**RESEARCH SUMMARY**

# Assessing Disability Inclusion Climate in the Workplace: A Brief Report

## A Quick Look

Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination greatly constrict people with disabilities’ opportunities for employment participation. The profession of rehabilitation counseling has seen an increase in research focusing on the demand-side of employment, or, the employers’ perspectives and roles in positive outcomes for people with disabilities. The aim of this article was to validate the *Abbreviated Disability Inclusion Scale*, which can be completed by managers and employers to get a sense of their organization’s disability inclusion climate, and disability inclusion preparedness.

## Key Findings

* Employment participation rate of people with disabilities is three times lower than those without disabilities.
* Much of these outcomes may be attributed to stigma held by employers and their organizations toward people with disabilities.
* Demand-side employment interventions are being developed and evaluated to help diminish this stigma and optimize employment outcomes for people with disabilities.
* In order to understand the effectiveness of these interventions, there needs to be a standardized, psychometrically validated instrument to compare pre-intervention outcomes, with post-intervention outcomes- which this article aimed to develop and validate.
* The instrument was administered to 138 human resource managers, department managers, and project managers in the Midwest region of the United States to measure their organization’s disability inclusion, and another survey was also administered to assess the employers’ stigmatizing attitudes towards those with disabilities (*The Employers’ Stigmatizing Attitudes toward People with Disabilities Scale).*
* Exploratory factor analysis results indicated a two-factor measurement structure: disability inclusion preparedness (Cronbach’s alpha .72); and disability inclusion climate (Cronbach’s alpha .67). These factors were found to be significantly associated with lower levels of employers’ stigmatizing attitudes toward people with disabilities in the workplace.
* The *Abbreviated Disability Inclusion Scale* is a brief, 6- item questionnaire that can quickly be completed by employers and key hiring decision-makers to gauge their disability inclusion preparedness and general disability inclusion climate, as a means to assess the effectiveness of demand-side interventions aimed at improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

## Putting It Into Practice

* The *Abbreviated Disability Inclusion Scale* can be a useful demand-side employment tool to assess a company’s disability inclusion practice
* Future interventions should be developed to increase businesses awareness and capacity for disability inclusion
* These interventions can include education on topics such as ADA regulations and job accommodations, and disability awareness and sensitivity training.
* The *Abbreviated Disability Inclusion Scale* can be a useful outcome measure in demand-side intervention research to evaluate the efficacy of such interventions in changing employers’ attitudes, hiring, and retention behaviors.

## Learn More

* Data for this study were extracted from the SPR/*n*Ablement Employer Survey database. The sample included 138 human resource managers, department managers, and project managers from employment backgrounds in health-care industries, finance, information technology, manufacturing, and professional/technical. Exploratory factor analysis was used to evaluate the measurement structure of the *Abbreviated Disability Inclusion Scale.*
* Article on demand-side factors related to employment of people with disabilities: Chan, F., Strauser, D., Gervey, R., & Lee, E. J. (2010). Introduction to demand-side factors related to employment of people with disabilities. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation, 20*(4), 407-411.
* More on [exploratory factor analysis from Columbia Public Health](https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/research/population-health-methods/exploratory-factor-analysis)

**Source**

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