

Understanding the Employment Gap for Ugandans with Down Syndrome

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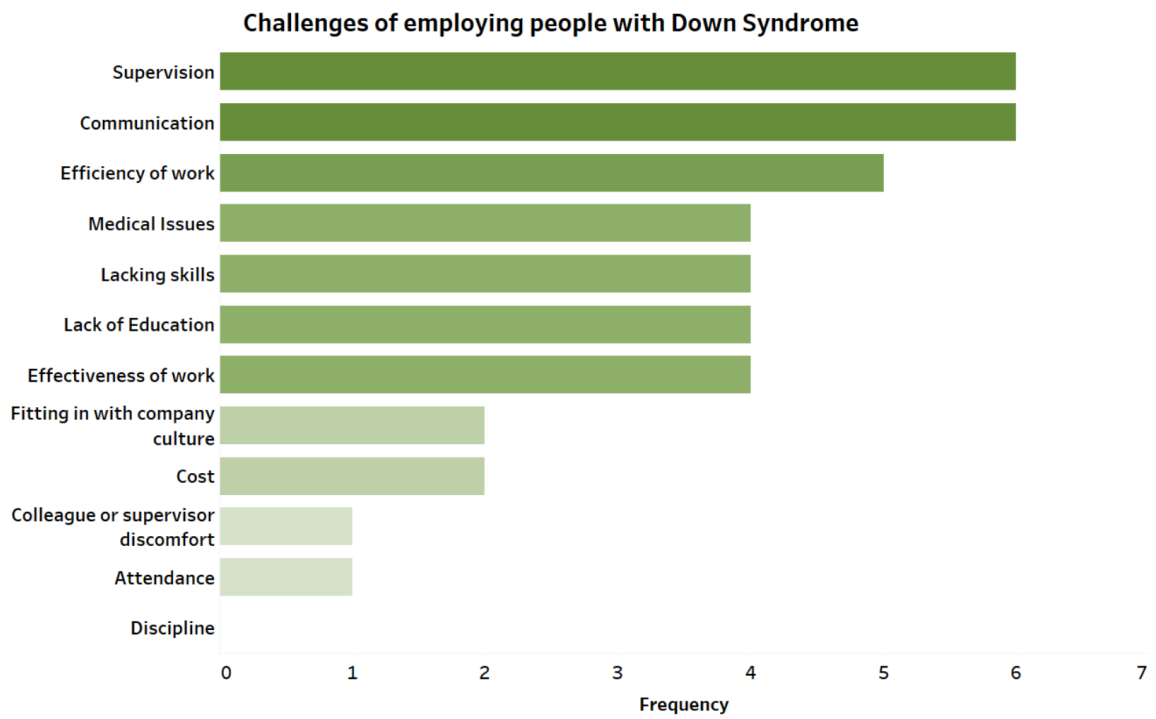
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Challenges of employing people with Down Syndrome



Executive Summary

An employment gap for people with Down Syndrome (DS) exists in Uganda. The purpose of this study is to better understand the barriers to employment for people with DS through interviews and surveys of employers in Uganda. This study focuses on three research questions. First, what prevents employers in Uganda from hiring job seekers with DS? Second, what key factors separate Ugandan employers that have hired people with DS from those who have not? Third, from the employers' perspective, what factors contribute to long-term employment in Uganda for employees with DS? Results suggest the following factors as barriers to employers hiring candidates with DS: a lack of applicants with DS, high competition for positions, effects of the pandemic on hiring, supervisory discomfort, communication concerns, perception of inefficiency and ineffectiveness, medical issues, lack of education, and stigma. The difference between those who had hired job seekers with DS versus those who had not appeared in the following variables: views or preparedness for the workforce, perception of the value that is added, likeliness of considering a candidate with a job coach, confidence in personal supervisory skills, reasons motivating hiring candidates with DS, skepticism of capabilities, and the number of applicants. Employers express that the key to long term employment is financial support and ongoing professional development. Recommendations include facilitating ongoing job application skills training, connecting potential employers with champion colleagues and supervisors, implementing an inclusive supervisory training program, proposing job carving to employers, and advocating for a tax credit amendment.

A tremendous employment gap, on average between 40% to 80% higher than for people without disabilities, exists for people with disabilities (Groce, 2004). In Uganda, it is uncommon for those with DS to obtain education and to participate in the typical milestones of their neurotypical peers, including employment (Gelaro et al., 2019). Major cultural stigma of DS, lack of employer understanding of DS, comorbid medical issues, and employer financial barriers are a few of the predicted barriers that contribute to the lack of employment opportunity for Ugandans with DS, although little research exists within this topic specific to Uganda or East Africa (Christianson, 1996; Gelaro et al., 2019; Hartley et al, 2005; Houtenville & Kalargyrou, 2012; Kaye et al., 2011; Nota et al, 2014; Rashid et al., 2017). On an individual level, lack of employment robs each person one of life's important milestones and the ability to earn a living. This disparity in the workforce means that adults with DS are unable to contribute income to their families who support them or are unable to afford to live independently if they would otherwise be able. Collectively, this demographic will lack the political power that money enables.

Client Background

Global Livingston Institute is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization founded in Denver in 2009. GLI's mission is to educate students and community leaders on innovative approaches to international development and empower awareness, collaboration, conversations, and personal growth (Global Livingston Institute, n.d.). GLI partners with communities in Uganda and Rwanda, in the realms of job creation, education, community development, culture sharing, public health, and economic development. GLI puts great emphasis on their motto and the sequential process of "Listen. Think. Act." This capstone project partners primarily with GLI's Workforce Development department, whose focus is to provide job training and placement to

Ugandans in order to alleviate poverty and create sustainable living conditions. GLI partners with Angel's Center, an NGO focused on improving the quality of lives of people with disabilities and co-coordinated the first two pilots in Uganda focused on job training and placement for Ugandans with DS.

The key question that this study seeks to address is what prevents employers in Uganda from hiring job seekers with DS? A secondary question is what key factors separate Ugandan employers that have hired people with DS from those who have not? The third question is from the employers' perspective, what factors contribute to long-term employment in Uganda for employees with DS? This study's data will shed light on the employers' perceptions of job seekers and employees with DS. Data analysis results will inform future actions that GLI and Angel's Center can take to alleviate barriers that exist, specifically within the employer side of the placement process, to obtain and maintain employment. This will guide GLI in their planning for the next phase of this pilot project, and ultimately contribute to an increase in Ugandan job seekers with DS entering and remaining in the workforce.

This paper will proceed with a literature review painting a clear timeline of DS research, first globally and then in Uganda. There are significant gaps in the literature regarding this topic, which this project seeks to address. Following the literature review, this paper will present the methodology, results, discussion, limitations, and recommendations.

Literature Review

Overview

Global Burden of Disease estimates there are at least 5,000 people with DS living in Uganda (Gelaro et al., 2019). Great disparities in education for children with DS exist in Uganda. Nineteen percent of children with DS have never attended school, nearly double the

10% of neurotypical Ugandan children that have never attended (Gelaro et al., 2019). Once people with DS reach the typical age of joining the workforce, there is an unemployment rate 40-60% higher for those with intellectual disabilities in Africa (Groce, 2004). People with DS in Uganda face major societal obstacles, including the beliefs that DS is a satanic curse, is a consequence of mothers' bad behavior, and is a condition that makes those who have it less valuable to society (Gelaro et al., 2019). In addition to socially constructed difficulties, Ugandans with DS face substantial medical issues, such as lack of congenital heart defect treatment (Gelaro et al., 2019) and unsanitary living conditions at institutions (McKenzie et al., 2013). These are a few of the many factors that influence hiring managers' perception of job seekers with DS in Uganda. In order to narrow the employment gap for this demographic, it is important to identify what factors influence the hiring decisions of managers in order to assist job placement agencies in persuading employers to hire qualified job candidates with DS. This literature review will highlight the key ideas, themes and conclusions which have been the focus of DS research. This review will lead to three research questions. This literature review takes on a global perspective, highlighting research in Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, and Uganda when possible. To conclude the literature review, the areas of gaps within the literature will be highlighted.

Stigma

The employment gap could be explained by the substantial stigma in Uganda regarding people with DS. Globally, studies show that employment is negatively impacted by preconceived notions about the type of disability (Rashid et al., 2017) and the idea that work completed by someone with DS should cost less (Rashid et al., 2017). Within Uganda, research first shows that part of the stigma around DS is shame-based (Gelaro et al., 2019). This is due to

the belief that DS is caused by a mother's wrongdoings (Gelaro et al., 2019; McKenzie et al., 2013). Second, the stigma involves the misconception that DS is a curse, in the religious sense (Gelaro et al., 2019; McKenzie et al., 2013). The third aspect of stigma highlighted in research is that people with DS are shameful and to be hidden (Hartley et al., 2005). International studies highlight the impact of societal misconceptions and stigma on job seekers with DS, but there is a major lack of research on that topic in Uganda, which is affected by its own social structures and stigma. This implies that little is known about how research from Western societies translate to Uganda. This literature is likely missing because of the high mortality rates (Christianson, 1996) and lack of medical care leading to low life expectancy (Kumin & Schoenbrodt, 2016), in combination with families secluding their members with DS (Gelaro et al., 2019), leading to lack of pursuance of how stigma would impact employment for Ugandans with DS. This gap can be filled by studies that survey hiring managers regarding their perception of Ugandans with DS, much like this research project.

Stigma and social perception often vary based on geography. In order to better understand the correlation between location and the effect social stigma has on hiring decisions, further research is needed among Uganda's districts. One hypothesis is that the more an employer aligns with the notions behind the stigma, the less likely they are to hire a job seeker with DS. Stigma is one of many independent variables that correlate with people with DS obtaining employment. The next variable important to investigate is education.

Education

The employment gap for Ugandans with DS may be explained by educational inequities for students with disabilities leading to their lack of qualification, or perception thereof, for job opportunities. Special education is insufficient (Gelaro et al., 2019; Nantongo et al., 2019) due

to lack of schooling options (Kristensen et al., 2006), lack of adequately trained teachers (Kristensen et al., 2006; Nantongo et al., 2019), and lack of serving the needs of those specifically with intellectual disabilities (Zoanni, 2019). The government does not enforce special education laws nor do NGO's have the capacity to monitor them (Gelaro et al., 2019; Zoanni, 2019). Because of this, the laws remain ineffective. Studies show that NGO's are working to provide educational programming for people with disabilities (Kristensen et al., 2006).

In 1995, the Ugandan constitution declared that education is a right for all. Prior to that, in 1954, an act granted education for those with disabilities (Kristensen et al., 2006). Beginning in 1997, primary school was free to four children per family based on gender, but a child with a disability was prioritized. Beginning in 2002, all children were able to go to primary school for free, but this did not apply to fees for special education schools (Kristensen et al., 2006). There is a high dropout rate from special education schools due to unaffordability paired with the fact that many children are orphans, meaning that one or both parents are deceased (Kristensen et al., 2006).

Even for those that remain in special education schools, the majority of which are boarding schools, living conditions are poor and unhealthy (Kristensen et al., 2006). Students with disabilities report that they feel abandoned by parents, that teachers do not or cannot help them, that they are segregated in their schools, and that they are not getting enough food, all which create abysmal conditions for learning (Kristensen et al., 2006).

Current literature indicates that future research is needed to evaluate and determine if there is a disproportionate skills gap between young adults with DS and their neurotypical peers in Uganda. There is also a lack of literature regarding the informal education and job skills

training that takes place for those who do not attend school but do substantial household chores for their families (McKenzie et al., 2013). One hypothesis is that employers view lack of education as a barrier to hiring people with DS. Another variable weighing heavily in the minds of employers is the cost of supporting an employee with DS.

Cost to employ

The perception that employing people with disabilities costs more can be a barrier to employment. Small businesses are particularly concerned over cost, but both small and large businesses are incentivized by government tax credits (Chen et al., 2016; Houtenville & Kalargyrou, 2012). Research suggests workplace accommodation cost is a more prominent deterrent to employment for people with disabilities within small businesses (Chen et al., 2016). Studies show that those who have not hired people with disabilities in the past are more concerned with the cost of accommodations (Kaye et al., 2011). Research supports the idea that ongoing job coaching is crucial to success, yet the Ugandan government does not currently pay for this service (Rashid et al., 2017). This means that the employer would need to incur the cost of that support, unless a foundation or NGO was able to incur the cost (Rashid et al., 2017). The pandemic of 2020 has caused global negative impact on the economy, which has likely impacted hiring practices and employer budgets. Research is needed to determine how employer budgets have been impacted in Uganda and what those effects are regarding job seekers with DS. In addition to employers being concerned with cost, research shows employers are also concerned with the idea of supervising employees with disabilities.

Employer discomfort

Barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment may be explained by employer discomfort. Some of the greatest concerns noted in the literature are that employers do not know

how to handle the needs of employees, that coworkers will feel uncomfortable, and that human resources will not be able to discipline an employee out of risk of a lawsuit (Graffam et al., 2002; Kaye et al., 2011; Stephen et al., 2011). Research is mixed regarding whether employers who have hired people with disabilities before are more likely to hire people with disabilities in the future.

What is missing in this realm is research specific to East Africa or Uganda. Because life expectancy for people with DS has been quite low until fairly recently (Christianson, 1996), employment for that demographic is a newer topic in society. A hypothesis is that employer discomfort in handling employees with DS is a major barrier to employment. Another hypothesis is that management turnover within companies is a barrier to employees maintaining their employment, as new managerial staff may not have the same comfort as previous managerial staff.

Summary

Overall, research indicates that stigma, perceived accommodations' cost, and employer discomfort all can be barriers to employment. Furthermore, education is inequitable for those with disabilities in Uganda, thus may be a barrier to employment. Research specific to employment for Ugandans with DS is severely lacking, so the vast majority of peer-reviewed studies examine samples of people internationally, typically outside of Africa. Because Uganda comes with its own set of cultural variables, generalizations from existing research should be applied with caution. Further culturally specific research is needed.

Methodology

Research Questions

To conduct this research, a qualitative survey was conducted via Zoom or WhatsApp or via written survey for employers without access to internet to better research the following questions:

RQ 1: What prevents employers in Uganda from hiring job seekers with DS?

RQ 2: What key factors separate Ugandan employers that have hired people with DS from those who have not?

RQ 3: From the employers' perspective, what factors contribute to long-term employment for employees with DS in Uganda?

Data collection

The unit of analysis for this study is hiring managers in Uganda. Original data came from over the phone/voice application interviews or written paper surveys for employers without access to stable internet. This non-probability sample is comprised of twelve employers selected by Global Livingston Institute and The Angel's Center. Some of these employers are those who have employed individuals with DS through the organizations' pilots and others are employers who have been approached, but have not employed, job seekers with DS. Because the sample used purposive sampling, the information gathered cannot be generalized to the whole population but does provide insight into the employer partners of GLI and The Angel's Center.

The data collection procedure that was used with the four employers that had access to internet and could be interviewed via phone application involved the use of open-ended questions (Appendix A). Open-ended questions were selected to gather information that the interviewer would previously not have known to ask, and it also worked to mitigate confirmation

bias and leading questions. Data was collected for all interviews between October 30th to November 11th, 2020.

The data collection procedure that was used with the other eight employers that did not have access to internet were conducted via written survey (Appendix B). The survey included multiple-choice questions, Likert scale questions, and open-ended questions. This survey was conducted from October 23rd to November 6th, 2020. The survey was printed by GLI and distributed, collected, scanned, and emailed back to the researcher by GLI and Angel's Center staff. This combination of the two data collection procedures created a mixed methods approach.

To organize and store data, the researcher used Otter's software to transcribe the recordings, add speaker designation, clarify the transcript when needed, and proofread the transcript. Loss of data was avoided by saving information on the cloud which was constantly backed up.

Data Analysis

The raw data collected was analyzed by coding the data, identifying patterns, and reducing the information to present in a way that is meaningful to GLI and Angel's Center efforts. Last, findings were interpreted with the intention of producing useful information and practical recommendations to contribute to answering GLI's research questions.

Results

The results of the paper surveys and oral interviews can be categorized into five main categories: candidate search process, employer perceptions of DS, differences between those who have hired individuals with DS and those who have not, factors promoting positive employer perceptions, and maintaining employment.

Candidate search process

Of the six respondents that had not hired a person with DS and answered the question regarding their candidate pools, five had never had a job seeker with DS apply for a position at their company, while one employer did not know if they had ever had any applicants with DS. Despite the lack of applicants with DS, 82% of respondents rated themselves as either very likely or likely to employ a person with DS at their organization in the future, while the other 18% rated themselves as neutral. One employer estimated that 20% of employers of a larger sample would be open to hiring someone with DS.

Competition for each position varies. 64% of respondents reported receiving 10 or less candidates for each open position, while 36% report receiving 20 or more candidates for each position, some citing between 50 and 200 candidates. Those who had hired job seekers with DS typically had more candidates than those who had not. One employer noted that candidates with DS are considered the last option to other decision makers within the hiring process.

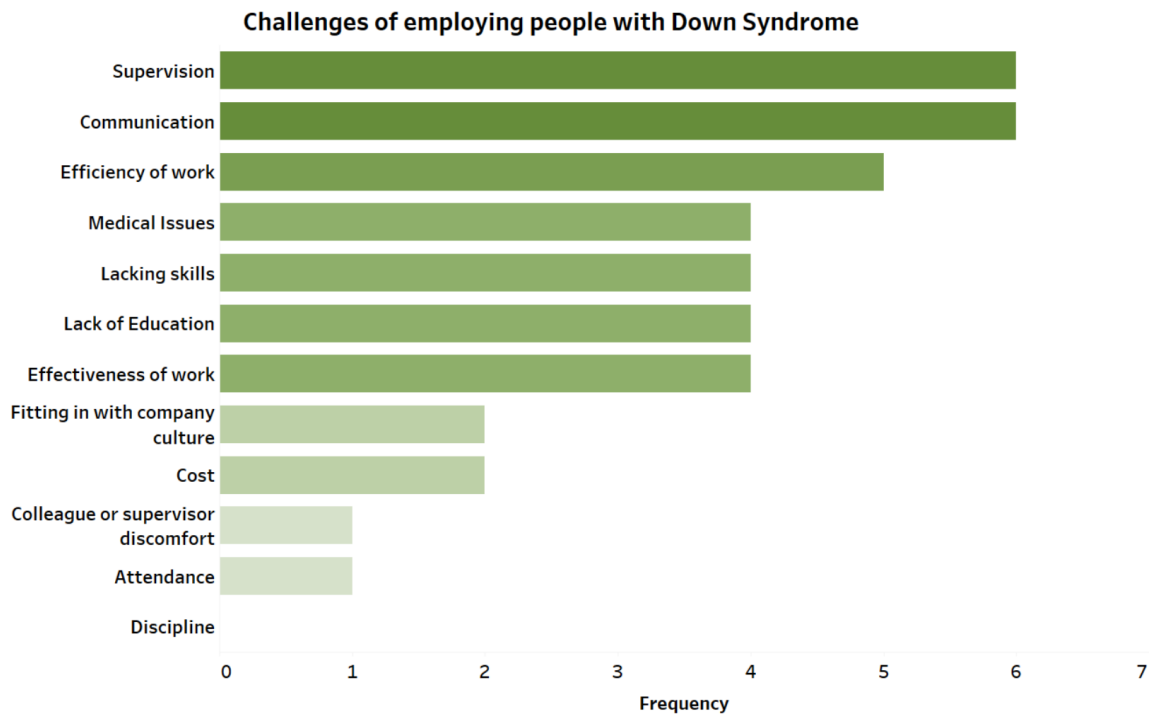
There were three common effects of the pandemic on hiring practices. First, because of its financial impact, many organizations report not being able to afford hiring new staff members. Second, many organizations reported needing to lay off staff. Third, those that laid off staff will attempt to rehire those staff at some point in the future.

While discussing the interview process, social media was a common denominator regarding how jobs were advertised. The interview process among the employers can be broken down into three steps. First, employers conduct a round of phone interviews. Second, they create a short list of whom they would like to conduct an in-person interview. Third, they conduct an in-person interview with multiple decision makers present. Two employers reported conducting a working-style interview as part of their interview process.

Employer perceptions of DS

Perceptions of the challenges to employing people with DS are listed in the following order from most frequently cited to least frequently cited (Table 1).

Table 1



Although it was an option on the survey, no employer selected or explicitly spoke about discipline as a challenge to employing people with DS. Some employers did note that lack of employer awareness of DS also presents challenges, but that was not an explicit option on the paper surveys, so it is unclear how many other employers would agree.

The vast majority of employers agreed that soft skills, particularly hospitality and communication, were the primary skills that they believe people with DS need to work on to become qualified to be employed by their organizations.

Through conversations, it was evident that the “people with DS” were viewed much differently than “people with disabilities”. Of those that had not employed someone with DS, all but one employer had employed or had volunteers in the past with other disabilities.

Of the respondents, 45% said it was likely or very likely that their teammates would have concerns working alongside someone with DS, 18% said it was unlikely or very unlikely that their teammates would have concerns, and 36% were neutral.

Stigma was a common topic, although none of the employers indicated that they subscribed to those beliefs. The stigma discussed can involve the belief that DS is the result of witchcraft or maternal wrongdoing. There can also be the fear that DS might be contagious. Employers believed that this stigma results in receiving poor or no formal education, being driven out by the community, being discriminated against in hiring practices and being left out of governmental decisions. There was disagreement regarding whether urban areas or rural areas were more stigmatized for people with DS. One employer discussed that stigma not only occurs within Uganda’s citizenry, but also amongst government officials.

Those who have hired versus those who have not

There were areas in which there was no difference reported. Regarding perception of skills, 100% of respondents indicated that they strongly agree that each person with DS has his or her own unique skills. Employers in both categories discussed the importance of using data to better understand people with DS. Both sides voiced the desire to understand how to cultivate potential and highlight the abilities of people with DS. Of the four employers who had hired at their current organization, three were nonprofits/CBO’s/NGO’s and one was in the private sector. Those that had not hired consisted of four nonprofits and three private organizations. Of this sample, 45% of the nonprofits had hired someone with DS compared with 40% of the

private employers. Because of the small sample, it is unclear if a larger sample would yield similar results. Both groups agreed that communication skills and hospitality skills are the most important to work on to become qualified for employment at their organizations.

Perception of the preparedness of people with DS varied between those who had employed versus those who had not. Those who had employed ranged from moderately agreeing to slightly disagreeing that people with DS were prepared for the workforce and noted that the degree of preparedness depended on a person's upbringing and training. Those who had not employed ranged from strongly agreeing to strongly disagreeing about preparedness.

All employers who had employed spoke strongly about the value added by someone with DS, while those who had not hired varied on their levels of agreement with the statement, albeit all agreed that value was added. Those who had hired had strong polarized feelings regarding whether they would consider a candidate with the support of a job coach. In contrast, nearly all of those who had not hired moderately to strongly agreed that they would consider hiring someone with DS with a job coach. Those that had hired were certain that they had the supervisory skills needed, whereas those that had not hired were much less confident that they had the supervisory skills needed.

Overall, employers who had not hired a job seeker with DS based their likelihood of hiring on how the disability manifests and each person's skill set. One employer mentioned the word *discrimination* and the lack of fairness that is involved when a company rules out someone solely based on their diagnosis of having DS. Another employer vocalized the importance of people with DS earning a living and fulfilling their financial needs and obligations. That employer also said that they could employ "one" person with DS.

Among employers that have hired people with DS, there is focus on their skills and their potential given appropriate training. The aspiration to be a community role model motivated most employers who had hired. Those who had hired people with DS articulated the importance of earning an income for employees to contribute to their families. Employers who have hired people with DS are more influenced by a humanitarian mindset than they are by a business mindset.

Employers who have not hired listed their teammates as potentially having concerns about the timeliness of their work, requirements to train and guide them, feelings of pity, and skepticism about their capabilities. The only difference in those that have hired was that they did not voice being skeptical about capabilities. However, one employer noted that they are unsure if their teammates would vocalize any concern due to the humanitarian nature of their business.

Employers' reasoning for having made the decision to employ someone with DS was strongly driven by social action ideals. Employers discussed the desire to fight stigma, cultivate community awareness for inclusive education, advocate for rights and access to income, improve quality of lives, prevent sexual abuse, transform families, lead by example, and help individuals find purpose and awareness of what they can achieve through a guided, focused work ethic.

Those that hired tended to get more applicants for open positions, whereas those that had not hired tended to get fewer applicants.

Of those that had hired, many discussed their exposure to and personal relationships with people with DS. All employers that have hired people with DS are likely or very likely to consider other job seekers with DS.

Factors that promote positive perceptions

Various factors arose in surveys and interviews that employers highlighted as ways that have promoted positive perceptions of people with DS. Some discussed World DS day as a celebration where they have learned about the achievements of people with DS. They cited this day as helping to shift society's focus to what people with DS *can* do. Another factor discussed by one employer was the use of videos and the significance of people visually witnessing what people with DS can do. One employer discussed their belief that coordinating an awareness program made of people with DS could be a tactic that may positively influence employers' perceptions. Employers that were aware of the abilities and potential within people with DS typically expressed personally knowing at least one person with DS. Lastly, one employer cited the employment tax credit employers as something that may promote the positive perception of hiring someone with DS.

Maintaining employment

Employers who supervise employees with DS believe that the first key to long term employment is external financial support. The second key is both internal and external training to support their agencies. Employers did not have an end date in mind, with the exception of those that have had to, or potentially will need to, lay off staff due to the pandemic's budgetary impacts.

Discussion

The first research question asked what prevents employers in Uganda from hiring job seekers with DS? Results show seven main answers. First, this study portrays a lack of applicants with DS for open positions. One interpretation of this may be that because society sends messages of shame which encourage families to hide their family members with DS. This

may lead to people with DS not applying to positions (Gelaro et al., 2019). Because it is common for Ugandans with DS to be less valued as contributing members of society, this may deter the encouragement of people with DS to apply for jobs because they, or their family members, do not believe they will add value to the workplace (Gelaro et al., 2019; Kristensen et al., 2006). Additionally, they may believe that employers will not recognize their value as a candidate (Gelaro et al., 2019; Kristensen et al., 2006). Inequity in education may prevent people with DS from applying for jobs if they lack reading or writing skills or are unaware of how to go about the application process (Gelaro et al., 2019; Kristensen et al., 2006). One employer highlighted that no governmental funding is allocated to this type of employment support, therefore people with disabilities may lack the professional assistance needed to represent themselves appropriately in the candidate pool. People with DS struggle to independently use transportation, which presents barriers to submitting in-person applications (Mckenzie et al., 2013; Rashid et al., 2017). Many employers use social media, as well as word of mouth referrals, to gain applicants. Lack of internet or social networking due to isolation may decrease the awareness of jobs currently posted (Kristensen et al, 2006).

Second, competition for open positions can be extremely high. One employer noted that 35% of youth are unemployed and actively applying, which is substantial in a country with a large youth demographic. High competition in the job market is a barrier to employment due to managers' perception of people with DS as less valuable and less educated relative to other candidates (Gelaro et al., 2019; Kristensen et al, 2006). Additionally, because special education schools are often secluded, they may be perceived as candidates who lack required social skills, or more specifically the required communication and hospitality skills, for their positions (Kristensen et al., 2006). Significant dropout rates exist for students with disabilities, so they

may be less competitive when it comes to formal education (Kristensen et al., 2006). One employer pointed out that many people with DS have only been afforded informal educational experiences. Overall, candidates with DS may not be viewed as competitive relative to other applicants in a vast pool of candidates.

Third, over half of respondents believe that it would cost more to employ someone with DS. Because the pandemic has negatively affected the budgets of many employers, it may disincentivize them from hiring someone with DS. Employers have also voiced their desire to rehire the staff they laid off. If people with DS were not in the workforce prior to the pandemic, this lessens their chance of entering the workforce in the near future.

Fourth, data shows that employers view supervision and communication as the top challenges to employing people with DS. Supervision and communication are not mutually exclusive and were tied for most frequently listed concern. International studies show that a major barrier to employment may be that supervisors are uncomfortable supervising someone with a disability. Based on data, it can be inferred that this trend may align with what occurs in Uganda (Houtenville & Kalargyrou, 2012). One could deduce that the more experience employers have had with people with DS, the more comfortable they would be communicating with them, although mixed findings related to this theory exist (Nota et al., 2014). Personal experience with a family member or acquaintance arose a few times amongst those that had employed someone with DS. Because it was not explicitly asked of all respondents, it is not clear if there is a correlation within this sample.

Fifth, the perception of people with DS as being inefficient at work is a factor that may prevent employers from hiring them. This conclusion would align with prior research. Employers' concern regarding the effectiveness of their work was frequently noted, which also

aligns with past literature (Nota et al., 2014). This perception is present in their use of language, as Ugandans often refer to adults with DS as children (Zoanni, 2019). Children are not typically described as efficient or effective and require substantial support. The assumption that adults with DS do not automatically earn the title of being adults based on their age may imply that they have the same limitations as children and are not efficient or effective enough for the workplace (Zoanni, 2019).

The sixth barrier identified is the employers' perception of people with DS as lacking skills and education. Because 19% of documented children with DS never attend school, compared with 10% of their neurotypical peers, the perception that people with DS lack the education needed to enter the workforce may stem from factual information (Gelaro et al., 2019). For those who do attend school, special education is severely lacking, as is governmental enforcement of special education law (Gelaro et al., 2019; Kristensen et al., 2006; Nantongo, 2019). Many people with DS remain in primary school, because they do not receive the support necessary to progress to more advanced learning (Gelaro et al., 2019). Special education schools lack the educational supplies and living conditions essential to maintain a successful learning environment (Kristensen et al., 2006; Mckenzie et al., 2013). Although skills are developed outside of school through completing daily chores, they are likely overlooked or underestimated by employers. Fortunately, according to employers, NGO's, such as Angel's Center and GLI, have risen to the challenge to provide informal job skills education to Ugandans with DS.

Seventh, employers view medical issues as a challenge to employment. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities may be perceived as being less hygienic than neurotypical peers, so this concern may translate into a concern of contagious illnesses in the workplace. One employer suggested that people with DS should work on their independent

living skills. Past studies have suggested that hygiene can be the highest rated factor by employers when considering hiring or maintaining an employee (Graffam et al., 2002). Alternatively, if employees have medical issues and are sick, they will likely be less effective and efficient which resonates with the previously listed concerns. Both illness and medical appointments can cause attendance issues, although that is not the primary concern, as only one employer listed attendance as a concern.

Another research question that was asked was what key factors separate Ugandan employers that have hired people with DS from those who have not? First, employers that have not hired people with DS varied across the scale on whether they believe people with DS are prepared for the workforce. The employers who strongly agreed that candidates are prepared may have overestimated the educational, job preparatory resources and opportunities accessible to people with DS. Alternatively, for those that strongly disagreed may have underestimated the skill sets acquired by people with DS.

A second difference appears in the likelihood of considering hiring someone with the support of a job coach. Employers that had hired someone with DS had mixed perceptions of whether or not they would consider hiring someone with a job coach. Alternatively, employers that had not hired someone with DS agreed that they would consider hiring a job seeker if they had the support of a job coach. This could be attributed to a lack of comfort in supporting an employee with DS. Current research varies regarding job coaching as an effective strategy to influence hiring decisions (Houtenville, 2012; Kumin, 2016). This question's data may be skewed by a point of confusion which arose during the verbal interviews regarding the definition of a job coach and whether s/he is an internal or external organizational figure. This study would have benefitted from providing a definition of a job coach within the paper survey.

Third, there is a difference within the level of confidence in supervisory skills. Supervisors may avoid hiring people whom they believe they would be unsuccessful supervising. Prior studies indicate that supervisors being uncomfortable supervising is a barrier to employment, but employers who had not hired people with DS had stated that they were comfortable and just did not have the skills. While they may have accurately self-reported, it is possible that they are not comfortable admitting that they are uncomfortable. In either circumstance, they would benefit from supervisory training for people with DS.

Fourth, a difference appears within motivators behind hiring people with DS. Those that had hired employees with DS often cited social action-oriented ideals as influencing their hiring decisions, whereas employers that had not hired cited solely business-based reasoning. Prior studies would suggest that this is an example of correlation, not causation, as they have not found the charity approach to be successful in persuading employers to hire (Rashid et al., 2017).

A fifth difference between employer groups was that employers who had not hired candidates with DS voiced teammate skepticism of the capabilities of candidates as a concern. For those who not only have never witnessed an employee with DS, but also have had little or no interaction, it is probable that they will doubt their capabilities in the workforce. This aligns with current international research (Houtenville & Kalargyrou, 2012; Nota et al., 2014).

A sixth difference was that employers who hired reported receiving more applicants for their open positions. Because this was a small sample, it is unclear if this would translate to a larger sample. Within a larger sample, if employers are committed to providing employment opportunities for people with DS, it may likely be irrelevant how many applicants they receive for their open positions. Further research would need to determine if and why there is a correlation between these two variables.

The final research question was from the employers' perspective, what factors contribute to long-term employment in Uganda for people with DS? First, organizational financial health contributes to long term employment. Employers voiced generally struggling with finances, which increased due the pandemic. Second, employers believe that professional development training for supporting people with disabilities would contribute to long-term employment. They also voiced the benefit of continued training for employees with DS, both within their own organizations and provided by GLI and Angel's Center. Employers may not be aware of the issues that will arise over time when they initially hire, so ongoing support is beneficial in promoting long-term employment.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Job Application Skills Training. In order to address the lack of applicants with DS, agencies should incorporate job application skills training into their workshops. Training should include how to craft a resume, conduct a job search, and apply for a job. If appropriate, the training should introduce assistive technology and adaptive devices that can be used to make job applications more accessible. It would be beneficial for parents or caregivers to be involved in the latter part of that training so they can offer support in the future. Job application skills training will allow participants to continue to apply for jobs after the workshop has ended, with the support of others, and increase the likelihood of being considered by employers for an open position. Over time, it may help normalize the idea of job seekers with DS as typical candidates.

Recommendation 2: Connect Potential Employers with Champion Colleagues and Supervisors. In order to address colleague concerns and discomfort in supervisors, GLI and Angel's Center can connect potential employers with colleagues and supervisors who currently

work with employees with DS. Facilitating an open dialogue, in-person or via video call, may alleviate concerns of colleagues and increase the confidence of supervisors. Additionally, it may reinforce the belief that people with DS can add value to a workplace and increase the credibility of the skills of employees with DS (Houtenville & Kalargyrou, 2012).

Recommendation 3: Inclusive Supervisory Training Program. In order to address the lack of confidence in supervisory skills, offer a training for potential, upcoming, and current supervisors of employees with DS or other intellectual and developmental disabilities. Because budgets have been cut by the pandemic, the cost of this training will likely need to be subsidized by a grant or donor. This is the greatest concern cited in this study, therefore addressing it may open employment opportunities for those with DS.

Recommendation 4: Job Carving. A fourth recommendation is for GLI and Angel's Center to propose job carving to employers, which involves breaking down a job into tasks and assigning appropriate tasks to the employee with DS, alleviating them of the need to do all tasks (Rashid et al., 2017). In prior studies, this tool has shown to be successful at increasing employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities (Rashid et al., 2017). This technique allows tasks that may be required of higher paid positions to be transitioned over to an entry level employee with DS at a lower pay rate, potentially saving money for the employer.

Although advantages of the first four recommendations outweigh the disadvantages, disadvantages to these recommendations do exist. They require allocated personnel, time, funding, and program supplies. Facilitation of these services will present challenges, as some participants will not have access to stable internet and may be weary of meeting in-person due to social distancing preferences.

Recommendation 5: Tax Credit Amendment Advocacy. A fifth recommendation is for GLI and the Angel's Center to advocate for amendments to Section 17 of the Disability Act. This act provides a 2% tax cut for private employers who employ ten or more employees with disabilities, making up at least 5% of their labor force, on a full-time basis. Currently, this is not an effective incentive due to the low benefit and high number stipulations. From 2009-2014 no employer applied for this tax reduction (Nyombi & Kibandama, 2014). Because prior studies have shown that a tax incentive may be an effective strategy to increase opportunities of employment for people with disabilities, it is recommended that agencies advocate for a larger tax incentive with fewer stipulations (Houtenville & Kalargyrou, 2012). Financial incentives may increase the likelihood of long-term employment, as well. Staff should be cautious about how they implement any advocacy efforts to ensure that their organization remains safe and in good standing with the government.

Limitations and challenges

One limitation of this study is that this was a purposive sample and cannot be generalized to all employers in Uganda. A second limitation is that the researcher does not live in Uganda and therefore could miss subtle elements of cultural understanding that would provide insight on the findings. A third limitation was that at least two participants completed their surveys together which may have influenced their answers. Fourth, only one researcher coded the data, but the chance of errors would have been minimized and the reliability of the data would have been increased if more researchers had independently coded the data.

One challenge was the difference in English spoken in the United States versus English spoken in Uganda. For example, "entry level positions" does not hold the same definition in the United States as it does in Uganda. During an interview, an employer asked for the definition of

a job coach, so it is possible that others had the same question. A second challenge related to language was thoroughly understanding the accents of those who were interviewed. When the internet was choppy, it was difficult to interpret every single word spoken and the researcher had to ask people to repeat certain responses. A third challenge when conducting this study was the lack of stable internet which interrupted meetings and caused audio issues.

Conclusion

Employment of people with DS in Uganda is a topic that has not yet been thoroughly examined. This study infers that barriers to employment include lack of applicants with DS, high competition within the job market, budgetary effects of the pandemic, difficulties with the application process, lacking skills or education, and concerns regarding supervision, communication, efficiency, effectiveness, medical issues and communication. Key factors that separate those who have hired people with DS from those who have not are their belief in the preparedness of people with DS for the workforce, their perception of job coaches, their confidence in their supervisory skills, their subscription to social action ideals, their skepticism of capabilities and the number of applicants they receive for open positions. The key factors that contribute to long-term employment for people with DS are financial stability and ongoing training. Future research should examine stigma amongst hiring managers in diverse geographical settings within Uganda, measure vocational skills amongst job seekers with DS, seek to better understand concerns around communication, and investigate tactics that can increase supervisors' comfort with the idea of supervising an employee with DS. These studies should occur in Uganda to consider cultural variables that influence results.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introduction to interview: Thank you for taking the time to be interviewed. My name is Leah Wing and am currently completing a graduate program at the University of Colorado and as part of my final project, I will be conducting your interview today. This interview should last 30-45 minutes depending on how in depth you'd like to go in your answers. The purpose of this project is to gain a better understanding of employer's hiring practices and how they impact job candidates with Down Syndrome. We sought you out, as we know you have a wealth of knowledge regarding the hiring process at your organization. This study is sponsored by the Global Livingston Institute and they will use it to inform their workforce development program to strengthen their practices regarding workforce development for people with Down Syndrome. I will be recording you for my own transcription purposes, but your comments will remain anonymous. Do you have any questions before we begin?

- Is your organization within the private, nonprofit or public sector?
- Tell me about the entry level positions at your organization.
- How many applicants do you typically get for the entry level jobs?
- Briefly tell me about your role within the hiring process.
- What does your hiring process typically look like?
 - Who is involved in the hiring process?
- Has Covid-19 affected your hiring needs or practices this year?
- Tell me what you know about Down Syndrome.
- Have you employed a person with a *disability* at your organization?
 - (If yes) Have you employed a person with *Down Syndrome* at your organization?

- (If yes) Tell me about your decision to employ this person with Down Syndrome.
 - Is this employee still working with your organization?
 - (If no) How long were they employed with your organization?
 - Tell me about the experience of employing them.
 - How long do you believe this person will work for your organization? Why?
 - How has his/her employment gone so far?
 - Tell me about what supports your business, or this employee, would need to lead to long term employment with your organization.
 - What supports from GLI or Angel's Center would be helpful?
 - What are your thoughts on considering other candidates with Down Syndrome for future positions?
- (If no) Have you had job candidates with Down Syndrome apply for positions at your agency?
 - (If yes) Why were those candidates not the best choice for the position?
 - (If yes) What concerns do employers have about employing someone with Down Syndrome?
- How likely is it that you would employ a person with *Down Syndrome* at your organization in the future?
 - Why or why not?

- What skills do you believe people with Down Syndrome need to work on to become qualified to work for your organization?
 - On what do you base these opinions?
- Do you believe that your teammates would have concerns about working along someone with Down Syndrome?
 - (If yes) What concerns might your teammates have about working alongside someone with Down Syndrome?
- What do you think the biggest challenges would be to employing people with Down Syndrome?
- How comfortable would you feel hiring someone with Down Syndrome?
 - How much would it increase the likelihood of you hiring an employee with Down Syndrome if they had the support of a job coach at work?
- What other businesses do you know of that have employed people with Down Syndrome?

Thank you for your time to allow me to draw from your expertise within your company! I appreciate it and I know GLI appreciates it. Please let me know if you would like to receive a completed copy of this research project. Would it be okay to contact you for small follow-up questions if necessary?

APPENDIX B: WRITTEN SURVEY QUESTIONS

GLI and The Angel's Center have partnered with a graduate student at the University of Colorado Denver to better understand employment as it relates to people with Down Syndrome. Please help us by completing this short survey. Your thoughtful and honest responses will help us better meet the needs of local employers and support job candidates with Down Syndrome.

Read each item carefully and respond as instructed. All responses will remain anonymous in the final report.

- 1) What is your sector of employment?
 - a. Private
 - b. Nonprofit
 - c. Public

- 2) What entry level positions exist at your business?

- 3) How many applicants do you typically get for your entry level positions?
 - a. 1-4
 - b. 5-9
 - c. 10-14
 - d. 15-19
 - e. 20+
- 4) What is your role in the hiring process? *Circle all that apply.*
 - a. I recruit for applicants
 - b. I determine who is interviewed
 - c. I conduct at least one of each candidate's interviews
 - d. I conduct all of the candidate's interviews
 - e. I contribute my feedback to the person who makes the final hiring decision
 - f. I make the final hiring decision

g. Other

5) What does your hiring process typically look like?

6) Which staff members at your business are involved in the hiring process?

7) Has Covid-19 affected your hiring needs or practices this year? *Circle all that apply.*

- a. Because of its impact, we no longer need additional staffing
- b. Because of its impact, we cannot afford to hire more staff members
- c. It increased our need for more staff members
- d. We had to lay off staff
- e. We had to lay off staff and are attempting to rehire them at some point
- f. It had no effect on us

g. Other

8) Tell me what you know about Down Syndrome.

9) Have you employed a person with a *disability* at your organization?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I don't know

10) Have you employed a person with *Down Syndrome* at your organization?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I don't know

11) Would you employ a person with *Down Syndrome* at your organization in the future?

- a. Very likely
- b. Likely
- c. Neutral
- d. Unlikely
- e. Very unlikely

12) Why or why not?

13) What do you think the challenges would be to employing people with Down Syndrome? *Circle all that apply.*

- a. Cost
- b. Supervision
- c. Efficiency of work
- d. Colleague or supervisor discomfort
- e. Effectiveness of work
- f. Discipline
- g. Lacking skills
- h. Attendance
- i. Medical issues
- j. Fitting in with company culture
- k. Lack of education
- l. Communication
- m. Other

14) What skills do you believe people with Down Syndrome need to work on to become qualified to work for your organization?

15) How likely is it that your teammates have concerns working alongside someone with Down Syndrome?

- a. Very likely
- b. Likely
- c. Neutral
- d. Unlikely
- e. Very unlikely

If Neutral, Likely or Very Likely, what concerns might your teammates have about working alongside someone with Down Syndrome?

- 16) How comfortable would you feel hiring someone with Down Syndrome?
- a. Highly comfortable
 - b. Moderately comfortable
 - c. Mildly comfortable
 - d. Mildly uncomfortable
 - e. Moderately uncomfortable
 - f. Highly uncomfortable

- 17) Do you know of businesses that have employed a person with Down Syndrome?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

- 18) If so, list the businesses

- 19) Answer Question 19 if your business has hired a person(s) with Down Syndrome. *If not, skip to Question 20.***
- a. How old is the person with Down Syndrome that you have hired?
 - i. 20 or younger
 - ii. 21-30
 - iii. 31-40
 - iv. 41-50
 - v. 51 or older

- b. Tell me about your decision to employ this person with Down Syndrome.

- c. How much prior training did this person have pertaining to the job?
 - i. A great deal
 - ii. Much
 - iii. Somewhat
 - iv. Little
 - v. None

- d. How long do you believe this person will work for your organization? Why?

- e. How has his/her employment gone so far?
 - i. Very good
 - ii. Moderately good
 - iii. Mildly good
 - iv. Mildly bad
 - v. Moderately bad
 - vi. Very bad

- f. Tell me about what supports your business, or this employee, would need to lead to long term employment with your organization.

- g. What supports from GLI or the Angel's Center would be helpful?

- h. Would you consider other candidates with Down Syndrome for future positions?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - iii. I don't know

20) **Answer Question 20 if your business has NOT hired a person(s) with Down Syndrome.**

- a. Have you had job candidates with Down Syndrome apply for positions at your agency?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - iii. I don't know

1. If yes, why were those candidates not the best choice for the position?

2. What concerns do employers have about employing someone with Down Syndrome?

Use the scale shown below to respond to the following statements. Write your answer on the blank beside each item number.

- 1=Strongly agree
- 2=Moderately agree
- 3=Slightly agree
- 4=Slightly disagree
- 5=Moderately disagree
- 6=Strongly disagree

- Each person with Down Syndrome has his or her own unique skills
- People with Down Syndrome are prepared for the workforce
- I am comfortable around people with Down Syndrome
- It would cost more to employ someone with Down Syndrome
- People with Down Syndrome would require extra supervision
- An employee with Down Syndrome could add value to my workplace
- Down Syndrome is a genetic medical condition
- I would consider hiring someone with Down Syndrome if they had the support of a job coach
- I do not have the skills to supervise someone with Down Syndrome

Thank you for your time!