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Hiring Managers' Perceptions of Hiring Adults With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Carol L. Price-Guthrie
Walden University

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Carol Price-Guthrie

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Dr. Sarah Matthey, Committee Chairperson,
Human and Social Services Faculty

Dr. Jennifer Weber, Committee Member,
Human and Social Services Faculty

Dr. Shari Jorissen, University Reviewer,
Human and Social Services Faculty

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Walden University
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Abstract

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by

Carol L. Price-Guthrie

MS, Walden, 2016

BS, Tennessee Technological University,1987

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Human and Social Services

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Abstract

Multiple barriers impede individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs) from gaining access to jobs that are competitive and integrated and that offer them a living wage. People with IDDs experience an inability to develop necessary employable skills and may be affected by hiring manager perceptions and lack of awareness of available job opportunities. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore hiring managers' perceptions of hiring individuals with IDDs in competitive integrated employment (CIE) settings in Tennessee. Critical disability theory was used to frame this study. Nine hiring managers in Tennessee who have worked with people with IDDs in CIE settings for at least one year were interviewed to collect data. Saldana's inductive coding process was used for data analysis. Six themes were identified: (a) disability limits types of jobs appropriate, (b) loyal and dedicated, (c) often overlooked for employment, (d) a potential workforce, (e) negatives related to the disability are important to know up front, and (f) training needs are important to know. Hiring managers in favor of hiring people with IDDs considered them good employees but expressed concerns about prehiring and accommodations. The results of this study could have implications for positive social change by leading to modifications in community employment policies and procedures in agencies that support people with IDDs in securing and maintaining meaningful employment.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents who are no longer here: Leonard J. III and Marilyn Friend Price. My dad stayed with me on this journey as long as his health allowed. I wish they could have been here; they would have been so proud. And to my precious dad who is still here with me, James E. Gudger. To my uncles who have loved me unconditionally: Norman, Shelby, and Tony. To my super cool, supportive son, Jonathan C. Guthrie, who is the very joy of our lives, and finally, to the one person who has held me up and stood by me through every single step of this process: my sweet husband James L. Guthrie Jr.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs) should have access to competitive integrated employment (CIE). Integrated jobs are those considered employment options for everyone in various sectors, as opposed to specialized jobs specific to people with IDDs (Blick et al., 2016; Ellenkamp et al., 2016). Specialized jobs for individuals with IDDs foster segregation and a lack of opportunity in the community work sector (Blick et al., 2016). People with IDDs have, historically, had limited access to employment outside of segregated, sheltered workshop settings (Blick et al., 2016). However, individuals with these diagnoses deserve the same access to CIE as those who are not disabled.

People with IDDs can become productive members of their communities when they are able to support themselves financially; there is less dependence on government programs and families for support. In addition, when these individuals become involved in their communities and establish meaningful relationships, they become less isolated and stigmatized, which leads to healthier and more positive mental and physical health (Blick et al., 2016; Ellenkamp et al., 2016). Individuals with IDDs develop self-respect and dignity when they have the same employment opportunities and are treated the same as people who do not have disabilities. This includes having access to work that provides opportunities for self-sufficiency and independence (Ellenkamp et al., 2016). Competitive integrated employment offers wages comparable to those for employees who are not disabled as well as community inclusivity (Blick et al., 2016; Ellenkamp et al., 2016).

Providing these opportunities to people with IDDs not only supports them, but also fosters social change in advancing the rights of these individuals to have fair and competitive wages.

Understanding hiring managers' perceptions in hiring these individuals might offer insight as to the barriers that people with IDDs have in securing community employment. In offering other stakeholders information related to possible hiring manager barriers, more work can be done in progress toward competitive, community employment for people with IDDs. Because people with IDDs have a need to live independent of families and government assistance, they need access to employment that offers competitive wages (Blick et al., 2016; Ellenkamp et al., 2016). In addition, people with IDDs have a need for community inclusion, which could be provided through integrated employment.

In this chapter, I address the introduction, background, problem statement, purpose statement, research question, conceptual framework, definitions, nature of the study, assumptions, delimitations, limitations, and a summary.

Background

There is an extensive history of discussion related to people with IDDs and their lack of access to CIE. The long-time discussion centers around discrimination and violation of rights of those with disabilities and the responsibilities of others to ensure those rights are not violated. In addressing these rights, barriers to accessing employment for these individuals has been a topic of concern and discussion specific to social inclusion for people with disabilities (Blick et al., 2016; Ellenkamp et al., 2016). Social

inclusion was not solely specific to employment but was inclusive of employment, as well as lack of access to public areas, lack of access to mainstream education, and other definitions of inclusion (Simplican et al., 2015). Policies related to inclusion were established to address this area of need.

There is a history and background on policies implemented in attempts to address rights for people with disabilities. In 1971, the Fair Labor Standard Act was amended to provide sheltered workshop opportunities for people with disabilities ("Disability History Timeline," 2002). The Job Accommodation Network was established to educate businesses that hired people with disabilities ("Disability History Timeline," 2002). In 1986, the American Employment Opportunities for Disabled Americans Act was established to ensure that people who chose to work would not be penalized by taking away government assistance, such as social security income ("Disability History Timeline," 2002). Also in 1986, the American Rehabilitation Act Amendments made provisions for supported employment to be considered as a resource for job skills development ("Disability History Timeline," 2002). In 2013, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) rules were amended to allow people with IDDs and other disabilities to be placed in jobs without certification from a medical provider, which was once the requirement (ADA, 2013). The new policy allowed employers to hire disabled people considered suitable for the job without requiring medical certification. In addition, the term *mental retardation* was replaced with the term *intellectual disability*.

Several programs were established to assist individuals with IDDs in securing employment, such as community rehabilitation providers. These programs, inadvertently,

became resources that developed employment supports and services only for people with disabilities (National Disability Rights Network, 2011). The U.S. Department of Labor, under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, allows these community rehabilitation providers to provide employment at minimum wage or less to people with disabilities (National Disability Rights Network, 2011). This includes a substantial number of people with IDDs, which significantly limits employment options for this population (National Disability Rights Network, 2011). Although this government intervention was intended to assist people with IDDs in becoming employed, people with disabilities experienced less access to community jobs as a result.

Employment, or being employed, is a part of life that most individuals choose to carry out daily. However, choice of employment is often not available to people with IDDs. People with IDDs face many challenges as they attempt to secure life-sustainable CIE that most consider an entitlement (Ellenkamp et al., 2016). People with IDDs have been, and continue to be, excluded from employment that offers competitive wages, benefits, and socialization; certain types of employment have not been viable options for this population (Ellenkamp et al., 2016; Scheef et al., 2018). Individuals with IDDs have been offered jobs in workshops that only compensate piece rate pay or in enclaves, which are jobs where people with IDDs work in community jobs in segregated groups (Blick et al., 2016; Ellenkamp et al., 2016). These jobs offer a pay-per-hour rate that is often less than minimum wage (Ellenkamp et al., 2016; Scheef et al., 2018). Not only is the pay substandard, but people are forced to work in segregated settings, removing work-related opportunities for socialization, skill development, and self-pride, which is a benefit of

employment most nondisabled employees enjoy (Blick et al., 2016; Ellenkamp et al., 2016). People with IDDs (despite years of advocacy, legislation, and research) do not experience the freedom of employment choice, often only being considered for noncommunity, segregated, low-paying employment options (Ellenkamp et al., 2016). Although there are people with IDDs who work in community jobs, the numbers remain low (Blick et al., 2016). Access to these jobs for people with IDDs is necessary to ensuring fair work options to accommodate independent living. Therefore, there is more work to be done in understanding barriers related to people with IDDs securing CIE.

Problem Statement

There is a global discussion and movement to ensure that people with disabilities who choose to work, including those with IDDs, have access to jobs equal to jobs held by people who do not have disabilities. Multiple barriers impede individuals with IDDs from gaining access to jobs that are competitive and integrated and offer them a living wage comparable to people who do not have disabilities. Barriers such as the inability to develop necessary employable skills, hiring manager perceptions, and lack of awareness of available job opportunities prevent individuals with IDDs from obtaining employment (Bush & Tassé, 2017; Kocman et al., 2018; Meltzer et al., 2018). Individuals with IDDs encounter barriers that prevent them from obtaining employment that offers self-sustaining incomes for viable lifestyles.

When people without disabilities apply for employment, there is little consideration given to employment setting or compensation. People with IDDs are not afforded the same job opportunities; they are often only considered for jobs within certain

settings, specific to those with IDDs (Carter et al., 2017; van Wingerden & van der Stoep, 2018). Employment for people with IDDs has been, historically, offered in workshops or supported employment enclaves (van Wingerden & van der Stoep, 2018). People who work in these types of employment settings are often paid less than minimum wage, resulting in a substandard income (Carter et al., 2017; van Wingerden & van der Stoep, 2018). Employment workshop-type sites are not only low paying, but they are also segregated and are not designed for skill development necessary for competitive community employment (van Wingerden & van der Stoep, 2018). When in a segregated setting, there is little opportunity for socialization, community interaction, or networking with people other than those who are hired as staff or those who work as medical specialists in the facilities (Bush & Tassé, 2017; van Wingerden & van der Stoep, 2018). People with disabilities need opportunities to live independently as opposed to continued dependence on family and government assistance.

A gap exists in the literature pertaining to hiring managers' perceptions regarding hiring people with IDDs. According to Kocman et al. (2018), scholars have not explored employers' perceptions on hiring people with IDDs. Although studies have been conducted that address some employer perceptions in hiring people with IDDs, further research is needed to fully address the gap in understanding any existing barriers to hiring people with disabilities (Ellenkamp et al., 2016; Scheef et al., 2018). In this study, I aim to address the gap in the literature regarding hiring managers' perceptions of hiring individuals with IDDs in competitive integrated employment (CIE) settings in Tennessee.

The results of this study may provide human services professionals with tools necessary to assist people with IDDs in obtaining and maintaining community employment.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore hiring managers' perceptions of hiring individuals with IDDs in CIE settings in Tennessee. The results of this study provide information for people with IDDs and for those who support them on how to access employment that supports a sustainable lifestyle. By researching hiring managers' perceptions in working with this population, the findings of this study provide information necessary for those responsible for hiring individuals with IDDs. The results of this study might give human services professionals tools necessary to assist hiring managers in hiring and retaining people with IDDs in community employment jobs. As a result of meaningful employment, individuals with IDDs will have the fiscal and social support they need to live independent lives.

Research Question

RQ: What are hiring managers' perceptions of hiring adults with IDDs in CIE in Tennessee?

Conceptual Framework

To understand the social barriers related to CIE for people with IDDs, there is a need to understand how members of society view and respond to this topic. In this study, participants were managers who have a role in hiring people with IDDs. As a conceptual framework for this study, I used critical disability theory (CDT). CDT is a framework proposed by Devlin and Pothier (2005). Devlin and Pothier claimed that people with

disabilities are part of a social construct as opposed to the result of an actual physical or mental disability.

Where various other theorists have defined people with disabilities as continually dependent on others, as misfortunate, or as medically or physically impaired, Devlin and Pothier (2005) suggested that people with disabilities are not defined by these labels. Rather, people with disabilities should be included in all aspects of society with the same rights and privileges as those who are not disabled (Devlin & Pothier, 2005). In this study, I used this theory to understand hiring managers' perceptions about hiring and maintaining people with IDDs as viable permanent employees. This information will inform future hiring practices and training of these individuals for community employment.

Nature of the Study

I used a basic qualitative method for this study. Basic qualitative research allows for adaptation during the research, improving quality data and better understanding of what is being researched (Worthington, 2013). This design allows researchers to identify common or recurrent patterns and/or themes during data collection (Worthington, 2013). I used this design to understand the perceptions of hiring managers who work with and hire the IDD population. I collected data through semistructured face-to-face interviews with hiring managers to answer my research question. I used purposeful sampling to obtain participants for the study. I used social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) to search for managers who hire people with IDDs. From throughout the state of Tennessee, I also gathered a sample of nine participants. I used Saldana's (2012) in

vivo coding process for data analysis for organizing and analyzing the data to determine themes or patterns related to hiring people with IDDs.

Definitions

The following terms are important to this study:

Competitive integrated employment (CIE): Employment that pays minimum wage or higher, with work equal to that performed by people without disabilities (Ellenkamp et al., 2016; Scheef et al., 2018).

Intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs): Disorders that are most often present at birth and affect an individual's physical, intellectual, and/or emotional development (Schalock et al., 2019).

Meaningful employment: Equal employment with competitive wages, benefits, and any needed support to ensure job retention (Rashid et al., 2017).

Segregated employment: Employment settings specific to people with disabilities (Ellenkamp et al., 2016; Scheef et al., 2018).

Assumptions

Assumptions are aspects of the study data assumed reliable or at least reasonable or realistic by a researcher and other researchers who read the study (Fan, 2013; Grant, 2014). For this study, I assumed that the research participants would answer the interview questions openly and honestly. I recognized that those responsible for hiring might be concerned that their responses could be considered insensitive or derogatory due to the population being discussed. I further assumed that the participants would have knowledge of the study topic and would offer candid, positive, and productive information to assist

in fostering research useful to people with IDDs who will benefit from sustainable employment. To alleviate participant concerns and ensure accuracy in shared information, the participants were assured their responses would be kept confidential. Another assumption was that interviewing would be an accurate tool in gathering needed information to inform data collection for this study. Interview questions were used in gathering information from participants and understanding their perceptions in hiring people with IDDs.

Scope and Delimitations

Delimitations are aspects of a study that clearly define research parameters set by the researcher by identifying certain aspects such as population or assumptions (Queirós et al., 2017). In identifying the scope or parameters, credibility is added to the research (Queirós et al., 2017). In this study, I focused solely on hiring managers of individuals with IDDs. All questions were regarding adult people with IDDs who have been employed, have an interest in employment, or are currently employed. I focused only on understanding the perceptions of hiring managers to address possible barriers of actual or potential employers. I did not involve or interview people with IDDs to gain their perceptions of barriers of being hired for CIE. No other disability was a focus of this research. I focused only on participants who hire individuals diagnosed with IDDs throughout the state of Tennessee. Setting these parameters excluded those who live outside of Tennessee. Additional factors related to employment for people with IDDs, such as individual skill set/ability or other factors that might affect the decision making in hiring, were not considered in this study.

For this research, CDT was used as the conceptual framework. CDT claims that people with disabilities are the product of a social construct rather than the result of specific disabilities (Devlin & Pothier, 2005). Another theory considered as a conceptual framework for this study was Goffman's (2009) stigma disability theory (SDT). SDT discusses people with disabilities as being different than and less desirable than people without disabilities based on societal standards (Goffman, 2009). SDT theory asserts that disabilities are established by society in that the stigma fosters the disability—the social construct of disadvantages and disapproval (Goffman, 2009). Although SDT is like the CDT in that the disability is considered a social construct relative to challenges and stereotypes, SDT focuses solely on stigma as the cause of disability (Devlin & Pothier, 2005; Goffman, 2009). For this reason, and since CDT is more recent, SDT was not chosen.

Another theory I considered for this research was the social labeling theory, which first originated in 1897 by Durkheim. This theory addresses stigma attached to certain groups of individuals who are considered *social deviants* because of the types of labels established and attached to them by their communities (Durkheim, 1897). I did not choose this theory because it asserts that a person's identity is relative to behavior because of the classification of individuals by society (Durkheim, 1897). This theory was not chosen for my research because the focus was less on IDDs and more on the nature or cause of criminal deviance.

Limitations

If not identified, acknowledged, and addressed, limitations of a study have the potential to skew data, adversely affecting the outcome of the study. The limitations of a study include the method or design that might influence how a researcher might interpret the data, causing the data to be flawed or slanted in any manner (Raskind et al., 2019). For example, using a qualitative method is limited in that words and situations cannot determine if the information being obtained from the participants is factual (Kelle, 2006). A researcher must trust that the information the participants share is true, depending on them to construct their reality as they choose (Kelle, 2006). To mitigate this limitation, participants are continually informed that their information is confidential and that all aspects of the research are being carried out ethically.

Additionally, researcher bias could be considered a limitation to the study because of my familiarity with the topic being studied. I have a long-term career with people with IDDs. My professional and personal biases of having been involved with people with IDDs for many years might have a negative effect on the study. To mitigate this limitation, reflexivity—a researcher's consideration of potential subjectivity based on their own belief system that might have an unintended effect on the study—was considered throughout the research process (Lehnert et al., 2016). To avoid inserting personal biases in this study, I bracketed my preconceived ideas about the topic in a researcher journal to decrease the potential of personal biases becoming a barrier to the research process.

Significance

The purpose of this basic, qualitative study was to explore hiring managers' perceptions about hiring adults with IDDs in CIE settings in Tennessee. Human services professionals who work with and advocate for people with IDDs may use the results of this study to ensure that individuals with IDDs have information that might meet employment requirement needs of prospective hiring managers. In addition, human services professionals might have data to support potential hiring managers in establishing a better understanding of people with IDDs, prompting companies to consider these individuals as mainstream employees. With potential hiring managers' improved understanding of people with IDDs, job opportunities for individuals with IDDs will become the norm as opposed to an anomaly (Meltzer et al., 2018). In completing this study, significant social change may occur when people with IDDs are included in mainstream society and have employment opportunities that are the same as those of people who are not disabled (see Simplican et al., 2015). The inclusion of people with IDDs in mainstream employment may lead to positive social change through inclusion and fairness with respect to employment.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore hiring managers' perceptions of hiring adults with IDDs in CIE in Tennessee. In conducting this research, the goal was to provide information that can be shared and applied to other research relevant to expanding employment options for those with IDDs. In Chapter 1, the topic and its significance were discussed. In addition, the background, problem, purpose, research

question, conceptual framework, and definitions were also reviewed. The assumptions, delimitations, limitations, nature, significance, and summary were also addressed in this chapter. In Chapter 2, I offer a review of the literature relative to this research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The discussion of employment for people with IDDs has spanned several years. What has changed is the discussion around the types of employment available to people with IDDs. When securing employment, people with IDDs are often given choices of jobs that are low paying, segregated, and offer little to no opportunities for job growth or advancement (Blick et al., 2016). These jobs are typically slated only for people with IDDs (Blick et al., 2016). Because of this, people with IDDs often lack the resources needed to sustain independent living, community inclusion, or other benefits associated with CIE, such as developing relationships and self-worth (Blick et al., 2016). In addition, this lack of opportunity often leaves people with IDDs dependent on others for their care. The discussion of employment for people with IDDs is necessary to ensure they are afforded employment that meets their personal needs and employment goals and desires, just as people who are not disabled.

In this section of the study, I reviewed and synthesized literature related to CIE for people with IDDs. In the literature review, I explored current, relevant literature to gain knowledge related to employment and people with IDDs. I also explored gaps regarding hiring managers' perceptions in hiring people with IDDs. In addition, I addressed the following themes: IDDs, competitive integrated employment, workshops, meaningful employment, discrimination, ableism, inclusion, and employers.

Literature Search Strategy

I used scholarly databases available through the Walden University library to find sources for the literature review. I also used Google Scholar search engine to secure information related to the research topic. Scholarly articles were obtained using terminology relative to *employers, intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, competitive integrated employment*, *workshops, competitive employment, meaningful work,* and *disabilities.* The databases used were SAFE Journals, ProQuest, EBSCO, PubMed, PsycINFO, CINAHL, Embase and Web of Science, Academic Microsoft, and Thoreau: Multi-Database Search. The literature reviewed, except for theories, was published within the last 5 years. The literature was used to understand theories and additional information related to the population and topic being studied. I also sought to review prior results related to this topic and to justify the understanding of the perceptions of hiring managers in hiring people with IDDs.

Conceptual Framework

I used CDT as the conceptual framework for this study. CDT is a framework proposed by Devlin and Pothier (2005). Devlin and Pothier (2005) claimed that people with disabilities are part of a social construct as opposed to resulting from actual physical or mental disability. Various other theorists defined people with disabilities as continually dependent on others, misfortunate, or medically or physically impaired. Devlin and Pothier suggested that people with disabilities are not defined by these labels; rather, people with disabilities should be included in all aspects of society with the same rights and privileges as those who are not disabled. People with disabilities should be afforded

the right to community inclusion, such as CIE, classroom inclusivity, and community venue accessibility.

CDT, derived from earlier social models of disability theories, includes multiple disciplines that study the phenomenon of disabilities. Disability, in the framework of CDT, is considered a form of social exclusion (Devlin & Pothier, 2005). The CDT framework describes disability through a societal lens, asserting that disabilities exist because of a lack of community resources and/or opportunities for people with physical and cognitive disabilities (Devlin & Pothier, 2005). CDT also asserts that people with disabilities are limited only by societal structures and can perform in any community setting (Devlin & Pothier, 2005). The parameters set by society on people with disabilities produce barriers that hinder successful, inclusive community living.

Some CDT theorists argue that, as opposed to a condition that should be eradicated, disabilities should be embraced and considered normal. According to Saxton (2018), CDT refers to society's belief that people with disabilities are abnormal. Their disabilities are considered flaws or afflictions, which then define the parameter of how society feels people with disabilities should be able to perform in community settings (Procknow et al., 2017). CDT involves studying societal beliefs and norms related to how people with disabilities are defined by society and how social constructs are established based on society's perceptions (Devlin & Pothier, 2005). People with disabilities should not be considered as different from other members of the population; they are productive members of their communities (Devlin & Pothier, 2005). Being treated differently in the employment sector affects people with IDDs as they, according to CDT, rarely are

considered as worthy of employment positions in the same way that their able-bodied counterparts are (Procknow et al., 2017). Using this theoretical framework to understand how others view people with disabilities, specifically those with IDDs, will be important in understanding hiring managers' perceptions on hiring people with IDDs.

In understanding CDT, ableism must be discussed. Ableism is the view that people with disabilities are unable to carry out basic societal functions (Procknow et al., 2017). People who exhibit characteristics of ableism demonstrate discrimination toward people with disabilities through false assumptions of ability (Procknow et al., 2017). This discrimination toward people with disabilities is most often the source of an imposed disability, rather than the disability-related impairment itself (Procknow et al., 2017). Bogart and Dunn (2019) suggested that ableism causes people with disabilities to experience oppression based on how they are treated by society. This is the result of stereotyping and other forms of discrimination, such as prejudice (Bogart & Dunn, 2019). Because of ableism, people with disabilities are often denied the same opportunities as those without disabilities, which is a form of discrimination.

The discrimination experienced by a disabled person is a direct correlation to the lack of societal response to community social inclusive needs that might foster success. This results in a lack of opportunity and equity, which could be addressed through formal change in social constructs (Saxton, 2018). CDT asserts that people with disabilities and their societal issues are not directly correlated to their impairments or physical afflictions, but rather, are a result of society's response to their physical and cognitive disabilities (Devlin & Pothier, 2005). People with disabilities do not experience setbacks due to their

actual disabilities; they experience setbacks because of how society categorizes and forces these individuals into certain social settings (Butterworth et al., 2017). This limits access, inclusion, and opportunity, which further disables people with disabilities.

Current researchers have used CDT to address concerns with various aspects of disabilities. Hamraie (2020) used CDT as a theoretical framework to address the lack of physical accessibility in community settings as an example of exclusion and lack of opportunity for people with disabilities. Hamraie stated that inaccessibility to public places is an issue that marginalizes people with disabilities, limiting them from reaching their highest potential. Hamraie further argued that the continued lack of physical accessibility in public settings is exclusive in that it does not adhere to the ADA, which mandates community inclusion for all people with disabilities. Little efforts have been made to ensure that reasonable accommodations are made in community settings to ensure inclusivity (Hamraie, 2020). People with disabilities are not given the same opportunities related to community inclusion. People with IDDs are excluded on various community fronts, continually promoting little to no access to community resources, including employment.

Providing opportunities for community education inclusion for people with disabilities helps to ensure their success as active, productive citizens. Peña et al. (2016) used CDT to examine how people with disabilities are viewed and treated by educators in higher learning institutions. Peña et al. argued that the educational success of people with disabilities is critical and must be addressed in a way that effectively accommodates these individuals in their quest for classroom inclusion and being treated equal to their peers.

Educators need to understand the experiences of people with disabilities, and Peña et al. focused on critical disability studies using the philosophy of disabled and nondisabled. Peña et al. (2016) suggested that making assumptions about people's needs with respect to their disability as opposed to understanding their lived experiences and need for inclusion to foster their success is discriminatory. Educators are encouraged not to focus on people's impairments and to move away from regulatory establishments that have historically defined people with disabilities as abnormal (Peña et al., 2016). People with IDDs must not be seen as disabled, but as capable, valuable resources in all sectors of their communities, including the educational system.

I chose the CDT for my study because it is a social model that moves forward the conversation of disability. CDT informs positive movement toward inclusivity of people with disabilities, with critical review and reflexivity (Goodley, 2018). This theory addresses the need for society to view people with disabilities as normal, as opposed to people who have flaws, and it places an emphasis on ability as opposed to disability (Goodley, 2018). CDT also promotes community structural changes to support people with disabilities in meeting their life goals (Goodley, 2018). This is the framework that was needed to address hiring managers' perceptions of people with IDDs.

Literature Review

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

The discussion of this study is focused on perceptions of community managers who are responsible for hiring and working with people with IDDs. Because the focus of the study is directly linked to people with these diagnoses, understanding the definitions

of terminology relative to IDDs is important. Although the term *IDDs* combines the terms *intellectual* and *developmental*, there is a difference in diagnosis of intellectual disability and developmental disability (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013). Intellectual disabilities, such as Fragile X syndrome, Down syndrome, and Prader-Willi syndrome, are classified based on information from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.; APA, 2013). People with intellectual disabilities experience cognitive deficits (APA, 2013). People with an intellectual disability must have an IQ of 70 or less, which is determined by a licensed examiner and is diagnosed prior to the age of 18 (APA, 2013). Intellectual disabilities, formerly referred to as *mental retardation*, are categorized into four levels: (a) mild, (b) moderate, (c) severe, and (d) profound (APA, 2013). People with developmental disabilities might experience both cognitive deficits and limited physical abilities (APA, 2013). The developmental disability diagnosis must also be made during the developmental stage, which is prior to age 22 (APA, 2013). Diagnostic information of people with IDDs is used to determine eligibility for various services and types of supports needed to address their abilities.

Clinicians use various methods of diagnostic criteria for people with IDDs. Schalock et al. (2010) noted that the same information related to diagnostic criteria of IDDs, as did the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.), but further noted there is no cure for these diagnoses and factored in the role of adaptive behavior in determining diagnoses. According to Schalock et al., adaptive behaviors are relative to diagnoses and rehabilitative options for people with IDDs since they are directly linked to their daily living. Also incorporating neurosciences, genetics, and

neuroimaging in addition to traditional diagnosing is a valuable determining factor in identifying IDDs (Harris et al., 2016). Understanding intellectual disability is complicated because of the many factors that play into the actual diagnosis, such as adaptive functioning, environment, and genetics (Schalock et al., 2018). A holistic approach to address these variables in establishing a diagnosis for IDDs is crucial to ensure accurate diagnoses that ultimately direct supports and services (Schalock et al., 2018). The correct supports and services allow people with IDDs to live in a manner they choose.

There is conflicting information as to where adaptive functioning fits in relation to diagnosing IDDs. Tassé et al. (2016) suggested that adaptive testing might not necessarily be causal in the determination of IDDs. Tassé et al. further asserted that simultaneous assessment of both adaptive functioning and IDDs must be considered in arriving at an accurate diagnosis of IDD. Both the intellectual disability and adaptive behavior must be equally considered in determining a valid diagnosis, as opposed to one diagnosis being a result of the other (Tassé et al., 2016). Tassé et al. proposed there may be no causal relationship between an IDD diagnosis and adaptive functioning. Tassé et al. further stated there is no order in diagnosis, meaning that adaptive functioning does not necessarily follow the IDD diagnosis. However, Balboni et al. (2020) suggested that adaptive behavior is a factor in diagnosing IDD. Balboni et al. further indicated that there must be some consideration of possible co-occurring conditions, such as mental health issues, which determine the overall identification the IDD profile. Understanding all

diagnostic components of IDDs allows those who provide supports to have all necessary information to assist the individuals in achieving successful community living.

Competitive Integrated Employment

Inclusion in competitive integrated employment (CIE) is elusive in that person with IDDs secure this type of employment less often than people without IDDs. Businesses hiring people with disabilities dedicated to diversity and inclusion would be the optimal employment resources for those working to develop CIE (McDaniels, 2016). Having businesses that focus on hiring people who match available positions as opposed to focusing solely on hiring based on the disability/diversity would provide positions for people with IDDs that are no different from the those who are nondisabled (McDaniels, 2016). Developing and securing these types of businesses should be the target of employment development systems that support individuals with IDDs in developing long-term CIE.

In discussing CIE, it should be noted that people with IDDs who have a desire for community work, need to be prepared for positions other than entry level work for employment to be considered competitive. According to McDaniels (2016), people with IDDs are routinely placed in positions that require little skill and offer little opportunity for growth and development. McDaniels labeled jobs, such as certain restaurant and yard work positions, as low-skill labor. Although these low-skilled jobs are considered community positions, they are not necessarily competitive with respect to income and benefits in comparison to higher paying jobs with benefits and opportunities for advancement (McDaniels, 2016). McDaniels suggested considering people's personal

work goals as well as the needs of businesses in meeting, at least in part, the definition of CIE. Brown et al. (2016) suggested CIE are important for people with IDDs, especially those exiting from secondary school settings as CIE provide income and social inclusion. Brown et al. focused on people with more severe IDDs and did not shy away from suggesting lesser paying jobs as viable, acceptable employment resources to ensure these individuals had opportunities to become employed in CIE. Brown et al. also noted restaurant work, specifically, as an acceptable work option for individuals with IDDs. Brown et al. suggested matching people with places of businesses, but suggested businesses needed to accommodate and adapt to the people' needs, as opposed to people meeting the needs of the businesses. This is a marked contrast to the standard definition of CIE (McDaniels, 2016). Thibedeau Boyd et al. (2016) stated there must be a cultural change in ensuring people with disabilities have access to meaningful work, which leads to meaningful lives. Thibedeau Boyd et al. further stated that there must be a transition from a good to a great mindset when considering employment equity for people with disabilities. People with IDDs should have access to CIE, but there should be more discussion as to the types of employment that meet the criteria of CIE.

People with IDDs have had longstanding issues with securing and maintaining competitive employment. CIE is community work that is not segregated, and it offers competitive, working wages (Wehman et al., 2018). According to Wehman et al. (2018), CIE offers competitive pay, which is at least minimum wage and equitable to the pay of those without disabilities who perform similar duties and have comparable experience and training. In addition, people with disabilities should receive comparable benefits, and

the jobs must be in settings that are not solely for people with disabilities (Wehman et al., 2018). CIE is considered a viable living wage option for people with IDDs (Wehman et al., 2018). Although there has been progress with CIE, people with IDDs securing these jobs still trend low compared to others without IDDs (Wehman et al., 2018). To maintain CIE, Wehman et al. indicated that there are various levels of support effective in assisting people with IDDs in obtaining and maintaining mainstream jobs, including supported employment (SE), customized employment, internships, and postsecondary education. Wehman et al. primarily focused on customized employment through interagency collaboration, suggesting this support as a viable option for securing and maintaining CIE. Carter et al. (2017) suggested that CIE empowers people with IDDs through fostering choice and independence. Carter et al. stated that although there has been some progress in people obtaining CIE, there is more work to be done in preparing individuals for this work, as the percentage of people with disabilities in the workforce is low. Carter et al. suggested focusing on preparing youth for employment while in school. Inge et al. (2016) suggested the use of vocational counseling through vocational rehabilitation (VR) as a viable resource for training and supporting people with disabilities in securing employment. Whether in educational settings, supported employment, or other forms of support systems, skill development is necessary for people with IDDs in securing and maintaining employment.

Hiring Considerations

A consideration in hiring people with IDDs is business incentives. Hiring managers might be more apt to hire people with IDDs if it makes smart business sense to

do so. According to Khayatzadeh-Mahani et al. (2020), there are systemic barriers in hiring people with IDDs. Working collaboratively with stakeholders (i.e., employers, families, and government entities) may provide an employer incentive to hire people with IDDs. The collaboration incentive allows brainstorming to develop programs that would provide financial and other incentives to not only hire, but also maintain employees. Rashid (2020) noted both pros and cons in using incentives to hire people with disabilities. For example, hiring people with IDDs merely because of financial incentives could negate the people' actual marketable abilities (Rashid et al., 2020). This, in turn, might drive the focus of hiring people with IDDs toward financial gain as opposed to recognizing these populations as viable and valuable employees (Rashid et al., 2020). Rashid et al. also suggested smaller businesses would benefit from monetary incentives as they would require fiscal resources to provide hands-on support necessary for people with IDDs when required. Rashid et al. stated that if smaller business were incentivized to hire people with IDDs, they could successfully do so by having the necessary supports, which require additional funding. Rashid et al. further suggested that only employers committed to employment inclusivity should receive incentive-based pay. Both positives and negatives must be considered in determining the best options in alleviating employer concerns, while fostering their willingness to employ and successfully maintain people with IDDs.

Workshops

Workshops are communal settings specific to people with disabilities. They provide jobs that offer piece rate work specific to this population that claim to prepare

individuals for CIE (Cimera, 2016). These workshops are in segregated settings, offer no employment benefits, and compensate with nominal wages (Cimera, 2016). Cimera (2016) considered both types of employment as viable, suitable options for people with IDDs. Cimera also suggested that with proper review of both employment options, an affordable method can be established for supported, community employment. Beyer et al. (2016) also addressed sheltered workshops as a viable option of preparing people with IDDs for competitive employment and suggested that because these workshops are segregated with people with IDDs, training and community work placements could be tailored to meet their needs. In addition, Beyer et al. suggested that the sheltered workshop support could be a form of rehabilitation and education, fostering community workplace success through work skill development. The IDD community still considers sheltered workshops as a useful resource for employment and skill development toward successful community employment.

An operative means for people with IDDs to be included in the mainstream employment system is through transformation of existing systems. New government policies and regulations, and various workforce initiatives such as Tennessee Works have mandated supported workshop providers to transform from segregated into integrated, inclusive work environments through reallocation of provider financial resources (Sulewski et al., 2017). Although providers presented with push back and others have struggled, some have done so successfully and have been noted as leaders in providing CIE for people with IDDs (Sulewski et al., 2017). Although there is a strong push for providers to transition to integrated community work settings, there are individuals who

work in sheltered workshops who consider their work there as a positive experience (Soeker et al., 2018). These individuals have indicated that their ties with their peers and the work they carry out each day satisfies their employment goals (Soeker et al., 2018). Although government entities, advocates, and other supporters feel that CIE is the best option for people with IDDs, there is still some perceived benefit, it seems, in sheltered workshop settings, at least, per individuals who consider these workshops as places of employment (Soeker et al., 2018). Although there is differing opinion with respect to workshops, there is a clear system shift toward CIE.

In working with individuals in becoming marketable, providers of employment services act as major stakeholders in this process. Because of the need for in-house employment transformation and an employment culture shift, supported workshop providers have been mandated through policies to transform from this model to integrated employment providers (Timmons et al., 2019). Providers have been asked to consider employment as the first choice of provided services (Timmons et al., 2019). A mandate such as this forces a cultural shift and would include internal structural changes through well thought out implementation strategies (Timmons et al., 2019). In transforming agencies to Employment First agencies, Harvey et al. (2016) suggested that providers must have clear strategic plans. This would include clear, measurable goals, expectations of all stakeholders, redistribution of resources, procurement of resources, and development of partnerships (Harvey et al., 2016). Transformation of old systems is important in ensuring CIE becomes commonplace.

Meaningful Employment

Being employed and earning an income is an aspiration most work toward from the time potential workers enter secondary education. Ellenkamp et al. (2016) focused on the importance of a meaningful work environment as it relates to the overall self-esteem of people with IDDs and stated that the percentage of people with IDDs in meaningful employment is low. By having employment that provides ample income, people with IDDs can live independent of their families and government assistance. For most, meaningful employment includes a wage that equals experience, includes benefits, and offers socialization opportunities that might also promote personal, meaningful relationships that might not otherwise occur outside of a work setting (Ellenkamp et al., 2016). In addition, adults choose work that allows for promotions to meet future personal and financial goals (Ellenkamp et al., 2016). According to Cassar and Meier (2018), meaningful employment encompasses more than monetary compensation. Cassar and Meier asserted that employees are willing to earn less money in return for doing work that is meaningful. Incentives other than money are typically the basis for meaningful employment, such as jobs that have an established social purpose and other benefits (Cassar & Meier, 2018). Adults, including adults with IDDs, typically seek out work that meets needs outside of the expected paycheck. Van Wingerden and van der Stoep (2018) suggested that performance is directly linked to work that has some manner of importance to employees. Meltzer et al. (2018) found that people with IDDs gravitated toward employment that was considered menial as opposed to considering themselves worthy of life sustaining, meaningful employment. Supporting people with IDDs in

securing employment that provides benefits other than monetary is critical in ensuring a meaningful employment experience.

When individuals apply for jobs, typically, applications are made to jobs that are of interest and meet personal and professional needs. Person-centeredness, as it relates to employment for people with IDDs, simply focuses on planning in a manner that people with IDDs can search for and be hired into jobs they prefer (Blaskowitz et al., 2019). Person centeredness is the foundation of self-determination (Blaskowitz et al., 2019). Knowing a person's preferences, listening to the person, and applying this information relative to a job search is paramount in meeting both the needs of employees and employers (Blaskowitz et al., 2019). Employers are not inclined to hire people who have no desire to be employed at their place of business (Blaskowitz et al., 2019). Bradley et al. (2015) suggested that personal transition planning, which includes planning related to the person's desires, should be carried out in school settings. Preplanning and planning that directly links people' wishes to the development of employment transition plans is considered a positive step toward supporting people with IDDs is securing and maintaining CIE (Bradley et al., 2015). Planning based on the person's wishes and desires is beneficial in securing and maintaining community employment.

Employment Skills

In the IDD field, it is common knowledge that people with IDDs have a desire to work and can work. According to Butterworth et al. (2015), almost 50% of people with IDDs who are unemployed want a job. The barriers to securing work are multifold, such as employer concerns and a lack of work skills (Butterworth et al., 2015). Determining

how to support people with IDDs in becoming employed has been a focal point over the years with IDD supporters and advocates (Butterworth et al., 2015). Nord (2020) suggested that people with IDDs have a desire to work and noted the correct type of support, such as early skill development, as a key element in ensuring people with IDDs secure and maintain employment. Ensuring interested workers have necessary work skills is important in ensuring individuals are placed in and can maintain suitable positions (Nord, 2020). Skill development allows people with IDDs employment opportunities that might otherwise be out of reach.

Training

There have been various suggestions and theories as it relates to understanding barriers related to people with IDDs securing employment. An example is the need for training specific to the person, employer, and people assigned to provide this training, especially for those who are transitioning from school to work (Stevenson et al., 2016). The percentage of people who receive community employment jobs when they transition from school to work is extremely low (Stevenson et al., 2016). Stevenson et al. (2016) suggested collaboration between the education system and adult employment services as necessary in implementing training tools to support individuals in securing and maintaining gainful employment of their choice (Stevenson et al., 2016). It is important that both systems must understand how the other works with respect to training for successful training collaborations (Stevenson et al., 2016). Hall et al. (2018) suggested that best practice in securing CIE for individuals is through personal outcomes focused on the successful transition to work. For the outcomes to be considered focused, people

who are considered a part of the person's support team must make a cultural shift as well as increased competency for all involved. This requires additional, in-depth training not only for the person, but for those who provide supports in assisting the person in meeting their employment goals through the development of marketable skills (Hall et al., 2018). Systemic changes through collaborative training are a needed area of focus for securing CIE.

Beginning early training with people with IDDs is an essential skill development intervention in preparing them for CIE. Migliore et al. (2018) suggested one effective option is supporting transitions from school to work through teaching employment skills to people with IDDs as opposed to solely focusing on education. Providing skill development options in secondary school settings promotes people with IDDs' ability to secure and maintain CIE (Migliore et al., 2018). Having an IDD workforce that has sought out skills also alleviates employer concerns related to people with IDDs being unqualified for available positions (Migliore et al., 2018). In addition to receiving work skills in the classroom, hands-on development of skills is also beneficial to potential employees and employers (Gilson et al., 2017). These skills can be secured through the school system by using peer-to-peer training, technology, videos, and other types of useful tools determined the best types of learning methods for the person preparing for employment (Gilson et al., 2017). Determining the correct supports will ensure optimal employment experiences for involved stakeholders.

In addition to teaching and ensuring people with IDDs have necessary employment skills for CIE, developing a framework for improved preparation of these

individuals as they transition from school to work is necessary. In support of people with IDDs, CIE employment should require targeted focus on systemic barriers by those developing policy and program design as a framework in improving employment opportunities (Butterworth et al., 2017). Establishing mandated avenues that promote the development of important work skills as well as support in securing integrated, sustainable employment is critical for people with IDDs (Butterworth et al., 2017). McLoughlin (2018) suggested that students should be required to obtain educational skill development in ensuring employability skills. For example, the state of Tennessee has an established workforce initiative that collaborates with VR to ensure people with disabilities have access to training in preparation for the competitive workforce (Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, 2020). Employment preparation, especially in school settings, is beneficial in that students who are prepared early for what McLoughlin (2018) coined as "real" employment, will ensure the development of successful employment skill sets for potential employment. Proper preparation will ensure that potential employers will know what to expect of people with IDDs in the work setting, making them more apt to be employed and employers more apt to maintain them as well as hire additional people with IDDs (McLoughlin, 2018). Skill development seems to be a common theme in the success of CIE for people with IDDs.

In ensuring people with IDDs are employable, barriers to securing and maintaining community employment must be considered. McLoughlin (2018) suggested that targeted vocational training in schools should focus on skills, such as communication and problem solving, which are deemed as barriers in successful community

employment. Nord (2020) suggested that training should not only occur in the classroom, but also on the job while students with IDDs are preparing to transition from school to work. Nord further asserted to ensure this population does not remain excluded from the mainstream workforce, hands-on training is critical to ensuring people with IDDs are trained to be marketable for CIE. Butterworth et al. (2017) suggested that training programs for people with IDDs that foster positive employment outcomes are important, but also stated the job search needs to be informed by the people' interests. Butterworth et al. suggested that this process should be carried out by work consultants who help people with IDDs secure employment. This type of program and others that mimic it offer necessary supports and services to address employment barriers for those with IDDs interested in CIE.

People with IDDs enjoy and consider employment as valuable. Understanding how to assist people with IDDs in securing and maintaining CIE is important for positive movement toward ensuring ample opportunities for gainful employment for people with IDDs (Nord, 2016). In working with people with IDDs, there are, like in any other demographic, subgroups (Nord, 2016). Because of the differences in levels of ability and severity, some individuals with IDDs might require more assistance than others in securing employment (Nord, 2016). Hiring managers, because they are the hiring entities, influence this process and must work collaboratively with job coaches and others responsible for employment training of individuals with IDDs in determining the best placement based on the person's needs and level of ability. The job coaches who are responsible for training and other employment related supports, must also ensure people

are properly trained and employers must ensure job coaches and others responsible for training have an idea of what traits and skills they are looking for in employees (Nord, 2016). In doing so, both the person and the employers are satisfied with the employment experience (Nord, 2016). Those who are seeking employment must be able to trust their support team, as well as be assured that the person providing the support knows the person well (Butterworth et al., 2017). The more knowledge of the support team, the better information that is shared with potential employers (Butterworth et al., 2017). When there is a plethora of information about the person's skills and wishes, there is a higher potential of a successful employment placement (Butterworth et al., 2017). Relationship building is key in gathering and sharing the best information in ensuring the person receives the best employment supports possible.

An element of relationship building is compatibility and meeting the goals of the person. People who work to assist people with IDDs in preparing for securing and maintaining jobs must ensure that the people and job are compatible (Akkerman et al., 2018). Job matching or the design of jobs for people with IDDs plays a critical role in ensuring job satisfaction for both the employee and the employer (Akkerman et al., 2018). Akkerman et al. (2018) suggested that those responsible for assisting with employment searches must consider the person's desires, level of ability, age, interests, and personality. In functioning in support roles, systems, such as VR, should consider and understand the needs and wishes of individual people (Nord, 2016). In understanding important variables of the job seeker, such as job preference and ability, it is suggested that employment is more successful (Nord, 2016). Using a person-centered approach in

assisting with securing employment would be beneficial in ensuring that the right job is matched to the right person (Lyons et al., 2018). Lyons et al. (2018) suggested person-centeredness as an essential element in the transition to integrated employment. A holistic approach includes the person's vision and goals and the supporting provider's commitment to changing the way things have always been done in the past (Lyons et al., 2018). Committed providers who consider the totality of a person will be successful in meeting requirements needed for ensuring people are "job ready" and for supporting the person in meeting their employment goals.

Ensuring people are compatible for employment positions is not only accomplished through training, but also through developing jobs specific to that person. Riesen et al. (2019) referred to this process as customized employment (CE), which is a nontraditional hiring method. Knowing a person's skill levels, interests, and type of employment support is used during the discovery process of employment supports by VR and other supported employment providers (Riesen et al., 2019). Once the provider, typically carried out by an employment specialist, has determined the ability of the person, they match the person with a suitable employer. This process allows the person to determine how their job will look, while meeting the needs of the employer (Riesen et al., 2019). For CE to be effective, the discovery process, which is the job search, must be carried out by well-informed providers of employment support services (Riesen et al., 2019). Providers, as well as advocates or supporters, might consider using networking to support CE as a viable means of matching people with jobs (Inge et al., 2016). People who know the person best can network with entities they know and interact with as

potential employers, such as personal bankers or barbers, in negotiating job opportunities for the job seeker (Inge et al., 2016). This type of CE job negotiation search is typically carried out by nonpaid people close to the person seeking employment, such as a parent or friend (Inge et al., 2016). This type of employment development works in favor of people with more severe disabilities, allowing for more personalized job experiences (Inge et al., 2016). CE will ensure that people and potential hiring managers work in tandem to ensure the best possible work experience.

In studying employment of people with IDDs, the way individuals are prepared for work should be a topic for primary focus. People with IDDs seeking and preparing for employment are very often supported in skill development activities by agency employment job coaches or job coaches through VR to assist in meeting their employment goals (Brock et al., 2016). However, according to Brock et al., there is concern that job coaches are not efficiently trained to effectively help people develop needed work skills, leading to fewer opportunities in securing employment for people with IDDs. Brock et al. suggested using various forms of extensive education curricula for job coaches, making them better prepared to act in an employment support role. According to Gilson et al. (2016), although valuable, job coaches hindered productivity because of their unwanted visibility to others at the person's workplace. Per Gilson et al., people with IDDs performed better and were more efficient at their place of employment when job coaches remained discreet and gave directives privately. Not only did the embarrassment of being watched at work by job coaches, people with IDDs felt a sense of exclusion based on job coach social interactions with managers and work peers that

seemed intrusive and exclusive (Gilson et al., 2016). People with IDDs reported the intrusive behaviors of job coaches, although a part of their job coaching role, diminished the integrated setting, making the work site more institutional-like (Gilson et al., 2016). Lessening job coaches' interactions at places of employment increased productivity and improved relationships with work peers (Gilson et al., 2016). Continuing to understand people' wishes will provide insight in fostering better work experiences for people in CIE and will also develop more efficient, effective job coaches.

Vocational Rehabilitation

People with disabilities, including people with IDDs, have access to services that offer support in securing CIE. VR is a government funded employment resource that provides guidance and funding to assist people with any disability in securing or returning to competitive employment (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). People with IDDs are encouraged to work through VR as a primary employment resource (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.) People with IDDs who receive VR supports, however, are not necessarily placed in CIE and do not necessarily maintain their positions, as is the purpose of VR (Dutta et al., 2017). Although VR assists people with disabilities in securing employment and is considered a valuable resource in meeting employment gaps between those with disabilities and those who do not have disabilities, there continues to be fewer employment successes for people with IDDs (Dutta et al., 2017). Iwanaga et al. (2019) suggested that promoting a working alliance between VR and service recipients (people with IDDs) allows for more positive outcomes in securing and maintaining community employment. When people are more engaged in their employment

development process, more positive employment outcomes occur (Iwanaga et al., 2019). VR, although designed to meet the needs of people with IDDs, there is need to look closer as to how to engage people in their employment planning to promote long-term competitive employment success.

Developing Opportunities

Developing opportunities for CIE might come in the form of promoting personal choice. Typically, employment is not considered a choice for people with IDDS, especially those transitioning out of school (Christensen et al., 2017). Supporting people with IDDs in becoming gainfully and successfully employed is often done so through the development of policies and programs related to personal choice (Christensen et al., 2017). Employment-first initiatives, such as New York State Partnerships in Employment Systems Change project (NYS PIE), promotes policy and interventions to bolster positive employment outcomes for youth transitioning from school to work who have a desire to work (Christensen et al., 2017). According to Butterworth et al. (2017), this program ensures that employment is the first choice of services and supports for people with IDDs prior to any other service offered for support with independent living. Similar to the NYS PIE, the Employment and Community First program in Tennessee ensures people with IDDs who have a desire to work are supported in that endeavor, also offering employment as the first choice in services that support how they choose to live their lives (Tennessee State Government, n.d.). Both programs work collaboratively with stakeholders in directing employment interventions, including policies established by the federal Medicaid program under the Home and Community Based program (HCBS) to

ensure people with IDDs have all necessary wraparound services to ensure those who have a desire to work in CIE have an opportunity to do so (Christensen et al., 2017; Tennessee State Government, n.d.). Involvement in these programs promotes their right to earn a living with competitive employment as a viable option.

Advocacy

In considering successful employment outcomes, the support of advocates is important. According to Adams et al. (2019), people with IDDs have experienced a lack of CIE opportunities due to scarcity of wraparound resources, such as transportation and proper employment skills training, and lack of competitive positions, specifically in rural areas. Supporters of people with IDDs have played a significant role in changing the narrative in their rural areas through advocacy and building relationships with major stakeholders (Adams et al., 2019). Regarding the jobs in rural areas, supporters of people with IDDs stated having issues with employer buy-in and with lack of employer understanding as to how to support people with IDDs in the business sector (Adams et al., 2019). Parents and other stakeholders have indicated that without their support of individuals with IDDs, employment in these rural areas would remain dismal (Adams et al., 2019). Adams et al. further suggested these supporters might require support themselves in developing a strong sense of comfort in advocating for family members. Petner-Arrey et al. (2016) suggested that advocates, such as parents, play important roles in the lives of people with IDDs and the development of viable, sustainable community employment. In establishing community networks, such as relationships with employment professionals, it is essential parents and other family members act as

advocates to assist with developing viable CIE in their areas (Petner-Arrey et al., 2016). The National Core Indicators website includes government employment performance measures and information related to ensuring people with IDDs have access to quality supports and offers guidance and information to families and other support people who act as advocates on behalf of people with IDDs (NCI, n.d.). Information, such as what is shared by NCI, will ensure advocates have information in supporting people with IDDs and becoming invaluable in promoting better success with community employment goals.

Employers

Employers, especially hiring managers, play a role in whether people with IDDs secure employment and are successful in community jobs. Kocman et al. (2018) stated that one of the barriers to CIE for people with IDDs is how the employer perceives people with IDDs. Lack of employer understanding of IDDs, based on preconceived notions, is a factor in whether an employer hired and maintained a person with IDDs in community jobs (Kocman et al., 2018). In addition, Kocman et al. asserted that employers' perceptions affected the perception of employees, which resulted in how people with IDDs were treated at work. McIntosh and Harris (2018) also indicated that employers played a role in hiring people with disabilities, specific to the hospitality profession. McIntosh and Harris stated that employers lay the groundwork for the acceptance of people with disabilities in the work setting, determining a person's experience with employment. In addition, McIntosh and Harris suggested that the attitudes of employers have a direct correlation to employment success and have the potential to cause a person to fail if the attitude is negative. Having had experience with

hiring people with disabilities was a determinant in whether employers would hire other people with disabilities (Kocman et al., 2018; McIntosh & Harris, 2018). Understanding the role of employers, specifically hiring managers, will offer more insight into CIE hiring barriers.

CIE employers play a role in employment success of people with IDDs. Understanding the needs of employers is important in preparing people, especially youth in school settings, for certain types of employment (Molfenter et al., 2018). According to Molfenter et al. (2018), employers believe that being able to have potential employees who have been trained in specific skills would be beneficial in hiring and would provide them a comfort level with the individuals they hire. In meeting the needs of employers, students might benefit from being prepared for skills specific to certain companies (Molfenter et al., 2018). In doing so, students would be service-ready for jobs offered by employers, which is considered a type of job matching (Molfenter et al., 2018). This would better prepare job seekers prior to entering the integrated job market (Molfenter et al., 2018). There would be benefit for schools to become employers themselves and act as a model system for future employers (Molfenter et al., 2018). Raynor et al. (2018) suggested that partnering with and including employers in the preparedness process promoted better CIE opportunities for people with IDDs. Collaborating to understand various stakeholder roles will produce more competitive employment opportunities for people with IDDs.

Employers, specifically hiring managers, are an essential element in any employment systems transformation, especially for people with IDDs. According to

Lulinski et al. (2017), employment agency efforts to engage and recognize employers who hire and maintain people with IDDs is an essential component in successful community employment. Agencies that work with employers and others to ensure buy-in of the belief that people with IDDs can and will work is a strategy has proven successful in positive employment outcomes for people with IDDs (Lulinski et al., 2017). CE is a process where employers are brought in as a member of a collaborative team in ensuring people and employers develop jobs specific to a person, based on the employer's needs (Lulinski et al., 2017). Employers have valuable information related to how employment specialists (support systems) should be trained with businesses to better know how to advocate and plan for employment on behalf of potential employees (Riesen et al., 2019). Employers, based on their hiring experiences, can support employment specialists in having more in-depth knowledge of businesses as well as hands-on experience at the actual businesses to become familiarized with skills needed for potential employees (Riesen et al., 2019). A consistent theme has been collaboration between employers and those who assist with job search and development.

Discrimination

Discrimination is a detriment to the personal and professional success of people with IDDs. People with IDDs have typically experienced discrimination in the form of stereotyping, such as being identified as unintelligent, unable to care for themselves, or needy in some form (Pelleboer-Gunnink et al., 2019). This type of stereotyping may transform into stigmatism (Pelleboer-Gunnink et al., 2019). This stigmatism then promotes the development of negative societal perceptions of people with IDDs, leading

to an overt push of people with IDDs away from community inclusion, resulting in lack of opportunity (Pelleboer-Gunnink et al., 2019). Pelleboer-Gunnink et al. (2019) suggested that people with IDDs can change societal mindsets by sharing their own success stories and experiences. Pelleboer-Gunnink et al. further stated that people with IDDs can be supported by their families and other members of their support system in changing stigma mindset through educating society and empowering individuals to self-advocate. In addition, Werner and Abergel (2018) stated that stigma associated with people with disabilities results in some form of discrimination, such as deliberate exclusion or derogatory name calling. Werner and Abergel asserted that the stigma associated with IDDs is related to labeling. How individuals are labeled, such as with the terms like mental retardation or IDDs, has a direct correlation to how they are treated (Werner & Abergel, 2018). In addressing stigmas associated with IDDs, people will be given more opportunities to experience self-actualization and live life as they desire, decreasing opportunities to be discriminated against.

Ableism

Societal perception and influence are determining factors as to how people with IDDs are perceived and received in social arenas, such as in medical settings and employment. In society, people with IDDs are considered dependent on others and unable to meet the requirements necessary to function independently and make decisions the same as those considered normal (Reynolds, 2017). This perception is then imposed upon people with disabilities, who often conform to the established societal perceptions (Reynolds, 2017). Because of this attitude, people with disabilities are guided as to how

they should behave and where/how they fit into certain social settings (Reynolds, 2017). Society, even family members, may deem disabilities as abnormal and that all people with disabilities should be fixed in some way, refusing to focus on the actual abilities these individuals (Friedman & Owen, 2017). Based on their attitudes, members of society may also believe that people with disabilities are defined by certain disability parameters, limiting their actual ability, asserting that people with disabilities must always function in an arena established specifically for them (Friedman & Owen, 2017). There is a need to focus additional attention on dismantling the ablest mindset and its negative effect on people with disabilities.

Ableism is akin to discrimination. It is a systemic issue that is presented in many forms, such as society's refusal to honor the rights of the disabled, refusal of accommodations, and offensive language toward people with disabilities, which are all forms of discrimination (Dirth & Branscombe, 2019). According to Nario-Redmond et al. (2019), people with disabilities are considered inferior to people who are not disabled and are treated as such. This behavior fosters oppression and abuse (Nario-Redmond et al., 2019). Those with physical disabilities (more visual) are more often treated as infants, considered as needy, and experience violations of privacy more often than their nondisabled peers (Nario-Redmond et al., 2019). Considering the people' abilities as opposed to their disabilities would promote more positive change toward eradicating ableism.

Inclusion

Everyone wants to feel included in their communities; people with IDDs are no different. According to Merrells et al. (2018), most people want to be productive members of society and do not want how they live determined by or based on someone else's opinion of how lives should be lived, but rather based on personal preferences and desires. Individuals with IDDs have a desire to be important, productive members of their communities (Merrells et al., 2018). People with IDDs, however, are often excluded from aspects of society because of how they are perceived due to society's lack of awareness of the plight of those with disabilities (Bould et al., 2018). For example, people are not given equal access to employment, housing, physical accessibility, or transportation (Bould et al., 2018). Opportunities are not the same for people with disabilities as those who are considered normal (Bould et al., 2018). Inclusion is ensuring that people with IDDs have the same opportunities as the nondisabled as they work toward living fruitful lives (Bould et al., 2018). Opportunity is the basis for success in the lives of people with IDDs just as it is with other members of society.

Inclusion, for people with IDDs, is not always the case as it relates to employment. In assisting people with IDDs in securing CIE, SE plays an important role in ensuring inclusion, both in employment and in their communities (Timmons et al., 2016). SE provides a more competitive integrated setting than other types of vocational settings, such as sheltered workshops, for people with IDDs (Friedman et al., 2017). According to Timmons et al. (2016), the integrative piece of SE is relative to inclusion because people with IDDs are typically placed in employment settings that are inclusive

of both disabled and nondisabled people. Timmons et al. suggested that SE also offers opportunities for people to develop and maintain meaningful friendships outside of their places of employment, which is also considered community inclusion for people with IDDs. CIE play an essential role, not only in providing financial resources, but also relationships important to well-rounded lives. According to Timmons et al., developing meaningful relationships with people outside of typical segregated work settings is as important a part of community employment as fiscal benefits. According to Friedman et al. SE services funded through the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers, specific to people with IDDs, is an essential conduit to accessing integrated employment. These services are also aimed at community inclusion and are important wraparound supports for people with IDDs to ensure inclusivity for those entering integrated workplaces (Friedman et al., 2017). A concern with HCBS programs, however, was inequitable distribution of fiscal resources which affected consistency in how funding was allocated across all 50 states (Friedman et al., 2017). Accessing services from all available resources is beneficial to people with IDDs in living inclusive lives. Careful consideration and identification of supports and services that best meet the person's needs is essential to successful community inclusion.

Summary

The major focus of this literature review was on CIE, meaningful employment, segregated employment, and hiring manager perceptions of hiring adults with IDDs in CIE. People with IDDs are less likely to be employed in competitive jobs than any other disability group (Hall et al., 2018). Understanding the history and barriers of employment

experiences of people with IDDs, as well as hiring managers' perceptions in hiring, may provide information necessary in fostering access to long-term, community employment for people with IDDs.

Access to CIE is critically important to people with IDDs as the income fosters independence and personal growth. Continued research to address issues and concerns of those who hire and support people with IDDs in maintaining meaningful employment will offer additional knowledge to those who seek to inform social change related to people with IDDs and employment. Based on the literature, there are ongoing barriers to people with IDDs being hired in CIE, such as discrimination, lack of understanding of employment needs, and fear on the unknown for those responsible for hiring (Baker et al., 2018). What is not known is a clear understanding of why the barriers exist, thus posing obstacles in addressing them as well as limiting employment opportunities for people with IDDs in CIE.

This study will address a literature gap related to employer hiring managers' mindset in hiring people with IDDs. Although there is significant literature regarding employment and disabilities, there is limited information specific to employer perception in hiring people with IDDs (Kocman et al., 2018). In addressing this gap, additional knowledge that might support ongoing work initiatives in providing pathways to community employment for people with IDDs will be provided to other researchers interested in this topic.

Chapter 3 will include a discussion of the methodology for this study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore hiring managers' perceptions on hiring individuals with IDDs in CIE settings in Tennessee. The participants were hiring managers who have already hired people with IDDs to ensure they had a perception regarding their experiences with people with IDDs. The results of this study may provide information for individuals with IDDs on how to access employment that supports a sustainable lifestyle. Through researching hiring managers' perceptions on working with this population, this study may provide information, such as barriers and concerns in hiring people with IDDs, for those responsible for hiring individuals with IDDs. With further education, hiring managers may hire and retain people with IDDs in competitive positions. As a result of meaningful employment, individuals with IDDs will have the fiscal and social support they need to live independent lives.

This chapter will include a discussion of the study research design and rationale, research question, and role of the researcher. Methodology, participant selection, instrumentation, and procedures for recruitment will be also addressed. In addition, procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection will be reviewed. This chapter will also include a discussion of the data analysis plan, researcher trustworthiness, and a comprehensive summary.

Research Design and Rationale

RQ: What are hiring managers' perceptions of hiring adults with IDDs in CIE in Tennessee?

For this study, I used a qualitative method to address hiring managers' perceptions of hiring adults with IDDs in CIE in Tennessee. Qualitative studies are typically carried out without collecting numeric data and are used to gather information about experiences, perceptions, or concepts from participants (Saldana, 2012). Qualitative studies also consider people's thoughts and perspectives as opposed to reviewing numbers, as in quantitative research (Cairney et al., 2015). Through asking questions, researchers can gather data to help answer questions about a phenomenon of interest in specific populations (Bansal et al., 2011; Chikweche et al., 2012). Sometimes referred to as an *unstable research design*, qualitative research is considered social research that involves gathering data that might promote social change (Alasuutari, 2010; Allwood, 2012). Gathering information related to hiring managers' perceptions of hiring people with IDDs meets guidelines for a qualitative research study based on qualitative research criteria.

I used a basic qualitative design to address the research question. A basic qualitative design encompasses various strengths from other qualitative designs (Caelli et al., 2003). This design allows a researcher flexibility to adapt the basic qualitative design to meet the needs of the study (Caelli et al., 2003). In using a basic qualitative design, a researcher is not forced to align with a specific theory (Caelli et al., 2003). The basic design's flexibility and adaptability meet the needs of this study since perceptions do not

necessarily fall within a structured qualitative design methodology. In a basic qualitative design, a researcher has access to more personalized data based on perceptions or experiences of the participants, which provides a clearer understanding of the research topic for the researcher and readers (Kahlke, 2014). Also, the data collection process can be used to identify common themes and patterns of information gathered from participants (Caelli et al., 2003). After considering other designs, I determined the basic qualitative method met the needs of this study because this method provides a framework for questions and answers and open communication between participant and researcher.

Using a basic qualitative design was the best fit for this study as interviews allowed participants to answer questions and share information in their own words based on their perceptions as opposed to adhering to specific questioning. Basic qualitative studies allowed for research questions that did not fit into the mold of typical case study, ethnography, or grounded theory qualitative designs because these designs are more focused in nature (Percy et al., 2015). For example, grounded theory uses collected data to develop theories based on assumptions as opposed to simply understanding perceptions of participants (Glaser, 1978, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In using the grounded theoretical design, a researcher uses data collection and analysis to establish a research theory (Glaser, 1978, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I chose not to use grounded theory because the collected data of this study were not intended to establish any theory related to hiring managers of people with IDDs, but rather to understand their perceptions of hiring people with IDDs. In addition, my goal was not to create a midlevel theory.

According to Yin (2012, 2014) and Stake (1995), case studies are conducted to investigate a single characteristic of a cultural topic or situation of each individual participant to answer research questions. The results of a case study provide a detailed description of a single case or unit (participant) being studied. I chose not to use a case study because I was focused on the perceptions of individuals, which encompasses multiple perspectives as opposed to focusing on a single unit or case. An ethnographic study design was not used because there was no specific cultural behavior focus in this study. Ethnographic studies require observations in a cultural environment and often informal interviewing during the observations (Holloway et al., 2010). I did not conduct in-person observations; therefore, I chose not to use an ethnographic design. With respect to phenomenological design, this study would not address participants' lived experiences, which is the focus in phenomenological studies. Therefore, I did not select a phenomenological design for this research.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher in this study, I was the instrument collecting, listening, observing, and interpreting data. Maintaining a standard of ethics is essential as a researcher, especially when working with vulnerable individuals (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). Although I have an extensive professional background with people with IDDs, I did not have any personal or professional relationships with any of the participants. I did not have any supervisory, instructor, or power relationships with any study participant. In properly carrying out my role as a researcher, I ensured that ethics were inserted in all areas of the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were incorporated

into the research as a responsibility to the participant and to the overall study (Tilley et al., 2011). I worked diligently to ensure confidentiality but could not ensure 100% confidentiality; when direct quotes are used, participants might be able to identify themselves or others. Confidentiality was maintained by ensuring the names of employees and hiring managers were masked to adhere to all ethical standards.

I have worked with and advocated for people with IDDs. My personal perspective could be considered a limitation by having a negative effect on the study. To avoid viewing data through a personal lens, I bracketed my preconceived notions in a researcher journal to decrease the potential of biases becoming a barrier to the research. Reflexivity is an assessment of researcher bias and beliefs that might affect or influence the research (Valandra, 2012). Reflexivity and bracketing are features of research that support researchers in managing and mitigating personal biases throughout the research process (Anderson, 1991; Newman, 2012). Bracketing is often used as a reflective tool in research (Wall et al., 2004). Reflexivity and bracketing were considered throughout the study to mitigate the risk of biases. This study was not conducted in my work environment, and there were no incentives to participate in this study.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The population of this research were community employers, specifically hiring managers, who had hired and worked with individuals with IDDs in CIE in Tennessee. The participants were hiring managers who had already hired people with IDDs to ensure the participants had a perception regarding hiring people with IDDs and what motivated

them to do so. Individuals were required to meet participant criteria to participate. Participant criteria were experience in hiring and working with people with IDDs in CIE for 1 year or more, and they must work in the East, Middle, or West regions of Tennessee. Hiring managers who worked with people with IDDs in workshops or other noncommunity work settings were not considered in this study as the goal of the research was to understand the perceptions of hiring managers in CIE.

This participant sample size goal was eight-10 individuals. In qualitative studies, sample size is important because of the volume of information required to complete the study (Mason, 2010). Sample size is directly correlated to the rigor of qualitative studies (Burmeister et al., 2012). A basic qualitative design allows data to be collected from smaller participant samples, which allows a researcher time for more attention to detail (Anderson, 2010). The participants were sought out through social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). The information seeking participants remained in place on social media for 4 weeks.

Purposeful sampling was used to secure study participants. Purposeful sampling, a nonrandom form of sampling, would ensure that participants meet the criteria of familiarity of the research topic (Anderson, 2010). In purposeful sampling, a researcher chooses participants who have the information needed for the study, often resulting in more in-depth data (Harsh, 2011). A strength of purposeful sampling in this study was my familiarity with companies that have experience in hiring people with IDDs. Participant information, including contact data, were secured through Tennessee Vocational Rehabilitation in the three regions of Tennessee (East, Middle, West).

I used semistructured interviewing via web conferencing to collect data from participants. Interviews with participants (hiring managers) continued until saturation was reached, which determined the actual sample size for this study. Saturation is outlined by securing ample and accurate data that support the research (Bowen, 2008; Francis et al., 2010; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Saturation relates to sample size in qualitative research in that once no new data or themes are identified and considered adequate, interviewing stops, and the sample size is the number of participants for the study at that point (Bowen, 2008; Francis et al., 2010). I planned to use snowball sampling as a follow-up sampling method to address any lack of adequate participants from the original selected group but secured needed participants without this process. Snowball sampling is using knowledge of original participants to identify and refer others who meet the participant criteria and is an effective way to secure additional participants if needed to ensure data saturation is reached (Ardern, 2013; Harsh, 2011). Using purposeful sampling provided necessary access to participants who provided data to address my research topic.

Instrumentation

Data were collected through semistructured interviews to answer the research question. I chose semistructured interviews because I could casually talk with participants and probe for additional information to inform the research (Adams, 2010; Yin, 2014). Participants were asked to participate in a one-on-one interview via web conferencing that was expected to last approximately 1 hour. A semistructured interview allows a researcher to ask questions that prompt additional responses (Yin, 2014). This type of interviewing also allows for a less formal session with the participant (Adams, 2010).

The semistructured method adequately aligns with aspects of qualitative research questions in allowing free conversation about the topic (Anyan, 2013). I developed an interview protocol, an interview tool with interview questions specific to this study (Appendix A). The tool and process were explained to the participants to ensure clarity and participant expectations prior to beginning the interview. Interviews were conducted via web conferencing. With the permission of the participants, the interview tool and an audio recorder were used for capturing the data during the interviews. Handwritten notes were also taken to document and augment interview recordings. To ensure transcripts were clear to ensure accuracy of data interpretation, transcriptions of the interview recordings were returned to participants by email to ensure they agreed with the transcribed responses. Changes were made as necessary.

Ensuring validity of the research tool is critical in gathering useful information. A protocol can be considered valid and effective if created through subject matter experts (Rabionet, 2011). To ensure validity of my research instrument, I used an expert panel review to review my research tool. I provided three IDDs professionals who have had more than 1 year of experience in the field of IDDs with a sample of the interview questions to review and offer feedback. The final content validity was determined by this expert panel review. There was no pilot study.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Participants were recruited through social media, such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. A flyer with information about the research and my contact information was placed on the social media pages. The participants reached out to me via email and phone

to notify me of their desire to volunteer for the study. I responded to them via email or phone (please see Appendix C). I determined whether they meet inclusion criteria through initial questions regarding their hiring experience with people with IDDs prior to setting up an interview. I provided them with a copy of an informed consent via email. I used a fill and sign Adobe form to secure a wet copy written signature for consent. The interviews were conducted via web conferencing meetings to accommodate participants' geographical logistics as I interviewed participants throughout the state of Tennessee. To participate in the web conferencing meeting, I asked participants to conduct the interview in a place of their choice where they were comfortable. I was in a private room so as to ensure confidentiality. I used the web conferencing video feature, which enabled me to see the participant face-to-face.

Participants were asked to participate in a one-on-one, approximately 1-hour interview via web conferencing. Preparing participants prior to the interview through informed consent, which is sharing an ethical outline as to how the interview was conducted, established a useful relationship with the participant (Rabionet, 2011). I only interviewed participants once. Interviews were carried out through a web conferencing confidentiality-compliant video conferencing medium. Not using my place of business or personal office space ensured safety during the current COVID-19 pandemic and also alleviated any opportunity for insertion of researcher bias. For data collection, I conducted 1 and 2 interviews per week. Because I collected data alone, the smaller number of interviews allowed time to carefully review and record data. Data was collected until saturation was met.

Participant interviews were recorded with permission of the participants. The interview procedure was shared with the participants prior to beginning the interview. I reviewed confidentiality, ensuring participants that their name and any identifying information will remain confidential. I also notified the participants of their right to stop the interview at any time, if they chose, with no consequences. I further notified participants that they may share only information they felt comfortable in sharing. The participants received a copy of the informed consent form. The written consent will be stored and locked for 5 years and shredded for any paper documents and erased for any electronic data. The recording was only used by me to ensure confidentiality of recordings; I used web conferencing for recording. Data collected through notes and recordings were transcribed by me.

After the interview, I debriefed participants by thanking them for their participation. Participants will be given a summary of the study via email, such as who will have access to the study and how it will be used to address hiring manager perceptions of hiring people with IDDs. Participants were given their signed consent forms and my contact information to secure the completed study, if interested.

Data Analysis Plan

Understanding the perceptions of hiring managers who hire people with IDDs was addressed through data collection and analysis. For this study, I was the data collection instrument. I used web conferencing to record data for accuracy. I used automatic transcription to transcribe the voice recording to text. I used Saldana's (2012, 2016)

inductive coding process for data analysis. According to Saldana's steps, in the order listed below, I completed the following:

1. Used a Microsoft Word spreadsheet for separating data into smaller samples
2. Then read all interview transcripts thoroughly to become familiar with the data
3. Then organized data into categories and create codes to address the sample
4. Then reread data and apply identified codes
5. Then read a new sample of data using the codes from the initial sample
6. Then identified where codes did not match or determine if additional codes are needed
7. Then created codes for the second sample
8. Then reviewed data and recoded data again
9. Lastly, repeated process, beginning at Number 5 until all data were coded

I used this process for each interview until I reached data saturation. Once I determined no new themes, I knew that I would not need any further data.

There were no discrepant cases or outliers, which are cases that do not align with identified research themes (see Booth et al., 2013). Identifying outliers which are considered discrepant cases and setting those apart from other themes enhance data quality (Booth, 2013). The lack of outliers and discrepant cases are recorded in Chapter 4 as a part of the data collection.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

In qualitative studies, trustworthiness must be established. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Shenton (2004), trustworthiness can be accomplished by ensuring data collection and analysis are carried out in a manner that is truthful, making the data credible. Data collection and analysis must be precise and consistent, providing readers with detailed information as to how the research was completed--a manner of researcher credibility per Cope (2014) and Lincoln and Guba. Such strategies might consist of recording and establishing themes, triangulation, or member checks (Cope, 2014). To ensure credibility, I asked clarifying questions during the interviews. I also had participants review unclear information in transcripts for accuracy, which took approximately 30-40 minutes. The transcription was returned to the participant by email to ensure their agreement with the transcribed responses provided by them. Changes were made, as necessary. I recorded the responses exactly the way they were given by the participants.

Transferability

For my research to be considered credible, it must also be transferable. In ensuring transferability, the results of the research should be easily understood by other groups that have an interest in or relate to the research topic and results for use in additional research (see Cope, 2014). To achieve transferability, I ensured data are thoroughly outlined in a way that future researchers can use the context of the data in other areas of research related to employment of people with IDDs. The knowledge

obtained from this study could be used to address barriers that hiring managers might experience when hiring people with IDDs, which might also be useful in new studies. Individuals and others who might relate to hiring manager perceptions of people who hire people with IDDs should be able to find my research useful in their experiences.

Dependability

Dependability is a critical component of qualitative research. Dependability ensures that the research process is consistent and explained in such a way that it can be reproduced for new research (Cope, 2014). I ensured that my research processes were documented clearly and can be easily followed by other researchers by maintaining written information about the study for 5 years after its completion.

Confirmability

Ensuring confirmability is necessary in qualitative research. Confirmability is established when other researchers can confirm research findings (Cope, 2014). Confirmability can be carried out when the researcher does not insert personal biases, ensuring the research is based solely on the information shared by the participants (Cope, 2014). I avoided inserting any personal bias into the study by using bracketing with my journaling. I ensured confirmability by using the specific language of the participants as opposed to applying my interpretation in any manner. I also analyzed, coded, and categorized collected data based on themes of the collected data. I also gathered interview confirmations from participants.

Prior to and during research, I followed ethical procedures. I obtained approval for my research from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to

securing any research data. I received written, informed consent via email from all participants and ensured an understanding of all aspects of the research prior to beginning any interview via email. I did not use any incentives for this research. I also followed all processes in the treatment of participants in The Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1978). I ensured that all participants were aware of their right to withdraw from the study and ensured an understanding of the withdrawal process. I ensured participants were aware that withdrawals, for any reason, were without repercussions. If a participant had chosen to withdraw, this would have been recorded, and no information received from the participant would have been used in the research. During interviews, I ensured participants were comfortable and responded to requests of the participants at any time during the interview process.

To ensure data are confidential, I labeled participants by numbers, as opposed to names. All information, which includes informed consent forms, research transcripts, interview guides, and demographic data, will be kept confidential. I have a secure computer login, only accessible to me. I will change access codes regularly to ensure password security. I will securely maintain research data for 5 years, then securely destroy the data; shredded for any paper documents and erased for any electronic data. I will share the summary of the results of the study with participants electronically (email).

Summary

In Chapter 3, I reviewed the research design and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, participant selection logic, instrumentation, procedures for recruitment,

participation, data collection, data analysis plan, issues of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. In Chapter 4, I will discuss the results of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore hiring managers' perceptions of hiring individuals with IDDs in CIE settings in Tennessee. Information collected during this research may assist individuals with IDDs and those who support them, including human services professionals, to inform tools necessary to assist hiring managers and supporters of people with IDDs in securing competitive employment. Ultimately, because of meaningful employment, individuals with IDDs could have the fiscal and social support they need to live independent lives.

The research question guiding this study was: What are hiring managers' perceptions of hiring adults with IDDs in CIE in Tennessee? The sections in this chapter include setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, results, and summary.

Setting

To ensure participant and interviewer safety during the COVID 19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted virtually via video teleconferencing. No other organizational or personal conditions influenced participants or their experience at the time of the study that might have influenced interpretation of the study results. Because participants were interviewed virtually, body language was difficult to capture as I could only primarily see their faces.

Demographics

There were no demographic data collected during interviews as this information was not relevant to this research study.

Data Collection

There were nine participants in this study. Each participant was interviewed once. Prior to the interview, I secured a written informed consent form as per my process in Chapter 3. Data were collected through virtual interviews in a private setting chosen by the participants. There were no others present during the interviews other than the participants and interviewer. I was in a private room to ensure confidentiality during interviews. Interview length ranged between 50 and 70 minutes, depending on how long the participants chose to talk. Data were recorded via recording and transcribed simultaneously. There were no variations from what was discussed in Chapter 3 regarding data collection. There were no unusual circumstances encountered in data collection.

Data Analysis

I recorded and transcribed interviews simultaneously using the transcription feature on the web conferencing tool used. I reviewed transcriptions several times to become familiar with the collected data. I emailed participants to clarify unclear portions of interviews and to verify accuracy in the collected data. I also highlighted unclear portions of the transcripts for the participants' review. This was to ensure participants did not spend unnecessary time searching for needed clarifications. Participants returned transcriptions with needed clarifications.

In a Microsoft Word document, I separated out the questions and participant responses. I also used the Microsoft Word document to take notes in the columns as interviews and transcriptions were completed. In the first round of coding, I used the comments section in the Microsoft Word document to identify specific statements made by the participants with codes given to each participant.

The second round of coding was also completed in a Microsoft Word document organized by question, then participant responses and assigned codes. Questions were separated into their own section, along with responses and codes, with numbers 1–9 for each participant to address the eight interview questions. Each participant and their questions were grouped separately so I could easily identify similar codes. During this process, I identified similar statements (e.g., people with IDD are loyal employees). The third round of coding was also completed in a Microsoft Word document manually using the original codes from the first two coding rounds of the coding process. There were no discrepant cases found during analysis.

Development of Themes

During coding, I merged related words and phrases of importance from the transcriptions. I then aggregated the data continuing to use these similar words, phrases, and statements. Once the data were coded, I developed categories. Using the coded data, I grouped related topics into categories. I then reviewed the categories in detail to determine commonalities in the categorized data for developing themes. I then identified the data in the categories that would be used in developing themes to answer the research

question. Examples of identified categories were *special needs, challenges/behaviors, special accommodations, traits, liability, type of jobs*, and *workforce needs*.

I used the categorized data to determine overarching themes for the study. Theme 1, *disability limits the type of jobs appropriate*, was developed from categories such as *types of jobs* and *special accommodations*. Theme 2, *loyal and dedicated*, was derived from categories such as *traits* and *dedicated, good workers*. Theme 3, *often overlooked for employment* was developed from categories such as *special accommodations* and *liability*. Theme 4, *a potential workforce*, was developed from categories such as *workforce needs* and *employee shortage*. Theme 5, *negatives related to the disability are important to know up front* was developed from categories such as *challenges* and *behaviors*. Theme 6, the final theme, *training needs are important to know* was developed from the *lack of knowledge/skills* and *concern of peers* categories.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

To ensure credibility, I asked clarifying questions about responses I did not understand during the interviews. I ensured participants understood questions if they needed clarification. I also had participants review transcripts to clarify unclear information and to review them for accuracy. Transcriptions were returned to participants by email to ensure their agreement with the transcribed responses provided by them. Changes were made, as necessary. I recorded the responses exactly the way they were given to me by the participants and all data were representative of what was shared by the participants.

Transferability

In this study, I sought to explore hiring managers' perceptions of hiring adults with IDDs in CIE in Tennessee. Although I only obtained the perceptions of nine individuals, this research has the potential to transfer to other hiring managers regarding people with IDDs. This research also has the potential to address barriers that hiring managers might experience when hiring people with IDDs. This research also has the potential to transfer to others who work with hiring managers to assist with helping individuals with IDDs secure employment.

Dependability

To ensure dependability, my research process was carried out in a consistent manner through interviewing all participants. All interviews were transcribed through the web conferencing tool. All participants met the criteria of having worked with a person with IDDs for at least 1 year. I followed the data analysis plan exactly as outlined in Chapter 3. I also worked to understand the context of participants' responses to ensure the intent of their interviews was clear in the study. I securely stored written study information, which will remain securely stored for 5 years after CAO approval of my study as outlined in Chapter 3.

Confirmability

To ensure confirmability, I only used information, including exact verbiage and direct quotes, obtained from the participants in my data analysis and coding. By journaling, I bracketed my knowledge, rooted in my work history, which might have influenced the study topic. I did this to ensure my personal biases were not inserted into,

nor influenced, the collected data. In addition, I analyzed, coded, and categorized collected data based on themes of the collected data and gathered interview confirmations from participants. Prior to research, I followed all ethical procedures required by Walden University and outlined in Chapter 3.

Results

The research question for this study was: What are hiring managers' perceptions of hiring adults with IDDs in CIE in Tennessee? For the results, I identified themes and placed them in six categories related to the research question. The themes I identified were: (a) disability limits the type of jobs appropriate, (b) loyal and dedicated, (c) often overlooked for employment, (d) a potential workforce, (e) negatives related to the disability are important to know up front, and (f) training needs are important to know. All six themes were directly related to the research question.

Disability Limits the Type of Jobs Appropriate

All participants shared information about the types of jobs that people with IDDs held at their places of employment. The most common jobs were janitorial/cleaning roles, including trash pickup; managing recycling; washing dishes; and hotel hospitality services, such as folding towels. P1 stated, "These people would actually do light duty cleaning and basically just housekeeping and so forth. Things of that nature." P2 stated, "I have one person that's been working with me for a couple of years now who does my in-house office cleaning." Others were office help (one was a secretary and a trustee of a church). P2 also stated, "When it comes to her role as doing janitorial services, you know in her home, she knows how to clean the bathroom, mop the floors and different things

like that." P3 stated, "One does some janitorial work for us, also a lot of trash pickup." The most common role was a janitorial type of work. P9 said, "I have my staff do a variety of things. I always decide based on their skill set." P7 shared that their employee engaged in,

> typical clerical and administrative roles of answering the phone, making copies, getting particular paperwork or data or things to the necessary person and then of course they interface with all the employees and anybody in the community coming in the front door.

There were no variances in job opportunities with these employers.

Loyal and Dedicated

Employers shared several traits of employees with IDDs and noted these traits as reasons to hire people with IDDs. P2 stated, "They come in and get the job done. It's not a lot of lollygagging and other things; they get the job done." P3 stated,

> And then I would say also someone that's very loyal once you bring them on, someone that's going to come, and potentially come on board with you depending on the age, and probably retire with you because you're loyal to them and they're loyal to you.

P6 stated, "My experience is they are dependable. They're loyal. They come to work. They're on time, they fulfill their job duties, few complaints." P6 also stated, "They are almost grateful to be able to have the opportunity to work, and so that makes me grateful to be able to give them a job." P7 stated, "We noticed that people with intellectual disabilities diagnosis tend to miss work less. They tend to really be committed to their job

and getting to work and getting to work on time." P7 also stated, "They really pay attention to detail." People with IDDs were consistently labeled as loyal and dedicated to roles for which they were hired.

Often Overlooked for Employment

During the interviews, when asked what an employee with the designation of IDD meant to them, participants said people with IDDs are often overlooked for employment. P3 described people with IDDs as "someone that traditionally is turned away from the typical workforce [or] traditional work setting." P9 described a person with IDDs as "a person with a specialized disability. A person who has typically been looked over as valuable to society and the normal workforce." P9 described people with IDDs as "People who are sometimes considered less than." Employer perceptions of employees with IDDs consistently included "being overlooked." Importantly, one participant noted that a primary reason people with IDDs are overlooked for employment was liability. P3 said, "I would primarily relate that to the fear of the unknown. Most people are just afraid of the liability and various things that come along with hiring people with disability." P7 stated,

> I think, at least initially, when I first started hiring a diverse work group is that I was concerned about liability, and I think that that was something that could have been better addressed with me on the front end, that I don't have any more liability hiring someone with an intellectual disability than I do a traditional employee. So, it took me a little while to probably acclimate to not having that added concern about safety.

The perception that people with IDDs are a population of people who are overlooked for CIE was common.

A Potential Workforce

Participants indicated that people with IDDs should be given opportunities to become employed. P1 stated, "people with IDD should have a special place in every work or workplace." P5 stated, "I just don't think people should be, you know, put off at hiring somebody with an IDD because most of the time, from what I've seen, they're very punctual and loyal." P8 also stated, "I think employers should tap into this workforce since there is a shortage because of COVID-19. I believe employers and people with IDDs would benefit from this unexpected workforce shortage." P7 said,

> This population seems to really like a lot of repetition and structure, and knowing what's going to happen next, and so we really… I just think this particular population is going to do well covering some gaps that we would have issues covering with the current generation of employees.

Four participants specifically indicated employment opportunities for people with IDDs as important.

Negatives Related to the Disability are Important to Know Up Front

Participants indicated that knowing a person's type(s) of disability was important in ensuring proper job placement when hiring people with IDDs. Participants also stated that knowing this information prior to hiring was important in decision making with respect to hiring. P8 stated,

> For those who might have behaviors, we like to know this early on, so we know where/how to place these people. Sometimes, if we know up front, we might not hire if the behaviors are such that they might interfere with their work.

P5 said,

> Trying to take what their problem is or their disability is and work with it, knowing that there could be issues and still try to place them in work is what I've done. It's great for them, but hard for employers without having all the information about their disability. This was one of the biggest barriers.

P7 said,

> I think, at least initially, when I first started hiring a diverse work group is that I was concerned about liability, especially when you have those employees who have behavioral issues. I think that that was something that could have been better addressed with me on the front end, that I don't have any more liability hiring someone with an intellectual disability than I do a traditional employee.

P8 said,

> Having all pertinent information about any type of behavior, or any other thing we would need to know ahead of time, as employers before hiring somebody in a position would be helpful. It's really hard to place people in a job when you don't know their history.

Prior knowledge of potential employees' medical and behavioral history was an important topic of concern as discussed by hiring managers.

Participants who addressed behaviors as challenges or problems in their interviews discussed and defined behaviors in different ways. Behaviors such as head banging, throwing items, and refusal of tasks, were brought up in interviews as being reasons for concern in hiring people with IDDs. Specifically, behaviors were referred to as "challenges" by P2 and by P1 as "emotional issues that would cause disturbances." P5 used the word "behaviors" in describing an employee with IDDs. P5 shared characteristics of an employee with IDDs by ending their sentence with "and sometimes behaviors." P8 said, "some have behaviors that need to be managed, so we try to make sure we can accommodate those, so these are concerns I have with hiring people with IDD." P5 spent most of their interview discussing how their company managed behavioral issues by an employee who was an exceptional employee otherwise. P1 stated, "They are very much on time to work, so they're punctual. Their mannerisms are amazing, and they have questions if they, if they want to know answers and they're not sure, they'll tell you and communicate with you." P5 said,

> I think that the thing that I found is they, employers, should be made aware and I don't know if we at the time knew with her what the specifics of her disabilities were. I'm not sure if we're supposed to know, but I think that we should be made aware of what their issues are. And also, the immediate supervisor should know.

P2 said, "they may have some challenges, but I don't like to look at them as someone with IDD. I try to just look at the person as an employee." Behaviors were a perception participants considered when hiring, as well as with job placement once employees were hired.

Employers shared their perceptions of the need for accommodations in ensuring successful placement in the workplace. P3 said,

> We don't hold their hand; we expect them to come in and excel [to] the best of their ability. So, the downside to some cases for us that we've had in the past with IDD is their inability, unfortunately, to reach a certain point in the production setting. And that's a reason it makes it a little tougher for us because it's hard to hold certain people accountable in one way and not hold others accountable and in another way.

P8 said, "Others have physical and medical needs that infringe on their work, so we try to make sure we can accommodate those, so these are concerns I have with hiring people with IDD." P5 stated,

> And, then you find a job that would suit them, you know, for whatever job that they were capable of doing. And, just knowing they can only work a few hours. You know so they could actually only work so many days a week.

P7 said, "I think that reasonable accommodations are made for all sorts of people, not just people with intellectual or developmental diagnosis. So, I think that it would be the same whatever that role would be my expectation of that employee." P8 identified a person with IDDs as "someone who needs special accommodations in their work. Someone who needs a little more help than a regular employee." P3 also said,

> We may need three people to do one specific operation that normally would take one non-disabled person to accomplish, but again that's who we are. So, it also has to make fiscal sense for us to be able to do that. So, we can only do so much

> of that, obviously, but we're going to ask someone to come in regardless of what the disability is to give us their 100%. Maybe 30% of the standard, but that's what we're going to ask of them, and that's how we're going to manage them. We're going to try to push them to give us their 100%.

According to participants, accommodating employees with IDDs was considered "a must" for the community workplace.

Training Needs are Important to Know

Training was a common theme used by participants when describing managers' perceptions of hiring people with IDDs. Specifically, participants indicated the need for training to address their perceptions of necessary support in the workplace in order to ensure a successful employment experience for all employees. Responses included needed training for both employees with IDDs and nondisabled employees. The training for nondisabled employees was provided to ensure that their peers with IDDs were treated with dignity and respect.

Participants shared their perceptions regarding needed training for employees with IDDs. P1 described hiring people with IDDs as having "special needs" and needing "special care, special training." P2 stated, "sometimes they may need a little more training than someone that may have some of the natural abilities" and "I may need to kind of do a little more hands-on training." P4 said "that most people generally can do the job if you train them the right way and that includes people with IDD." P3 stated,

> We don't want to place them somewhere that we feel like that we're setting them up for failure. We want them to have the ability to be successful. We want to give

> them the tools they need, the training they need. You know, everyone learns differently, especially if it's folks with disabilities and IDD as well. Everyone has a different learning curve. How they learn is going to be different. Our trainers have to take different approaches.

P6 said, "They're not always able to fulfill all of the job duties possibly. I believe that you have to give them the proper supports that they need, proper training." P8 stated that they felt training employees regarding how to treat employees with IDDs would address any worksite issues regarding mistreatment. Training all employees, including nondisabled employees, was considered important by participants to ensure people with IDDs could work with their peers without experiencing any type of mistreatment.

Participant perception was that there are employees who are not disabled who might be a barrier in the workplace because their treatment of people with IDDs. P8 said, "We resolve the concerns by making sure nondisabled employees are trained and understand our expectations in how we treat people who are different, this includes people with IDD." P1 said, "But if that was the situation and they were being bullied, then I would definitely have a talk with the other employees about diversity and inclusion. That would bring awareness to situations of people with those disabilities." P6 said, "Some of the concerns is the acceptance by other employees which would be very bad for people that I employed because we treat everyone equally and you know equitably." P6 also said,

> You have stares, you have whispers. Especially depending on how severe the IDD is, or in the particular individual, or just not really fully understanding the purpose

> and how important it is for people with IDD to be in the workforce and to be contributing members to society and within the community. So, I think that it starts at the top, so if I were to perceive them in a certain way then my employees would do the same. But because I don't treat them differently, my employees kind of knew, like maybe we shouldn't either, and so that's kind of how I run the business with making sure employees understand how to treat those who are different.

P6 stated that a concern of employing a person with IDDs as

> discrimination on the basis of their disability. A poor perception of their capabilities. Being a person with disability. It could be their lack of training. So, to me it's important for them to have the proper supports and proper training to fulfill their duties in a successful manner, which means I would take on a more of a protector's mentality when it comes to individuals or employees with IDD, to be able to help them be successful.

Participants repeatedly noted the importance of training for all employees including that employee without disabilities need to be trained on things like disabilities and appropriate accommodations.

How Themes Answer the Research Question

The six themes I identified through my interviews with hiring managers were that disability limits the type of jobs appropriate, often overlooked for employment, a potential workforce, negatives related to the disability are important to know up front, and training needs are important to know about employees with IDDs. The first two

themes could be perceived as positive perceptions of hiring managers about individuals with IDDs as they were seen as doing a good job when employed in lower skill and repetitive jobs and should be considered being hired despite concerns such as insurance and liability, because the experience of hiring managers is that individuals with IDDs are loyal and dependable employees. However, while "positive" perceptions on the surface, and perceived as positives by hiring managers, these could actually be detrimental to meaningful employment for individuals with IDDS. This will be discussed further in the interpretation of results section of Chapter 5.

Summary

Chapter 4 reviewed setting, data collection process, analysis phase, and reliability of the study. Six main themes were identified as a result of this study. All six themes addressed the research question, being directly relative to employer perceptions of hiring people with IDDs in CIE.

The initial theme that emerged was disability limits the type of jobs appropriate people held in the community sector. Most of the jobs were janitorial or cleaning positions. Clerical jobs were also identified as jobs that were held by participants' employees with IDDs. The second theme that emerged was loyal and dedicated people with IDDs. Employees with IDDs were described as loyal and good employees. They were also described as employees who focused on their work and did not engage in non-work-related activity on the job. Additionally, the perception was that people with IDDs were "teachable and willing to learn." The third theme that emerged was people with IDDs are often overlooked for employment. One participant's perception was that

employers might have a fear of liability when hiring people with IDDs. Another participant's perception was that people with IDDs are overlooked because they are "considered less than" and that people with IDDs are not typically considered for the mainstream workforce. The fourth theme that emerged was a potential workforce for people with IDDs. Participants indicated that people with IDDs should be given employment opportunities. Two participants suggested that people with IDDs might be a valuable resource in managing the COVID-19 employment shortage. The fifth theme that emerged was negatives related to the disability are important to know up front. Participants said that they felt it important to know the types of disabilities a person had prior to hiring. They perceived this knowledge as necessary because of the various types of jobs that required employees who could manage themselves, while others had no allowances for behavioral or emotional outbursts. Two participants perceived that having disability information during the interview process as opposed to post hiring would have had an effect on hiring decision making. Participants discussed varying behaviors of employees, specifically behaviors that interfered with work duties. Some behaviors also interfered with fellow employees' work. Participants identified these behaviors as concerns with hiring people with IDDs.

The sixth emerging theme was training needs are important to know about employees with IDDs. Participants indicated that people with IDDs, although desirable candidates for employment, would require various accommodations to be successful in the workforce. Participants used examples such as allowing for medical visits, adjusting

the workday and hours, and allowances to accommodate the level of ability and desire of type of work to complete employment tasks.

Both employees with IDDs and nondisabled employees were identified by participants as requiring training in some form. Training was suggested for nondisabled employees/coworkers due to their potential to treat their disabled peers unfairly because of differing levels of ability of people with IDDs. A participant perception was that nondisabled employees should receive training in the area of IDDs, including expectations as to how to work with/alongside their peers with IDDs who have varying levels of abilities.

Participants had varying perceptions related to hiring people with IDDs in community placements. All respondents had parameters for hiring, such as training, initial knowledge of disability, and needed accommodations to ensure safety and meeting work requirements. Still, all participants perceived that hiring people with IDDs was possible. Participants agreed that, with proper training, people with IDDs could be employed successfully in CIE.

In Chapter 5 I will review and compare this study with previous findings to determine whether results of this study confirm or disconfirm previous research studies. I will address how this study's findings might inform further research related to employer perceptions of hiring people with IDDs in CIE. Limitations and recommendations for future research will also be addressed in Chapter 5. Finally, in Chapter 5 I will explore how the results of this research may provide human services professionals tools necessary in assisting people with IDDs in obtaining and maintaining community employment.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore hiring managers' perceptions of hiring individuals with IDDs in CIE in Tennessee. Information collected during this research may assist individuals with IDDs and those who support them, including human services professionals, to inform tools necessary to assist hiring managers and supporters of people with IDDs in securing competitive employment. Ultimately, because of meaningful employment, individuals with IDDs could have the fiscal and social support they need to live independent lives.

The research question guiding this study was the following: What are hiring managers' perceptions of hiring adults with IDDs in CIE in Tennessee? The themes that I arrived at that answered this research question were (a) disability limits the type of jobs appropriate, (b) loyal and dedicated, (c) often overlooked for employment, (d) a potential workforce, (e) negatives related to the disability are important to know up front, and (f) training needs are important to know. The answer to the research question is that hiring managers perceive that people with IDDs can and should be successfully employed in CIE.

The sections reviewed in this chapter include interpretation of findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications, and conclusion.

Interpretation of the Findings

Theme 1: Disability Limits the Type of Jobs Appropriate

The findings of this study aligned with the review of existing literature presented in Chapter 2, specifically that people with IDDs are often placed in unskilled positions. Most jobs identified in this study were janitorial or other types of manual labor, which require little or no skills. There were also administrative, clerical types of jobs noted, but these were uncommon opportunities for people with IDDs. When discussing available jobs, participants stated that community employment for people with IDDs was more successful if they were able to match them to jobs based on their ability, as opposed to placing them in any available job. Participants felt that matching people with jobs was important in ensuring people were placed in jobs they could fulfill based on their level of skills. Participants also stated that job matching became their responsibility instead of paid agency employment support staff. The data from this study aligned with the current literature related to types of jobs and job matching.

Community jobs for people with IDDs are often menial in nature. According to McDaniels (2016), people with IDDs, although hired in community jobs, are typically hired in roles considered low paying or entry level. McDaniels argued that people with IDDs should be prepared for jobs that meet their skill level, rather than being hired solely based on their disabilities. The findings of my qualitative study are in line with the literature because, according to the data, most people with IDDs were hired to do manual labor type of jobs. There were a few exceptions where participants hired people in clerical and personal-assistant types of jobs. However, participants discussed the

importance of matching people with jobs, even with manual labor jobs, to ensure better opportunities for successful job placement. Scholars also confirmed that employers feel job matching is necessary to ensuring successful placement in CIE (Brown et al., 2016). Based on data from this study, the discussion of matching people with IDDs to types of jobs should continue for those interested in supporting people with IDDs in CIE.

I found that this theme aligns with CDT in that the jobs offered to people with IDDs are similar in nature, suggesting the impression that people with IDDs can only work jobs in certain sectors (i.e., menial task jobs). This theme specifically addresses the fact that disabilities limit the types of jobs available to this demographic, based on others' perceptions of their abilities. CDT does align with this theme as people are not equal to the overall population with respect to employment opportunities.

Theme 2: Loyal and Dedicated

My findings do not necessarily align with the research literature review in Chapter 2. Traits of people with IDDs in the literature were essentially negative (Gilson et al., 2016; Nord, 2016), but the participants in this study shared more positive traits of people with IDDs. The participants shared various examples of what they considered to be employment traits of people with IDDs. Most traits were favorable, indicating people with IDDs were loyal, dedicated, punctual, teachable, were good employees, and had a desire to do their work well. People with IDDs were also described as interested in, and committed to, their work and routine oriented. Participants stated that people with IDDs would arrive at their places of employment and carry out the work eagerly. The

participants reported no concerns with absenteeism as a positive trait of people with IDDs.

Previous researchers tended to note that perceptions of traits of people with IDDs were often negative. Scholars suggested that people with IDDs were often stereotyped as being unintelligent and unable to care for themselves (Pelleboer-Gunnink et al., 2019). Werner and Abergel (2018) identified stigma relative to disabilities as discrimination that resulted in labeling, exclusion, and/or derogatory name calling. Friedman and Owen (2017) stated that society, including some families, considered people with disabilities as abnormal. Dirth and Branscombe (2019) noted ableism as a societal and systemic issue that led to offensive language toward people with disabilities. I found there was a difference between the literature and participants' perceptions of traits of people with IDDs. Employers' perceptions were that people with IDDs can work and should be considered for employment like any other person. None of the participants spoke of people with IDDs negatively.

What I found about hiring managers' perceptions of traits of people with IDDs aligned with the conceptual framework CDT. CDT states that people with disabilities is a concept that is socially constructed as separate from, or opposed to, a natural human experience or occurrence (Devlin & Pothier, 2005). CDT is also based on notions of social, cultural, and political biases or opinions and social norms akin to ableism, in which people are viewed based on their disability (Devlin & Pothier, 2005; Friedman & Owen, 2017). CDT looks to change how people with disabilities are excluded based on how they are perceived by others. CDT also supports societal changes that foster

integration and equity for people with disabilities in their communities (Devlin & Pothier, 2005; Friedman & Owen, 2017). My results support CDT, as many participants desired and made internal and external policy and procedural changes to ensure CIE opportunities for people with IDDs.

However, there were areas in the study where participants felt that people with IDDs should remain in segregated work settings (i.e., workshops) based on their level of ability or the person's desire to do so. This perception supports the notion that people with IDDs should remain segregated, at least in areas of employment. In addition, people with IDDs were routinely referred to as loyal and dedicated, which was intended to be positive comments regarding traits of people with IDDs but could also be considered negative in that this is a type of labeling.

Theme 3: Often Overlooked for Employment

My findings aligned with the research literature reviewed in Chapter 2 in that participants stated that people with IDDs are overlooked for employment, primarily due to concerns over liability and/or lack of knowledge. Excessive paperwork tied to programs was considered a barrier in hiring people with IDDs; this was considered a use of time that would not otherwise be necessary for people without disabilities. Although the paperwork was not considered a liability, it was considered a barrier by participants because of the additional time required for this task. Participants also considered behavior outbursts, such as harm to self or others, as a liability; if such behaviors occurred, both the person and their peers could be at risk of harm.

Participants suggested that people with IDDs in noncommunity settings, such as workshops, was not necessarily negative and that maybe these should be considered viable options as opposed to community jobs. Participants also indicated that certain individuals might perform better and be more suited for a sheltered workshop setting; these employment options could be beneficial. Participants stated that these options should be considered for people who might never be prepared for CIE.

This theme aligns with CDT. Participants, although well intended, suggested that segregated workshops were an employment option based on the level of ability of people with IDDs. Using disability impairment as a reason to support employment segregation is directly aligned with CDT. The participants in this study, as well as previous literature, stated that workshop settings should be considered for some people with IDDs. As opposed to community employment, Beyer et al. (2016) stated that sheltered workshops could be viable employment options for people with IDDs because they can work alongside others with similar levels of ability. In addition, these workshops could also be used as training areas for future community placement (Beyer et al., 2016). Soeker et al. (2018) stated that there are people in sheltered workshops who consider their work and social outlets there important. This particular result did not support CDT as the response of participants in this area suggested reasons for people with IDDs to remain in segregated employment settings.

Theme 4: A Potential Workforce

My findings aligned with the research presented in Chapter 2 in that employment opportunities for people with IDDs continues to be a work in progress. The topic of

employment opportunities was discussed by many of the participants. Most participants indicated a desire to hire this population of individuals and offered various pros and cons in doing so. Participants stated that, in some cases, although they were willing to hire and support people with IDDs in competitive employment, the need for collaboration with their support systems was crucial in its success. Not having these support systems in place was considered a barrier to community employment opportunities.

Previous studies offer suggestions regarding possible methods in securing CIE for people with IDDs. Although Friedman et al. (2017) stated that community employment offers a more integrated work setting, Bould et al. (2018) stated that community employment opportunities are not offered to people with IDDs as often as they are to those who are nondisabled. Lyons et al. (2018) suggested a person-centered, holistic approach to supporting people with IDDs in their employment search. Lyons et al. suggested that employment tasks should be done by a team committed to carrying them out differently than what has been considered the norm. This includes working collaboratively with all people who work with the person and consider the people' vision and goals for successful CIE. Khayatzadeh-Mahani et al. (2020) suggested business incentives to attract hiring managers to hire people with IDDs. Brown et al. (2016) stated that people with IDDs should have access to community employment, but also stated that lesser paying jobs should be considered in ensuring people with IDDs have access to community employment.

This theme aligns with CDT as participants sought both internal and external systems changes, especially collaboration with support systems to develop opportunities

for people with IDDs to be included in CIE. Participants also suggested that people with IDDs could be successful in supporting the current COVID 19 work shortage.

Theme 5: Negatives Related to the Disability Are Important to Know Up Front

Participants noted knowledge of disability as a concern in hiring people with IDDs. Specifically, participants stated that when they hired people without having knowledge of their disabilities, they were at a disadvantage by not knowing how to effectively work with the person, placing both manager and employee at a disadvantage. Participants spoke specifically about negative behaviors that were unknown until the person was hired. These behaviors, such as head banging, throwing items, and refusal of tasks, were barriers to employment.

Existing literature stated that knowing the person well would benefit employers as well as people with IDDs in CIE. Butterworth et al. (2017) stated that to foster successful community employment, the support team must know the person well and must share this knowledge with potential employers. Inge et al. (2016) suggested networking with potential employers as a means for developing employment for people with IDDs. The support person would make the employer knowledgeable of the person's skills and needs, and jobs could be developed around this information. In these cases, the employer would have the person's information prior to hiring and could better prepare them for employment with their company or decide whether the person is a good match for their company. Akkerman et al. (2018) stated that those who support people with IDDs in securing employment must have a responsibility in ensuring the person is compatible with jobs they are pursuing. This responsibility would include making the potential

employers aware of information that might be an issue once hired. Kocman et al. (2018) noted employers' lack of understanding of people with IDDs as a barrier in community employment. Employers' prior knowledge of the potential employee is crucial in successful community employment. Participants stated that knowing how to successfully place people with IDDs in certain positions was contingent upon their ability to carry out their job tasks safely and successfully.

My results aligned with CDT as change in current notions of how people with IDDs are viewed and supported is suggested to assist people with IDDs in securing CIE. Also, participants sought ways to adjust to how people with IDDs worked as opposed to having them adjust to the work setting. In alignment with CDT, participants suggested that people with IDDs could operate in jobs slated for nondisabled people, changing the societal belief that people with IDDs could only work nonskilled labor jobs. I also found further support of CDT because of the need for societal change in how people with IDDs are perceived based on their level of ability or behavior challenges. Based on the literature and the study data, those who support people with IDDs suggest that employment opportunities for people with IDDs should be a collaborative effort with supports in place as needed to mitigate any negative issues related to hiring people with IDDs.

Theme 6: Training Needs Are Important to Know

The participants I interviewed also discussed the need for on-the-job accommodations. One participant stated that they would not consider people with IDDs as having any more need of accommodations than other employees, stating that

nondisabled people also have needs for special accommodations in employment. Other participants felt they were required to make accommodations specific to people with IDDs, such as scheduling work hours around medical appointments and changing jobs to accommodate fears and difficulty with change in daily work tasks. Other participants described having to make accommodations due to lack of support from agency staff limiting shift opportunities. Participants often felt obligated to make these accommodations to ensure a successful work environment for all employees.

The level of accommodations varied by employee. Nord (2016) stated that people with IDDs might require more assistance or support on their jobs than non-disabled employees, noting a need for employer accommodations. Participants mentioned that they often made person-centered accommodations based on the needs of the person in order to complete their job tasks, as well as ensuring they were comfortable at work. Hamraie (2020) stated that lack of accommodations for people with disabilities marginalized and further isolated them from areas of society not restricted to nondisabled people. All participants, however, were willing to make accommodations, even though, doing so might create disruptions in other areas of their places of employment.

I found that this theme aligned with CDT because although participants voiced not being aware of needed accommodations as negative, once they became aware of the needs, participants were willing to support employees with IDDs by making structural changes to ensure work was achievable. No participant refused any necessary accommodation but preferred to know needs up front to ensure people with IDDs could work in an integrated, safe environment.

The results of this study confirmed prior research related to people with IDDs and training for CIE. The study confirmed that people with IDDs want to work, and employers need training for both staff and employees due to varying levels of ability. Lack of training was a common theme identified as a barrier experienced by hiring managers.

Much of the literature in Chapter 2 was related to training. Migliore et al. (2018) suggested that a key component to successful community placement was training, even suggesting that training should be required in schools in preparation for employment post-graduation. Carter et al. (2017) suggested preparing individuals for work prior to their leaving school. McLoughlin (2018) stated that people with IDDs might benefit from vocational training or other types of pre-training in preparation of community employment. Similarly, Inge et al. (2016) suggested vocational rehabilitation training as a resource for preparing people with IDDs for employment. McLoughlin stated that employers would have more knowledge of the people' skills if they were prepared for employment in advance, making them more employable for competitive employment. Migliore et al. (2018) suggested school-to-work training in preparing people with IDDs for CIE. Stevenson et al. (2016) also suggested employment training specific to the person, in collaboration with employers and trainers in the school system that would offer a school to work transition for people with IDDs. With this type of program, employers would already be familiar with potential employees and the employees would have necessary skills for employment. This type of training would also include those who support people with IDDs in meeting employment training goals (Hall et al., 2018).)

Scholars suggested hands-on training in community jobs as a useful tool for employment preparation (Gilson et al., 2017; Nord, 2020). In general, training was noted as an essential factor in successful community employment.

Employee training for coworkers on how to work with people with IDDs was also noted as important among my participants. Participants felt it necessary to train employees at their places of employment to ensure people with IDDs were treated fairly. Kocman et al. (2018) stated that employer perception of people with IDDs influenced the perception of employees, which, in turn, affected how people with IDDs were treated. Training of potential employees and staff are essential in ensuring people with IDDs are treated fairly at their places of employment.

The theme also aligned with CDT in that participants wanted to know and understand how to work with people with IDDs in the work setting. They were all willing to change hiring processes so that people with IDDs were included and not focused on solely for their disabilities. In addition, participants felt that training staff about IDDs was important in the successful integration of people with IDDs into the community work force.

Limitations of the Study

There are limitations to this study that should be addressed. This study included one-on-one interviews, which were the basis of data collection. Information was only gathered from the participants in the study, limiting information to nine hiring managers. Other limitations of the study include the participants themselves; the data were only as sound as what was received from the participants. I had to assume the information

received in the interviews was truthful. To make participants comfortable in sharing information, they were reassured that their information would be confidential, that no names or other identifying information would be released. In addition, participants were only from Tennessee, limiting perceptions only to Tennesseans. There was no demographical information gathered from the participants. Researcher bias could have also been a limitation. To mitigate any of my own biases from skewing data, I bracketed my preconceived ideas in a researcher journal.

Recommendations

As CIE continues to be a topic of discussion for those who support people with IDDs, I recommend further research regarding this topic. Although there is research related to hiring managers' perceptions in hiring people with IDDs, there is a need for more in-depth research in this area to understand hiring managers' thoughts regarding hiring people with IDDs. If this research were to be replicated, I would increase the number of participants to produce a larger amount of data and conduct the study in a different place to gather data outside of Tennessee.

Another recommendation would be to conduct similar research using an interview process that is less structured. This study used semi-structured interviewing with pre-established questions. The less structured interviewing would allow participants to share information on their own terms as opposed to researcher led interviews with predetermined questions.

Also, using a phenomenological research methodology might provide a more descriptive experience of those who have employed people with IDDs. In having more

detailed information related to employers' direct experiences, human services workers and others who have an interest in CIE for people with IDDs might better understand needed supports for employers to not only hire but maintain people with IDDs on jobs long-term.

A final recommendation would be to use mixed-methods research. This methodology would allow the researcher to gather more objective information from employers of people with IDDs through the quantitative data. These data might consist of the number of people with IDDs who are hired and the timeframe for which they remain employed. The qualitative data would offer narrative-type data, such as reasons for hiring and termination, and any supports useful in preparing for and sustaining employment for people with IDDs. Using qualitative methodology in collaboration with quantitative could prevent the researcher from overgeneralizing the quantitative data. That is, a mixed methods approach would allow the researcher to gather more detailed information about the experiences of hiring managers who hire people with IDDs in community employment.

Implications

This study found that, overall, hiring managers felt positive about hiring people with IDDs indicating that people with IDDs were good employees. This finding indicates that those who support people with IDDs in securing CIE have made positive gains. However, there is still work ahead in making CIE more accessible to people with IDDs. This study fosters positive social change as it provides information for hiring managers who are considering hiring people with IDDs in community employment. This study also

might aid human services workers, who are support systems to this population, in preparing these individuals in securing community employment that offers them life sustainability through financial security and social inclusion.

Expanding understanding of employers' perceptions supports social change because shared information between fellow employers could provide useful information to support individuals with IDDs in the community workplace. This study showed both negative and positive aspects of employing people with IDDs. Having this knowledge might address gaps of information, adding clarity to employers who have questions about hiring this population.

Conclusion

Literature has shown that more research in the area of hiring managers' perceptions on hiring people with IDDs is necessary. This additional research is warranted because there has not been considerable progress in the number of people with IDDs being employed in CIE. Although there is a gap in the literature regarding hiring managers' perceptions in hiring people with IDDs, this study provides insight into the hiring managers' perceptions, which is a positive move forward in providing research that helps in addressing this gap, specifically for people with IDDs and their support systems. The results of this study support prior research regarding hiring managers' perceptions of hiring people with IDDs. The findings align with prior research by supplying information such as needed training and why people with IDDs might be overlooked for CIE.

Based on this study, hiring managers and human services workers who support people with IDDs have useful information that might add to the success of employment for people with IDDs in CIE. Hiring managers shared pros and cons of hiring this population based on experience and trial and error throughout their work experiences. Employers were willing to support individuals with what was needed and address barriers to ensure successful employment because they considered most people with IDDs valuable employees who should be offered employment opportunities.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Interview Introduction: Hello (Participant). My name is Carol Price-Guthrie, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. Thank you for talking with me today. My interview today is about hiring managers' perceptions in hiring people with IDDs. This will be a 60-minute, semistructured interview. After obtaining your permission, I will audio record your interview today for research purposes only. You can answer questions in any way you choose. I hope you feel comfortable in sharing information honestly; this interview is confidential. Please only share information you're comfortable in sharing. This means any information that could identify you will be kept private. If, at any time during this interview, you feel uncomfortable you may stop without any consequences. Please read over the informed consent provided for this study and respond with an email to give your consent to participate in this study. I am excited to talk to you about your work. Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Interview

The interview questions were developed following the instructions/processes in the "Interview Guide Worksheet." The questions are open-ended, neutral, designed to be only one question at a time, and written in a way that the person understands. In addition, there will be probing questions.

Interview Questions:

1. What does an employee with the designation of IDD mean to you?
2. What type of jobs do the people with IDDs do?

3. What, if any, are your concerns with hiring people with IDDs?
4. How do you resolve the concerns?
5. What are positives in hiring people with IDDs?
6. What would you consider barriers in hiring people with IDDs? How do you overcome these barriers?
7. How would you explain your overall perception of hiring people with IDDs?
8. What else would you like to share with me on hiring people with IDDs?

Potential probing prompts:

Tell me more about that. How did you feel about that? What do you mean when you say?

Ending the interview: Do you have questions or comments for me? Thank you for talking with me today. I know that your time is important, and I appreciate you for sharing employment information with others. I will contact you by phone to have you review the accuracy of your interview. I will also contact you by mail to share the study after it its completed.

Appendix B: Mental Health Resource List

Mental Health Resource List

Should you experience stress greater than daily life because of this research, please feel free to utilize the resources below. The resources below are of no cost to you and can offer guidance as to how to manage your stress.

- Stress Management Resources:
- www.mentalhealth.gov
- National Alliance on Mental Illness at 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or email them at info@nami.org
- Hopeline: 1-877-235-4525
- Crisis Text Line: Text "DESERVE" TO 741-741
- National Hopeline Network: 1-800-SUICIDE (800-784-2433)
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Appendix C: IRB Approval Number

IRB Approval #: 10-01-21-0324278