Introduction

Research Questions:
1. What types of barriers are job seekers with disabilities most likely to face compared to job seekers without disabilities?
2. How do job acquisition barriers differ by disability type?
3. Are there particular employment barriers that are more problematic at different stages of the job acquisition process (i.e., when looking for, applying to, or accepting a position) for people with and without disabilities?

Methodology

- Qualtrics partner recruitment of working age adults (18-64)
- Online survey completed by opt-in Internet panel
- Oversampling of people with disabilities
- Final analytic sample = 3,021
- Data Collection Period = 5 days, end of March to beginning of April 2019.

Key Independent Variables:
- Disability Status & Type
- Key Dependent Variable:
- Perceived personal barrier(s) to employment
- Other Variables of Interest:
- Employment Status
- Job Acquisition Stage
- Demographics

Disability Variable Measurement

- [Vision disability]: Do you have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses?
- [Hearing disability]: Do you have serious difficulty hearing?
- [Ambulatory disability]: Do you have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs?
- [Physical disability]: Do you have any difficulty doing physical activities such as lifting, carrying, bending, or manipulating small objects?
- [Cognitive disability]: Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?
- [Webscales]: Do you think you have a condition that makes it difficult for you to learn?
- [Injuries]: Did you have a work-related injury that kept you from your normal work activities for more than 2 weeks?
- [Developmental disability]: Do you have a developmental disability or disorder? (This may include Down Syndrome, autism, or Asperger syndrome, as well as other conditions.)
- [Psychiatric illness]: Do you have a psychiatric illness or disorder (e.g., anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, substance abuse, nervous, as well as other conditions)?
- [Mental illness or disorder]: Do you have a mental illness or disorder (e.g., anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, substance abuse, nervous, as well as other conditions)?
- [Other health condition]: Do you have any other health condition?
- [Respondents who said no to all of the above were asked]: Do you have any other kind of disability?

Foundations

1. The majority of the unemployed experience similar employment barriers, but people with disabilities report disability or health condition most often, and people without disabilities report organizational attitudes, and other barriers more often.
2. In general, people with physical mobility, learning-related, or psychological limitations experience significantly more employment barriers than people with vision or hearing limitations, compared to those with no disabilities.
3. Statistically significant differences were found between people with and without disabilities across barrier types, except regrading a lack of education or training, at the job acceptance stage of the job acquisition process.

Conclusions

- Employment barriers for people with and without disabilities are similar in nature but vary by degree. Improvements in transportation and better alignment between education/training and the job market may benefit all prospective employees, as well as employers.
- More efforts are needed to address employment barriers faced by people with disabilities at all stages of the job acquisition process, recruitment, the application process, and job negotiations.

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