

12-1988

# Effects of Disability Status of Test Administrator on Attitudes Towards Disabled Person Scores

Paul T. Hanson

*Southern Illinois University Carbondale*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/uhp\\_theses](http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/uhp_theses)

---

## Recommended Citation

Hanson, Paul T., "Effects of Disability Status of Test Administrator on Attitudes Towards Disabled Person Scores" (1988). *Honors Theses*. Paper 314.

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the University Honors Program at OpenSIUC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of OpenSIUC. For more information, please contact [opensiuc@lib.siu.edu](mailto:opensiuc@lib.siu.edu).

Effects of Disability Status of Test Administrator  
on Attitudes Towards Disabled Person Scores

Paul T. Hanson and Charles Victor  
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale

Running head: ATDP

### Abstract

The effect of test administrator disability status was examined in relation to a standardized scale which measures attitudes towards disabled persons.

Conducting the study on two different dates with a total of 88 subjects it was found that filling out the attitude scale in a group with either: a visually impaired; Quadriplegic using a wheelchair; or able-bodied administrator did not result in a significant difference in recorded attitudes. There was, however, an interesting finding in that there was a wide variance of scores within each group. This encourages further data analysis.

**Effects of Disability Status of Test Administrator  
on Attitudes Towards Disabled Person Scores**

Ever since the early 1930's, a large area of research in rehabilitation, psychology, and social policy has involved attitudes towards disabled persons (Strong, 1931). This research has investigated attitudes on a broad scale, examining various aspects of attitudes, from type of disability (Altman, 1981; Furnham & Pendred, 1983; Richardson & Ronald, 1977; Strohmer, Grand & Purcell, 1984; Yuker, 1983), to gender of disabled person(s) in question (Furnham & Pendred, 1983), to degree of contact one has had with disabled persons (Furnham & Pendred, 1983; Richardson & Ronald, 1977; Strohmer et al. 1984; Yuker, 1983).

This research, as well as other research involving attitudes towards disabled persons, has provided valuable information as to why certain attitudes are held toward disabled persons. An example of this would be research involving employer/employee relationships (Florian, 1981), where a potential employee is disabled and the employer fears hiring her. In this research it is shown that inaccurate beliefs, such as fearing that a disabled employee will cause insurance premiums to rise, are one reason for which people hold certain attitudes.

With all of this research that has been, and is being, conducted a large base of attitude related information is being gathered, thus allowing some research to shift from the examination of attitudes to the changing of attitudes. Research already involved in this area includes that conducted by Sawyer and Clarck (1980) in which college students took part by simulating disabilities of various types. After 24 hours of being "disabled" the participants were asked for feedback on the experiment. It was shown that simulation did lead to some attitude changes towards specific disabilities and their related aspects. A four month follow-up on these participants showed that their improved attitudes had remained stable. While many other studies are exploring ways to change attitudes, for comparison see Donaldson (1980); Pulton (1976); Westwood, Vargo, and Vargo (1981), there still remains a lot of unanswered questions as to why negative attitudes are maintained. In the process of exploring these attitudes one measurement has been used with great regularity.

The most commonly used means for measuring attitudes towards disabled persons are the Attitudes Towards Disabled Persons (ATDP) Scales D, A, and B developed and introduced by Yuker, Block, and Campbell

(1960) and Yuker et al. (1966). Much of the research on attitudes towards disabled persons has centered around these scales. The research includes studies on the reliability, validity, and factor analytical studies on the dimensionality of the ATDP Scales (Antonak, 1980; Hafer, Wright, & Godley, 1983; Jaques & Linkowski, 1970; Livneh, 1982; Siller & Chipman, 1964). Although the results of these studies vary the wide spread use of the ATDP Scales make them adequate tools for attitude measurement and allow comparative analysis between related studies.

But why do we measure these attitudes to begin with? Research on attitudes toward disabled persons is particularly important because these attitudes have serious implications on the lives of disabled persons. Every aspect of the lives of people with disabilities, be it economical, political, or social, may be influenced by attitudes held by others (Altman, 1981; Bowe, 1978; Dejong & Lifchez, 1983; Hahn, 1982, 1983, 1985; Light & Kirshbaum, 1977).

Economically, employers may hold certain fears and misconceptions toward the employment of disabled persons. According to Florian (1981), employers, incorrectly, fear that disabled individuals would be unreliable, would present a bad image for the business,

or would cause the business's health insurance premiums to increase. Beyond these inaccurate attitudes, economic opportunities for disabled persons are further limited by attitudes which allow only limited freedom, to some disabled people, due to physical barriers and lack of accessible transportation (Dejong & Lifchez, 1983; Hahn, 1982, 1983, 1985; Light & Kirshbaum, 1977). The fostering of more positive attitudes could lead the way to the removal of these obstacles and thus allow disabled persons their right to seek a place amongst the nation's work force.

The political aspects of the disabled population are much like that of other minorities in that services and opportunities for either group are dependent upon attitudes held by the public as a majority (Hahn, 1982, 1985; Kamieniecki, 1985). These public attitudes influence the actions of elected leaders and thus are major determinants of what services will be offered to which populations (Altman, 1981).

Social aspects of disabled persons are such that disabled persons are denied the opportunity to make contact with others. According to Light & Kirshbaum (1977), disabled persons face isolation both from one another and from the mainstream of society because of prejudicial attitudes held by society. If disabled

people are unable to make contact with one another outside of care facilities and with society as a whole they will be dependent upon the able-bodied community to decide what contact and involvement with others they may have. This lack of independence may suppress a disabled individual's life in many ways, from the need to relate ideas, experiences, and worries to similar others, to establishing personal relationships. Unless negative attitudes towards disabled persons change, people with disabilities will remain divided from one another and the social support that every human being needs.

Negative attitudes, however, are not necessarily the sole antecedents to disabled person's problems. It has been shown, for instance, that favorable attitudes are expressed by some people but, these people are simultaneously, albeit subtly, maintaining paternalistic protection over disabled persons (Hahn, 1982). Kamieniecki (1985) studied various factors which influenced attitudes held towards disabled persons and blacks. It was shown that factors such as; specific political party affiliation, familiarity and historical knowledge of the population in question, and degree of approval toward the president's and congress's economic policies could result in problems



for disabled persons, as well as blacks, that were not directly a result of negative attitudes being held.

In the same direction, Yankelovich, Skelly, and White (1978) examined the general public's attitudes towards disabled people, minorities, women, and ex-convicts to see if they would approve of "special efforts" toward any of these specific populations (cited in Rowe, 1980). The study shows that over three quarters (79%) of the public who took part were in support of "special efforts" for disabled people, possibly indicating a favorable attitude. It goes on to discuss why these positive attitudes may not manifest in increased support for disabled persons, there being three possibilities; 1) political leaders have not yet been pressured by special-interest groups representing disabled persons, 2) these leaders are wanting and waiting for guidance and ideas from disabled persons, and 3) political leaders want public support before implimenting expensive and possibly controvercial programs.

Despite all this research, positive or negative, Livneh (1982) states that attitude studies involving disabled people are still in their early stages of development. Other researchers, such as Altman (1981) and Yaker (1983) are in agreement with Livneh, stating,

respectively, that we may not have as much accurate data on these attitudes as we believe and that there is a real need for more involved studies into the attitudes which are held toward disabled persons.

After a thorough review of studies on attitudes toward disabled persons, Altman (1981) recommended the use of actual disability conditions as attitude object in research rather than previously used stereotypic labeling. Strohmer et al. (1984) also recommended that further research be undertaken which investigates attitudes held in actual social settings. Conducting research, Kleck (1966, 1968) used a confederate who posed as either an able-bodied interviewer or as an interviewer who was an amputee in a wheelchair. Conducted in interview-type settings, the two studies investigated subject's verbal and nonverbal interactions with the confederate. It was found that those subjects who were interviewed by the disabled-acting confederate showed: less variability in their behaviors and motor movements, lower lengths of time within the interview, more positive impressions of the confederate, and responses and opinions which were less their own than they were those which they thought the "disabled person" held.

Using the Attitudes Towards Disabled Persons

(ATDP) Scale-0 (Yuker et al. 1960), Genskow and Maglione (1965) studied attitudes of students from two universities, one of which having a substantial disabled student enrollment (D) while the other (A) did not have such a population. From these universities two classes were chosen from each and they were each then tested on two different occasions to measure their attitudes towards disabled persons. Using the ATDP Scale each group was tested once using an able-bodied administrator and once using an administrator who acted as a parapalegic in a wheelchair.

While the study measured additional factors, two of the factors it measured were the effects of using able-bodied v. "nonable-bodied" administrators and the differences in measured student attitudes between the two universities (D & A). Examining the first factor, able v. nonable-bodied administrators, Genskow and Maglione hypothesized that students from university "D", disabled population, would show a more positive attitude when their administrator was nonable-bodied rather than when he was able-bodied. In contrast, they also hypothesized that students from the second university ("A", few disabled students) would show more negative attitudes when their administrator was nonable-bodied as opposed to able-bodied. Although the

results they gathered were not significant, possibly due to their choice of analysis, they were in alignment with what was predicted. Students from university "D" recorded more positive attitudes towards their nonable-bodied administrator than towards their able-bodied administrator, while students from university "A" showed results in the opposite direction, holding more negative attitudes towards their nonable-bodied v. able-bodied administrator.

Looking at the second factor mentioned, the difference of attitudes between the two universities, it was hypothesized that the university (D) having students with the greatest familiarity with disabled people would show more positive attitudes than university "A" having little familiarity. As hypothesized, it was shown, significantly, that students who are familiar with disabled others will record more favorable attitudes towards disabled persons than students with less familiarity.

This hypothesis and the two previously discussed were founded on research studies conducted by Hebb (1946), Heider (1958), and Rosenberg, Hovland, McGuire, Abelson, and Brehm (1960) which showed that consistency, familiarity, and similarity may have an effect on people's attitudes towards disabled persons.

These findings appear to have remained stable.

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationship between scores on Yuker's (1966) Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons (ATDP) Scale and the disability status of persons administering the scale. It is hypothesized that subjects will tend to rate disabled persons more favorably when the ATDP Scale is administered by a disabled tester as opposed to an able bodied tester. Evidence for this is contained in Genskow & Maglione (1965) and in the fact that the ATDP Scale has been found to be only slightly sensitive to social desirability bias (Yuker & Block, 1986).

#### Method

##### Subjects

The present study involves the participation of 88 students from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. The students will receive extra credit for their participation in the research.

##### Instruments

Since the Attitudes Towards Disabled Persons(ATDP) Scale has been utilized in a great amount of research and was found to be a reliable and valid measure of attitudes towards disabled persons, it was selected for use in this study. This will also make it possible to compare the resulting scores with other norm groups.

Measurement of subject's attitudes will be obtained using Form A of the (ATDP) Scale. In addition to filling out the Scale Ss will be asked to complete a demographic sheet. The sheet asks for: Age, Major, Gender, Class, Race, and degree of contact, if any, subject has had with disabled persons.

#### Procedure

All subjects will be asked to report to one room, upon which they are to be randomly assigned to one of three groups, two treatment and one control. Each group of Ss will differ only in that the ATDP Scale is to be administered by a different test administrator. Group 1 will have an administrator who is Quadriplegic and requires a wheelchair, Group 2 will have an administrator who is visually impaired, and Group 3 (control) will have an able bodied administrator. All three testers are white males between the ages of 22 and 30.

Once randomly assigned, each group will be directed to its own room in which the Ss will join their specific test administrator. When all Ss are seated they will be asked to walk up to where the administrator is seated and take a packet containing instructions, the ATDP Scale, and the demographic sheet. Subjects will then be briefly informed that

they are to complete a scale which measures attitudes towards disabled persons. They will be further instructed to respond honestly, answer every question, and that there are no time limitations. They will then be allowed to begin.

Upon completion, Ss will be asked to return their completed packets to the administrator and will then be informed that a debriefing sheet is going to be available at a later date. The debriefing sheet will contain a description of the experiment, the name of the experimenter, and a phone number through which subjects can contact the experimenter if any experiment related problems or questions arise.

#### Data Analysis

A one way Analysis of Variance for a three-group study is going to be used to test for significant differences among mean scores across the three groups. The scores will also be correlated with demographic characteristics and a factor analysis of the data will be done to examine the factorial dimensionality of ATDP Scales.

#### Results

Analysis of the data showed that the means of the two different testings and also their combination between groups were not significant. However, there

was a great amount of variance in scores within groups.

The study was conducted on two different dates using 16 participants in the first and 72 in the second. An ANOVA was used to examine if the between group means were significant. This was also done with the means obtained from a combination of the two study dates.

Looking at the first study date the means were 117.00 (visually impaired: VI), 130.50 (Quadriplegic: QD), and 128.00 (able-bodied : AB). Conducting an ANOVA, the results, Table 1.1, were seen as insignificant,  $F(2,13) = 0.75$ ,  $p < .05$ . Beyond this, however, it was observed that scores within groups were highly variable, ranging 36 points (93-129: VI), 45 points (103-148: QD), and 61 points (94-155: AB). With this variance found further analysis is in order.

Like the first study date the second date as well as the dates combined showed insignificant ANOVA results on between group means. Likewise, both sets of data also showed large variances within groups. The second group's means were 114.69 (VI), 118.61 (QD), and 119.57 (AB),  $F(2,69) = 0.39$ ,  $p < .05$ , Table 1.2. Within group ranges for this date were 71 points (87-158: VI), 72 points (78-150: QD), and 85 points (76-161: AB). For the combined group data the means were



115.85 (VI), 124.56 (QD), and 123.79 (AB),  $F(2,85) = 0.89$ ,  $p < .05$ , Table 1.3. This data's ranges within the groups were 71 points (87-158: VI), 72 points (78-150: QD), and 85 points (76-161: AB).

#### Discussion

The results of the present study showed that the mean scores between the three groups were not significantly different from one another. This would seem to indicate that manipulating the test administrator's disability status had no effect. Another possibility for these findings could also be related to studies which state that attitude changes only occur after lengthy contact. If this is the real case the momentary contact and presence with disabled persons will not be enough to show measurable attitude changes in others. Further, tightly controlled, research may clarify these possibilities.

In addition to the primary data gathered, analyzed, and discussed there was great variance found within the groups. Using the demographic data collected with the scale scores, a post hoc factorial analysis of this information should identify factors, i.e., gender, degree of contact, which are causing this within group error. Through the reduction of this error, specific attitude correlates should be

uncovered.

Anticipating further research in this area it is suggested that subject thought processes be measured to examine their state of mind, in relation for example, to their being aware that the administrator is disabled or that being aware that the administrator is aware of them. This additional information could further aid in "clearing the smoke" within the groups.

## References

- Altman, B.M. (1981). Studies of attitudes toward the handicapped: The need for a new direction. Social Problems, 28, 321-337.
- Antonak, R.F. (1980). Psychometric analysis of the Attitudes Towards Disabled Persons Scale, Form O. Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin, 23, 169-176.
- Bowe (1978)
- Bowe, F. (1980). Rehabilitating America: Toward Independence for Disabled and Elderly People. New York: Harper and Row.
- Dejong & Lifchez (1983).
- Donaldson, J. (1980). Changing attitudes towards handicapped persons: A review and analysis of research. Exceptional Children, 46, 504-514.
- Florian, V. (1981). Objective obstacles in hiring disabled persons - the employer's point of view. International Journal of Rehabilitation Research, 4, 167-174.
- Furnham, A., & Pendred, J. (1983). Attitudes towards the mentally and physically disabled. British Journal of Medical Psychology, 56, 179-187.
- Genskow, J.K., & Maglione, F.D. (1965). Familiarity, dogmatism, and reported student attitudes toward the disabled. The Journal of Social Psychology,

67, 329-341.

Hahn, (1982, 1983, 1985)

Hafer, M., Wright, W.R., & Godley, S.H. (1983).

Dimensionality of the Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale revisited. Educational & Psychological Measurement, 43, 459-463.

Hebb, D.O. (1946). On the nature of fear.

Psychological Review, 53, 259-276.

Heider, F. (1958). The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations. New York: Wiley.

Jaques, M.E., & Linkowski, D.C. (1970).

Kamieniecki, S. (1985). The dimensions underlying public attitudes toward blacks and disabled people in America. American Behavioral Scientist, 28, 367-385.

Kleck, R., Ono, H., & Hastorf, A.H. (1966). The effects of physical deviance upon face-to-face interaction. Human Relations, 19, 425-436.

Kleck, R. (1968). Physical stigma and nonverbal cues emitted in face-to-face interaction. Human Relations, 21, 19-28.

Light, M. & Kirshbaum, H. (1977). Disabled consumer as enabled producer. Social Policy, 8, 33-35.

Livnek, H. (1982). Factor analysis of the Attitudes

Toward Disabled Persons Scale - Form A.

Rehabilitation Psychology, 27, 235-243.

Richardson, S.A., & Ronald, L. (1977). The effect of a physically handicapped interviewer on children's expression of values toward handicap.

Rehabilitation Psychology, 24, 211-218.

Pulton, T.W. (1976). Attitudes toward the physically disabled: A review and a suggestion for producing positive attitude change. Physiotherapy Canada, 28, 83-88.

Rosenbaum, C. & Katz, S. (1980). Attitudes toward the physically disabled: Beliefs and their evaluation. International Journal of Rehabilitation Research, 3, 15-20.

Rosenberg, M.J., Hovland, C.I., McGuire, W.J., Abelson, R.P., & Brehm, J.W. (1960). Attitude Organization and Change: An Analysis of Consistency Among Attitude Components. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.

Sawyer, H.W. & Clark, D. (1980). Disability simulation as a strategy for attitude change. Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling, 11, 132-35.

Siller, J., & Chipman, A. (1964). Factorial structure and correlates of the Attitudes Toward Disabled

Persons Scale. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 24, 831-840.

Strohmer, D.C., Grand, S.A., & Purcell, M.J. (1984). Attitudes toward persons with a disability: An examination of demographic factors, social context, and specific disability. Rehabilitation Psychology, 29, 131-145.

Westwood, M.J., Vargo, J.W., & Vargo, F. (1981). Methods for promoting attitude change toward and among physically disabled. Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling, 12, 220-225.

Yuker, H.E. (1983). The lack of a stable order of preference for disabilities: A response to Richardson and Ronald. Rehabilitation Psychology, 28, 93-103.

Table 1.1 Analysis of variance summary table (16 Ss)

<u>Source</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	2	542.50	271.25	
Within groups	13	4701.50	361.65	0.75
Total	15	5244.00		

Table 1.1 Analysis of variance summary table (72 Ss)

<u>Source</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	2	331.33	165.67	
Within groups	69	29032.67	420.76	0.39
Total	71	29364.00		



Table 1.1 Analysis of variance summary table (88 Ss)

<u>Source</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	2	724.23	362.12	
Within groups	85	34720.77	408.48	0.89
	87	35445.00		

Attitudes Towards Disabled Persons Study

General Information

The present study is being conducted as a senior honors thesis in Psychology by Paul T. Hanson and Charles Victor. The purpose of the study is to measure attitudes held toward persons with disabilities.

As a participant, you are asked to complete a 30-item scale which measures attitudes towards disabled persons. The scale requires approximately 15 minutes to complete and upon completion, you are free to leave. In order to receive credit for your participation you must sign the attendance sheet before leaving. Please take your time (there is no time limit) and answer every question.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, refusal to participate or the discontinuation of your participation at any time will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. As a participant, you will have complete anonymity since you will not be required to identify yourself in any way upon the scale which you are asked to complete.

If you would like debriefing information, a sheet fully explaining what the study is about will be available May 1 at Life Science II, Rm 271 or you may contact the Senior Investigator, Paul T. Hanson at 549-4989.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Carbondale Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects. The Committee believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the Committee may be reached through the Graduate School, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, , Illinois 62901. The telephone number of the Office is 618/536-7791, ext. 22/55.

Attitudes Towards Disabled Persons Study

Instructions

Please read the instructions on the scale carefully and follow them as directed. You must respond to every one of the 30 items. DO NOT leave any item unanswered. Take as much time as you need, there is no time limit. Finally, please complete the demographic information requested on the attached sheet.

When you have completed, please turn in all 3 sheets, the instruction sheet, the ATDP Scale, and the demographic sheet, to the administrator. Keep all 3 sheets in the package together. DO NOT REMOVE the staple or separate the sheets.

In order to receive credit for your participation you must sign the attendance sheet before leaving.

The investigators of this study thank you.

Paul T. Hanson

Charles Victor

ATDP-A

Mark each statement in the left margin according to how much you agree or disagree with it. Please mark every one. Write +1, +2, +3: or -1, -2, -3: depending on how you feel in each case.

+3: I AGREE VERY MUCH	-1: I DISAGREE A LITTLE
+2: I AGREE PRETTY MUCH	-2: I DISAGREE PRETTY MUCH
+1: I AGREE A LITTLE	-3: I DISAGREE VERY MUCH

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Disabled people are often unfriendly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Disabled people should not have to compete for jobs with physically normal people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Disabled people are more emotional than other people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Most disabled persons are more self-conscious than other people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. We should expect just as much from disabled as from nondisabled persons.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Disabled workers cannot be as successful as other workers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Disabled people usually do not make much of a contribution to society.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Most nondisabled people would not want to marry anyone who is physically disabled.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Disabled people show as much enthusiasm as other people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Disabled persons are usually more sensitive than other people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Severely disabled persons are usually untidy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Most disabled people feel that they are as good as other people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. The driving test given to a disabled person should be more severe than the one given to the nondisabled.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Disabled people are usually sociable.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Disabled persons usually are not as conscientious as physically normal persons.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Severe disabled persons probably worry more about their health than those who have minor disabilities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Most disabled persons are not dissatisfied with themselves.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. There are more misfits among disabled persons than among nondisabled persons.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Most disabled persons do not get discouraged easily.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Most disabled persons resent physically normal people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. Disabled children should compete with physically normal children.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. Most disabled persons can take care of themselves.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. It would be best if disabled persons would live and work with nondisabled persons.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. Most severely disabled people are just as ambitious as physically normal persons.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. Disabled people are just as self-confident as other people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. Most disabled persons want more affection and praise than other people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. Physically disabled persons are often less intelligent than nondisabled ones.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. Most disabled persons are different from nondisabled people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. Disabled persons don't want any more sympathy than other people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. The way disabled people act is irritating.

Attitudes Towards Disabled Persons Study

## Demographic Information

Please fill in or circle the following information.

1) Age: \_\_\_\_\_

2) Major: \_\_\_\_\_

3) Gender:    M        F

4) Class:    Fresh.    Soph.    Jr.    Sr.    Grad.

5) Race:        American Indian/Alaskan Native

                Asian or Pacific Islander

                Black - Non-Hispanic Origin

                Hispanic

                White - Non-Hispanic Origin

                Other \_\_\_\_\_

6) Have you ever had contact with a disabled individual?

Yes    No

If you answered "Yes" please complete the following:

Type of contact:    Family Member

                                Friend

                                Classmate

                                Occupational setting

                                Other \_\_\_\_\_

Degree of contact: Frequent

                                Occasional

                                Minimal

                                Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Effects of Disability Status of Test Administrator  
on Attitudes Towards Disabled Person Scores  
Paul T. Hanson and Charles Victor  
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale**

**Running head: ATDP**

**Effects of Disability Status of Test Administrator  
on Attitudes Towards Disabled Person Scores**

Ever since the early 1930's, a large area of research has involved attitudes toward disabled people (Strong, 1931). This research has investigated attitudes in relation to such factors as: *type of disability* (Altman, 1981; Furnham & Pendred, 1983; Richardson & Ronald, 1977; Strohmer, Grand & Purcell, 1984; Yaker, 1983), *work/social setting* (Florian, 1981; Light & Kirshbaum, 1977; Rosenbaum & Katz, 1980), *personality characteristics* (Gunther, 1981), *gender* (Furnham & Pendred, 1983), *political implications* (Light & Kirshbaum, 1977; Kamieniecki, 1985), *employer/employee relationships* (Florian, 1981), *reducing/eliminating prejudice* (Matkin, Hafer, Wright & Lutzker, 1983); *counselor effectiveness* (Fish & Smith, 1983), and *degree of contact* (Furnham & Pendred, 1983; Richardson & Ronald, 1977; Strohmer et al., 1984; Yaker, 1983). The purpose of these studies can be classified as being descriptive, explanatory, or exploratory although they are usually a combination (Jones, 172-73). Though the methods used may vary, the goal of data obtained from this research does not in that it helps further the attempt to find ways in which more positive attitudes may be fostered (Matkin et al.,

1983).

Research on attitudes toward disabled persons is particularly important in that these attitudes have serious implications on the lives of disabled persons. Every aspect of the lives of people with disabilities, be it economical, political, or social, may be influenced by attitudes held by others (Light & Kirshbaum, 1977).

Economically, employers may hold certain fears and misconceptions toward the employment of disabled persons. According to Florian (1981), employers fear that disabled individuals would be unreliable, would present a bad image for the business, or would cause the business's health insurance premiums to increase. Beyond these inaccurate attitudes, economic opportunities for disabled persons are further limited by attitudes which allow only limited freedom, due to physical barriers and lack of accessible transportation, to certain members of the disabled population (Light & Kirshbaum, 1977). The fostering of more positive attitudes could lead the way to the removal of these obstacles and thus allow disabled persons their right to seek a place amongst the nation's work force.

The political aspects of the disabled population



are much like that of other minorities in that services and opportunities for either group are dependent upon attitudes held by the public as a majority (Kamieniecki, 1985). These public attitudes influence the actions of elected leaders and thus are major determinants of what services will be offered to which populations. If the proper attitudes can be fostered, services can then be directed at populations which are legitimately deserving or most rewarding.

Social aspects of disabled persons are such that disabled persons are denied the opportunity to make contact with others. According to Light & Kirshbaum (1977), disabled persons face isolation both from one another and from the mainstream of society because of prejudicial attitudes held by society. If disabled people are unable to make contact with one another outside of care facilities and with society as a whole they will be dependent upon the able bodied community to decide what contact and involvement with others they may have. This lack of independence may suppress a disabled individual's life in many ways, from the need to relate ideas, experiences, and worries to similar others, to establishing personal relationships. Unless proper means (such as, wheelchairs, support animals, accessible transportation) and channels are

established, people with disabilities will remain divided from one another and the social support that every human being needs.

As one can see, negative attitudes toward disabled persons do not only result in hurt feelings but have an impact upon every aspect of their lives (Light & Kirshbaum, 1977). These aspects of the lives of disabled persons are not separate units but instead are pieces which make up individual lives. If any of these pieces are missing then one's life cannot be complete. The description, evaluation, and/or exploration of attitudes toward disabled persons may provide some of these missing pieces and with them, an improvement of disabled people's lives.

Further, since disabilities cut across all minority groups (Light & Kirshbaum, 1977), this improvement of life, aimed at the disabled population, may also spill over and have a positive affect on attitudes held toward other such minorities as women and ethnic groups (Kamieniecki, 1985).

Despite all prior research, Livneh (1982) states that attitude studies involving disabled people are still in their early stages of development. Other researchers, such as Altman (1981) and Yuker (1983) are in agreement with Livneh, stating, respectively, that

we may not have as much accurate data on these attitudes as we believe and, that there is a real need for more involved studies into the attitudes which are held toward disabled persons. As the search for and analysis of these attitudes continues, further questions will arise and, upon their investigation, they may extend our knowledge and understanding of this area. Hence, there appears to be room for more research regarding attitudes toward disabled people.

As if in recognition of this need, upon the conclusion of research studies conducted by Matkin et al. (1983), Fish & Smith (1983), and Yuker (1983), each researcher made recommendations for further studies. The recommendations made included continued research into, respectively, visual aids used to encourage more favorable attitudes in others; the manipulation of age, sex, and work experience between disabled persons and people who are in contact with them; the study of the conditions which lead up to particular attitudes, and the type of attitudes held by disabled persons themselves. Two other studies have suggested further research into attitudes toward disabled persons and a particular recommendation of each is of interest to this present study.

After a thorough review of studies on attitudes

toward disabled persons, Altman (1981) recommended: investigating the attitudes of peer groups in employment, recreation, and residential environments, evaluating the attitudes brought about due to legislation which demands the mainstreaming of disabled youth, a closer look at the attitudes held by those who possess influence over disabled people, and the use of actual disability conditions as attitude object in research rather than previously used, stereotypic labeling. Following their research into demographic factors, social context, and specific disability as they relate to attitudes, Strohmer et al. (1984) recommended that further research be undertaken which investigates attitudes held in actual social settings. The present research involves suggestions made by both of the previously mentioned studies. The study is interested in the analysis of attitudes held when people are in the presence of disabled others.

Prior to the present research, there has been previous interest in this area. Research conducted by Kleck (1966, 1968) involved the use of a confederate who posed as either an able-bodied interviewer or as an interviewer who was an amputee in a wheelchair. Conducted in interview-type settings, the two studies investigated subject's verbal and nonverbal

interactions with the confederate. It was found that those subjects who were interviewed by the disabled-acting confederate showed: less variability in their behaviors and motor movements, lower lengths of time within the interview, more positive impressions of the confederate, and responses and opinions which were less their own than they were those which they thought the "disabled person" held.

Another study which is more closely related to the one at present is a study which utilized two universities, one having disabled students and the other without disabled students (Genskow & Maglione, 1965). Using the Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons (ATDP) Scale designed by Yuker et al. (1960), subjects from both schools were each requested to fill out two different forms of the scale. On one given day an able bodied presenter asked each subject to complete one of the ATDP forms and on another day, a presenter who was physically confined to a wheelchair asked the same subjects to fill out the second form. The findings from these two testing periods showed that those subjects who had a prior familiarity with a wheelchair bound individual reported more favorable attitudes than did those without prior familiarity and, on the whole, the subjects who attended the university with disabled

students showed more favorable attitudes than did the subjects attending the nondisabled student university.

Each of the studies conducted by Kleck (1966, 1968), Genskow & Maglione (1965), and the one at present is concerned with conducting research involving interactions with disabled persons, either actually or by confederate. Because actual disability conditions were utilized in this study and that of Genskow & Maglione (1965), new data was collected which helped reduce the need to rely on artificial findings from research which employed stereotypic labeling as attitude object. By gathering data on attitudes toward disabled persons through the cooperation of actual disabled persons instead of, for example, ranking pictures (Richardson & Ronald, 1977), the data obtained provides clearer, more accurate information on what attitudes are possessed by people. With more precise information as a base, research which examines why certain attitudes are being held and how more positive attitudes may be fostered is enhanced and accelerated.

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship between scores on Yunker's (1966) Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons (ATDP) Scale and the disability states of persons administering the scale. It was hypothesized that subjects would tend to

rate disabled persons more favorable when the ATDP Scale was administered by a disabled tester as opposed to an able bodied tester.

Since the ATDP Scale has been utilized in a great amount of research, the present study employs its use as a well standardized measurement and one which will allow easier comparison with previous ATDP related studies.

#### Method

##### Subjects

The present study will use a minimum of 60 volunteer undergraduate students from the Introduction to Psychology class at Southern Illinois University - Carbondale. The students will be given extra credit for participation in the research.

##### Instrument

Since the ATDP Scale has been utilized in a great amount of research and was found to be a reliable and valid measure of attitudes toward disabled persons, it has been selected for use in this study. This also makes it possible to compare the scores with other norm groups. Measurement of subject's attitudes will be obtained using forms A and B of the Attitude Toward Disabled Persons (ATDP) Scale (Yuker et al., 1966). Ten copies of each scale will be used with each group

of 20 subjects.

### Procedure

All subjects will report to a room in which they will be randomly assigned to one of three groups, two treatment and one control. Each group of 20 will differ in that the ATDP Scale for each group will be administered by a different test administrator. Group A will have a tester with Quadriplegia who uses a wheelchair; group B will have a tester with visual impairment; and group C (control) will use a nondisabled tester. All three testers will be white males between the ages of 25 and 30.

Once randomly assigned, each group will be directed to its own room in which they will join their test administrator. When all subjects are seated they will be briefly informed that they will be completing a scale which measures attitudes toward disabled people. They will further be instructed to respond honestly, answer every question, and that there are no time limitations. Subjects will then be asked to walk up to where the tester is seated, take an ATDP Scale, and begin filling it out. Equal numbers of Form A and Form B will be used in each group.

Upon completion, the scale will be returned to the tester and in return, subjects will receive a



debriefing paper which will provide a description of the experiment, the name of the experimenter, and a phone number through which subjects can contact the experimenter if any experiment related problems or questions arise.

#### Data Analysis

A three way Analysis of Variance will be used to test for significant differences among scores across the three groups. The scores will also be correlated with demographic characteristics. A factor analysis of the data may also be done to examine the factorial dimensionality of ATDP Scales.

## References

- Altman, B.M. (1981). Studies of attitudes toward the handicapped: The need for a new direction. Social Problems, 28, 321-337.
- Cloerkes, G. (1981). Are prejudices against disabled persons determined by personality characteristics? International Journal of Rehabilitation Research, 4, 35-46.
- Fish, D.E., & Smith, S.M. (1983). Disability: A variable in counselor effectiveness and attitudes toward disabled persons. Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin, 27, 120-123.
- Florian, V. (1981). Objective obstacles in hiring disabled persons - the employer's point of view. International Journal of Rehabilitation Research, 4, 167-174.
- Furnham, A., & Pendred, J. (1983). Attitudes towards the mentally and physically disabled. British Journal of Medical Psychology, 56, 179-187.
- Genskow, J.K., & Maglione, F.D. (1965). Familiarity, dogmatism, and reported student attitudes toward the disabled. The Journal of Social Psychology, 67, 329-341.
- Jones, R.A. (1985). Research Methods in the Social and Behavioral Sciences, Sinauer Associates, Inc.,

Sunderland, MA.

- Kamieniecki, S. (1985). The dimensions underlying public attitudes toward blacks and disabled people in America. American Behavioral Scientist, 28, 367-385.
- Kleck, R., Ono, H., & Hastorf, A.H. (1966). The effects of physical deviance upon face-to-face interaction. Human Relations, 19, 425-436.
- Kleck, R. (1968). Physical stigma and nonverbal cues emitted in face-to-face interaction. Human Relations, 21, 19-28.
- Light, M. & Kirshbaum, H. (1977). Disabled consumer as enabled producer. Social Policy, 8, 33-35.
- Livnek, H. (1982). Factor analysis of the Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale - Form A. Rehabilitation Psychology, 27, 235-243.
- Matkin, R.E., Hafer, M., Wright, W.R. & Lutzker, J.R. (1983). Pretesting artifacts: A study of attitudes toward disabilities. Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin, 342-348.
- Richardson, S.A., & Ronald, L. (1977). The effect of a physically handicapped interviewer on children's expression of values toward handicap. Rehabilitation Psychology, 24, 211-218.

- Rosenbaum, C. & Katz, S. (1980). Attitudes toward the physically disabled: Beliefs and their evaluation. International Journal of Rehabilitation Research, 3, 15-20.
- Strohmer, D.C., Grand, S.A., & Purcell, M.J. (1984). Attitudes toward persons with a disability: An examination of demographic factors, social context, and specific disability. Rehabilitation Psychology, 29, 131-145.
- Yuker, H.E. (1983). The lack of a stable order of preference for disabilities: A response to Richardson and Ronald. Rehabilitation Psychology, 28, 93-103.