Discrimination Against Disabled Persons in Malawi and the United States: A Comparative Study

Stephen Crum
University of Dayton, stander@udayton.edu

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

Stephen Crum
Advisor: Thomas Farnsworth, S.M., Psy. D

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

The Malawian Applicants

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

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”

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.