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COWORKER JUSTICE PERCEPTIONS TOWARD WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS AND WHAT JUSTICE CRITERIA ARE USED TO MAKE THESE JUSTICE PERCEPTIONS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Science
in
Psychology:
Industrial/Organizational

by
Audrey Marie Hunzeker
June 2007
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine coworker distributive justice judgments in the workplace accommodation situation, as well as how application of need and equity rules affects justice judgments. Past research on justice rules suggests that the equity rule is the rule most often used in the work context; however, it is possible that in the accommodation situation, coworkers will use the need rule. Results revealed that coworkers who felt that a disabled individual has a legitimate disability and needed an accommodation to fulfill his or her work responsibilities were more likely to view the accommodation situation as fair. When making judgments concerning physical disabilities, need rule considerations were a stronger predictor of accommodation fairness than equity rule considerations. Furthermore, application of the need rule differs according to type of disability. Paraplegia evoked the highest need judgments, followed by dyslexia and then depression. Alcoholism showed no significant need judgment difference to depression.
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In 1990 President George H. W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA was the first civil rights law prohibiting discrimination against those with disabilities in the workplace, and its aim was to increase job opportunities for the disabled in the workplace. The impact of this act is potentially far reaching, in that there are 49.7 million Americans who currently have at least one disability (Waldrop & Stern, 2003), and anyone can develop or acquire a disability at any time.

The ADA lists three ways individuals can show that they have a disability, including having a (1) "physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual, (2) a record of such an impairment, or (3) being regarded as having such an impairment" [42 U.S.C. § 12101(2)]. This definition includes such long-lasting conditions as blindness and deafness, and/or any physical, mental and emotional conditions. A person is protected under the ADA if the person is an individual with a disability who, "with or
without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the job that the individual holds or desires" [42 U.S.C. § 12111(8)]. If an individual is unable to perform the essential activities of a job due to a disability, and no accommodation would allow him or her to, that individual would not be protected under the ADA.

Along with prohibiting discrimination, the ADA also requires any business employing 15 or more employees to provide reasonable accommodation to individuals with disabilities. A company provides reasonable accommodations by restructuring nonessential elements of the job or environment of the job so that an individual with a disability can perform the job. Examples of reasonable accommodation include supplying sign language interpreters, job adjustments (such as being allowed to sit at a cash register), modifying work schedules and/or acquiring special equipment or devices (such as a large computer monitor). According to a study by Mitchel, Allinger and Morfopoulos (1997), the most common accommodations include special equipment (18%), scheduling of breaks or flextime (16%), computer software (10%), and increased access (e.g. ramps) (10%).
Whatever the qualifying disability, an employer is not required to grant the accommodation if it would cause a company undue hardship. The term “undue hardship” refers to an action requiring significant difficulty or expense, when considered in light of the company’s resources. If granting an accommodation would be too expensive or require extensive job redesign, the employer would not be obligated to grant such a request. The U. S. Department of Education (2006) also states, in reference to granting accommodations, that an employer is not required to eliminate a primary job responsibility, lower production standards that are applied to all employees, or provide wheelchairs, glasses, hearing aids or other personal items. Disabled individuals who are able to function with medical treatment, corrective devices, or by their own means are excluded from the ADA’s protection (Knapp, Erdos, Robert, & Long, 2006). In summary, the bottom line of the ADA is that an employer cannot refuse to hire an applicant simply because he or she has or appears to have a disability, and an employer needs to accommodate a disabled applicant or employee if resources allow.

The enactment of the ADA in and of itself is an achievement in the disability arena. Passing the act has
contributed to a positive outlook regarding the employment potential of Americans with disabilities who desire to work. One consequence of the Act appears to be that society has shifted its view towards those with disabilities. People with disabilities were once viewed as unemployable and the focus was on "fixing" or curing them. Now society sees their capabilities, and focuses on ways to maximize their work potential (Unger, 2002). Not only are society's views changing, but employer views are changing as well. A review of 37 studies examining employer attitudes towards workers with disabilities by Hernandez, Keys, and Balcazar (2000) found that although employers' expressed willingness to hire applicants still surpasses their actual hiring habits, the gap appears to be narrowing. The ADA is one more step in the struggle for breaking down the barriers that exist for the disabled in the workplace, and for enlightening employers and workers on the abilities individuals with disabilities have.

Despite the enactment of the ADA and the increasingly positive outlook towards those with disabilities, studies show that progress is slow and there is evidence that the ADA may not be having its desired impact. The main goal of the ADA was to increase job opportunities for those with
disabilities, and allow them the opportunity to experience satisfying careers and achievement (Wooten & James, 2005). However, the 2004 National Organization on Disability/Harris Survey (National Organization on Disability, 2004) found that in the job market, Americans with disabilities are at a significant disadvantage compared to Americans without disabilities. The survey found that only 35% of people with disabilities are employed full or part time, compared to 78% of other Americans. Although this number is up from the year 2000, when it was 32%, progress is slow, and the employment gap between Americans with disabilities and Americans without disabilities is large. The low employment rate, low earnings and low-status jobs are believed to contribute to the finding that only 34% of people with disabilities are very satisfied with their lives, compared to 61% of those without disabilities who are very satisfied with their lives.

The low unemployment rate of Americans with disabilities may be due in part to fears employees have concerning employing those with disabilities. Many employers fear that disabled workers would be absent more often, produce substandard work, scare away customers and
so forth. Although scenarios such as these may happen, they are far from the norm. In fact, there are many benefits companies can realize from hiring those with disabilities. Employees with disabilities have proven to be dependable, dedicated, hardworking and productive. They also have shown equal or higher job performance ratings, higher retention rates, and lower absenteeism (National Organization on Disability, 2001). Employing those with disabilities is also good for the image of businesses and society. A study by the University of Massachusetts Boston's Center for Social Development and Education (Mohler, Parker, Romano, & Siperstein, 2006) found that 92% of customers surveyed felt more favorable towards companies that hire individuals with disabilities, and 87% said that they would prefer to give their business to such companies. These findings suggest that hiring those with disabilities can bring multiple benefits to a firm. Therefore, employing individuals with disabilities not only taps into a labor supply of dependable and hard working people, but also contributes to portraying a positive company image to customers.

The low unemployment rate of Americans with disabilities may also be due in part to fears about the cost of granting accommodations. Many company leaders
thought that to accommodate individuals they would have to spend large sums of money on costly equipment or devices. Subsequent research has indicated that these fears are largely unsubstantiated and such costs are minimal. The Fall 2005 Survey of Employees and Individuals with Disabilities found that the median cost of accommodations was only $600, and 72% of individuals with disabilities reported that their accommodation was made at no cost (Hendricks, Batiste & Hirsh, 2005). In many instances there was no need for structural accommodations, but rather a change in human resource management practices (Wooten & James, 2005). The Federal government also helps mitigate the cost of supplying reasonable accommodations by offering tax benefits to qualifying companies that accommodate employees with disabilities.

While concerns over the cost of accommodating disabilities have subsided somewhat, other employer concerns about the ADA have emerged. Due in part to the media pointing out abuses of accommodation, concerns have surfaced about the possibility that persons with disabilities or claiming to have disabilities will unjustly benefit from the accommodation stipulation (Colella, Paetzold, & Belliveau, 2004). Stories of ADA
misrepresentation include an alcoholic who filed a wrongful dismissal claim when he was fired for coming to work drunk. Another man who was fired for bringing a gun to work claimed protection under the ADA because he asserted he had a chemical imbalance that left him with poor judgment. A typist believed she had been wrongfully terminated because bipolar disorder caused her to scream at her manager (West & Cardy, 1997). As a result of examples like these, employers may question whether an individual claiming to have a disability does in fact have a disability, the individual is stretching the interpretation of ADA provisions, or if the individual is faking a disability to claim a benefit.

There seems to be apprehension about people receiving accommodations they are not entitled to while, conversely, there appear to be many people with disabilities who are reluctant to request accommodations that they are entitled to. Individuals with a qualifying disability may be reluctant to divulge that they have a disability for a variety of reasons, including possible stigmatization, resentment, and less challenging job assignments (Baldridge & Viega, 2001). To understand this challenging state of affairs of exploitation and unmade valid requests, scholars...
have examined the role of coworker reactions in relation to accommodations made for a worker with a disability.

Providing accommodations is a process that must take into account individual characteristics because there isn’t one disability that requires one specific accommodation. There are over 1,000 different disabilities covered by the ADA, and an endless list of possible accommodations (Baldridge & Viega, 2001). In reference to coworkers, there are two types of accommodations: those that affect the coworker, and those that do not. Certain accommodations require the assistance or cooperation of coworkers to be successful. Examples of these accommodations include shift changes or changing job tasks. If an employer changes the shift of an individual with a disability, then the shift of a coworker is going to get changed as well. If an employee with a bad back is not required to sweep, another employee is going to have to complete that task. If coworkers are not willing to assist in these accommodations, the accommodation is not going to be successful.

There are also certain accommodations that do not directly affect coworkers because they do not require the assistance or cooperation of coworkers to be implemented. For example, someone who is vision-impaired may be
accommodated by the provision of a larger computer screen, someone who has back trouble may be accommodated by supplying a special chair, or a blind person may be accommodated by translating written materials into Braille. Although many accommodations, such as a special chair or a computer screen, do not require the cooperation of coworkers, they are often visible to coworkers. Coworkers are likely to form opinions and attitudes about accommodations that affect them or are visible to them. If coworkers develop negative attitudes towards the disabled individual, the accommodating supervisor, or the company, the “backlash” could lead to detrimental results for the company, in terms of conflict or decreased productivity. Thus, coworker reactions need to be considered when accommodating persons with disabilities.

Coworker Reactions

Colella (2001) identifies four reasons why coworker reactions should be considered when deciding whether to grant an accommodation to an individual with a disability. First, as discussed earlier, coworker reactions can impact whether the implementation of an accommodation is successful because many accommodations require the
cooperation of coworkers. For example, if a disabled employee cannot sweep because of a bad back, some other worker will need to do it. Without the cooperation of others in the workgroup, accommodations such as task reassignment, longer lunch breaks, a quieter workspace or permission to work from home would be arduous, if not impossible, to implement.

The second reason why coworker reactions should be considered is that their reactions can have an effect on the individual who is requesting the accommodation. Research results indicate that, in general, people hold negative attitudes towards disabled individuals, and people with disabilities are frequently treated poorly (Baldridge & Viega, 2001). If individuals with disabilities believe that their coworkers will form negative attitudes towards them or treat them differently because they request an accommodation, they may be less willing to request the needed accommodation. Quite simply, the individual with a disability may feel that the benefits of the accommodation will not outweigh the costs of requesting the accommodation.

Third, supervisors may consider, among other things, coworker reactions when deciding whether or not to grant an
accommodation. Although the ADA does not permit supervisors
to consider coworker reactions in determining an
accommodation, they may do so when deciding whether the
accommodation may cause undue hardship. For example, if a
supervisor believes that granting an accommodation would
create negative coworker reactions that would lead to
conflict or decreased productivity, he or she may not grant
the accommodation because they may not feel that it would
be worth it.

And finally, as a whole, coworker reactions can
influence public policy and the general public’s reaction
to the ADA. The popular press and media are quick to point
out abuses of the accommodation stipulation in the ADA.
Stories about individuals exploiting the ADA in the media
may be promoted by a small but vocal number of people
having adverse ADA-related experiences. This negative press
could shift how society views the ADA and individuals with
disabilities.

In review, there are four reasons Colella (2001)
states for considering coworker reactions when supervisors
decide whether or not to grant an accommodation. First,
coworkers may need to assist in the accommodation; second,
coworkers may have negative reactions to the accommodated
person if they think the accommodation is not fair; third, negative coworker reactions can lead to destructive behaviors; and finally, coworker reactions may cause negative public reaction to the ADA and to accommodation issues generally.

Justice

There is an almost universal awareness of the term 'fairness', although the definitions and ways to achieve it differ. Within the psychological literature, interest in the principle of fairness led to the study of justice development. Melvin J. Lerner, a prominent justice researcher, supposed that "individuals have a need to believe that they live in a world where people generally get what they deserve. The belief that the world is just enables the individual to confront his physical and social environments as though they were stable and orderly" (cited in Ng & Allen, 2005, p. 437). Thus, it appears that in all aspects of life, people are concerned about the concept of fairness. In fact, individuals are rarely reticent about expressing an opinion when asked whether an allocation, a procedure, or a punishment is fair (Tyler & Smith, 1998).
Generally, people believe that distributions and procedures ought to be fair. So how do individuals determine whether or not something is fair? Social psychological research has demonstrated that people have specific justice criteria that they use when determining whether or not distributions and procedures are considered just or unjust. This justice criterion defines what individuals believe ought to happen in “justice” situations (Werndorf, Alexander & Firestone, 2002).

Concern about the fairness of outcomes or allocations is labeled *distributive justice*. Nowakowski and Conlon (2005) define distributive justice as “the perceived fairness of outcomes one receives from a social exchange or interaction” (p. 5). Distributive justice research focuses on reactions to outcome distributions in groups, and research shows that favorable outcomes typically lead to positive responses while unfavorable outcomes result in negative responses (Werndorf et al., 2002). Individuals determine whether outcomes are distributed fairly based on different justice criteria, or ‘rules’. Three of the most common decision rules are *equity, equality* and *need*.
Equity

The study of distributive justice was initiated with Adams’ (1965) equity theory. Equity theory postulates that to derive an equitable outcome, people first compare the ratios of their own perceived outcomes to their own inputs, and then compare this ratio to a corresponding other (Greenberg, 1990). Equitable states and feelings of satisfaction and fairness are theorized to result from equivalent ratios of inputs and outputs. If the ratios are unequal, the individual with the higher ratio is theorized to be inequitably overpaid and thus will feel guilty, and the individual with the lower ratio is theorized to be inequitably underpaid and feel angry. Individuals can adjust their own or the comparison other’s actual or perceived inputs or outcomes to try and change distressing inequitable states to more agreeable and equitable states. These adjustments may be behavioral or psychological. A behavioral adjustment might be altering one’s own job performance, and a psychological adjustment might be altering certain perceptions of work outcomes, such as reevaluating which outcomes are more important, like salary, parking spaces or vacation time (Greenberg, 1990). For example, if a woman had five years experience at a job,
she might expect that her salary be higher than a coworker who holds the same job but had not been working for the company as long. If her salary was indeed higher, then she would deem the ratios were equitable and feel a sense of satisfaction. If the coworker’s (comparison other) salary was higher, the woman would conclude that the outcome was not fair, based on the corresponding ratios of experience to salary.

Need

The equity rule has been studied more often than other justice decision rules, and it is the rule deemed most relevant to most forms of social interaction. Many people are concerned about maximizing their self-interest, and deem whichever outcomes meet this standard as fair. However, people are not always or only concerned about personal gain, but are also concerned about fair treatment. In certain situations, people use justice rules other than equity, such as the need rule. The need rule argues that people should be rewarded based on their level of individual need. The need rule is often deemed important when the goal of the distribution is the wellbeing of the recipients. Also, the need rule is more likely to be used when individual needs are acknowledged and important to the
individual making the fairness judgment (Giacobbe-Miller, Miller & Victorov, 1998). In some situations, individuals may see as fair only those distributions that favor those with the greatest need (Werndorf et al., 2002). For example, members of a sales staff may get different travel budgets based on who travels the farthest. Using the need rule, the salesperson who travels the farthest gets the largest travel budget, because he needs it more than a salesperson who doesn’t travel as far.

Equality

There are also situations where people may utilize the equality rule. The equality rules states that each individual in the group should receive equal allocations. Under an equality rule, everyone in the group would be treated equally, or the same as everyone else. The equality rule calls for resource distribution that does not take into account input differences, and thus resources are divided equally, independent of how much each individual contributes (Meindl, 1989). In an organizational context, employee benefits may be distributed equally.

One of the more prominent implications of alternative decision rules, such as equity, need and equality, is the disparity they create between allocation recipients. This
contrast is significant, because of the negative implications this can bring. The application of decision rules in the organizational setting, as well as outcomes different rules engender, is discussed in the next section.

Justice Judgments

Justice judgments have been shown to span many contexts, including educational settings, the political arena, and workplace settings (Werndorf et al., 2002). As has been stated earlier, justice is an important underlying concept for proper functioning of organizations and the people within the organization (Colquitt, Conlon, Weson, Porter, & Ng, 2001). The study of justice in an organizational setting is termed organizational justice, and coworker reactions to distributions play a critical role in organizational justice.

Why is it important to distinguish between different allocation rules in the organizational setting? It is important to know which distributive justice rule is being used because alternate use of the equity, need or equality rules result in different outcome allocations. These rules have implications for a number of important interpersonal and group problems, and have been found to affect future productivity and job satisfaction, group climate and
interpersonal conflict (Meindl, 1989). These reactions are difficult to predict, because all three rules may be operating at the same time (Klimoski & Donahue, 1997).

An area of research that has extensively studied the simultaneous application of decision rules is the area of organizational pay allocations. One study (Giacobbe-Miller, Miller & Victorov, 1998) examining manager allocation decisions found that a significant number of Russian and U.S. managers made base allocations to all their employees (partial equality) and allocated bonuses based on productivity (partial equity). The most cited reasons for making equal allocations was group relations and cohesiveness, and the most cited reason for making equity allocations was to reward productivity. Both the Russian and U.S. managers rated the equity criterion as the most fair; however, they utilized the equality rule because they were concerned about the long-term effects on low performers, such as developing low morale (Giacobbe-Miller, Miller & Victorov, 1998). Thus, in certain situations, more than one decision rule may be operating at the same time.

The distributive justice rule used to make judgments on the fairness of outcomes will also depend on the specific situation. Equity is important when the goal is
productivity, equality is important when the goal is group harmony, and need is important when the goal is the welfare of the recipients, especially in situations where individual needs are known and important to the decision maker (Giacobbe-Miller, Miller & Victorov, 1998). A study by Meindl (1989) found that managers operating in different value contexts and with different situational goals are likely to arrive at different distributive solutions. For example, managers who had a goal to increase coworker cohesiveness were more likely to use the equality rule, and managers who had a goal to increase productivity were more likely to use the equity rule.

Understanding recipient reactions to allocations, as well as the goals of different distributive justice rules would be very beneficial to organizations to assist them in reducing negative reactions that may occur. Knowing which distributive justice rule a coworker or coworkers will use in accommodation situations would be beneficial to predicting the reactions to accommodations, as well as the treatment of a person with a disability by coworkers.

Decision Rules and Accommodation

The decision rule used by coworkers when making distributive justice judgments in organizational settings
is hypothesized to result in different factors being considered when making judgments about different situations. The equity rule is thought to be the rule most often used in organizational settings. If the equity rule is used in the accommodation situation, coworkers would make distributive justice judgments about the fairness of an accommodation based on how the accommodation altered the accommodated person's input/outcome ratio in relation to their own. Colella (2001) states that coworkers using the equity rule would be more likely to see an accommodation as distributively unfair if the accommodation is seen as making the accommodated person's work easier, the accommodation is seen as making the coworker's own work harder, the accommodation is seen as a reward, or the accommodation is seen as making aspects of coworkers' jobs less desirable.

It has not been suggested if or when the equality decision rule will be used in the organizational accommodation setting. In the accommodation scenario, a disabled individual is granted an accommodation based on a specific individual characteristic, which violates the equality rule of equal treatment to all. Thus, if the equality rule were used in the accommodation scenario, all
accommodations would be considered unfair because accommodations are a form of specialized treatment (Colella, 2001). Because Colella (2001) makes this argument and does not include the equality rule in her model of coworker accommodation justice perceptions, the equality rule will not be considered further and is not included in this study.

If the need rule is used, rather than distributive justice judgments based on the effect of equity comparisons, coworkers make judgments about an accommodation based on the degree to which they perceive the accommodation is needed or warranted. Coworkers decide whether or not they believe the accommodation is warranted, based on their belief that the person being accommodated has a legitimate disability, and the accommodation is needed for the disabled person to fulfill his or her work responsibilities (Colella, 2001). The next section of this paper discusses the influences on coworker perceptions of accommodation "warrantedness" (Colella, 2001).
Influences on Coworker Perceptions of Accommodation Warrantedness

Two factors thought to influence coworker perceptions of accommodation warrantedness include characteristics of the disability and characteristics of the accommodation (Colella, 2001).

Characteristics of the Disability

Research on attitudes towards individuals with disabilities is not new, and the results of research on the topic indicate that, in general, people hold negative attitudes towards the disabled (Popovich, Scherbaum, Scherbaum & Polinko, 2003). However, attitudes towards the disabled have been shown to differ depending on attributes of the individual, attributes of the disabled person, attributes of the disability and the context of the situation (Popovitch et al., 2003). For example, people may view individuals with drug addictions less favorably than individuals with paraplegia, people with more experience and familiarity with individuals with autism may have more positive attitudes than those with less experience with individuals who have autism, and an individual may enjoy working with someone who is blind, but would never date someone who is blind. A study by Grand, Bernier, and
Strohmner (1982) found that attitudes towards individuals with disabilities were significantly more positive in work situations than in dating or marriage scenarios. A more recent study by Hergenrather and Rhodes (2007) found similar results, in that individuals held more positive attitudes towards working with individuals with disabilities, followed by marriage to an individual with a disability, and finally dating an individual with a disability. Thus, the context of the situation is an important determinant when studying attitudes towards individuals with disabilities. This being said, what attitudes do employers and coworkers have about disabled workers?

Many studies have explored attitudes towards individuals with disabilities based on the type of disability, and these studies have found that attitudes vary depending on the type of disability. Stone and Colella (1996) categorized disabilities into six different groups: physical conditions, sensory impairments, mental conditions, learning disabilities, neurological conditions and addictive disorders. A physical disability is a condition that limits basic physical activities, such as walking, climbing stairs, lifting, reaching or carrying;
the U.S. Census Bureau (Waldrop & Stern, 2003) estimates that 8.2% of the United States population has a physical disability. Sensory disabilities include those individuals with sight or hearing impairments; the U.S. Census Bureau (Waldrop & Stern, 2003) estimates that 3.6% of the United States population has a sensory disability.

Mental conditions, neurological conditions and learning disabilities are all forms of mental or psychological disorders that affect a major life activity of individuals. Mental or psychological disorders are disorders that affect the mind, which can include cognitive, emotional or behavior impairments. Common mental conditions include depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. A common neurological disorder includes Alzheimer’s disease, which is a type of dementia that causes brain deterioration. Learning disabilities affect one’s capacity to learn. Learning disabilities affect how one acquires, stores, or uses information. According to a report conducted by the United States Census Bureau ("Americans With Disabilities" the Survey of Income and Program Participation [1997]), among people 15 and over in 1997, 14.3 million Americans have a mental disability, including 1.9 million with Alzheimer’s disease, and 3.5
million Americans have learning disabilities. Addictive disorders are those classified as chronic use of a drug, and are classified into 4 categories: alcoholism, narcotic addiction, stimulant addiction and nicotine addiction.

There seems to be a hierarchy of attitudes for disabilities in the general population. Generally, physical disabilities are perceived more favorably than sensory disabilities, and sensory disabilities are preferred over mental disabilities (Thomas, 2000). A study by Thomas (2000) found that out of the 16 disabilities he included in his study, diabetes engendered the most positive attitudes, while alcoholism engendered the most negative attitudes.

A review of the studies concerning employer attitudes found that employer attitudes were congruent with the general public’s attitudes. The research found that employer attitudes towards individuals with different types of disabilities in the workforce are more favorable towards individuals with physical disabilities than individuals with mental or emotional disabilities (Unger, 2002). Employers have expressed greater concerns about employing those with mental or emotional disabilities than employing those with physical disabilities. Mental disabilities create unique challenges for employers. Many employers fear
that individuals with mental disabilities will exhibit unpredictable behavior, and many also feel that due to the relative invisibility of mental disabilities, individuals will state that they have a disability when in fact they do not.

**Learning Disabilities.** Since the passing of the ADA, very little research has been conducted on attitudes towards individuals with learning disabilities that differentiate them from mental disabilities. One study conducted in 1987 (Minskoff, Sautter, Hoffman, & Hawks, 1987) assessed employer attitudes towards hiring employees with physical disabilities and learning disabilities five years before the ADA was implemented. The study asked employers if they were willing to hire certain individuals for the jobs that they supervised. Just over half of all respondents (51%), said that they would hire individuals with a learning disability, 33% said no, and 16% did not respond. The authors hypothesized three reasons for why a large percentage of coworkers were unwilling to hire individuals with learning disabilities. The first reason was that employers have more positive feelings towards hiring those with physical disabilities than those with mental disabilities. The second reason was the lack of
experience employers have with working with individuals with learning disabilities, and the third reason was that employers may not have accurate knowledge about learning disabilities (Minskoff et al., 1987).

A more recent synthesis of the empirical work in the field of learning disabilities and the ADA (Gerber & Price, 2003) found that employers had mixed feelings towards learning disabilities. As with other types of mental disabilities, the invisibility of learning disabilities can make them difficult to accept. Also, employers are concerned about what conditions are considered learning disabilities, and how each condition can be accommodated. However, data indicate that many employers seem willing to hire individuals with learning disabilities; therefore, it is important for the individual with a learning disability to be familiar with his or her disability so that the employer has all the information necessary to produce a suitable accommodation.

Research on accommodations for individuals with learning disabilities is sparse. Individuals with learning disabilities most likely are not more likely to disclose to their employer that they have a learning disability, and thus do not request an accommodation. For example, in a
study by Gerber, Price, and Mulligan (2004) in which 25 Americans with disabilities were interviewed about their employment experiences, none had requested an accommodation. Self-disclosure is required to receive an accommodation, so why are individuals with learning disabilities unwilling to disclose to their employer that they have a disability? Possible reasons include: individuals with learning disabilities may feel that an accommodation is not necessary (Gerber et al., 2004), they may not believe the benefits that come from receiving an accommodation will outweigh the costs of possible stigmatization, and they do not believe that employers will grant the accommodation (Baldridge & Viega, 2001).

Even less information has been gained about coworker attitudes towards employees with learning disabilities. The same survey mentioned above also asked these individuals about coworker reactions to their disabilities. Gerber et al. found that most individuals did not want their coworkers to know they had a learning disability (2004). With those with learning disabilities unwilling to disclose that they have a disability, it is hard to assess the employment experiences of those with learning disabilities.
Physical Disabilities and Mental Disabilities. Not only are physical disabilities viewed more positively than mental or psychological disabilities, but more people agree that physical impairments should be covered under the ADA. In two separate studies, Popovich et al. (2003) looked at attitudes people have about what conditions constitute a disability. Their first study examined beliefs about what individuals felt constitutes a disability and supplied the participants with no definition of disability, while the second study asked the same questions, but provided the participants with the ADA’s definition of disability. Results showed that there were discrepancies between what individuals thought were disabilities, and what disabilities are legally covered under the ADA. Even when participants were presented with information about the ADA, the discrepancies were not reduced. The discrepancies were largest for psychological conditions (including mental and emotional conditions), and smallest for physical and sensory-motor conditions. More physical and sensory conditions were considered disabilities than psychological conditions, even though many psychological conditions are covered under the ADA. Thus, studies show that more physical conditions are considered to be disabilities than
psychological conditions, and physical conditions are viewed more positively than psychological conditions.

**Attributions for Disabilities.** Why are physical conditions viewed more favorably than psychological conditions? Attribution theory may be useful in explaining this state of affairs. Attribution theory examines the causes and future expectancies of events. When examining negative attitudes towards disabilities, two factors are explored. These factors are controllability and stability. Controllability of an impairment is the extent to which the disabled person is responsible for the impairment and its remediation (Corrigan, 2000). Is the disability self-caused, or is it due to environmental factors or biological disease? If an individual is believed to be responsible for his or her disability, then he or she is more likely to elicit more negative attitudes than when he or she is not seen as responsible for his or her disability. For example, an individual who is addicted to drugs may engender more negative attitudes than someone who has been blind since birth, because the drug addict is believed to be responsible for his or her condition, while the blind individual is not believed to be responsible for his or her condition.
Stability of an impairment is the expectation of whether a condition will improve over time (Chan, McMahon, Cheing, Rosenthal, & Bezyak, 2005). Stability reflects changeability of a disorder and beliefs about responsiveness to therapy. A mental condition such as depression can be expected to improve over time due to therapy or medication, whereas a physical condition such as being paralyzed is not expected to improve over time.

The research of Wiener, Perry and Magnusson (1988) and Corrigan et al. (2000) studied controllability and stability of different types of impairments, and found that the general public does discriminate among different disability classifications due to perceptions of controllability and stability. Individuals with mental illnesses are viewed as having more controllable and stable conditions than those with physical or sensory conditions and consequently, they engender more negative attitudes. They are believed to be more in control of their disabilities, less worthy of pity and prognostically inferior to individuals with physical disabilities (Chan et al., 2005).

In summary, the general population has an overall negative attitude towards the disabled, and employer
attitudes seem to follow the same trend. However, attitudes tend to differ depending on context of the situation and the type of disability. People have more positive attitudes towards working with individuals with disabilities than marrying or dating individuals with disabilities. Also, physical disabilities are viewed more positively than mental or psychological disabilities.

Characteristics of the Accommodation

Clearly, the nature of a disability affects people's attitudes, which in turn may affect the perceived warrantedness of an accommodation. How coworkers view a disability will affect how they view an accommodation, and this will determine whether they will utilize the need rule in forming their fairness judgment. Not only does the nature of the disability affect whether coworkers will utilize the need rule, but coworkers will also consider characteristics of the accommodation. For coworkers to consider an accommodation necessary, they must see that the accommodation provides some benefit. The benefit can be characterized as perceived accommodation usefulness, which is the assessment of the extent to which an accommodation would help the disabled individual accomplish work tasks (Baldridge & Viega, 2001). Perceived accommodation
usefulness answers the question, does the accommodation fit the impairment? This assessment takes into account awareness of a problem or a perceived need, and a belief that the need can be resolved. Thus, accommodation usefulness requires two essential conditions are met: a perceived need exists, and an accommodation can reduce this need. Generally, the stronger the belief in the need, the greater the perception of accommodation usefulness (Baldridge & Viega, 2001). If coworkers believe that an accommodation is not appropriate for addressing the needs of the disability, they will be less likely to view the accommodation as needed, and therefore less distributively just according to the need rule (Colella, 2001). For example, if coworkers believe an individual is requesting an accommodation to increase his or her performance so as to "get ahead", coworkers are more likely to view this accommodation as unwarranted.

There is little research about the types of accommodations offered by organizations. A plausible reason for this could be the large number of disabilities and the large number of possible accommodations. Cleveland, Barnes-Farrell and Ratz (1997) identified six dimensions that accommodations vary on, including type, cost, timing,
duration, impact on workplace and who initiated the accommodation (employer or employee). How an accommodation distinguishes itself based on these six attributes is apt to influence coworker reactions to it. For example, there is evidence that coworkers react differently to different types of accommodations, independent of the disability. An earlier study by Cleveland, Barnes-Farrell and Huestis (1996) found that, independent of disability, subjects classified accommodations into major and minor accommodations, and reacted differently to each. Results showed that requesting to work at home two days a week via telecommuting was considered a major request, while requesting to leave work 45 minutes early two days a week was considered a minor request. The major accommodation was considered more costly, less appropriate, and the applicant was seen as less entitled to the major accommodation than the minor accommodation (Cleveland et al., 1996). This difference suggests that coworkers make judgments about specific accommodations, and may view minor accommodations as more acceptable than major accommodations.

Accommodation magnitude can be of particular importance when coworkers decide whether or not an accommodation is warranted. Accommodation magnitude is the
amount to which an accommodation is extensive in terms of money, time or inconvenience (Baldridge & Viega, 2001). Accommodations of greater magnitude are more likely to be seen as inappropriate (Klimoski & Donahue, 1997). Also, coworkers may expect that accommodations of greater magnitude will impose a greater imposition on themselves. If coworkers believe accommodations to be too extensive, inappropriate or impose a large imposition on themselves, this can lead to decreased perceptions of fairness.

Therefore, it has been suggested that both characteristics of the disability and characteristics of the accommodation will influence coworker perceptions of accommodation warrantedness.

**Purpose of This Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine if in the accommodation situation, coworkers are likely to use the need rule when determining whether an accommodation is warranted or not, and if they do, if using the need rule is likely to result in more positive justice judgments. Past research on justice rules suggests that the equity rule is the rule most often used in the work context; however, it is possible that in the accommodation situation, coworkers
will use the need rule. There are certain circumstances in which it is more likely that coworkers will use the need rule and not the equity rule. It has been suggested that in the accommodation situation, coworkers will be more likely to use the need rule when they believe the impairment being accommodated is a legitimate disability and when the accommodation for the disability is reasonable for the disability (Colella, 2001). Thus, the more coworkers utilize the need rule, the more fair their justice perceptions towards the accommodation situation will be.

Coworkers using the equity rule will not base their justice perceptions toward an accommodation situation on whether they believe the disability is legitimate or the accommodation is reasonable. They will base their justice perceptions on how the accommodation altered the accommodated person’s input/outcome ratio in relation to their own input/outcome ratio. The more coworkers utilize the equity rule, the less fair their justice perceptions toward the accommodation situation will be.

Hypothesis 1: In the physical disability scenario, coworkers who utilize the need rule will be more likely to view an accommodation situation as fair. Coworkers who utilize the equity rule will be more likely to view the
accommodation as unfair. In addition, in the physical
disability scenario, need rule judgments will be more
predictive of fairness perceptions than will equity rule
judgments.

Hypothesis 1 is being tested on the physical
disability scenario because physical disabilities engender
the most positive attitudes, and therefore application of
the need rule is most likely to occur. Because this type of
disability is well accepted and the need rule has never
been tested in the disability accommodation situation, it
is a reasonable "test" of the need versus equity rule.

Hypothesis 2: When making justice judgments about
accommodation situations, application of the need rule will
vary according to type of disability. The more positively
viewed the disability, the more the need rule will be used.
Specifically, the need rule will be most prominent for
physical disabilities, followed by learning disabilities,
then mental disabilities, and finally addictive
disabilities.
CHAPTER TWO

METHODS

Participants

Undergraduate students at California State University San Bernardino, who were currently employed or previously employed, were recruited from psychology and business courses to participate voluntarily in this study. To screen for invalid data, a manipulation check was included at the end of each scenario. Of the 145 surveys collected, 3 answered the manipulation check incorrectly, and 22 evidenced incomplete responses; therefore, 25 responses were eliminated, leaving 120 complete surveys. No identifying data were collected and thus participants were assured of anonymity. Participants were treated in accordance with the APA guidelines.

Measures

On the basis of a review of the literature on justice and Colella's (2001) model of factors affecting coworker distributive justice judgments concerning disability accommodations, I developed 3 scales to assess attitudes on accommodation fairness, warrantedness and equity. The
Accommodation Fairness Scale (AFS) consists of 3 items used to determine the overall fairness rating of a scenario. The second scale used was the Coworker Need Rule Scale (CNRS). This scale consists of 3 items assessing whether an individual uses the need rule when making justice judgments. The third scale employed was the Coworker Equity Rule Scale (CERS), which consists of 4 items assessing whether an individual uses the need rule when making justice judgments. Participants rated the items on each scale on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from “completely disagree” (1) to “completely agree” (7). Sample questions include “Linda has a legitimate disability” and “Linda’s accommodation makes my work more difficult”.

A pilot study was conducted to determine if the items were perceived as measuring different constructs, as well as to ensure understanding. Ten individuals were asked to sort each item into their corresponding category (justice, need or equity). Based on the results of the pilot study, all items were retained and two items were reworded. Item 2 was reworded from “the accommodation Linda is getting is what she deserves” to “Linda is getting what she deserves” and item 5 was reworded from “Linda’s disability merits an
accommodation” to “Linda’s disability requires an accommodation”.

The internal consistency of the responses on these scales was determined through reliability analysis. Alphas for each scale were computed for each disability scenario (range from .80 - .96) as well as aggregated across all disability scenarios (range from .88 - .95), as can be seen Table 1.

Table 1. Coefficient Alphas by Scale and Disability Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Paraplegia</th>
<th>Dyslexia</th>
<th>Depression</th>
<th>Alcoholism</th>
<th>Aggregate</th>
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<td>Fair</td>
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<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need</td>
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<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.88</td>
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NOTE: n = 120.

In addition to the attitudinal measures, several demographic items (gender, age, experience working with a disabled individual, supervisory experience) were requested.

Procedure

A survey consisting of four scenarios and the measures detailed above was administered to participants in
psychology and business courses with instructors' permission. The participants first read a scenario in which they were told that they work as a cashier at a department store where one of their coworkers has a disability which is being accommodated. After reading the brief scenario, each participant was then asked to fill out the Accommodation Fairness Scale (AFS), the Coworker Need Rule Scale (CNRS) and the Coworker Equity Rule Scale (CERS).

There were four different scenarios that corresponded to a physical disability (paraplegia), a learning disability (dyslexia), a mental disability (depression) and an addictive disability (alcoholism). After participants read the first scenario and completed the three scales, they were then directed to complete the same procedure for each of four disability scenarios in turn. To guard against carry-over effects, the surveys were constructed so that the order of the different disabilities was randomly presented. Following the completion of the scenarios, participants filled out a brief demographic questionnaire.

Each scenario was carefully designed so that the only difference between each scenario was the type of disability and the type of accommodation commonly made available for the given disability. Each scenario pertained to the same
job (cashier) and name of the disabled individual (Linda) remained the same throughout each scenario. Care was taken to ensure that each accommodation was known by the coworker, and that the participant is aware of the coworker’s disability. Each of the accommodations was designed so that it did not require the assistance or cooperation of coworkers. All of these precautions were taken to ensure that the fairness judgments across scenarios were based only on the type of disability and the corresponding accommodation, and not the gender of the disabled individual, the job the disabled individual has, or the amount of coworker assistance required for the accommodation.
CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS

Descriptives

Of the 120 participants, 44 were men and 76 were women. Participant ages ranged from 18 to 57, with a mean age of 22 (median = 20). Sixty-one (51%) participants had worked with a disabled individual; the average length of time working with a person with a disability was one year.

Assumptions

Prior to running analyses, data were screened for missing values. Six cases contained missing values; however, there was less than 5% missing data for each measure and no cases were deleted on the basis of missing data. Results of evaluation of the assumptions of normality (equal n and error degrees of freedom > 20), homogeneity of within cell variance (descriptive statistics), and independence (randomly assigned) were satisfactory. There were no outliers. The two scales AFS and the CNRS were negatively skewed for the paraplegia and dyslexia disabilities. No transformations were performed because this phenomenon is believed to be a true reflection of the
underlying population values and comparisons of the paraplegic and dyslexic conditions could not be made to the other two conditions.

Analyses

Hypothesis one stated that coworkers who utilized the need rule would be more likely to view an accommodation situation as fair, and coworkers who utilized the equity rule would be more likely to view the accommodation as unfair. Data for Hypothesis one were analyzed through correlations. Bivariate correlations were performed between responses to the AFS and the CNRS for the paraplegia scenario, and responses to the AFS and the CERS for the paraplegia scenario. The bivariate correlation between the AFS and CNRS was .83 (p < .01). There was a significant positive linear relationship between AFS scores and CNRS scores. As AFS scores increased, CNRS scores increased. The bivariate correlation between the AFS and the CERS was -.46 (p < .01). There was a significant negative linear relationship between AFS scores and CNRS scores. As AFS scores increased, CNRS scores decreased. Correlations for the AFS, CNRS and CERS on the other three disabilities are listed in Appendix A. In addition, a comparison of the two
correlations was made, using Hotelling-Williams T (t=10.54, p< .001). The value of .83 is significantly different from |-.46|. Therefore, need judgments were a stronger predictor of fairness than were equity judgments in the physical disability scenario.

Hypothesis two stated that when making justice judgments about accommodation situations, application of the need rule would vary according to type of disability. The more positively viewed the disability, the more the need rule would be used. Specifically, the need rule was expected to be most prominent for physical disabilities, followed by learning disabilities, then mental disabilities, and finally addictive disabilities. Data for Hypothesis two was analyzed using planned contrasts in a one-way ANOVA; with mean scores on the CNRS compared across the four scenarios (different disabilities).

The one-way ANOVA showed a significant main effect in need rule scores across the four different disabilities, [F(3, 476) = 107.9, p < .001]. Following my hypothesis, I expected that participants would report higher need rule scores for paraplegia than for dyslexia. The test of this contrast was significant, [t(1, 476) = 6.59, p < .001]. I also expected higher need rule scores for dyslexia than
depression. The test of this contrast was also significant, \[ t(1, 476) = 8.03, p < .001 \]. Finally, I expected higher need rule scores for depression than for alcoholism. The test of this contrast was not significant, \[ t(1, 476) = .99, p > .001 \]. The results of these contrasts indicate that the need rule scores are highest for paraplegia (19.56), followed by dyslexia (16.53) and depression (12.62); however there is no significant difference between depression and alcoholism. Need rule means for each disability are graphed in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Coworker Need Rule Scale Mean Score Across Disability Type
NOTE: n = 120.
Post Hoc Analyses

Because previous researchers (Popovich et al., 2003) have found that affective reactions of women to working with disabled individuals were more positive than the reactions of men, I examined the fair, need and equity, scores by gender. I conducted t-tests to compare men and women’s scores on these scales and found no differences among the AFS, CNRS and CERS scales. (See Appendix B for the means).

Due to research suggesting that previous experience with individuals with disabilities has been found to result in more favorable attitudes toward individuals with disabilities (Stone & Colella, 1996; Unger, 2002), I also examined the fair, need and equity scores by experience with a family member or close friend who has a disability and experience working with an individual with a disability. I conducted t-tests to compare the scores of those with experiences working with or having a family member who was disabled on these scales and found no differences among the AFS, CNRS and CERS scales by experience. (See Appendix B for the means).

Correlations between the three scales by disability type were also calculated (see Appendix C) to see whether
correlation strength between the AFS and CNRS and the AFS and CERS differed by disability. All correlations were significant (p < .001). The correlations between the AFS and CNRS were greater than the correlations between the AFS and the CERS across all disabilities; however, the correlations between the AFS and the CERS were greater for dyslexia, depression and alcoholism than they were for paraplegia.
CHAPTER FOUR
GENERAL DISCUSSION

This study was designed to look at coworker distributive justice perceptions in organizational disability accommodation situations. Past research has found that equity is the most commonly used decision rule in organizations (Greenberg, 1990); however some research indicates that in the accommodation situation, coworkers may utilize the need rule when making distributive justice judgments (Colella, 2001). It has been suggested that coworkers using the need rule will rate an accommodation as more fair the more they believe that the individual being accommodated has a legitimate disability and when they believe that the accommodation is needed for the person with a disability to fulfill his or her work responsibilities (Colella, 2001). My investigation exploring need rule application in the accommodation situation extends Colella’s (2001) model of how coworkers judge the distributive fairness of workplace accommodations of employees with disabilities by testing factors affecting need rule judgments and equity rule judgments.
The first goal of this study was to determine if coworkers utilize the need rule when making fairness judgments about accommodation situations. It was predicted that higher need rule judgments would result in higher fairness judgments. Findings revealed that coworkers did use the need rule when making fairness judgments, and higher need rule judgments predicted higher fairness judgments. The more a coworker believed a disabled coworker had a legitimate disability and needed an accommodation to fulfill his or her work responsibilities, the more fair he or she believed the accommodation situation to be. This finding supports Colella's (2001) model of factors affecting coworker distributive fairness judgments by studying how accommodation warrantedness affects accommodation justice perceptions. The finding that application of the need rule predicted higher accommodation fairness judgments also supports previous research suggesting that need is important when the goal is the welfare of the recipient, especially in situations where individual needs are known and important to the decision maker (Giacobbe-Miller, Miller & Victorov, 1998). Physical disabilities are visible, and therefore coworkers are more
apt to see the need, and thus rate an accommodation addressing this need as fair.

Furthermore, it was predicted that coworkers who reported higher equity judgments would report lower fairness judgments. Findings revealed that when coworkers reported higher use of the equity rule, including beliefs that an accommodation makes the accommodated person’s work easier, makes the coworker’s own work harder, makes aspects of the coworker’s job less desirable or is seen as a reward, coworkers also reported that the accommodation was less fair. Coworkers who are more likely to use self-interested comparisons when determining fairness judgments are more likely to judge an accommodation situation as unfair. Colella (2001) proposed that coworkers will be more likely to utilize the equity rule when the accommodation reduces other’s inputs, increases own inputs, increases other’s outcomes, and/or decreases own outcomes. This research supports Colella’s proposition by finding that in the physical disability scenario, coworkers were less likely to use equity comparisons when making fairness judgments.

It was also hypothesized that the need rule would be a stronger predictor of overall fairness judgments in the
physical disability scenario. Results confirmed that believing an accommodation was needed was a more important consideration of overall accommodation fairness then belief that the accommodation was equitable. One possible explanation for the results is that if coworkers believe that there is a high need for an accommodation, they are less likely to apply the equity rule. Coworkers may be more likely to perceive an accommodation need for physical disabilities, because the disability is clearly observable to them, as well as the relevancy of the accommodation. Mental or psychological disabilities are less visible, and therefore need ratings might not be as high because coworkers cannot observe the disability and surmise the reason for the accommodation (Colella, 2001). When coworkers believe that an accommodation is not needed they may be more likely to apply the equity rule. For example, the equity rule may be a more important predictor of fairness in a mental disability situation.

The results for hypothesis one revealed that distributive justice distribution rules influence justice perceptions. If coworkers believe an accommodation is needed, they are more likely to judge the accommodation as fair. If coworkers believe an accommodation is inequitable,
they are more likely to judge the accommodation as unfair. Also, in the physical disability scenario, beliefs about accommodation warrantedness were a more significant predictor of accommodation fairness than beliefs about accommodation equity.

Prior research has also indicated that more than one distributive justice rule can operate at the same time (Klimoski & Donahue, 1997). These findings build upon this line of research by extending the equity and need rule application to the accommodation domain, as well as supporting similar findings in reward allocation research, where managers reported allocations based on both equity and equality (Giacobbe-Miller, Miller & Victorov, 1998). My findings also suggest that more than one distributive justice rule may be in operation at the same time; however, because I am analyzing group level data, making predictions about individual's response patterns requires additional study. However, the strength of the correlation suggests that both rules may have been utilized at the same time. Although results showed that the need rule was a stronger predictor of fairness judgments, both rules did predict fairness. Coworkers may believe that an accommodation is
warranted and equitable, thus applying both rules simultaneously.

The second goal of this study was to determine if application of the need rule will vary according to type of disability. Research on employer attitudes towards different types of disabilities has found that there appears to be a hierarchy of attitudes for disabilities in the workplace. Employer attitudes are more favorable for physical disabilities than individuals with mental or emotional disabilities (Unger, 2002), and the least favorable disabilities are addictive disabilities (Thomas, 2000). It was predicted that application of the need rule would report a similar hierarchy to attitudes towards disabilities. Thus, coworkers would report a higher need for an accommodation for paraplegia, followed by dyslexia, then depression and finally alcoholism.

Findings provided partial support for this hypothesis. Results showed that there was a significant difference between application of the need rule in the paraplegia scenario and the dyslexia scenario. Respondents reported higher need judgments for the paraplegia accommodation than the dyslexia accommodation. Results also showed that there was a significant difference between application of the
need rule in the dyslexia scenario and the depression scenario. Respondents reported higher need judgments for the dyslexia accommodation than the depression accommodation. In contrast, results did not show that there was a significant difference between application of the need rule in the depression scenario and the alcoholism scenario. This may be because coworkers do not consider depression or alcoholism legitimate disabilities. A study by Popovich et al. (2003) found that participants did not consider depression and alcoholism to be legitimate disabilities. The finding that need application did not differ between the two mental disabilities expands the findings found by Popovich et al. (2003), by adding support that these two conditions are viewed less favorably than other conditions.

This result may also be due to attribution theory, specifically, respondent’s beliefs about the controllability of mental disabilities. Studies have shown (Corrigan et al., 2000; Wiener, Perry & Magnusson, 1988); that people view individuals with mental illnesses as having more controllable conditions than individuals with physical disabilities, and thus they are viewed more negatively. The controllability similarities between
depression and alcoholism may have been the reason that my results did not show a significant difference between them on application of the need rule.

Results for hypothesis two showed that the need rule was applied most for paraplegia, followed by dyslexia and then depression; however, there was no difference in application of the need rule between depression and alcoholism. It appears that coworkers will report higher need considerations for an accommodation for physical disabilities than mental or emotional disabilities.

Contrary to previous research, my results did not show significant differences on the AFS, CNRS and CERS by gender, previous experience working with an individual with a disability and experience with a family member or close friend who had a disability. These results may be due to the particular sample of participants. Participants were college students attending the same university and were similar in age. Also, only half of the participants had worked with an individual with disabilities, and the average length of time spent working with an individual with a disability was only one year.
Coworker reactions to disability accommodations can have a significant impact on the disabled person being accommodated, as well as the success of the accommodation. If coworkers believe that an accommodation is unfair, this perceived inequity may engender negative reactions. For example, coworkers may not cooperate if the accommodation requires coworker assistance, or they may treat the disabled individual poorly. Negative reactions from coworkers can be very detrimental to the disabled individual in various ways. Coworker resentment may result in actions to ensure that individuals with disabilities know that they are unwelcome, or coworkers may make sure that a disabled individual will fail working at the organization. Concerns with injustice may also create a social backlash against individuals with disabilities that may contribute to noncompliance with regulations (West & Cardy, 1997). Also, productivity may decrease, disabled coworkers may not request needed accommodations because they are afraid of harassment, those with disabilities may not even be employed to begin with (Cleveland et al.,
1997), or disabled workers receiving accommodations may sue the organization.

Understanding the importance of coworker reactions to disability accommodations is therefore very important for organizations. The finding that higher need judgments result in higher fairness judgments can be very beneficial for employers because it can decrease negative coworker reactions. If employers can effectively communicate to employees the need for workplace accommodations, then this communication could reduce coworker discrimination and increase coworker acceptance of disabled coworkers and their accommodations. Although employers are not allowed to discuss specifics about individual accommodations with their employees, they can and should conduct general training, in which employees are instructed about common disabilities and common accommodation situations, as well as the benefits the organization has in providing these accommodations (e.g. increased positive image). In this way, employers could enhance the probability of acceptance, by coworkers, of accommodations because these elements of general training would emphasize the need rule, which was shown in this study to be more predictive of accommodation warrantedness than was the equity rule.
Providing training to employees about the ADA will not lead to the desired results if the culture of an organization is not one that supports individuals with disabilities and their accommodations. Attention must be paid to the way that an organization’s culture creates or reinforces barriers for employees with disabilities, and how these barriers can be overcome or removed (Schur, Kruse & Blanck 2005). Removing attitudinal barriers by general training can have significant benefits for employees with disabilities, coworkers and the organization as a whole.

Results showing that application of the need rule varies according to type of disability supports research on disability hierarchy preferences, as well as builds onto it by not only looking at disabilities, but common accommodations attached to different types of disabilities. Knowing that application of the need rule differs by disability can also aid employers in the training of employees on disability accommodations. Because mental and psychological disabilities evoke lower application of the need rule and lower fairness judgments, employers should discuss common mental and psychological disability accommodations, so that although certain types of disabilities may not be visible to them, they can
understand why a coworker may be receiving different
treatment. This training may increase coworker beliefs of
accommodation warrantedness, decrease beliefs of
accommodation inequality, and increase fairness judgments.
CHAPTER SIX
LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study is not without limitations. While scenarios are useful tools for communicating complex problems in a controllable way, they are role-playing situations rather than actual situations. It is possible that the participants in my study may react differently to different disability accommodations if they were to happen in their actual workplace rather than in a hypothetical scenario. However, due to the difficulty of controlling all factors affecting accommodation justice judgments and given the sensitive nature of disabilities, I believe a scenario study is justified. Future research should look at the possibilities and opportunities of examining distribution role application towards accommodations within organizations.

There are also concerns about common method variance. All data was collected using the same method (scales); therefore, there is the possibility that correlations between the scales may be due to use of the same method of measurement in the scales and not an underlying relationship between the constructs. The results of the
pilot study and evidence from the correlations between the scales suggest that the correlations are due to relationships between the constructs and not to using of the same method of measurement.

Another limitation concerns the participants in my study. The use of college students has been criticized as limiting the external validity of a study. Generalizability to the workplace is an important concern with my study; however all of the participants had job experience, and almost half of the participants had actually worked with someone who was disabled. Despite the difficulties of replicating this study on employees within an organization, such as not violating stipulations of the ADA, maintaining accommodation confidentiality and controlling for other factors that might influence fairness judgments, future research should examine distribution role application towards accommodations on actual coworkers.

My findings add support to previous research that decision rules may be applied simultaneously. Like research on pay allocations, application of more than one rule can lead to the same conclusion. However, this might not always be the case. For example, a coworker may feel that an individual has a legitimate need, and also feel that the
same individual is receiving a reward. Future research should study this possible state of affairs, and what effect this would have on fairness judgments.

Need rule application in the accommodation situation has not been previously tested. Thus, future research needs to be conducted to confirm the results found in this study. Also, research needs to be done to study how other factors, including characteristics of the coworker and characteristics of the disabled individual, affect application of different distribution rules and overall accommodation fairness judgments. For example, research shows that attitudes toward the disabled are positively related to observers' personality characteristics (Stone & Colella, 1996). For example, an individual's need for social approval may be a significant factor in their accommodation fairness judgments. Understanding how all these factors interact can aid researchers and managers who deal with this issue.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

The study examined how coworker justice perceptions toward workplace accommodations are influenced by what justice criteria are being used. Coworkers who felt that a disabled individual has a legitimate disability and needed an accommodation to fulfill his or her work responsibilities were more likely to view the accommodation situation as fair. When making judgments concerning physical disabilities, need rule considerations were a stronger predictor of accommodation fairness than equity rule considerations. Employers may decrease coworker negative reactions to disability accommodations by training employees on common disabilities and accommodations, and highlighting why they are needed.

This study also examined how application of the need rule differs according to type of disability. In line with previous research that states that there is a hierarchy of attitude preference for different types of disabilities, this research showed that application of the need rule also differs according to type of disability. Paraplegia evoked the highest need judgments, followed by dyslexia and then
depression. Alcoholism showed no significant need judgment
difference to depression; however, this may have been due
to the fact that respondents may have considered both
depression and alcoholism to not be legitimate
disabilities, or alternatively, respondents may have seen
both alcoholism and depression as more controllable
disabilities. Overall, these results support past findings
that physical disabilities evoke more positive attitudes
than mental or psychological disabilities, but not that
addictive disabilities evoke the least positive attitudes.
Employees can benefit from training that highlights
different types of disabilities, especially disabilities
that are not visible.
APPENDIX A

CORRELATIONS
Appendix A: Zero-Order Point-Biserial Correlations between the AFS, CNRS and CERS and type of disability

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</tr>
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<td>4. Fair</td>
<td>0.42**</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
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<td>5. Need</td>
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<td>0.36**</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.88**</td>
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<td>6. Equity</td>
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<td>-0.22*</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>-0.56**</td>
<td>-0.46**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alcoholism</td>
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<td>7. Fair</td>
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<td>0.28**</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td>-0.23*</td>
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<td>8. Need</td>
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<td>0.31**</td>
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<td>-0.36**</td>
<td>-0.31**</td>
<td>0.61**</td>
<td>-0.63**</td>
<td>-0.52**</td>
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</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
APPENDIX B

SCALE MEANS
## Appendix B: MEANS FOR THE AFS, CNRS AND CERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISABILITY</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paraplegia</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
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<td>Need</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX C

POS HOC MEANS
Appendix B: Post Hoc Means for CFS, CNRS and CERS by Gender, Experience Working with a Disabled Individual and Experience with Disabled Individuals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender</th>
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<th>Experience Working With</th>
<th>Experience with Disabled Individuals</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraplegia</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>9.45</td>
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<td>Dyslexia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
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<td>11.10</td>
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<td>Fair</td>
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<td>11.66</td>
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<td>Fair</td>
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<td>12.41</td>
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<td>Equity</td>
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Note: N = 120.
APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT
INFORMED CONSENT

You are invited to participate in a study designed to build on the knowledge of coworker attitudes towards disability accommodations. This study is being conducted by Audrey Hunzeker, under the supervision of Dr. Janet Kottke, Professor of Psychology. This study has been approved by the Department of Psychology Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee of the California State University, San Bernardino, and a copy of the official Psychology IRB stamp of approval should appear somewhere on this consent form.

In this study you will be asked to respond to a survey. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. All of your responses will be held in the strictest of confidence by the researchers. All data will be reported in group form only. Since no identifying information is collected on the survey, all your responses will be completely anonymous. Results from this study will be available from Dr Kottke (909-537-5585) after March 16, 2007.

Your participation in this study is totally voluntary. You are free not to answer any question and withdraw at any time during this study without penalty. This study involves no risks beyond those of everyday life, nor any direct benefits to you as an individual. When you have completed the survey, you will receive a debriefing statement describing the study in more detail. In order to ensure the validity of the study, we ask that you not discuss this study with other participants.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Janet Kottke at (909) 537-5585.

By placing a check mark in the box below, I acknowledge that I have been informed of, and that I understand, the nature and purpose of this study, that I freely consent to participate, and that at the conclusion of the study, I may ask for additional explanation regarding the study. I also acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

Place a check mark here □

Today date: _____________________
APPENDIX E

SURVEY
You work as a cashier at a department store with 30 other employees. Cashiers must be standing at all times when at their register. Linda, one of your coworkers, has paraplegia (the lower part of her body is paralyzed). Therefore, she is allowed to sit at her cash register, while everyone else must stand.

Please answer each question based on the preceding scenario.

1. The accommodation Linda receives is fair.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
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<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Linda is getting what she deserves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. It is fair that Linda gets to sit at work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</table>

4. Linda has a legitimate disability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

5. Linda’s disability requires an accommodation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Linda needs to be able to sit while at work in order to perform her job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Linda’s accommodation makes her work easier.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

8. Linda’s accommodation makes my work more difficult.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

9. Linda’s accommodation is a reward or perk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<td>□</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

10. Because Linda gets to sit and I don’t, it makes my job less desirable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You work as a cashier at a department store with 30 other employees. Every month, each cashier must pass a timed, 15 minute test that covers produce codes to ensure that cashiers know the codes. Any cashier who does not pass this test has 3 days to study and retake the test. Failing the test results in termination. Linda, one of your coworkers has dyslexia (difficulty reading) and therefore gets 30 minutes to take the test.

Please answer each question based on the preceding scenario.

1. The accommodation Linda receives is fair.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

2. Linda is getting what she deserves.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

3. It is fair that Linda gets to sit at work.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

4. Linda has a legitimate disability.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

5. Linda’s disability requires an accommodation.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

6. Linda needs to be able to sit while at work in order to perform her job.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

7. Linda’s accommodation makes her work easier.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

8. Linda’s accommodation makes my work more difficult.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

9. Linda’s accommodation is a reward or perk.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

10. Because Linda gets to sit and I don’t, it makes my job less desirable.
    - Strongly Disagree
    - Somewhat Disagree
    - Disagree
    - Neutral
    - Somewhat Agree
    - Agree
    - Strongly Agree

77
You work as a cashier at a department store with 30 other employees. The store opens every morning at 8. Every cashier must be at work by 8, and any employee that comes in late will be disciplined. Linda, one of your coworkers, is allowed to come in by 8:30. She is permitted to arrive late to work because her depression medication causes early morning fatigue.

Please answer each question based on the preceding scenario.

1. The accommodation Linda receives is fair.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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</table>

4. Linda has a legitimate disability.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<th>Disagree</th>
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<table>
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7. Linda’s accommodation makes her work easier.

<table>
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8. Linda’s accommodation makes my work more difficult.

<table>
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9. Linda’s accommodation is a reward or perk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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10. Because Linda gets to sit and I don’t, it makes my job less desirable.

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You work as a cashier at a department store with 30 other employees. Linda, one of your coworkers, is a recovering alcoholic. She gets every Friday afternoon off to attend a therapeutic session.

Please answer each question based on the preceding scenario.

1. The accommodation Linda receives is fair.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. Linda is getting what she deserves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</table>

3. It is fair that Linda gets to sit at work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
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4. Linda has a legitimate disability.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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5. Linda’s disability requires an accommodation.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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6. Linda needs to be able to sit while at work in order to perform her job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<th>Disagree</th>
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7. Linda’s accommodation makes her work easier.

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8. Linda’s accommodation makes my work more difficult.

<table>
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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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9. Linda’s accommodation is a reward or perk.

<table>
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<tr>
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10. Because Linda gets to sit and I don’t, it makes my job less desirable.

    | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
    |-------------------|-------------------|---------|---------|----------------|-------|---------------|
    | □                 | □                 | □       | □       | □              | □     | □             |
Demographic Questionnaire

1. Gender       Male / Female

2. Age

3. Have you ever worked with a disabled individual?   Yes / No

4. If your answer is yes to the previous question, for how many months did you work with the person with a disability?  ______

5. Does a member of your immediate family or close friend have a disability?   Yes / No

6. Do you have supervisory experience?   Yes / No
REFERENCES


