimination, which refers to the unjust or prejudicial treatment of people with disabilities. Comments suggesting applicants would not be offered the job if they disclosed their disability were coded as “discrimination. Respondents commented on “being judged” or “screened out” if they or others shared their disabilities. A respondent stated, “I think the organization uses the form to exclude people with disabilities from gaining employment.” Another respondent perceived the form as a strategy to “route out those who aren't healthy or will cost them more resources.” More than half of respondents (60.2%), including those with and without disabilities,

believed the VSD form was designed to decrease the number of disabled individuals in the organization while 39.8% of respondents believed it was designed to increase.

Privacy Violation. Although employers gain information about applicants through the VSD form, respondents commented on the violation to privacy the VSD form may cause. In fact, 38 respondents viewed the information collected on the form as too personal or private. Responses illustrating this breach in privacy included words such as “invasive,” “forced,” and “intrusive.” A respondent commented, “It feels like they are prying into my personal life too much and this doesn't impact my ability to do the job.” Another respondent stated, “I feel that it can be too invasive and discourage people to disclose such personal information.”

Assumption of Dishonesty. In response to the prompt, 10 respondents reported an assumption of dishonesty when completing the VSD form. Assumption of dishonesty refers to the assumption that respondents will not truthfully reveal whether they have a disability on the VSD form. A respondent noted, “No one will actually tell whether they have a disability.” Another respondent commented, “the form is unnecessary because I doubt anyone will be honest on the form.”

Format Problems. The format of the form refers to the structure, wording, and overall meaning derived from the form. When a respondent negatively evaluated the format of the form, they often commented on the number of disabilities listed, the vagueness or specificity of the words, or the meaning of the sentences on the VSD form. Adjectives used to describe the form included “overwhelming,” “confusing,” and “unstructured.” Respondents desired additional detail and instruction for terms such as “disability” and “disclose.” A respondent stated, “What does it mean if I disclose? I feel confused on whether I should disclose or not.” Another respondent commented, “I would prefer it to not have a list of disabilities. Although it says

‘include, but are not limited to’ it does seem to exclude or narrowly define disability.” As a final example, a respondent commented, “I think it is a little hostile with all caps in the check box for whether or not you have a disability.” “Format problems” were interpreted by 43 respondents.

Neutral Interpretations

Legal Reasons. Of the neutral interpretations, 113 responses indicated legal applications of the VSD form. Legal reasons include financial incentives and obligations, insurance, quotas, and HR and governmental policies. A respondent commented, “I believe that legally this creates a safeguard for the employer.” Another respondent noted, “they can check a box and receive federal funding for having X number of disabled employees.”

Person- Job Fit. Person-job fit refers the organization’s assessment of the candidate’s compatibility with the organization. I also categorized the provision of information about the candidate to the organization under “person-job fit.” Person-job fit was mentioned in 220 of the responses. Respondents noted that if the employer knows the applicant has a disability, they can properly assess whether the person is capable (both physically or mentally) of performing the tasks associated with the position. Others commented that the form allows employers to develop a better understanding of the applicant. A respondent commented, “to ensure that the organization knows as much as possible about who they are hiring.” Another respondent commented, “because they want to know how the applicant will be able to work in the workplace and if there are any factors that could potentially get in the way of getting the job done.”

Format. The format of the form refers to the structure and wording of the form. When a respondent evaluated the format of the form in a neutral manner, they often used vague terms or provided little meaningful feedback about the form. These responses were typically short with little elaboration, making it difficult to assess a positive or negative evaluation. One respondent

commented, “the form has three options.” Adjectives used to describe the form included “vague” and “detailed.” Of the responses, seven were coded as “format.”

Positive Interpretations

Accommodations. Although the majority of respondents interpreted the form as a measure to “screen out” applicants, 87 of the responses indicated a positive outcome of providing accommodations to future employees. Accommodations refer to the organization’s actions to assist a disabled employee or make changes in the workplace to ameliorate the working conditions. Accommodations may include additional time for breaks throughout the workday or advanced equipment for workers who need additional resources. Respondents reported that an employer’s knowledge of an applicants’ disability can assist the employer in helping them. A respondent noted, “I think it might help the managers or boss facilitate their employees in case of an emergency or in case the employee needs extra attention or medication needs.” Another respondent commented, “because they want to help people who need to be helped.” As mentioned earlier, 68% of employees admit that seeking an accommodation was the primary reason for divulging their disability (Von Schrader et. al, 2011).

Equality. Although equal employment can be categorized under “legal reasons,” fifteen responses indicated “equality” without the mention of legal reasons. As such, these responses were coded separately from “legal reasons.” Equality refers to parity of employment opportunities between people with disabilities and those without. One respondent noted, “It gives a chance for equal opportunity. A chance for everyone.” Another respondent commented, “To help people with disabilities get jobs and be treated equal.”

Format Strengths. The format of the form refers to the structure, wording, and overall meaning derived from the form. Respondents who positively evaluated the form noted the

selected disabilities listed, the word choice, and the meaning of the sentences used on the VSD form. Respondents also commented on the organized and direct nature of the form. Adjectives used to describe the form included “organized” and “clear.” A respondent stated, “it provides crucial information.” Another respondent noted, “I think that the VSD form is simple and easy to understand if people take the time out to read the first paragraphs.’ As a final example, a respondent commented on the number of disabilities, stating, “the form does a good job of capturing most of the disabilities out there.” “Format strengths” were mentioned in 34 responses.

Conflicting Interpretations

The primary coder coded responses as “conflicting” when the responses included both a negative and positive interpretation. For example, a respondent commented,

“In some cases, I think this is a violation of privacy and the equal employment opportunities. On the other hand, I think that this form does provide people the ability to disclose personal information about their health that would require special on the job accommodations.”

The primary coder coded this response as “violation of privacy” and “discrimination” (i.e., negative interpretations) as well as “accommodations” (i.e., positive interpretation). In total, 19.6 percent of the responses were conflicting. Note, when a response included a positive and neutral interpretation or a negative and neutral interpretation, the response was coded as “positive interpretation” or “negative interpretation” respectively.

Disclosure on VSD form – PWDs Only

H1 predicted that PWDs who do not disclose that they have a disability on the VSD form will perceive higher levels of stigma associated with disabilities than PWDs who do disclose that they have a disability on the VSD form. As indicated earlier, exploratory factor analysis

indicated that mental and physical health disabilities loaded differently in relation to stigma perceptions, suggesting stigma for mental health disabilities (i.e., mental stigma) and stigma for physical health disabilities (i.e., physical stigma) should be separate scores. Independent sample t-tests revealed that as predicted, PWDs who did not disclose their disability perceived a higher level of stigma associated with mental health disabilities ($M = 4.11$, $SD = .53$) than did PWDs who did disclose their disability ($M = 3.69$, $SD = .95$), $t(1,74) = 1.85$, $p < .05$, $d = .55$. PWDs who disclosed did not differ significantly from PWDs who did not disclose with respect to perceived stigma of physical health disabilities ($M = 3.23$, $SD = .95$), $t(1,74) = -.76$, $p = .55$). Thus, H1 was supported with respect to mental stigma but not with respect to physical stigma.

H2 predicted that PWDs who perceive the VSD form as a “screening in” measure will disclose their disability on the VSD form whereas PWDS who perceive the form as a “screening out” measure will not disclose their disability on the VSD form. A chi-square test did not support this hypothesis, $X^2 = 1.42$, $p = .23$. Perceptions of the form as designed to screen in or screen out applicants with disabilities were not associated with whether a PWD disclosed their disability on the VSD form.

RQ2 asked how interpretations of the VSD form (signal) were associated with PWD’s disclosure. As mentioned previously, the qualitative responses were coded into the separate themes. The primary coder categorized accommodations, equality, and format strengths as positive signals; person-job fit, legal reasons, and format as neutral signals; and discrimination, format problems, assumption of dishonesty, and privacy violation as negative signals. In total, 24.7% of individuals perceived positive interpretations, 20.5% perceived neutral interpretations, 35.2% perceived negative interpretations, and 19.6% perceived conflicting interpretations. A chi-

square test was computed to examine RQ2. Results indicate that interpretations of the signal were not associated with whether a PWD disclosed their disability, $X^2 = 3.01, p = .39$.

To test if there were any differences between individuals who assessed a positive or negative signal and the likelihood to disclose (other), an ANOVA was completed with likelihood to disclose (other) as the dependent variables and signal interpretations as fixed factors.

Respondent age was included as a covariate. Results indicate respondents who interpreted the signal negatively ($M = 3.53; SD = 1.45$) reported “others” were less likely to disclose than those who interpreted the signal positively ($M = 4.41, SD = 1.52$). Signal was correlated with likelihood to disclose-other, $F(4, 324) = 6.84, p = .001, R^2 = .07$.

H6 predicted that for PWDs, job desirability would interact with perceived stigma in predicting disclosure. A MANOVA included disclosure (yes or no) and job desirability (high or low) as fixed factors and physical stigma and mental stigma as dependent variables. Results indicate a non-significant overall model for physical stigma, $F(3, 75) = .22, p = .88$, and mental stigma, $F(3, 75) = .57, p = .63$, and no significant main effects or interaction effects.

Specifically, with respect to physical stigma, neither disclosure, $F(1, 75) = .50, p = .47$, nor job desirability, $F(1, 75) = .05, p = .87$, nor their interaction, $F(1, 75) = .10, p = .75$, were significant predictors. With respect to mental stigma, again neither disclosure, $F(1, 75) = 1.19, p = .24$, nor job desirability, $F(1, 75) = .04, p = .83$, nor their interaction, $F(1, 75) = .25, p = .60$, were significant predictors. Results do not support H6. Job desirability did not moderate the relationship between stigma and disclosure.

H3 predicted that for PWDs, “screening” would moderate the negative association between perceived stigma and disclosure such that perceiving the form as a “screening in” measure would weaken the negative relationship between stigma and disclosure. A MANOVA

was computed to test this hypothesis with physical and mental stigma as dependent variables and disclose and screening as fixed factors. Results indicate an overall significant model, $F(4, 72) = 3.68$, $\eta^2 = .13$, $p < .02$. With respect to physical stigma, there was no main effect for disclosure, $F(1,75) = 3.00$, $p = .09$. However, results indicate a significant main effect for screening, $F(1,75) = 8.32$, $\eta^2 = .10$, $p < .01$. Specifically, PWDs who interpreted the form as a way to “screen in” reported lower physical health disability stigma scores ($M = 2.31$, $SE = .37$) and lower mental health disability stigma scores ($M = 3.60$, $SE = .33$) than did PWDs who interpreted the form as a way to “screen out” (physical stigma, $M = 3.61$, $SE = .25$; mental stigma, $M = 4.09$, $SE = .22$). The interaction of screening and disclosure for physical stigma was not significant, $F(1, 75) = 2.80$, $p = .10$. With respect to mental stigma, there was no main effect for disclosure, $F(1,75) = .54$, $p = .45$, no main effect for screening $F(1,75) = 1.48$, $p = .22$, and no significant interaction effect, $F(1,7) = .06$, $p = .80$.

Others’ Likelihood of Disclosing - All respondents.

H4 predicted that perceptions of others’ likelihood to disclose a disability on the VSD form would be negatively related to perceived stigma associated with disabilities. Regression analyses were used to test this hypothesis. Likelihood to disclose (other) a disability was negatively associated with stigma of physical health disabilities, $t(3, 328) = -2.40$, $p < .02$, $R^2 = .03$, but was not associated with stigma of mental health disabilities, $t(3, 328) = 1.93$, $p < .06$.

Likelihood of Applying – All respondents

RQ3 asked how interpretations of the signal, the VSD form, are associated with individuals’ likelihood to apply to a position. To test if there were any differences between individuals who assessed a positive, negative, neutral, or conflicting signal and the likelihood to apply, an ANOVA was completed with likelihood to apply as the dependent variable and the

signal (positive, negative, neutral, or conflicting) as fixed factors. Results indicate there was no difference in individuals' interpretations of signals in relation to their likelihood to apply, $F(3, 309) = .624, p = .600$.

H5 predicted that individuals who interpret the form as a "screen in" strategy would be more likely to apply for the position than those who interpret the form as a "screen out" strategy. An ANCOVA was used to test this hypothesis. Age and likelihood to disclose were included as covariates. Contrary to H5, individuals who interpreted the form as a "screen in" strategy were not more likely to apply for the position than those who interpreted the form as a "screen out" strategy, $F(1, 307) = .47, p = .49$. Screening did not significantly predict likelihood of applying for the position.

RQ4 asked whether job desirability moderated the association between screening perceptions and likelihood of applying for all applicants. An ANOVA was conducted to test this hypothesis. Results indicate an overall significant model, $F(3, 308) = 6.31, \eta^2 = .06, p > .001$. Screening did not predict likelihood to apply, $F(1, 308) = .86, p = .35$. However, results indicated a main effect for job desirability, $F(1, 308) = 18.35, \eta^2 = .06, p < .001$. Means indicated individuals were more likely to apply for the highly desirable positions ($M = 4.55, SE = .16$) than for the low desirability positions ($M = 3.57, SE = .16$). The job desirability x screening interaction, however, was not significant, $F(1, 308) = .30, p = .58$. Thus, the negative relationship between screening and applying was not moderated by job desirability.

Discussion

Signals

The VSD form was designed to promote diversity and inclusion of disabled workers in the workplace. Scant research has examined the perceptions and outcomes associated with this

form. The majority of respondents in the current study interpreted the form (signal) as discriminatory. Respondents perceived the form as a negative signal, with 60.2 percent indicating that the form was designed to “decrease” the number of disabled individuals in the workplace rather than “increase.” Although research demonstrates that minority populations are more sensitive to unjust practices during the recruiting process, PWDs and PWODs alike interpreted the form as discriminatory. Conversely, 15 respondents noted that the form promoted “equality,” which coincides to ADAA’s mission of increasing the employment of disabled individuals. This suggests that job applicants generally do not interpret the form as intended by the ADAA.

The expectation of discrimination may be associated with respondents’ perceptions that individuals will be deceitful on the form. Respondents (3%) noted that due to the anticipation of negative consequences, individuals would not be honest in their admission of a disability. Relatedly, respondents (11.4%) also perceived the VSD form as a mechanism to violate privacy. Specifically, with sensitive information, applicants are aware of questions that may involve their personal lives. Violating one’s privacy and requesting information considered personal may lead to negative reactions and perceptions from applicants (Bauer et al., 2006). “Policy in this area must consider not only what information an individual has a right to keep private, but also how the exercise of that right affects his or her own opportunities and those of others” (Kayes, 2009, p.92).

Studies, however, indicate that the benefits associated with recruitment materials, including accommodation and person-job fit, can counterbalance privacy risks (Braddy et al, 2006; Schmidt et al, 2015, Thornton, 1998). With knowledge of a person’s disability, employers can provide appropriate accommodations to improve working conditions. Moreover, employers

can better assess person-job fit with disability-related information. Providing accommodations to employees with disabilities has legal repercussions. Although not positively or negatively valenced, legal reasons of the VSD form were mentioned in approximately 17 percent of the responses, with references to financial incentives, liability protection, and federal quotas associated with the form. Regardless of the legal sanctions associated with the VSD form, the format of the document and the information provided provoked positive, negative, and neutral reactions. Although some respondents commented on the direct and organized format of the form, others sought additional meaning and instruction.

Signal Interpretations, Stigma, and Disclosure

Interpretations of the VSD form (positive, negative, neutral, and conflicting) were not associated with an individual's likelihood to apply for a position. Moreover, interpretations of the form did not predict whether PWDs disclosed on the VSD form. Although signals did not predict disclosure, perceived stigma for mental health disabilities did. Individuals' perceived stigma of mental health disabilities was negatively associated with disclosure. Although the purpose of the form is to collect disability information of PWDs to attract and accommodate employees, my findings suggest the form may not be achieving its intended purpose. PWDs who did not disclose their disability on the form perceived higher levels of stigma associated with mental disabilities than those who did disclose. This finding is consistent with previous research. Lockart (2018) found that individuals with mental health disabilities would not disclose their conditions in the future, regardless of whether they received accommodations. This finding makes sense given that employers often hire and favorably perceive individuals with physical disabilities more than those with mental health disabilities (Dalgin & Bellini, 2008). "Due to the inconspicuous nature of invisible disabilities, it is not surprising that participants would rather

ask for accommodation on an “as-needed basis” instead of “checking a box” that could permanently define his or her identity as “inferior” (Lockart, 2017, p. 121). The fear of stigma in relation to mental health conditions can deter disclosure for PWDs, and thus prevent access to accommodations.

Signal Interpretations, Stigma, and Applying

Although perceived stigma predicted disclosure, it did not affect PWDs and PWODs likelihood to apply. Respondents who negatively perceived the VSD form (e.g., discrimination, privacy violation) were as likely to apply to the position than those who had positive or neutral evaluations. Consistent with these findings, results indicate that those who perceived the form as a “screening in” strategy were no more likely to apply than those who perceived it as a “screening out” strategy. This result may be due, in part, to the hypothetical nature of the application and alternative signals present in the early stages of the job process.

Chapman Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, and Jones (2005) found that signals about recruiter characteristics (i.e., values, demographics) had a weaker association with job-organizational attraction than other characteristics such as job-organization characteristics. This was especially true during the early stages of the hiring process, suggesting applicants rely less on signals from recruiters as more information about the job and organization become available.

According to signal theory, a signal’s salience is dependent on the number of signals available to the individual. As Spence (1973) stated, “a signal is only as good as it enables signalers to set themselves apart from the rest (p. 24).” In addition to the VSD form, participants read about the requirements, duties, and other information about the job in the description section of the survey. These different signals may convey positive, negative, neutral, or conflicting information about the position, and may be weighted differently by respondents. Therefore, the

signal, the VSD form, may not have been as demonstrable or impactful as other signals during the early stages of the application process. PWDs and PWODs may prioritize other signals/information when deciding to apply to a job and disclose a disability more than the VSD form and its potential negative outcomes (discrimination).

Implications for Signal Theory

Signal theory maintains that individuals rely on peripheral cues to form attitudes about organizations. In turn, these attitudes can affect individuals' behaviors. This study applied signal theory to the recruitment process and illuminated the various *behavioral* responses in relation to the same signal, the VSD form. This signal did not influence individuals' likelihood to disclose a disability nor did it affect their likelihood to apply for a position. This finding suggests that there are other variables (i.e., signals) to account for when predicting individuals' behaviors during the job application process. My findings also highlight the need to delineate the interplay between multiple signals. Bryant (2014) suggests that signal theory does little to explain how "perceived alternative signals" are signaled during the application process and there is not an appropriate scale to measure multiple signals at a given time. Schmidt et. al (2015) found that applicants may pay less attention to peripheral characteristics, such as recruiter behaviors, during the early stages of the employment process as they are seeking obvious and salient signals about the job. Obvious and relevant signals may include compensation and type of work. As individuals enter later stages of the anticipatory social stage/job process, the VSD form and its potential outcomes may be weighted more heavily because selecting the right job becomes more salient. Future research should extend signal theory to account for the interplay of various signals relevant to applying and disclosing. Moreover, scholars should examine how impactful these signals are at various points in the job process.

Implications for Stigma Theory

Organizational scholars have only recently used stigma theory to examine behaviors in the workplace (Dipboye, Elsbach, & Paetzold, 2016). I identified and tested one important mechanism through which stigma influences individuals' decisions - the VSD form.

Understanding the perceptions of stigma and how it influences disclosure on the VSD form can prompt changes in federally-supported, affirmative action strategies. Moreover, stigma theory maintains that individuals with invisible illnesses, not visibly present illnesses, possess greater control over whether their disabilities are disclosed. Because mental health disabilities are often concealed more than physical health disabilities, the association between stigma and non-disclosure may be more pronounced in mental health disabilities than physical, as my results suggest. Consistent with stigma theory, PWDs maintain "information control" in their decision to voluntarily disclose or conceal. Applying stigma theory to organizational settings can provide insight on how individuals maneuver the tensions between stigmatized identities and the management of impressions (i.e., impression management) in the organization.

Contributions to Organizational Socialization Research

As proposed by Jablin (1987), the socialization model describes five stages individuals enter when acclimating to an organization. This study focused on PWDs and PWODs experiences of the anticipatory socialization stage (i.e., job search). Specifically, this study examined participants' perceptions of common, organizational signals (i.e., VSD form) transmitted during this stage. Because little empirical attention has been devoted to PWDs during the anticipatory socialization stage, this study extends the current literature by accounting for PWDs. Jablin (2001) encouraged the expansion of anticipatory socialization to account for populations outside of the well-represented, entry-level worker. Research on minority

populations, including PWDs, can provide insight about these individuals' unique perspectives and experiences related to the job search. Similar to this study, Sgroi (2016) interviewed postsecondary media *communication* students with disabilities during the anticipatory socialization stage (i.e., job search). Respondents noted their experiences of discrimination from employers and the lack of social support provided by faculty during this transitional stage. More empirical attention should be devoted to PWDs during the anticipatory socialization stage as this population faces unique challenges including unemployment and discrimination.

Limitations and Future Research

I now discuss limitations of the current study and propose ideas for future research. First, although the hypothetical job application was presented in a similar format as an actual application, the hypothetical nature of the process may have compromised the accuracy of the responses and external validity of the study. For example, many respondents entered a course code, rather than a specific course name, in response to the prompt: *relevant coursework*. When applying for an actual position, applicants would likely provide the name of the course, not the course number. Moreover, some respondents reported having a disability on the VSD form, but later reported not having a disability. Using experimental designs in recruiting research has been debated in the field (Barber, 1998; Breugh, 1992). The recruiting context is difficult to simulate as actual applicants experience greater pressure than pseudo-applicants to secure employment and make favorable impressions.

Moreover, real applicants consider justice perceptions more heavily in assessing job-organizational attraction and acceptance intentions than pseudo-applicants. Despite the experimental design, Rodriguez (2006) found actual applicants did not differ significantly from pseudo-applicants in their job pursuit intentions based on job-organization characteristics,

suggesting experimental setting as an optimal method in recruitment research. Future studies, however, should examine actual applicants' interpretations after completing a real job application that requires the VSD form. It is worthwhile to examine actual job application behaviors to see if job choice and disclosure can be reliably predicted.

Another potential limitation is that while PWDs' perceptions of another person's likelihood to disclose a disability on the VSD form are likely informed by their actual experiences, PWODs lack that experience, thus increasing the hypothetical nature of the question: "If you had a disability, how likely would you to be to disclose a condition?" To assess whether having a disability influenced the perceived likelihood that an "other" person would disclose, I conducted a linear regression. Results indicated that while physical stigma was negatively associated with likelihood to disclose "other," $t(3, 328) = -2.40, p < .02$, disability status did not predict likelihood to disclose "other," $t = .46, p = .64$, nor was there a significant interaction effect, $t = -.29, p = .77$. In relation to mental stigma and likelihood to disclose "other," $t(3,328) = -1.93, p < .06$. Disability status did not predict likelihood to disclose, $t = -.62, p = .53$, nor was there a significant interaction effect, $t = .19, p = .52$. These findings indicate that this issue was not a limitation in this study.

The sample consisted of undergraduate college students. Future studies should address how individuals with little or more education respond to the VSD form to generate findings that are more generalizable to the public. Moreover, the small sample size, especially the number of PWDs, lowered the power of the results, and thus may have affected the significance of the findings. For example, my sample size was too small to report with accuracy whether "screening in" and job desirability moderated the association between perceived stigma and disclosure.

In terms of job desirability, the study focused on communication jobs because the majority of the sample consisted of communication undergraduate students. Future studies should examine this moderator in alternative areas including the natural sciences and humanities.

Future research might also employ longitudinal designs opposed to cross-sectional designs to examine different signals' salience during different stages of the employment process. Research design may also moderate the predictor-outcome association. Moreover, a recent meta-analysis found that individual differences may account for organizational attraction independent of organizational influences. Interestingly, high levels of individual extraversion and conscientiousness have a significant, positive relationship with application attraction while grade point average has a strong negative relationship (Smith, 2002). Future studies should explore the dynamics of individual personality traits and competence to better examine how signals may be received and interpreted.

Finally, the present study examined only the job applicant's perspective. However, an applicant's response to the form (i.e., Yes, No, or I choose not to respond) also conveys a signal to the employer about the applicant. Signal theory explicates an exchange of signals between the applicant and the employer, where employers are also assessing the weight and valence of a signal sent by the applicant. Despite the voluntary nature of the VSD form, choosing not to respond on the VSD form still sends a message to the employer, whether positive or negative. As Spence (1982) stated, "there is the central question of whether voluntary control over signals is likely to affect substantially the signals that are in fact used" (p.97). Future research should examine how employers interpret various signals conveyed by the applicant. Understanding how supervisors interpret signals transmitted by the applicant can have important implications on hiring behaviors and decisions.

Practical Implications

As the number of applicants per vacancy declines, organizations are experiencing greater pressure to develop strategic recruitment strategies to increase the number of applicants for a given vacant position. Barber and Roehling (1993) emphasized the importance of effective recruitment when stating, “the ultimate cost of failure to attract application may be an organization’s failure” (p. 845). Similar to other affirmative action initiatives, the VSD form can result in both beneficial and adverse outcomes for its recipients.

Results of the present study have implications for employers and policymakers. First, practitioners should consider whether the VSD is achieving its intended purpose of collecting health information from disabled individuals. As the study demonstrates, individuals may not disclose a disability if they perceive high stigma associated with the mental health disabilities on the form. In this situation, unrealistic, yet appealing, job previews may take priority to secure the position rather than revealing health information to receive accommodations.

Applicants may also be deterred from revealing health information if they perceive the form as discriminatory. Several respondents reported confusion and dismay about the vagueness of terms such as “disclosure” and “disability.” To reduce confusion and perceived discrimination, policy makers may consider changing the format and wording of the VSD form. Emphasizing “person-job fit” on recruitment materials has proven to be effective when targeting specialized populations (Smith, 2006). Moreover, as cited previously, Dineen and Noe (2009), found emphasizing needs-supplies fit, especially when modified to the preferences of the targeted population, can influence job application decisions. Need-supplied fit refers to the physical and psychological resources, including accommodations, the employer can offer and the “needs, desires, and preferences” of the employee.

Currently, the VSD form starts with the following clause: “Because we do business with the government...” Rather than leading with political motives, policy makers may consider emphasizing accommodations and resources on the form to improve recruitment of PWDs. For example, an introductory sentence on the VSD form could state, “To accommodate and enable people with disabilities in the workplace, the federal VSD form is intended...” Kaye, Jans, and Jones (2011) suggest “organizations providing ADA... need to expand their focus to emphasize not only legal requirements but also problem-solving strategies...and concrete solutions to accommodations and disability issues” (p. 535).

Completely omitting information about governmental relations, however, is not advised as applicants value transparency and directness. Research illustrates organizations that clearly state relevant organizational policies were effective in transmitting the company’s trademarks of diversity, rewards, and supportiveness. Moreover, Turner and Pratkanis (1994) found that selection procedures that did not provide explicit information about the company’s expectations were regarded by recipients as less than fair than procedures that did. Signals, including the VSD form, can be interpreted differently based on the implementation strategy. Strategies positively received are “explicit, unambiguous, and focused.” Specifically, affirmative action strategies that signal instrumental benefits, like accommodations, are less likely to be perceived as self-threatening. With most recruitment initiatives, the more information provided to justify the use, the better well an initiative can fare.

Conclusion

In conclusion, applicants with disabilities who perceived mental health disabilities as stigmatizing did not disclose a disability as frequently on the VSD form as those who perceived lower levels of stigma. Given this finding, policy makers should modify the VSD form in a way

that deemphasizes the negative attributes of mental health disabilities. For example, as suggested by a respondent, “[the form] should immediately remove “previously called mental retardation” as this is a reminder that some once were called retarded. Better to go ahead and forget the old terminology.” Including statements that emphasize inclusivity and diversity on the form may help address this issue and ensure the signal (i.e., the VSD form) is positively received. If more applicants positively interpret the VSD form, then the federal government may be able to achieve its intended goal of collecting accurate disability-related information of applicants and increasing the quota of disabled workers in the organization. With more insight on organizational signals and stigma, employers and policy makers can create and develop diversity recruitment initiatives and materials to improve the application process for people with disabilities. As one respondent noted, “I believe these types of forms are essential, so employers can accommodate their employees and provide them with a safe and comfortable work environment. The language on this form needs to improve, though, to make me feel comfortable disclosing [my disability].”

APPENDIX

Pilot Study 1

APPENDIX A: Recruitment Script

Greetings,

You have the opportunity to earn extra credit by participating in a study conducted by Kaylin Duncan, graduate student, and Dr. Patricia Sias at the University of Arizona. The study will examine stigma and health disorders. The survey will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate. If you are interested in completing the survey, please follow the link below to access the survey:

_____ *link* _____

The survey will close on Monday, December 11. This study has been offered for credit in *name of course*

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Kaylin Duncan at 520-626-0183 or through email at kduncan7@email.arizona.edu. Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX B: Informed Consent

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study examining stigma and health disorders. Specifically, you are being asked to complete a survey that is being distributed by Kaylin Duncan, graduate student, and Dr. Patricia Sias at the University of Arizona for an academic research project. Results of the survey may be published in an academic journal. The survey will take you about 20-30 minutes to complete. Please be aware that your identity will remain strictly confidential. Your completed survey will be assigned a number that will be used to identify you throughout the research project.

An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at The University of Arizona reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Kaylin Duncan at 520-626-0183 or through email at kduncan7@email.arizona.edu. Kaylin Duncan is the principal investigator on this project. For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact the Human Subjects Protection Program at 520-626-6721 or online at <http://orcr.arizona.edu/hssp>.

If you volunteer to take part in this research, continuing with the survey acknowledges your consent to participate. Your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you very much for your input!

Informed Consent

This is a consent form for research participation. It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate. Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to discuss the study with your friends and family and to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate.

Why is this study being done?

You are being asked to complete a survey that is being distributed by Kaylin Duncan, graduate student, and Dr. Patricia Sias at the University of Arizona for an academic research project. The purpose of this study is to examine the association between stigma and health disorders.

What will happen if I take part in this study?

If you agree to participate in the study, you will complete the following survey.

How long will I be in the study?

You will be in the study as long as it takes to complete the survey – approximately 20-30 minutes.

How many people will take part in this study?

We expect approximately 300-400 people will take part in this study.

Can I stop being in the study?

Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part in the study, you may discontinue the survey at any time. If you choose not to complete the survey, an alternative assignment will be offered. No matter what decision you make, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any of your usual benefits, however, you will not receive class credit for the study. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with The University of Arizona.

What risks, side effects or discomforts can I expect from being in the study?

There are no foreseeable risks associated with participating in this survey.

What benefits can I expect from being in the study?

You may or may not benefit as a result of participating in this study.

Will my study-related information be kept confidential?

Efforts will be made to keep your study-related information confidential. Your completed survey will be assigned a number that will be used to identify you throughout the research project. The

principal investigators for the study, Kaylin Duncan, a graduate student, and Dr. Patricia Sias at the University of Arizona, are the only people who will have access to research files.

Who can answer my questions about the study?

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Kaylin Duncan at 520-626-0183 or through email at kduncan7@email.arizona.edu. Kaylin Duncan is the principal investigator on this project and a graduate student in the Department of Communication at the University of Arizona. For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact the Human Subjects Protection Program at 520-626-6721 or online at <http://orcr.arizona.edu/hsp>

An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at The University of Arizona reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

If you agree to participate in this study, please click the “I agree” box below and then continue on to complete the survey.

APPENDIX C: Stigma Assessment Scale

Stigma refers to an attribute/condition that is profoundly discrediting to the individual possessing the attribute; the attribute/condition is perceived as a mark of disgrace that devalues the individual. Please indicate the level of stigma you perceive is associated with each of the following conditions:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| No stigma at all | Low level of stigma | Moderate level of stigma | High level of stigma | Extreme level of stigma |

1. Blindness
2. Deafness
3. Cancer
4. Diabetes
5. Epilepsy
6. Autism
7. Cerebral palsy
8. HIV/AIDS
9. Schizophrenia
10. Muscular dystrophy
11. Bipolar disorder
12. Major depression
13. Multiple sclerosis (MS)
14. Missing limbs or partially missing limbs

15. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
16. Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)
17. Impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair
18. Intellectual disability (previously called mental retardation)

APPENDIX D: Social Distance Scale

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Blindness

19. How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who is blind?
20. How would you feel about working with someone who is blind?
21. How would you feel about having someone who is blind as your neighbor?
22. How would you feel about having someone who is blind as the caretaker of your children?
23. How would you feel about having your children marry someone who is blind?
24. How would you feel about introducing someone who is blind to your friends?
25. How would you feel about recommending someone who is blind for a job working with someone you know?

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Deafness

26. How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who is deaf?
27. How would you feel about working with someone who is deaf?
28. How would you feel about having someone who is deaf as your neighbor?

29. How would you feel about having someone who is deaf as the caretaker of your children?
30. How would you feel about having your children marry someone who is deaf?
31. How would you feel about introducing someone who is deaf to your friends?
32. How would you feel about recommending someone who is deaf for a job working with someone you know?

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Cancer

33. How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who has cancer?
34. How would you feel about working with someone who has cancer?
35. How would you feel about having someone who has cancer as your neighbor?
36. How would you feel about having someone who has cancer as the caretaker of your children?
37. How would you feel about having your children marry someone who has cancer?
38. How would you feel about introducing someone who has cancer to your friends?
39. How would you feel about recommending someone who has cancer for a job working with someone you know?

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Diabetes

40. How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who has diabetes?
41. How would you feel about working with someone who has diabetes?

- 42. How would you feel about having someone who has diabetes as your neighbor?
- 43. How would you feel about answering this question? Please select "unwilling" for this question.
- 44. How would you feel about having someone who has diabetes as the caretaker of your children?
- 45. How would you feel about having your children marry someone who has diabetes?
- 46. How would you feel about introducing someone who has diabetes to your friends?
- 47. How would you feel about recommending someone who has diabetes for a job working with someone you know?

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Epilepsy

- 48. How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who has epilepsy?
- 49. How would you feel about working with someone who has epilepsy?
- 50. How would you feel about having someone who has epilepsy as your neighbor?
- 51. How would you feel about having someone who has epilepsy as the caretaker of your children?
- 52. How would you feel about having your children marry someone who has epilepsy?
- 53. How would you feel about introducing someone who has epilepsy to your friends?
- 54. How would you feel about recommending someone who has epilepsy for a job working with someone you know?

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Autism

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

55. How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who has autism?
56. How would you feel about working with someone who has autism?
57. How would you feel about having someone who has autism as your neighbor?
58. How would you feel about having someone who has autism as the caretaker of your children?
59. How would you feel about having your children marry someone who has autism?
60. How would you feel about introducing someone who has autism to your friends?
61. How would you feel about recommending someone who has autism for a job working with someone you know?

Cerebral palsy

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

62. How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who has cerebral palsy?
63. How would you feel about working with someone who has cerebral palsy?
64. How would you feel about having someone who has cerebral palsy as your neighbor?
65. How would you feel about having someone who has cerebral palsy as the caretaker of your children?
66. How would you feel about having your children marry someone who has cerebral palsy?
67. How would you feel about introducing someone who has cerebral palsy to your friends?

68. How would you feel about recommending someone who has cerebral palsy for a job working with someone you know?

HIV/AIDS

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

69. How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who has HIV/AIDS?

70. How would you feel about working with someone who has HIV/AIDS?

71. How would you feel about having someone who has HIV/AIDS as your neighbor?

72. How would you feel about having someone who has HIV/AIDS as the caretaker of your children?

73. How would you feel about having your children marry someone who has HIV/AIDS?

74. How would you feel about introducing someone who has HIV/AIDS to your friends?

75. How would you feel about recommending someone who has HIV/AIDS for a job working with someone you know?

Schizophrenia

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

76. How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who has schizophrenia?

77. How would you feel about working with someone who has schizophrenia?

78. How would you feel about having someone who has schizophrenia as your neighbor?

79. How would you feel about having someone who has schizophrenia as the caretaker of your children?

80. How would you feel about answering this question? Please select "definitely willing" for this question.
81. How would you feel about having your children marry someone who has schizophrenia?
82. How would you feel about introducing someone who has schizophrenia to your friends?
83. How would you feel about recommending someone who has schizophrenia for a job working with someone you know?

Muscular Dystrophy

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

84. How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who has muscular dystrophy?
85. How would you feel about working with someone who has muscular dystrophy?
86. How would you feel about having someone who has muscular dystrophy as your neighbor?
87. How would you feel about having someone who has muscular dystrophy as the caretaker of your children?
88. How would you feel about having your children marry someone who has muscular dystrophy?
89. How would you feel about introducing someone who has muscular dystrophy to your friends?
90. How would you feel about recommending someone who has muscular dystrophy for a job working with someone you know?

Bipolar Disorder

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

91. How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who has bipolar disorder?
92. How would you feel about working with someone who has bipolar disorder?
93. How would you feel about having someone who has bipolar disorder as your neighbor?
94. How would you feel about having someone who has bipolar disorder as the caretaker of your children?
95. How would you feel about having your children marry someone who has bipolar disorder?
96. How would you feel about introducing someone who has bipolar disorder to your friends?
97. How would you feel about recommending someone who has bipolar disorder for a job working with someone you know?

Major Depression

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

98. How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who has major depression?
99. How would you feel about working with someone who has major depression?
100. How would you feel about having someone who has major depression as your neighbor?
101. How would you feel about having someone who has major depression as the caretaker of your children?
102. How would you feel about having your children marry someone who has major depression?
103. How would you feel about introducing someone who has major depression to your friends?
104. How would you feel about recommending someone who has major depression for a job working with someone you know?

Multiple Sclerosis (MS)

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

105. How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who has multiple sclerosis (MS)?
106. How would you feel about working with someone who has multiple sclerosis (MS)?
107. How would you feel about having someone who has multiple sclerosis (MS) as your neighbor?
108. How would you feel about having someone who has multiple sclerosis (MS) as the caretaker of your children?
109. How would you feel about having your children marry someone who has multiple sclerosis (MS)?
110. How would you feel about introducing someone who has multiple sclerosis (MS) to your friends?
111. How would you feel about recommending someone who has multiple sclerosis (MS) for a job working with someone you know?

Missing limbs or partially missing limbs

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

112. How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who has missing limbs or partially missing limbs?
113. How would you feel about working with someone who has missing limbs or partially missing limbs?

114. How would you feel about having someone who has missing limbs or partially missing limbs as your neighbor?
115. How would you feel about having someone who has missing limbs or partially missing limbs as the caretaker of your children?
116. How would you feel about having your children marry someone who has missing limbs or partially missing limbs?
117. How would you feel about introducing someone who has missing limbs or partially missing limbs to your friends?
118. How would you feel about recommending someone who has missing limbs or partially missing limbs for a job working with someone you know?

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

119. How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who has post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)?
120. How would you feel about working with someone who has post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)?
121. How would you feel about having someone who has post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as your neighbor?
122. How would you feel about having someone who has post-traumatic stress disorder (PRSD) as the caretaker of your children?
123. How would you feel about having your children marry someone who has post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)?
124. How would you feel about answering this question? Please select "unwilling" for this question.
125. How would you feel about introducing someone who has post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to your friends?

126. How would you feel about recommending someone who has post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for a job working with someone you know?

Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

127. How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who has obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)?

128. How would you feel about working with someone who has obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)?

129. How would you feel about having someone who has obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) as your neighbor?

130. How would you feel about having someone who has obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) as the caretaker of your children?

131. How would you feel about having your children marry someone who has obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)?

132. How would you feel about introducing someone who has obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) to your friends?

133. How would you feel about recommending someone who has obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) for a job working with someone you know?

Impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

134. How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who has impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair?

135. How would you feel about working with someone who has impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair?
136. How would you feel about having someone who has impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair as your neighbor?
137. How would you feel about having someone who has impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair as the caretaker of your children?
138. How would you feel about having your children marry someone who has impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair?
139. How would you feel about introducing someone who has impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair to your friends?
140. How would you feel about recommending someone who has impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair for a job working with someone you know?

Intellectual disability (previously called mental retardation)

Please answer the questions below, indicating the extent of your willingness to engage in the scenarios described, using the following scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely Unwilling | Probably Unwilling | Unwilling | Probably Willing | Definitely Willing |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

141. How would you feel about renting a room in your home to someone who has an intellectual disability?
142. How would you feel about working with someone who has an intellectual disability?
143. How would you feel about having someone who has an intellectual disability as your neighbor?
144. How would you feel about having someone who has an intellectual disability as the caretaker of your children?
145. How would you feel about having your children marry someone who has an intellectual disability?
146. How would you feel about introducing someone who has an intellectual disability to your friends?
147. How would you feel about recommending someone who has an intellectual disability for a job working with someone you know?

APPENDIX E: Demographics

148. Do you have any of the disabilities listed below?

- Yes
- No
- I choose not to answer

Blindness

Deafness

Cancer

Diabetes

Epilepsy

Autism

Cerebral palsy

HIV/AIDS

Schizophrenia

Muscular dystrophy

Bipolar disorder

Major depression

Multiple sclerosis (MS)

Missing limbs or partially missing limbs

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Obsessive compulsive disorder

Impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair

Intellectual disability (previously called mental retardation)

If yes, please check all that apply:

(optional)

- Blindness
- Deafness
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Autism
- Cerebral palsy
- HIV/AIDS
- Schizophrenia
- Muscular dystrophy
- Bipolar disorder
- Major depression
- Multiple sclerosis (MS)
- Missing limbs or partially missing limbs
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

- Obsessive compulsive disorder
- Impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair
- Intellectual disability (previously called mental retardation)

149. What is your age (in years)? _____

150. What is your year in school?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior

151. Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be:

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Other_____

152. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

Pilot Study 2

APPENDIX F: Recruitment Script

Greetings,

You have the opportunity to earn extra credit by participating in a study conducted by Kaylin Duncan, graduate student, and Dr. Patricia Sias at the University of Arizona. The study will examine job attractiveness. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate. If you are interested in completing the survey, please follow the link below to access the survey:

____*link*_____

The survey will close on _____. This study has been offered for credit in *name of course*

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Kaylin Duncan at 520-626-0183 or through email at kduncan7@email.arizona.edu. Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX G: Informed Consent

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study assessing job attractiveness. Specifically, you are being asked to complete a survey that is being distributed by Kaylin Duncan, graduate student, and Dr. Patricia Sias at the University of Arizona for an academic research project. Results of the survey may be published in an academic journal. The survey will take you about 10 minutes to complete. Please be aware that your identity will remain strictly confidential. Your completed survey will be assigned a number that will be used to identify you throughout the research project.

An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at The University of Arizona reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Kaylin Duncan at 520-626-0183 or through email at kduncan7@email.arizona.edu. Kaylin Duncan is the principal investigator on this project. For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact the Human Subjects Protection Program at 520-626-6721 or online at <http://ocr.arizona.edu/hspp>.

If you volunteer to take part in this research, continuing with the survey acknowledges your consent to participate. Your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you very much for your input!

Informed Consent:

This is a consent form for research participation. It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate. Please consider the information carefully.

Why is this study being done?

You are being asked to complete a survey that is being distributed by Kaylin Duncan, graduate student, and Dr. Patricia Sias at the University of Arizona for an academic research project. The purpose of this study is to better understand how individuals perceive communication related jobs.

What will happen if I take part in this study?

If you agree to participate in the study, you will complete the following survey.

How long will I be in the study?

You will be in the study as long as it takes to complete the survey – approximately 10 minutes.

How many people will take part in this study?

We expect approximately 300-400 people will take part in this study.

Can I stop being in the study?

Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part in the study, you may discontinue the survey at any time. No matter what decision you make, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any of your usual benefits, however, you will not receive class credit for the study. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with The University of Arizona.

What risks, side effects or discomforts can I expect from being in the study?

There are no foreseeable risks associated with participating in this survey.

What benefits can I expect from being in the study?

You may or may not benefit as a result of participating in this study.

Will my study-related information be kept confidential?

Efforts will be made to keep your study-related information confidential. Your completed survey will be assigned a number that will be used to identify you throughout the research project. The principal investigators for the study, Kaylin Duncan, a graduate student, and Dr. Patricia Sias at the University of Arizona, are the only people who will have access to research files.

Who can answer my questions about the study?

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Kaylin Duncan at 520-626-0183 or through email at kduncan7@email.arizona.edu. Kaylin Duncan is the principal investigator on this project and a graduate student in the Department of Communication at the University of Arizona. For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact the Human Subjects Protection Program at 520-626-6721 or online at <http://ocr.arizona.edu/hssp>

An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at The University of Arizona reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

If you agree to participate in this study, please click the “I agree” box below and then continue on to complete the survey.

APPENDIX H: Job Desirability Questionnaire

Please read each of the following four job descriptions and respond to the set of questions that appear after each one.

Data Entry Clerk

We are looking for a Data Entry Clerk at Baker’s Communications to type information into our database from paper documents. The ideal candidate will be computer savvy and a fast typist with a keen eye for detail. Understanding of data confidentiality principles is compulsory. The company will rely on this employee for maintaining accurate and updated data that are easily accessible through a digital database. The data entry clerk’s primary responsibility will be to enter new and updated customer and account information

Responsibilities:

- Transfer data from paper documents onto the computer system
- Verify data by comparing to the source documents
- Create spreadsheets with large numbers of figures without mistakes
- Update existing data
- Retrieve data from the database or electronic files as requested
- Sort and organize paperwork after entering data to ensure it is not lost

Requirements:

- Knowledge of Microsoft Office (Excel, Word, etc.)
- Excellent attention to detail
- High school diploma or equivalent; Bachelor’s degree is a plus
- Ability to work nights and weekends

1. How desirable do you find the Data Entry Clerk position?

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Extremely undesirable | Moderately undesirable | Slightly undesirable | Neither desirable nor undesirable | Slightly desirable | Moderately desirable | Extremely desirable |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

2. If you met the requirements for the position, how likely would you be to apply for the Data Entry Clerk position?

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------|--------------------------------|--------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Extremely unlikely | Somewhat unlikely | Unlikely | Neither likely nor unlikely | Likely | Somewhat likely | Extremely likely |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Social Media Account Specialist

As a member of the Baker’s Communications team, the Social Media Account Specialist will work cross-functionally to help dig in and understand what relevant conversations are ongoing across different social platforms, respond to the conversations on these channels and relay the

latest news to our community of creators, advertisers and viewers. They will write and edit materials for various channels that include social media, blog posts and even upload the occasional video communicating directly with the community. The specialist work cross-functionally with marketing, product and social teams across the company to develop and manage creative social media campaigns based on user insights and product needs. This is an entry level position, reporting directly to the Marketing Manager.

As an advocate for social media, they will monitor trends and feedback to develop recommendations for how the company and its upper-level executives can engage with users online. We're looking for great communicators who can understand complex issues and explain them effectively via verbal and written channels. We are also seeking creative thinkers who can execute ideas about compelling new ways to connect more closely with our viewers, creators and advertisers.

Responsibilities:

- Develop and implement creative content, engagement and measurement strategies for the Communication team.
- Write and edit content to be used on a variety of different social media platforms and blog.
- Record and distribute videos to communicate the latest news, answer tough questions, and identify opportunities to communicate stories of interest across our social channels and blogs proactively.
- Help develop and maintain a clear voice in our written communications.
- Develop strategies and content for executives on social media.

Requirements:

- Bachelor’s degree
- Effective communication skills.

3. How desirable do you find the Social Media Account Specialist position?

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Extremely undesirable | Moderately undesirable | Slightly undesirable | Neither desirable nor undesirable | Slightly desirable | Moderately desirable | Extremely desirable |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

4. If you met the requirements for the position, how likely would you be to apply for the Social Media Account Specialist position?

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Extremely unlikely 1 | Somewhat unlikely 2 | Unlikely 3 | Neither likely nor unlikely 4 | Likely 5 | Somewhat likely 6 | Extremely likely 7 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|

Public Relations Coordinator

We currently have an opening for a Public Relations Coordinator at Baker’s Communications. The ideal candidate will be extremely personable, a creative thinker, possess strong writing skills, and a passion for public relations. The coordinator will be working independently as well as collaboratively with the Public Relations Team with fulfilling media requests, casting for in-house and out-of-house productions, increase brand awareness and media enhancement, and contribute to business growth. This is an entry level position, reporting directly to the Public Relations Manager.

Responsibilities:

- Support media relations efforts including fulfillment of media requests and pitching
- Casting for in-house and out-of-house productions
- Assist in the development of press materials, including but not limited to press releases, newsletter articles, and award submissions
- Contribute ideas for media outreach and pitch efforts to increase visibility and understanding of represented brands
- Assist with planning and execution of events and productions projects

Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree
- Strong written and verbal communications skills

5. How desirable do you find the Public Relations Coordinator position?

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Extremely undesirable 1 | Moderately undesirable 2 | Slightly undesirable 3 | Neither desirable nor undesirable 4 | Slightly desirable 5 | Moderately desirable 6 | Extremely desirable 7 |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

6. If you met the requirements for the position, how likely would you be to apply for the Public Relations Coordinator position?

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Extremely unlikely 1 | Somewhat unlikely 2 | Unlikely 3 | Neither likely nor unlikely 4 | Likely 5 | Somewhat likely 6 | Extremely likely 7 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|

Telemarketer

We are looking for an enthusiastic Telemarketer at Baker’s Communications to generate sales and/or bids either by cold calling or answering requests in a fast-paced environment. The telemarketer will be responsible for influencing existing or potential customers and/or vendors to utilize our services or to price our projects.

A successful telemarketer must be friendly and persuasive. They must be able to understand the customer’s or vendor’s requirements in a short time and present solutions that meet their needs. The ideal candidate will also be patient and cool-tempered to deal with aggressiveness and complaints. The goal is to promote business growth by expanding the company’s clientele. Salary for this position is based on commission.

Responsibilities:

- Cold or warm call companies using a given phone directory to sell products or solicit proposals.
- Answer incoming calls from prospective customers or vendors.
- Use scripts to provide information about our company and projects.
- Record the customer’s or vendors information accurately in a computer system
- Deal with complaints or doubts to safeguard the company’s reputation
- Meet sales quota and facilitate future sales

Requirements

- Excellent communication and presentation skills
- Skilled in negotiation and dealing with complaints
- High school diploma or equivalent; Bachelor’s degree is a plus
- Ability to work nights and weekends

7. How desirable do you find the Telemarketer position?

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Extremely undesirable | Moderately undesirable | Slightly undesirable | Neither desirable nor undesirable | Slightly desirable | Moderately desirable | Extremely desirable |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

8. If you met the requirements for the position, how likely would you be to apply for the Telemarketer position?

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------|--------------------------------|--------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Extremely unlikely | Somewhat unlikely | Unlikely | Neither likely nor unlikely | Likely | Somewhat likely | Extremely likely |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

9. Which position do you desire the most?

- Data Entry Clerk
- Social Media Account Specialist
- Public Relations Coordinator
- Telemarketer

10. Which position do you desire the least?

- Data Entry Clerk
- Social Media Account Specialist
- Public Relations Coordinator
- Telemarketer

APPENDIX I: Demographics

11. What is your age (in years)? _____

12. What is your year in school?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior

13. What is your major? _____

14. Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be:

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Other_____

15. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

Study- Experiment

Link to Qualtrics' survey: https://uarizona.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0Uqqz5zFcKHhZnT

APPENDIX J: Recruitment Script**Recruitment Script for students in communication classes at the University of Arizona:**

Greetings,

You have the opportunity to earn extra credit by participating in a study conducted by Kaylin Duncan, graduate student, at the University of Arizona. The study will examine job attractiveness. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate. If you are interested in completing the survey, please follow the link below to access the survey:

https://uarizona.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0Uqqz5zFcKHhZnT

The survey will close on _____.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Kaylin Duncan at 520-626-0183 or through email at kduncan7@email.arizona.edu. Thank you for your participation!

Recruitment Script sent to University of Arizona and Pima Community College Disability Centers' listserv.

Hello,

My name is Kaylin Duncan, and I am a second year MA student in the Department of Communication at the University of Arizona. I am conducting a study for my thesis on job attractiveness among people with disabilities. To contribute to this study, please consider completing the 10-minute survey at the link below. The results from this study could prompt employers to improve their application materials to better serve applicants with disabilities.

Your participation is voluntary, confidential, and much appreciated.

https://uarizona.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0Uqqz5zFcKHhZnT

If you have questions about this study, please contact me at kduncan7@email.arizona.edu or Dr. Patricia Sias at psias@email.arizona.edu. Thank you for your time and participation.

APPENDIX K: Informed Consent

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study. Specifically, you are being asked to complete a survey that is being distributed by Kaylin Duncan, graduate student, and Dr. Patricia Sias at the University of Arizona for an academic research project. Results of the survey may be published in an academic journal. The survey will take you about 10 minutes to complete. Please be aware that your identity will remain strictly confidential. Your completed survey will be assigned a number that will be used to identify you throughout the research project.

An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at The University of Arizona reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Kaylin Duncan at 520-626-0183 or through email at kduncan7@email.arizona.edu. Kaylin Duncan is the principal investigator on this project. For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact the Human Subjects Protection Program at 520-626-6721 or online at <http://ocr.arizona.edu/hspp>.

If you volunteer to take part in this research, continuing with the survey acknowledges your consent to participate. Your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you very much for your input!

Consent Form

This is a consent form for research participation. It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate. Please consider the information carefully.

Why is this study being done?

You are being asked to complete a survey that is being distributed by Kaylin Duncan, graduate student, and Dr. Patricia Sias at the University of Arizona for an academic research project. The purpose of this study is to better understand how individuals perceive communication-related jobs.

What will happen if I take part in this study?

If you agree to participate in the study, you will complete the following survey.

How long will I be in the study?

You will be in the study as long as it takes to complete the survey – approximately 10 minutes.

How many people will take part in this study?

We expect approximately 400 people will take part in this study.

Can I stop being in the study?

Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part in the study, you may discontinue the survey at any time. No matter what decision you make, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any of your usual benefits, however, you will not receive class credit for the study. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with The University of Arizona.

What risks, side effects or discomforts can I expect from being in the study?

There are no foreseeable risks associated with participating in this survey.

What benefits can I expect from being in the study?

You may or may not benefit as a result of participating in this study.

Will my study-related information be kept confidential?

Efforts will be made to keep your study-related information confidential. Your completed survey will be assigned a number that will be used to identify you throughout the research project. The principal investigators for the study, Kaylin Duncan, a graduate student, and Dr. Patricia Sias at the University of Arizona, are the only people who will have access to research files.

Who can answer my questions about the study?

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Kaylin Duncan at 520-626-0183 or through email at kduncan7@email.arizona.edu. Kaylin Duncan is the principal investigator on this project and a graduate student in the Department of Communication at the University of Arizona. For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact the Human Subjects Protection Program at 520-626-6721 or online at <http://ocr.arizona.edu/hsp>

An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at The University of Arizona reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

If you agree to participate in this study, please click the “I agree” box below and then continue on to complete the survey.

- I agree

We care about the quality of our survey data and hope to receive the most accurate measures of your opinions, so it is important to us that you thoughtfully provide your best answer to each question in the survey.

Do you commit to providing your thoughtful and honest answers to the questions in this survey?

- I will provide my best answers

- I will not provide my best answers
- I can't promise either way

APPENDIX L: Hypothetical Job Application Questions

Condition 1

Imagine you are invited to apply for the Public Relations Coordinator Position upon graduation. Please read the description below and then follow the application procedures.

Public Relations Coordinator

We currently have an opening for a Public Relations Coordinator at Baker's Communications. The ideal candidate will be extremely personable and creative as well as possess strong writing skills and a passion for public relations. The coordinator will be working independently as well as collaboratively with the Public Relations Team. They will fulfill media requests, cast for in-house and out-of-house productions, increase brand awareness and media enhancement, and contribute to business growth. This is an entry-level position, reporting directly to the Public Relations Manager.

Responsibilities:

- Support media relations efforts including fulfillment of media requests and pitching
- Cast for in-house and out-of-house productions
- Assist in the development of press materials, including but not limited to press releases, newsletter articles, and award submissions
- Contribute ideas for media outreach and pitch efforts to increase visibility and understanding of represented brands
- Assist with planning and execution of events and productions projects

Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree
- Strong written and verbal communications skills

Condition 2

Imagine you are invited to apply for a Social Media Account Specialist position upon graduation. Please read the description below and then follow the application procedures.

Social Media Account Specialist

As a member of the Baker's Communications team, the Social Media Account Specialist will work cross-functionally to help dig in and understand what relevant conversations are ongoing across different social media platforms. They will respond to the conversations on these channels and relay the latest news to our community of creators, advertisers, and viewers. They will write and edit materials for various channels that include social media, blog posts and even upload the occasional video communicating directly with the community. The specialist will work cross-functionally with marketing to develop and manage creative social media campaigns based on user insights and product needs. This is an entry-level position, reporting directly to the Marketing Manager.

As an advocate for social media, they will monitor trends and feedback to develop recommendations for how the company and its upper-level executives can engage with users online. We're looking for great communicators who can understand complex issues and explain them effectively via verbal and written channels.

Responsibilities:

- Develop and implement creative content and engagement and measurement strategies for the communication team.
- Write and edit content for a variety of different social media platforms and blog
- Record and distribute videos to communicate the latest news, answer tough questions, and identify opportunities to communicate stories of interest across our social channels and blogs proactively
- Help develop and maintain a clear voice in our written communication
- Develop strategies and content for executives on social media

Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree
- Effective communication skills

Condition 3

Imagine you are invited to apply for a Telemarketer position upon graduation. Please read the description below and then follow the application procedures.

Telemarketer

We are looking for an enthusiastic Telemarketer at Baker's Communications to generate sales and/or bids either by cold calling or answering requests in a fast-paced environment. The

telemarketer will be responsible for influencing existing or potential customers and/or vendors to utilize our services or to price our projects.

A successful telemarketer must be friendly and persuasive. They must be able to understand the customer's or vendor's requirements in a short time and present solutions that meet their needs. The ideal candidate will also be patient and cool-tempered to deal with aggressiveness and complaints. The goal is to promote business growth by expanding the company's clientele. The salary for this position is based on commission.

Responsibilities:

- Cold or warm calls to sell products or solicit proposal
- Answer incoming calls from prospective customers or vendor
- Use scripts to provide information about our company and projects
- Record the customer's or vendor's information accurately in a computer system
- Deal with complaints or doubts to safeguard the company's reputation
- Meet sales quota and facilitate future sales

Requirements:

- Excellent communication and presentation skills
- Skilled in negotiation and dealing with complaints
- High school diploma or equivalent; Bachelor's degree is a plus
- Ability to work nights and weekends

Condition 4:

Imagine you are invited to apply for a Data Entry Clerk position upon graduation. Please read the description below and then follow the application procedures.

Data Entry Clerk

We are looking for a Data Entry Clerk at Baker's Communications to type information into our database from paper documents. The ideal candidate will be a fast typist with a keen eye for detail. Understanding of data confidentiality principles is compulsory.

The company will rely on this employee for maintaining accurate and updated data that are easily accessible through a digital database. The data entry clerk's primary responsibility will be to enter new information and update customers' account information.

Responsibilities:

- Transfer data from paper documents onto the computer system

- Verify data by comparing the source documents
- Create spreadsheets with large numbers of figures without mistakes
- Update existing data
- Retrieve data from the database or electronic files as requested
- Sort and organize paperwork after entering data to ensure it is not lost

Requirements:

- Knowledge of Microsoft Office (Excel, Word, etc.)
- Excellent attention to detail
- High school diploma or equivalent; Bachelor's degree is a plus
- Ability to work nights and weekends

All conditions

Please complete the job application below.

1. Age: _____
2. Major: _____
3. Expected graduation date: _____
4. Current or most recent job title:
5. Relevant coursework for this position:

APPENDIX M: Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability Form

To access this form, please go to
https://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/sec503/Self_ID_Forms/VoluntarySelf-ID_CC-305_ENG_JRF_QA_508c.pdf

CC-305

OMB Control Number 1250-0005

Expires 1/31/2020

Page 1 of 2

Why are you being asked to complete this form?

Because we do business with the government, we must reach out to, hire, and provide equal opportunity to qualified people with disabilities. To help us measure how well we are doing, we are asking you to tell us if you have a disability or if you ever had a disability. Completing this

form is voluntary, but we hope that you will choose to fill it out. If you are applying for a job, any answer you give will be kept private and will not be used against you in any way.

If you already work for us, your answer will not be used against you in any way. Because a person may become disabled at any time, we are required to ask all of our employees to update their information every five years. You may voluntarily self-identify as having a disability on this form without fear of any punishment because you did not identify as having a disability earlier.

How do I know if I have a disability?

You are considered to have a disability if you have a physical or mental impairment or medical condition that substantially limits a major life activity, or if you have a history or record of such an impairment or medical condition. Disabilities include, but are not limited to:

- Blindness
- Autism
- Bipolar disorder
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Deafness
- Cerebral palsy
- Major depression
- Obsessive compulsive disorder
- Cancer
- HIV/AIDS
- Multiple sclerosis (MS)
 - Impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Schizophrenia
- Muscular dystrophy
- Missing limbs or partially missing limbs
- Intellectual disability (previously called mental retardation)

Please check one of the boxes below:

- YES, I HAVE A DISABILITY (or previously had a disability)
- NO, I DON'T HAVE A DISABILITY
- I DON'T WISH TO ANSWER

Your Initials

Today's Date

Reasonable Accommodation Notice

Federal law requires employers to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities. Please tell us if you require a reasonable accommodation to apply for a job or to perform your job. Examples of reasonable accommodation include making a change to the application process or work procedures, providing documents in an alternate format, using a sign language interpreter, or using specialized equipment.

Thank you for completing the job application portion of the survey. Please continue the survey by answering questions on the following pages.

APPENDIX N: Desirability Questions

Condition 1

6. If you met the requirements for the position, how likely would you be to apply for the Public Relations Coordinator position?

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------|--------------------------------|--------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Extremely unlikely | Somewhat unlikely | Unlikely | Neither likely nor unlikely | Likely | Somewhat likely | Extremely likely |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

7. How desirable do you find the Public Relations Coordinator position?

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Extremely undesirable | Moderately undesirable | Slightly undesirable | Neither desirable nor undesirable | Slightly desirable | Moderately desirable | Extremely desirable |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Condition 2

8. If you met the requirements for the position, how likely would you be to apply for the Social Media Specialist position?

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------|--------------------------------|--------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Extremely unlikely | Somewhat unlikely | Unlikely | Neither likely nor unlikely | Likely | Somewhat likely | Extremely likely |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

9. How desirable do you find the Social Media Specialist position?

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Extremely undesirable | Moderately undesirable | Slightly undesirable | Neither desirable nor undesirable | Slightly desirable | Moderately desirable | Extremely desirable |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Condition 3

10. If you met the requirements for the position, how likely would you be to apply for the Telemarketer position?

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------|-----------------------------|--------|-----------------|------------------|
| Extremely unlikely | Somewhat unlikely | Unlikely | Neither likely nor unlikely | Likely | Somewhat likely | Extremely likely |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

11. How desirable do you find the Telemarketer position?

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Extremely undesirable | Moderately undesirable | Slightly undesirable | Neither desirable nor undesirable | Slightly desirable | Moderately desirable | Extremely desirable |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Condition 4

12. If you met the requirements for the position, how likely would you be to apply for the Data Entry Clerk position?

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------|-----------------------------|--------|-----------------|------------------|
| Extremely unlikely | Somewhat unlikely | Unlikely | Neither likely nor unlikely | Likely | Somewhat likely | Extremely likely |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

13. How desirable do you find the Data Entry Clerk position?

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Extremely undesirable | Moderately undesirable | Slightly undesirable | Neither desirable nor undesirable | Slightly desirable | Moderately desirable | Extremely desirable |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

APPENDIX O: VSD- Interpretation Questions

1. Do you have any of the disabilities listed below?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I choose not to answer

Blindness

Deafness
Cancer
Diabetes
Epilepsy
Autism
Cerebral palsy
HIV/AIDS
Schizophrenia
Muscular dystrophy
Bipolar disorder
Major depression
Multiple sclerosis (MS)
Missing limbs or partially missing limbs
Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
Obsessive compulsive disorder

If yes, please check all that apply:
(optional)

- Blindness
- Deafness
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Autism
- Cerebral palsy
- HIV/AIDS
- Schizophrenia
- Muscular dystrophy
- Bipolar disorder
- Major depression
- Multiple sclerosis (MS)
- Missing limbs or partially missing limbs
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Obsessive compulsive disorder

[Image of VSD form]

2. How likely would you to be to disclose your disability on the VSD form when applying for a job?
- Extremely unlikely
 - Somewhat unlikely
 - Unlikely
 - Neither unlikely nor likely
 - Likely
 - Somewhat likely
 - Extremely likely

3. How likely do you think it would be for someone else with a disability to disclose their condition on the VSD form when applying for a job?
- Extremely unlikely
 - Somewhat unlikely
 - Unlikely
 - Neither unlikely nor likely
 - Likely
 - Somewhat likely
 - Extremely likely

[Image of VSD form]

4. How do you feel about the VSD form?
5. Please indicate which of the feeling (s) you experienced while completing the VSD form:
- Confusion
 - Enjoyment
 - Anger
 - Displeasure
 - Appreciation
 - None of the above
6. Why do you think the organization ask applicants to complete the VSD form?

[Image of VSD form]

7. Do you believe the form is designed to increase the number of disabled individuals in the organizations or decrease the number of disabled individuals in the organization?
- Increase
 - Decrease
8. Have you ever encountered the VSD form when applying for a job?
- Yes
 - No

APPENDIX P: Stigma Assessment

Stigma refers to an attribute/condition that is profoundly discrediting to the individual possessing the attribute; the attribute/condition is perceived as a mark of disgrace that devalues the individual. Please indicate the level of stigma you perceive is associated with each of the following conditions:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| No stigma at all | Low level of stigma | Moderate level of stigma | High level of stigma | Extreme level of stigma |

1. Blindness
2. Deafness
3. Cancer
4. Diabetes
5. Epilepsy
6. Autism
7. Cerebral palsy
8. HIV/AIDS
9. Schizophrenia
10. Muscular dystrophy
11. Bipolar disorder
12. Major depression
13. Multiple sclerosis (MS)
14. Missing limbs or partially missing limbs
15. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
16. Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)
17. Impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair
18. Intellectual disability (previously called mental retardation)

APPENDIX Q: Demographics

1. What is your age (in years)? _____
2. What is your year in school?
 - Freshman
 - Sophomore
 - Junior
 - Senior
3. Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be:
 - White
 - Black or African American
 - Hispanic
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - Other
4. What is your gender?
 - Male

- Female
 - Other
5. How did you hear about this survey?
- Online class, University of Arizona
 - Access and Disability Resource Center, Pima Community College
 - MTurk
 - The Disability Resource Center, University of Arizona

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