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Keywords

disabilities, employment, hospitality industry

Disciplines

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Comments

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Managers' attitudes towards employees with disabilities in the hospitality industry

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Abstract

People with disabilities face many challenges when integrating into the workforce, overcoming co-workers and employers' negative attitudes and perceptions is one such challenge. This study aimed to assess U.S. hotel and restaurant managers' attitudes towards employees with disabilities. Paper questionnaires were mailed to 836 hotel and restaurant managers in a Midwestern state of the United States, 124 were returned for a response rate of 15%. Managers' attitudes about teamwork, costs, training, characteristics, and skills were analyzed. No significant differences were noted in attitudes based on manager's age, gender, or experience with disabled employees. Additional training and education is needed to help increase current and future hotel and restaurant managers' knowledge to promote success in working with people with disabilities. This study found hotel and restaurant managers had positive attitudes toward training and working with people with disabilities therefore, the hospitality industry should be considered an industry with viable employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, the hospitality industry employs about 13,200,000 people, approximately 10% of the total labor force (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). The National Restaurant Association projected that the restaurant industry alone would have additional growth of 1.3 million jobs over the next 10 years (NRA, 2011). People with disabilities are the third largest market segment in the U.S. (U.S. Department of Labor, 2011) and provide a viable labor source for the hospitality industry. According to the most recent available data (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009), it is estimated 10% of the U.S. population, 18-64 years of age, had a disability; about 43 million Americans had one or more physical and/or mental disabilities. Of those who reported a disability, 11.9% reported a condition that affected their ability to find a job or remain in one (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

With the incorporation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 came a change in the way people with disabilities could participate in society and the workforce (Price, Gerber, & Mulligan, 2007). Despite the adoption of the ADA (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007), people with disabilities continued to experience workplace discrimination. In 2009, an amendment was made to the ADA expanding the definition of “disability” in an attempt to include more people, who had not been classified before, as having disabilities thereby providing more opportunities for people with disabilities to assume jobs (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [EEOC], 2008). To assure that the provisions of the amendment are incorporated, it is important that professionals in the hospitality industry look for appropriate ways to integrate people with disabilities into their operations as disabled people are a potential pool of applicants.

Employing people with disabilities appears to offer benefits to both employee and employer; employers diversify the workforce and gain loyal employees while employees have Managers’ attitudes towards employees with disabilities

opportunity for flexible employment. Some hospitality companies are looking for various ways to create a more diverse workforce. Recognizing diversity includes different cultures, races, and genders; as well as differently disabled people. The employment of people with disabilities could be a viable alternative for managers seeking diversification in their workforces.

Research has indicated that, because hotels and restaurants often look for part-time employees, hospitality work schedules facilitate the incorporation of employees with disabilities, providing for an arrangement beneficial for employee and employer. A number of employees with disabilities work late or rotating shifts; however day shift employees and most night shift employees with disabilities receive lower hourly wages than do employees without disabilities (Presser & Altman, 2002).

Human resources managers are challenged to define and understand disabilities (Groschl, 2007; Hignite, 2000). Besides the complexity of understanding disabilities, leaders of qualifying organizations (those with 15 or more employees, state and local governments, employment agencies, and labor unions) need to consider the potential legal implications, potential lack of awareness, and potential limited understanding associated with hiring employees with disabilities as well as the communication challenges between employees with disabilities and employees without disabilities (Groschl; Hignite). With recent changes in the ADA (EEOC, 2008) and consideration for the potential benefits to both employee and employer, the purpose of this study was to assess managers' attitudes towards employees with disabilities in retail foodservices and lodging operations in the United States.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Americans with Disabilities Act and Definition of Disabilities

Through the incorporation of the ADA (U.S. Department of Justice [USDJ], 1990), opportunities expanded for people with disabilities in the United States so they could become

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more active in society; a reduction in the discrimination of people with disabilities was expected.

First, the ADA defines an individual with a disability as someone who:

- “has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
- has record of such an impairment; or
- is regarded as having such an impairment” ([USDJ], 1990, p.7)

Second, consistent with the recent ADA amendment, major life activities include walking, reading, bending, learning, thinking, and communicating (EEOC, 2008). Third, disabilities involving major bodily functions, such as brain, bladder, neurological, circulatory, and respiratory, are recognized in this definition. This three-part definition reflects general types of limitations experienced by people with disabilities. There is no known definitive list of all conditions or diseases that are considered physical or mental impairments; given the variety of possible impairments, this would be difficult. Therefore, this ambiguity, at times, makes it difficult for employers to clearly define and understand disabilities as it relates to their employees. Although this is a legal definition, the complexities in defining people with disabilities (as noted by Groschl, 2004) are not ignored in this research presented. Based on previous work determining how hospitality managers define employees with disabilities, the definition used was one consistent with the legal definition (Paez, 2010).

The ADA, enforced by the U.S. EEOC, states that there should be no job discrimination by covered organizations (EEOC, 1991). The ADA requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities, yet an exception is made when an accommodation would cause an employer undue hardship (EEOC, 2002). The ADA describes a reasonable accommodation as any change or adjustment to a job, the work environment, or the way things usually are done that would allow a person with disabilities to apply for a job,

perform job functions, or enjoy equal access to benefits available to other individuals in the workplace.

Managers in the hospitality industry need to provide reasonable accommodations to disabled applicants and employees. Two illustrations of reasonable accommodations are as follows: 1) an individual with an intellectual disability wishes to apply for a dishwasher job but cannot complete the computerized application therefore an alternative must be offered as long as this does not cause “undue hardship” to the organization 2) an employee is on medication for major depression and the side effects include morning tiredness therefore the employee is often late for her morning shift. In this case, the accommodation may be shift reassignment, as long as it does not cause “undue hardship” to the organization.

Employment of People with Disabilities

The employment rate of people with disabilities remains low despite the adoption of ADA and later amendment. In the United States, of the 43 million people classified as having disabilities, 56% are employed compared to 88% of people without disabilities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). Schur (2002) found that less than 50% of working age people with disabilities in the United States were employed compared with 82% of working age people without disabilities. Employees with disabilities were more likely to work part time, and their hourly and annual incomes were less than that for people without disabilities. Employment was beneficial for people with disabilities as it helped skill development, increased income, decreased social isolation, increased life satisfaction, and increased civic skills (Schur).

Diligent efforts are still needed to decrease the unemployment rate for people with disabilities. Barriers to employment and advancement of people with disabilities have been identified; lack of related work experience was the most frequently cited barrier by both public and private sector employers (Bruyere, 2000). Other identified barriers were: manager’s lack of Managers’ attitudes towards employees with disabilities

knowledge about how to make accommodations, managers and coworkers attitudes/stereotypes, disabled person's lack of required skills/training; and costs associated with training, supervising and making accommodations (Bruyere).

Organizations might unknowingly limit the hiring of people with disabilities because of several challenges they face in understanding legal definitions and implications of hiring them. An improvement in manager education and involvement in training processes, as well as enhanced communication between employees with and those without disabilities, might lead to hiring and better integration of this sector of the population (Groschl, 2007; Vilá, Pallisera, & Fullana, 2007). Additional training, need for retraining, more supervision, and additional costs for accommodations are concerns managers have when working with employees with disabilities.

McCary (2005) found that the perceived costs for making accommodations as well as time-intensive training were major concerns. Discomfort with the process of interviewing people with disabilities, negative attitudes from co-workers, concerns about absenteeism and anticipated low performance levels were additional issues that deterred employers from tapping into the disability community. Researchers have also found that changes in work routines and having different supervisors can affect performance of people with learning disabilities; these are key issues in the hospitality industry (Geng-qing & Qu, 2003; Groschl, 2004; Ruggeri-Stevens & Goodwin, 2007; Stokes, 1990; Unger, 2002).

One of the resources employers could use to increase employment of people with disabilities is through placement specialists; these individuals can help employers find candidates for the job and also guide them through the hiring process; and in this way, overcome some of the challenges expressed by employers in the literature review. Greenwood, Schriener, and Johnson, (1991) studied placement specialists' perceptions regarding concerns employers have about workers with disabilities. The authors found employers were interested in services that

placement specialists could offer, such as disability awareness training for employees (71.6%), help in acquiring special tax incentives and wage subsidies (70.6%), consultation on job modification (63.7%), assistance with employees who become disabled while employed (62.7%), rehabilitation employment specialists knowledgeable about worksite accessibility (58.8%), and advice on architectural barrier removal (49.5%).

Despite the many challenges noted, researchers have identified intangible and tangible benefits of hiring and working with people with disabilities. Coworkers who had the opportunity of working with people with disabilities mentioned contagious excitement about the job as one of the positive experiences when working with people with disabilities (Ruggeri-Stevens & Goodwin, 2007). Some other reported benefits of hiring people with disabilities were: dedication, stability, loyalty, and duty devotion. More tangible benefits to the organization may include state and federal assistance, tax credits, and funds for disability training programs (Geng-qing & Qu, 2003; Ruggeri-Stevens & Goodwin, 2007; Stokes, 1990).

Morgan and Alexander (2005) examined perceptions of employers with and without experience working with people with disabilities. More advantages were identified by employers with experience as compared to those without experience. The most frequently identified advantages were consistent attendance, workforce diversity, long-term employment, and co-worker partnerships.

Strauss, Tobiesen, Cohen, & Schweers (n.d.) in their study in Arizona found employers are analyzing and considering disability in the same context as gender and race, from the perspective of diversity. As stated by the authors, “companies that appreciate the competencies, talents and value individuals with disabilities can bring to the workplace, those which employ promising practices to achieve full inclusion and develop a culture of diversity, position their business at a competitive advantage” (p. 10). Companies in Arizona such as the University of Managers’ attitudes towards employees with disabilities

Arizona, Safeway, and Raytheon Missile Systems, view the employment of people with disabilities as a way to improve and ensure diversity within their organizations.

Attitudes toward People with Disabilities

Discrimination against individuals with disabilities appears to continue as a serious problem despite efforts, legislation, and identified benefits of hiring people with disabilities (Geng-qing & Qu, 2003; Ruggeri-Stevens & Goodwin, 2007; Stokes, 1990). It seems that certain individual characteristics (past working experiences, own disability, frequent exposure, and gender) affect individuals' attitudes toward people with disabilities (Perry, Ivy, Conner, & Shelar, 2008; Unger, 2002) thus potentially leading to decreased discrimination. Employers who had worked in the past with people with disabilities had positive attitudes and were more willing to hire and integrate them into the workforce (Daruwalla & Darcy, 2005; Geng-qing & Qu, 2003; Gilbride, Stensrud, Vandergoot, & Golden, 2003; Unger).

Millington, Rosenthal, and Lott (1997) demonstrated how attitudes towards people with disabilities may influence the selection process. Based on the results of the study, it appeared gender did not have an impact on the employment selection process, but a significant effect for disability status was found, suggesting that disability labels do indeed affect overall evaluations. The authors concluded employers' attitudes are important at all stages of the employment process and these attitudes can have major impact throughout the process thereby potentially resulting in lower employment of disabled individuals.

Some researchers found that, in addition to previous experience with people with disabilities, interaction frequency was also an influential attitudinal factor (Perry et al.). Others found significant differences between attitude scores by gender; females scored higher as compared to males indicating that women had more favorable attitudes toward disabled people than men (Hunt & Hunt, 2004; Perry et al.).

Smith, Webber, Graffam, and Wilson (2004) conducted a study in Australia to examine employer satisfaction with employees with a disability and non-disabled employees. Three work performance variables (speed/rate of work, accuracy/quality of work, and workplace climate) were evaluated. Data from 656 employers, who had employed someone with a disability, were collected; of the respondents, 13.7% were from the hospitality industry. Employers were less satisfied with their employees with disabilities than with other employees. The authors found employers rated employees with a disability lower than employees without a disability on employer satisfaction and on each of the three work performance variables.

Research suggested managers and coworker employees would benefit from incorporating disability employees into their workforce yet noted barriers exist. One of the most significant barriers found were managers attitudes and stereotypes of disabled employees. Employers' attitudes seemed to influence several steps during the hiring process of people with disabilities, starting with the selection process. Therefore, evaluating employers' attitudes towards people with disabilities in the hospitality industry is relevant considering the hospitality industry can offer flexible schedules and part-time jobs. The objective of this study was to assess hotel and restaurant managers' attitudes towards employees with disabilities in the U.S.

METHODOLOGY

A mailed questionnaire was sent to hotel and restaurant managers. Given previous work, the definition of disability used for this questionnaire was that provided by the ADA; this definition was found to be similar to that used by hospitality managers (Paez, 2010). The appropriate University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the research proposal.

Questionnaires

Sample. The target population was managers of restaurants or hotels in a U.S. Midwestern state. Eight-hundred thirty-six operations (444 restaurants and 392 hotels) were sampled; the sample was comprised of all lodging operations listed in the 2009 AAA TourBook[®] and all restaurant operations with membership in the state restaurant association. At the time of the study, there were approximately 5,500 total lodging and restaurant establishments in the state (Iowa Lodging Association, 2009; Iowa Restaurant Association, 2009). In Iowa, of the total civilian noninstitutionalized population ages 16 and older, 15% (415,074) had some kind of disability and 6.3% reported that a disability made it difficult to find a job (State Data Center of Iowa, 2006).

Instrument. A paper questionnaire was developed and pilot tested with educators and foodservice managers ($N = 15$) for content and face validity. Minor revisions were made based on pilot test results and the revised questionnaire was mailed with a self-addressed prepaid business reply label. Following Dillman's (2007) recommendations, after 1 week, a follow-up postcard was sent. A second paper questionnaire was sent 6 weeks after the first contact.

The questionnaire included five sections however only three of those sections will be reported on here. The first section contained questions about managers/supervisors attitudes toward and beliefs about people with disabilities in the workplace. These attitudes/beliefs section questions were adapted, with permission, from the questionnaire with reliable scales (Cronbach's alpha .64 - .87) developed by Geng-qing & Qu (2003). Questions in the attitudes/belief section were answered using a Likert-type scale and corresponding descriptors (SA = *strongly agree*, A = *agree*, N = *neutral*, D = *disagree*, SD = *strongly disagree*). The latter two sections contained demographic questions about the respondent and demographic questions about the organization where he/she worked. Some examples of these demographic questions are as follows: "Do you currently work with disabled employees and if so, indicate how many?", "What is the total

number of disabled employees in your organization?”, “What positions do employees with disabilities hold?”, and “What experiences have you had with people with disabilities?”

Analysis. Questionnaires were coded and the data processed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18.0. Data coding and entry followed the procedures recommended by Dillman (2007). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations, were computed. Exploratory factor analysis, principal axis factoring analysis with varimax rotation, was used to group the items. Because of the limited number of respondents, three groups who had completed the questionnaire (managers/supervisors at hotels, restaurants, and school foodservice) were combined to run the factor analysis; for this manuscript, results from school foodservice managers will not be included. To validate findings from the factor analysis, correlations for each one of the factors in each group (hotels and restaurants) were obtained; significant correlations were an indicator that data from both sectors could be combined. Then, mean scores for each of the factors were calculated by summing the items' means within each factor. Independent sample *t* test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used for comparisons.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Of the 836 questionnaires sent to hotel and restaurant managers in a Midwestern state of the United States, 124 were returned for a response rate of 15%. Sixty-three (51%) were from restaurant managers and 61 (49%) from hotel managers. This response rate is not surprising; a similar response rate (14%) was achieved by Geng-qing and Qu (2003) in their study of foodservice operations. Ravichandran and Arendt (2008) reported response rates in hospitality lodging research ranged from 11% to 93% with the higher response rates achieved through personal connections or contacts with the participants.

Respondents' Profile and Experience with Disabled People

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A majority of the respondents was female (60%) and most were Caucasian (90%) (Table 1). Most of the respondents (56%) had worked over 15 years in the hospitality industry, and 51 (41%) had worked 5 or fewer years for the current organization. Respondents' answers showed most of them (87%) had some type of experience with people with disabilities and almost half of respondents (48%) were currently working with employees with disabilities. The positions most commonly reported to be held by employees with disabilities were housekeeping (44%), dishwasher (33%), and kitchen helper (26%); Geng-qing and Qu (2003) reported that 60% of their respondents had hired persons with disabilities as kitchen helpers.

Attitudes toward Employees with Disabilities

In general, managers had slightly positive perceptions of employees with disabilities with an overall mean rating of 3.26 (scale 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*) on 22 attitudinal statements. For most of the individual statements, managers reported a neutral perception towards employees with disabilities (mean ratings between 3.10 and 3.50; Table 2). Providing training on communication, technical, and social skills to employees with disabilities was reported as important ($M = 4.17$, $M = 3.85$, and $M = 3.80$; respectively). Managers agreed it was costly to give additional training to employees with disabilities and slightly agreed that different training methods would need to be used to train employees with disabilities ($M = 3.67$ and $M = 3.53$, respectively). Special attention needed from supervisor was one of the statements with the lowest mean ($M = 2.85$), suggesting managers were in slight disagreement that workers with disabilities needed more attention, contrary to Geng-qing and Qu's (2003) findings in which restaurant managers reported employees with disabilities needed closer supervision and special attention from coworkers.

Factor analysis was conducted; Bartlett's test of sphericity was used to test for intercorrelation and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was used to

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make sure the factor analysis was appropriate for the data analysis. The chi square was significant at .000, indicating that the empirical correlation matrix was statistically different from the identity matrix. The KMO value was 0.765; being greater than 0.5 indicated factor analysis was suitable for the data (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991).

Four factors with loadings higher than 0.400, representing 44.5% of the explained variance, were extracted (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). Eight statements were discarded due to low loadings or high loadings on more than one factor. Correlations were calculated to ensure there was a significant correlation between the statements within each factor (Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6). Correlations between all statements for Factor 1, 2, and 4 were significant ($p \leq .001$). One statement was discarded from Factor 3 because there was no significant correlation with one or more of the other variables within that factor. The factors were named based on the statements included in each of them.

Factor 1, “Teamwork and Costs,” is constituted of 11 statements related to employees with disability working as part of a team. Two of the statements were related to special attention required by employees with disabilities from their coworkers or supervisors, three were related to the way employees with disabilities relate to other employees, two were associated with difficulty of training employees with disabilities depending on the job or disability, and four were related to the increased cost of training employees with disabilities.

Factor 2, “Training,” included four statements associated with training employees with disabilities. Three items asked about whether the managers used/would use different training methods, topics, or tools for employees with disabilities as compared to those used for employees without disabilities. One statement was related to whether the manager believed that employees with disabilities should be trained differently than employees without disabilities.

Factor 3, named “Characteristics,” included four statements. Statements in this factor reflected some of the positives and negative characteristics of people with disabilities, for example, dependency, loyalty to organization, tardiness for work, and better cooperation from employees with disabilities. Factor 4, labeled “Skills,” consists of three statements. This factor reflects managers’ perceptions of the importance of providing training on communication, technical, and social skills for employees with disabilities.

Attitudes Mean Scores and Demographic Characteristics

Mean scores were computed for each of the four attitudinal factors (Table 2). Reliability estimates for the mean scores ranged from .72 to .92. The mean score for Factor 4, Skills, was the highest of the four factors. Harris and Bonn (2000), in their study with foodservice operations, found that training for communication, technical, and social skills was something in which organizations needed to improve. Bruyere (2000) reported that one of the barriers for employment and advancement of people with disabilities was the lack of skills. No statistically significant difference was found for mean scores of the four factors and experience with people with disabilities. Past research has found significant relationships between prior experiences with people with disabilities and respondents’ attitudes (Daruwalla & Darcy, 2005; Geng-qing & Qu, 2003; Gilbride et al., 2003; Smith, Webber, Graffam, & Wilson 2004; Unger, 2002). No statistically significant differences were found for the mean scores of the four factors based on gender, years working in the hospitality industry, current position, sector of the industry, or current experience with employees with disabilities. Similarly, Geng-qing and Qu (2003) did not find significant differences between attitudes and gender; however they did find significant differences between attitudes and current job position (owner, manager, and supervisor). In their studies, Hunt and Hunt (2004) and Perry et al. (2008) found significant differences between gender and attitudes.

Statistically significant differences ($p \leq .001$) were found between mean scores for Factor 1, Teamwork and Costs, and ethnicity of participants (Caucasian or other ethnicity groups); Caucasians had a mean score of 3.23 (scale: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*), and the non-Caucasian group had a mean score of 2.58. A statistically significant difference ($p \leq .05$) was found between mean scores for Factor 4, Skills, and participant's age and number of years working for the current organization. Qeng-qing and Qu (2003) and Perry et al. (2008) found no significant differences between overall attitudes toward people with disabilities and age in their studies.

Accommodations

Several researchers have reported that one major concern for employers when hiring people with disabilities was the high cost associated with making accommodations (Greenwood, Schriener, & Johnson, 1991; McCary, 2005). In the current study, hotel and restaurant managers agreed that they made or would make accommodations in their operations for people with disabilities. The reported mean was 3.93 (scale: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).

CONCLUSION

Managers' attitudes toward people with disabilities might have an impact on the hiring of these workers. This study examined restaurants and hotels managers' attitudes towards people with disabilities. This work presented potential professional development needs of current managers; additional training and education is likely needed to help increase their knowledge, change their attitudes, and incorporate people with disabilities into their organizations. Individuals with disabilities may have difficulty learning and performing employment skills without support or guidance from their supervisors, coworkers, or coaches; managers' attitudes

have an impact on the support or guidance of people with disabilities. Employers want people who have communication, social, and technical skills. The attitudinal factor with the highest mean score was the one that included items related to the importance of communication, social, and technical skills. This is something to consider as past research (Bruyere, 2000) reported these might represent barriers for employing people with disabilities. Developing and carrying out training for people with disabilities on communication, social, and technical skills is an important consideration. Likewise, training coworkers about disability awareness can improve coworker comfort level and affect coworker's attitudes towards disabled employees resulting in better overall teamwork.

The study supported previous research (Geng-qing & Qu, 2003) regarding the relationship between employers' attitudes and demographic characteristics. Age and years working for the current organization had a positive effect on attitudes about the importance of providing skills for employees with disabilities. Also, a relationship was found between being Caucasian and attitudes toward people with disabilities working as part of a team. However, no differences in employers' attitudes was found for gender, years working in the hospitality industry, job position, sector of the industry, or current experience with employees with disabilities. Other studies have shown relationships between gender and attitudes toward people with disabilities (Hunt & Hunt, 2004; Perry et al., 2008). Previous research has highlighted the positive effect of past experience on attitudes toward people with disabilities and how this affected employers' willingness to hire people with disabilities; in contrast this study did not find that experience with employees with disabilities had an effect on managers' attitudes.

Accommodations should be considered when hiring people with disabilities. The ADA states that an employer should provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities. Respondents to the questionnaire agreed that they had provided or would provide

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reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities if it were necessary. Managers are concerned about the cost associated with accommodations (Geng-qing & Qu, 2003) and might look for inexpensive ways of organizing the duties, work schedule, or the space to accommodate an employee with disabilities.

People with disabilities and placement agencies might consider the hospitality industry as an industry with viable employment opportunities. This study found hotel and restaurant managers in this one state had a somewhat positive attitude toward training and working with people with disabilities. It is important to consider not only challenges but associated benefits (for example, loyalty) of working with people with disabilities. Employees with disabilities might need closer supervision but the investment may be worth it given the potential positive outcomes. Organizations might consider training people with disabilities on specific relevant topics which in turn might help the employee better perform on the job.

As with any study, this study has limitations. Given this study was done with managers in both hotel and restaurant, an argument may be made that organization culture is different between the two thereby affecting managers' attitudes towards employees with disabilities. The study had a low response rate; reasons for this low response rate are unknown but not uncommon and it has been reported that nonresponse may not always generate bias (Groves, 2006). Another potential limitation is that socially desirable responses might have been reported due to the sensitive nature of this topic. Questions to measure socially desirable responses were pilot tested during interviews and respondents voiced concerns about including those on the questionnaire so they were not used.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

All persons with disabilities are different with different skill sets and abilities. The significance of the interview and hiring process for all potential employees, whether disabled or Managers' attitudes towards employees with disabilities

not, is to find the right fit for the organization. This study has implications for stakeholders involved in the hiring, retaining, and training of disabled employees. It is important to recognize that respondents in this study did not have strong favorable attitudes towards working with employees with disabilities. Noting this, stakeholder focus should be twofold. First emphasis needs to be placed on training and educating managers on disabled employees so that managers have appropriate expectations and realistically compare disabled employees to the other employees in the operation. Managers might expect employees to start with certain skills; however, given that most disabled workers lack the prerequisite skills and knowledge, additional initial training may be needed. Second, managers serve as role-models to employees through their verbal and nonverbal communications. A manager's positive or negative attitude toward disabled employees can serve as a role model attitude for employees; whereby the employee takes on the attitude of his/her manager. Helping managers recognize this important aspect of their job may be the key to coworker and related teamwork success.

This research provided baseline data and assessment of managers' attitudes toward employees with disabilities. The hospitality research on disabilities is pithy; likely because it is a sensitive and politically charged area of study. Future research should be conducted with hospitality lodging and foodservice operations from other states and in different hotel and restaurant sectors. In addition, future research should identify managers' perceived benefits and challenges of hiring people with disabilities in the hospitality industry.

All persons with disabilities are different with different skill sets and abilities. The significance of the interview and hiring process for all potential employees, whether disabled or not, is to find the right fit for the organization.

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Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Hotel and Restaurant Managers

Characteristic	Questionnaire (N=124)	
	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	49	40
Female	75	60
Age		
18-35 years old	31	25
36-45 years old	27	22
46-55 years old	36	29
Over 55 years old	30	24
Ethnicity ^a		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	4	3
African American or Black	1	1
Asian or Pacific Islander	6	5
Caucasian	111	90
Hispanic	1	1
Ethnicity Unknown	1	1
Current Position		
Owner	44	36
Manager or Supervisor	80	64
Years Working for Hospitality Industry		
≤1-5 years	14	11
6-10 years	18	14
11- 15 years	23	18
Over 15 years	69	56
Years Working with Current Organization		
≤1-5 years	51	41
6-10 years	20	16
11- 15 years	14	11
Over 15 years	39	32
Experience with Disabled People		
Yes	108	87
No	16	13

Table 2. Hotel and Restaurant Managers Mean Ratings for Factors and Attitudinal Statements about Employees with Disabilities (N=123)

Factor Attitudinal Statements	Mean^a	SD	Alpha^b
Teamwork and costs	3.16	0.59	0.92
I feel it is not too costly to give additional training to EWD. ^c	3.67	0.76	
EWD do not make other employees uncomfortable. ^c	3.48	0.79	
EWD do not increase operational costs. ^c	3.38	0.82	
Supervisors find/would find it hard to get disabled employees to adopt new ways of doing the job. ^c	3.17	0.78	
EWD don't need special attention from coworkers. ^c	3.15	0.79	
Depending on the job, it does not cost/would not cost me more to train EWD. ^c	3.13	0.86	
Depending on the job, EWD are not harder to train than EWOD. ^c	3.05	0.81	
EWD do not work slower than EWOD. ^b	3.02	0.81	
Depending on the disability, it does not cost/would not cost me more to train EWD. ^c	3.02	0.86	
Depending on the disability, EWD are not harder to train than EWOD. ^c	2.90	0.79	
After training, EWD do not need special attention from supervisors. ^c	2.85	0.80	
Training	3.03	0.73	0.73
I do not use/would not use different training methods for EWD. ^c	3.53	0.96	
I do not believe disabled employees need to be trained differently than EWOD. ^c	3.29	0.88	
I train/would train all employees using the same methods whether they are disabled or not. ^c	2.97	1.06	
I do not use/would not use the same training tools for EWD as those without disabilities. ^c	2.83	0.85	
Characteristics	3.10	0.57	0.74
I feel EWD are more dependable than EWOD. ^c	3.15	0.70	
EWD are absent less often than EWOD. ^c	3.12	0.83	
I believe that generally, EWD cooperate better than EWOD. ^c	3.07	0.73	
EWD are more loyal to the organization than EWOD. ^c	3.05	0.80	
Skills	3.94	0.59	0.72
Providing training on communication skills for EWD is important. ^c	4.17	0.67	
Providing training on technical skills for EWD is important. ^c	3.85	0.76	
Providing training on social skills for EWD is important. ^c	3.80	0.77	
Overall Mean	3.26	0.33	

^a Scale for statements: 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neutral; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree.

^b Coefficient alpha reliability estimates

^c EWD=employees with disabilities and EWOD=employees without disabilities

Table 3. Correlations between Statements for Factor 1: Teamwork and Costs

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. EWD do not work slower than EWOD ^a										
2. After training, EWD do not need special attention from supervisors. ^a	.473**									
3. I feel it is not too costly to give additional training to EWD. ^a	.408**	.363**								
4. Depending on the job, EWD are not harder to train than EWOD ^a	.471**	.559**	.424**							
5. Depending on the disability, EWD are not harder to train than EWOD ^a	.464**	.465**	.417**	.743**						
6. EWD do not need special attention from coworkers ^a	.555**	.519**	.412**	.527**	.519**					
7. Supervisors find/would find it hard to get EWD to adopt new ways of doing the job ^a	.473**	.545**	.373**	.536**	.438**	.666**				
8. EWD do not make other employees uncomfortable ^a	.299**	.307**	.374**	.411**	.350**	.483**	.439**			
9. EWD do not increase operational costs ^a	.547**	.385**	.606**	.500**	.493**	.588**	.461**	.607**		
10. Depending on the job, it does not cost/would not cost me more to train EWD ^a	.441**	.400**	.466**	.629**	.546**	.538**	.459**	.498**	.670**	
11. Depending on the disability, it does not cost/would not cost me more to train EWD ^a	.442**	.399**	.484**	.550**	.582**	.463**	.373**	.438**	.643**	.891**

^aEWD=employees with disabilities and EWOD=employees without disabilities

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 4. Correlations between Statements for Factor 2: Training

Statement	1	2	3
1. I train/would train all employees using the same methods whether they are disabled or not			
2. I do not use/would not use the same training tools for EWD as those without disabilities ^a	.498**		
3. I do not believe disabled employees need to be trained differently than EWOD ^a	.476**	.263**	
4. I do not use/would use different training methods for EWD ^a	.454**	.364**	.333**

^aEWD=employees with disabilities and EWOD=employees without disabilities

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5. Correlations between Statements for Factor 3: Characteristics

Statement	1	2	3	4
1. I feel EWD are more dependable than EWOD ^a				
2. EWD are absent less often than EWOD ^a	.632**			
3. I believe that generally, EWD cooperate better than EWOD ^a	.428**	.463**		
4. EWD are more loyal to the organization than EWOD ^a	.235**	.302**	.432**	
5. EWD produce higher quality work than EWOD ^{a,b}	.123	.143	.361	.391**

^aEWD=employees with disabilities and EWOD=employees without disabilities

^bThe shaded statement was deleted because of no significant correlation with one or more other statements

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 6. Correlations between Statements for Factor 4: Skills

Statement	1	2
1. Providing training on technical skills for EWD is important ^a		
2. Providing training on social skills for EWD is important ^a	.383**	
3. Providing training on communication skills for EWD is important ^a	.353**	.619**

^aEWD=employees with disabilities and EWOD=employees without disabilities

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level