

Discrimination against disabled persons in Malawi and the United States: A comparative study

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Introduction

In Malawi, Africa and in the United States, many disabled individuals experience hardships that are more severe than the general public. Disabled Malawians and Americans experience lower employment rates and school attendance rates. Possible contributing factors could be discrimination, infrastructure, disability legislation, or the severity of the disability. We tested for discrimination by asking participants to rate medical school applicants, with one applicant in a wheelchair. We hypothesized that unfavorable perceptions would be placed upon the applicant pictured in a wheelchair in both countries.

Materials and Methods

Questionnaire 1: 52 participants were surveyed at UD and University of Livingstonia in Malawi. Participants were asked to rate applicant's chance for success.

The American Applicants



Name: Joseph Adams Date of Birth: June 10, 1990
 Information: I was born in Centerville, Ohio. I am one of three siblings in my family. I attended Centerville High School where I was elected Vice President of Student Council. I identified my strengths in Science and was an active member of the Science Club at my school. I scored well on my ACT and enrolled at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. At College I joined the fraternity Alpha Epsilon Delta, a pre-health professional fraternity. I scored well on my MCAT and now I'm looking to optimize my scientific skills as a Doctor.

The Malawian Applicants



Name: Frackson Gondwe Date of Birth: 9 October 1988
 Information: I was born near Blantyre and at the age of five I attended Manja Primary school. I am one of two brothers, and my father now lives in Lilongwe. When I was growing up I helped my father farm the grain from our fields. I advanced through primary school with good marks and was selected to Chickwawa Boys Secondary school. I found myself interested in technical drawing and considered becoming a builder. After completing several science experiments in the science lab I knew that Science was my strength. In my GCE, I scored A's in Biology and Chemistry. I hope to become a doctor so that I can make my father proud.

Results

- No significant difference between handicapped applicant and others
- Strong positive correlation between "quality of transportation and "access to education" in Malawi
- Strong negative correlation between "discrimination by employer" and "access to education"

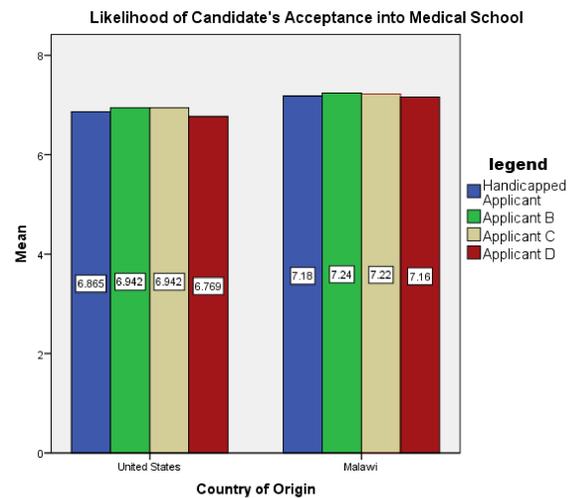


Table 1.5 Applicant chosen for acceptance in the U.S

Applicant	Percent (%)
Handicapped Applicant	21.20
Applicant B	23.10
Applicant C	34.60
Applicant D	21.20

Table 1.6 Applicant chosen for acceptance in Malawi

Applicant	Percent (%)
Handicapped Applicant	26.90
Applicant B	21.20
Applicant C	23.10
Applicant D	25.00

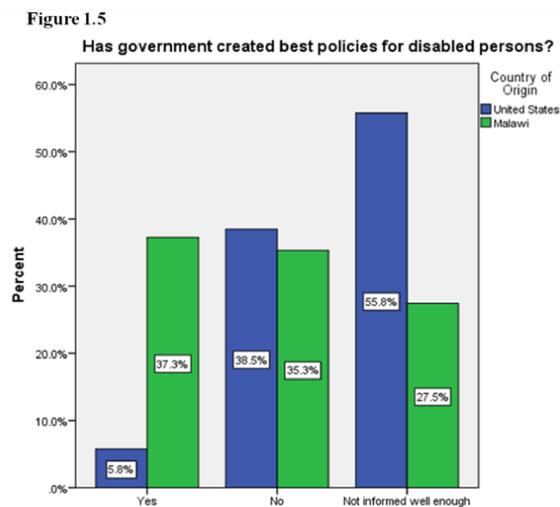
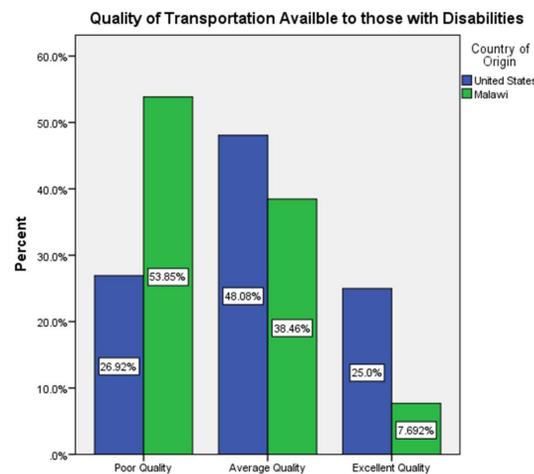
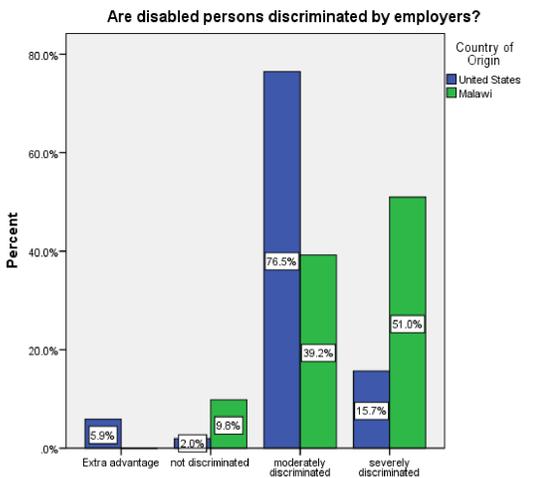
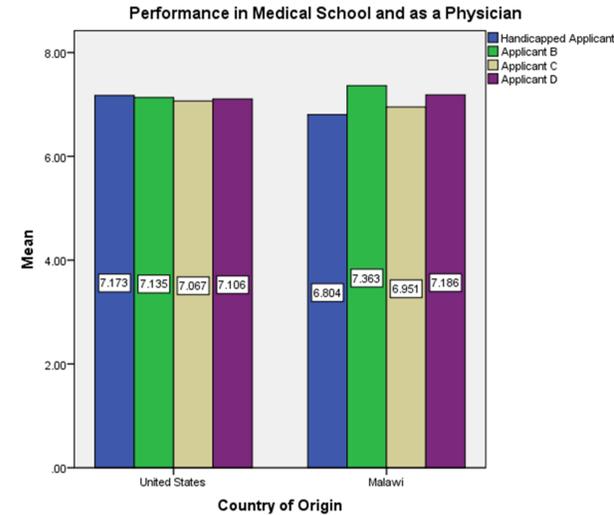


Table 1.9 Paired Samples Correlations^a

Pair 1	N	Correlation	Sig.
Quality of transportation for disabled persons & Access to education	52	.273	.050

a. Country of Origin = Malawi

Table 1.10 Paired Samples Correlations^a

Pair 1	N	Correlation	Sig.
Discrimination of disabled persons by employers & Access to education	51	-.503	.001

a. Country of Origin = United States

Discussion:

This experiment should be performed on a different population of people because college students are not representative of the overall population. Strong relationship between "access to education" and "quality of transportation" indicates a possible infrastructural barrier in Malawi. Strong correlation between "discrimination by employers" and "access to education" in U.S indicate possible discriminatory barriers.

Questionnaire 2: Included 12 questions evaluating disability policy, infrastructure, discrimination in the employment sector, and knowledge of the origin of disabilities.