Job Discrimination Associated with Stuttering in Adults

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Outline

- Talk a bit about stereotyping and other important concepts
- Discuss my research and work of others related to occupational stereotyping and employment issues
- Explore factors that might prove important for changing occupational stereotyping and employment issues
- Close up the discussion with some thoughts about moving forward
  - Throughout, vignettes and examples of real-life issues that clients, others and I have experienced with employment will be shared.
Stereotyping

- Stereotyping is defined as a “an exaggerated belief associated with a category” (Allport, 1986, p. 191).
  - The stereotype is a collection of attitudes or beliefs about a category (person, place, thing or idea).
  - Oversimplification.
- Prejudice is the emotional or affective response to a stereotype.
- Discrimination is the behavioral reaction.
  - So, the category itself is not prejudicial, but the beliefs about the category lead to prejudice.
  - Beliefs and attitudes lead to or can mediate behaviors.
Effects of Stereotyping

Beliefs become ingrained, automatic, and almost accepted in some ways for people with disabilities and stuttering

- Spread phenomenon (Goffman, 1963).
  - A singular aspect about a person leads to define the entire person, or “spreads” to impact all aspects of the person’s being.

- Role entrapment (Smart 2001).
  - Society views certain social, educational, and occupational roles as unavailable for people who stutter.
  - For people with disabilities, this has been found to lead to lower paying and lower prestige jobs (Hahn, 1997).

- Paternalism (Smart 2001).
  - Society may believe that it is inhumane to suggest people who stutter do certain things.

- Wright (1983), people with disabilities internalize false impressions, which become part of their self-concept.
Role Entrapment and Impact on Employment

- Lower paying, less acceptable, or less interesting jobs for an individual based on a perceived limitation.
- Role entrapment can also be related to education and social aspects.
- Employment and educational experiences are mediated by the ADA (1990):
  - Flexible, individualized, and reasonable accommodations...
  - .......to provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities.....
  - .....historically, society has tended to isolate and segregate individuals with disabilities, and, despite some improvements, such forms of discrimination against individuals with disabilities continue to be a serious and pervasive social problem......
Fig. 1. Graphical representation of how the World Health Organization's *International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health* (ICF) can be applied to the stuttering disorder.
Three Real-Life Situations Related to Career Choice

- Student clinician 1- Completing an off-campus practicum and has just had the close-out meeting. Receives an A and has received many positive comments from supervisor. Complemented for ability to build rapport, able to explain techniques, timeliness, efficient use of time, creativity, etc. Also, a lot of positive feedback from other staff during the semester and all of the clients. One family did mention to severe stuttering that the student sometime experiences, despite the successful use of therapy skills and positive past therapy.

  - The supervisor shares with the student that despite their performance, he should return to speech therapy to gain control of stuttering, since he will more than likely have a difficult time with employment.
Three Real-Life Situations Related to Career Choice

- **Student clinician 2-** Completing an off-campus practicum and has just had the close-out meeting. Due to severe stuttering, the student often has difficulty completing testing materials in the way they are designed. Sessions appear to be poorly planned, despite obvious effort, since the duration of stuttering behaviors and reactions lead to the clients either not understanding the student, or having a limited number of attempts at targets. The student reports that she is very anxious about preparing for therapy, and this is obvious. The student is clearly motivated, but simply not performing in a way expected of a student at her level.
  - The student received a “remediate” for the semester and a plan is set up to help her meet expectations. The student struggles, but is given accommodations to allow for the opportunity to be successful.
Three Real-Life Situations Related to Career Choice

- **Student Clinician 3-** Self-identifies as a person who stutters, but the stuttering behaviors, though noticeable, are not severe and the student has a handle on the use of techniques. Is actually a good model of “openness” about stuttering. Does quite well in all aspects of assessment/therapy planning and has received high marks in all aspects of training.
  - Has little difficulty with the training program and graduates. Becomes employed fairly easily.
Hurst and Cooper (1983a)

- Surveyed the attitudes of 644 personnel and industrial relation directors toward people who stuttered, by responding to the EATS.
- Only 29% reported that stuttering hindered job performance.
- 50% of employers reported that stuttering decreased employability.
- 43% reported that a person who stutters should seek employment that required little speaking.
- 40% reported that stuttering would make it difficult for a person to gain promotion.
- 83% reported that people who stuttered made them uncomfortable.
My year working at the school was a challenge and I had a lot of doubts about my ability as a stutterer to handle the pace and work with the kids. Despite my struggles, I did quite well and integrated well with the teachers and the children. Many of the parents expressed that they were pleased with how I helped their children. At the end of the year, I found out that the principal requested I not return, because he said my stuttering was inhibiting my ability to interact at his school.
Attitudes and Impact on Employability

- Hurst and Cooper (1983b).
  - Surveyed 152 vocational rehabilitation counselor’s attitudes toward and knowledge of stuttering.
  - 78% believed that stuttering was indeed vocationally handicapping.
  - 88% of the counselors reported that they felt that most individuals would be uncomfortable when speaking with an individual who stuttered.
The most eye opening experience I had about my stuttering was my first job. I was scared to death to ask for applications, but my parents encouraged and expected me to get a part-time job. I filled out 6 applications, mostly at fast food places, and waited. I had an interview and the manager knew my mother, through my mother’s work as nurse. I was hired. I did well, though this entire process of finding a job really caused me a lot of stress and I stuttered a lot. After a few weeks, it was not an issue, I was doing great at the job. I was an honor student, class president, A-B student, and my parents taught me to work hard. Fast food preparation was easy, I just stuttered severely. After becoming good friends with some of the people I worked with, they let me in on the fact that everyone was expecting me to fail because of my stuttering. They were so happy with how well I did.

I did not know whether to be happy or offended. This was fast food for _____ sake.
Silverman and Paynter (1990)

- Studied the attitudes of 48 college students toward one of 4 constructs. These were a 1) factory worker; 2) a factory worker who stutters; 3) a lawyer; and 4) a lawyer who stutters using an 81-item semantic differential scale.
  - The factory worker who stutters was described as more afraid, insecure, tense, cowardly and weak than the factory worker.
  - Similarly, the factory worker who stutters was judged to be less talkative, sociable, coordinated, dominant, affluent, aggressive, and confident than the factory worker.
  - The lawyer who stuttered was viewed more negatively than the factory worker who stuttered on 34 of the 81 items.
  - The lawyer who stuttered was evaluated as more afraid, confused, tense, discontented frightened, lazy, dependent, uncomfortable, naïve, and disorganized than the lawyer who did not stutter.
Attitudes and Impact on Employability

- Silverman and Bongey (1997)
  - Studied the attitudes of 20 nurses toward a “doctor who stutters” and a “doctor who does not stutter” using a 20-item semantic differential scale.
    - The “doctor who stutters” was judged to be less competent, mature, intelligent, secure, competent, confident, educated, and reputable than the “doctor who does not stutter.”
    - The “doctor who stutters” was judged to be more afraid, tense, nervous, and aggravating than the “doctor who does not stutter.”
Role Entrapment/Vocational Stereotyping

- The Vocational Advice Scale (Gabel, Blood, Tellis, & Althouse, 2004), or VAS. Good content validity and reliability.
- Developed to study individual’s perceptions about advising people who do and do not stutter to pursue one of 43 careers.
  - The students reported their agreement with each item using a five-point Likert type scale from 5 “strongly agree” to 1 “strongly disagree.”
  - Paradigm: *I would advise this PWS with the right kind of qualifications (i.e. elementary, middle school, high school, or higher academic requirements) to train to be a (one of the 43 careers).*

- A total of 385 students were surveyed using the VAS to respond to a “person who stutters and has no other communication disorders” or a “person who does not stutter and has no other communication disorder.”
- 23 careers were reported as equally advisable/appropriate for people who stutter and people who do not stutter and 20 were reported as less advisable/appropriate for people who stutter when compared to people who do not stutter.
- Greater communication skills appeared to be related to the 23 careers that were reported to be equally advisable, but that was not directly explored in the study.
Table 2
Results of the comparison between the participants’ reports of advising a person who stutters (PWS) \(N = 197\) and a person who does not stutter (PWDS) \(N = 188\) for each of the careers on the FAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career</th>
<th>Mean (S.D.) for PWS</th>
<th>Mean (S.D.) for PWDS</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attorney</td>
<td>2.71 (1.24)</td>
<td>4.36 (0.792)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>2.95 (1.25)</td>
<td>4.39 (0.719)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLP</td>
<td>3.02 (1.39)</td>
<td>4.25 (0.820)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant minister</td>
<td>3.08 (1.25)</td>
<td>4.09 (0.990)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance/employment counselor</td>
<td>3.20 (1.24)</td>
<td>4.32 (0.765)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parole officer</td>
<td>3.29 (1.26)</td>
<td>4.12 (0.908)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist</td>
<td>3.39 (1.20)</td>
<td>4.27 (0.777)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meteorologist</td>
<td>3.41 (1.32)</td>
<td>4.29 (0.714)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital administrator</td>
<td>3.41 (1.15)</td>
<td>4.30 (0.753)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical secretary</td>
<td>3.43 (1.26)</td>
<td>4.03 (0.980)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiologist</td>
<td>3.46 (1.27)</td>
<td>4.22 (0.816)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>3.49 (1.22)</td>
<td>4.43 (0.671)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational therapist</td>
<td>3.58 (1.12)</td>
<td>4.29 (0.714)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadcast technician</td>
<td>3.58 (1.26)</td>
<td>4.22 (0.822)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank officer</td>
<td>3.61 (1.17)</td>
<td>4.19 (0.798)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociologist</td>
<td>3.73 (1.08)</td>
<td>4.21 (0.860)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political scientist</td>
<td>3.75 (1.14)</td>
<td>4.26 (0.788)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optometrist</td>
<td>3.79 (1.06)</td>
<td>4.30 (0.730)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optician</td>
<td>3.84 (1.05)</td>
<td>4.18 (0.820)</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
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<td>Pharmacist</td>
<td>3.87 (1.04)</td>
<td>4.28 (0.709)</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chiropractor</td>
<td>3.92 (0.989)</td>
<td>4.22 (0.885)</td>
<td>0.002</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paralegal</td>
<td>3.92 (1.01)</td>
<td>4.18 (0.815)</td>
<td>0.006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physiologist</td>
<td>4.08 (0.911)</td>
<td>4.27 (0.749)</td>
<td>0.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban/regional planner</td>
<td>4.09 (0.884)</td>
<td>4.29 (0.673)</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actuary</td>
<td>4.02 (0.897)</td>
<td>4.13 (0.813)</td>
<td>0.198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer service technician</td>
<td>4.07 (0.994)</td>
<td>4.22 (0.811)</td>
<td>0.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historian</td>
<td>4.10 (0.996)</td>
<td>4.17 (0.862)</td>
<td>0.469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical technologist</td>
<td>4.12 (0.891)</td>
<td>4.27 (0.777)</td>
<td>0.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>4.17 (0.865)</td>
<td>4.25 (0.764)</td>
<td>0.386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motion picture editor</td>
<td>4.19 (0.866)</td>
<td>4.21 (0.792)</td>
<td>0.862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal inspector</td>
<td>4.19 (0.799)</td>
<td>4.06 (0.925)</td>
<td>0.144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication editor</td>
<td>4.21 (0.854)</td>
<td>4.23 (0.737)</td>
<td>0.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematician</td>
<td>4.22 (0.845)</td>
<td>4.17 (0.893)</td>
<td>0.590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astrologer</td>
<td>4.22 (0.853)</td>
<td>3.97 (1.13)</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical records technician</td>
<td>4.22 (0.802)</td>
<td>4.14 (0.893)</td>
<td>0.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical laboratory technician</td>
<td>4.22 (0.834)</td>
<td>4.23 (0.789)</td>
<td>0.995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial designer</td>
<td>4.23 (0.813)</td>
<td>4.27 (0.735)</td>
<td>0.680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>4.27 (0.760)</td>
<td>4.37 (0.685)</td>
<td>0.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistician</td>
<td>4.28 (0.834)</td>
<td>4.14 (0.877)</td>
<td>0.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biologist</td>
<td>4.33 (0.755)</td>
<td>4.33 (0.723)</td>
<td>0.999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer systems analyst</td>
<td>4.34 (0.744)</td>
<td>4.34 (0.730)</td>
<td>0.950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural scientist</td>
<td>4.35 (0.651)</td>
<td>4.19 (0.868)</td>
<td>0.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer programmer</td>
<td>4.42 (0.663)</td>
<td>4.25 (0.826)</td>
<td>0.025</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at the 0.001 level.
Role Entrapment/Vocational Stereotyping

- Irani, Gabel, Hughes, Swartz, and Palasik (2009)
  - 204 teachers completed the VAS. Also completed an open-ended question asking teachers to report what influenced their choices. Finally, the teacher completed a demographic questionnaire
  - 10 careers were judged to be less advisable. These were: Judge, attorney, slp, protestant minister, guidance/employment counselor, psychologist, physician, hospital administrator.
  - The open-ended question was analyzed qualitatively, and the reports toward careers appeared to be related to 1) related to disorder, 2) related to career, and 3) the participants being supportive. For the first theme, stuttering was the key factor in whether a career was advisable or not, such that people who stutter were viewed as unlikely to be able to effectively do the career.

No demographic factors impacted the reports toward careers.
Swartz, Gabel, & Irani (2009)

- 158 SLPs completed the VAS. Demographic and open ended items were utilized to identify factors that influenced the participants reports.
- Only 2 careers, SLP and attorney, were judged to be less advisable.
- The open-ended question suggested that SLPs would advise people who stutter to pursue almost any career, while others reported that stuttering would impact career choices of people who stutter.
- Most demographic factors did not impact the reports toward careers. The amount of professional reading did have a positive impact on reports toward the 2 careers.
Factors that Alter Attitudes

- Presences of stuttering
- Severity of stuttering
- Gender of the respondent
- Familiarity with stuttering
- Involvement in therapy
- Acknowledgement/disclosure
- Type of presentation- hypothetical, video, audio, etc.
My past bosses took me out for lunch, and told me it was time to move into a much larger bank and step up my work. I was doing great at my work, I had experience, and since I had attended your clinic and alleviated my stuttering, it was time. I had eliminated my only weakness. I needed to now move up the ladder where my stuttering was keeping me from going.
Schlagheck, Gabel, & Hughes (2009)

- A mixed method study of attitudes and role entrapment of people who stutter.
- 154 individuals from a community sample completed a questionnaire with both forced choice and open ended items. The open ended items were analyzed qualitatively for important themes.
- The participants reported negative attitudes toward people who stutter.
- More interesting, was that 82% of participants believed that stuttering would have a negative impact on employment. More familiarity and men were more likely to report that stuttering would affect employment.
  - Reasons for these reports included the communication disability, difficulty with certain tasks, need to avoid certain careers, and no limitations.
  - Careers that involved a significant amount of communication were reported to be less appropriate for people who stutter.
Role Entrapment/Vocational Stereotyping: Variables to Decrease Role Entrapment

- Gabel, Hughes, & Daniels (2008)
  - Surveyed 260 participants to explore whether severity and involvement in therapy altered attitudes towards reports on the VAS or role entrapment related to employment.
  - Neither improved attitudes, though certain careers were still seen as less advisable.

- Gabel (2002; ongoing)-Poster Presentation
  - Surveyed 197 participants regarding perceptions of employment options using the VAS. Explored the impact of gender and familiarity.
  - Neither improved attitudes. As with other studies, certain careers were still rated as less advisable.
Role Entrapment/Vocational Stereotyping: Variables to Decrease Role Entrapment

- **Logan & Connor (2012)**
  - Conducted two experiments, using speech samples (pseudostuttering and fluent speaker) and a questionnaire similar to the VAS to explore what factors affected perceptions of occupational advice.
  - In experiment 1, the authors found that occupational speaking demands had an effect of suitability ratings for people who stutter.
  - In experiment 2, the authors found that occupational suitability ratings were associated with ratings speaker’s personal attributes and communicative functioning.
  - In both studies, many high speaking occupations were viewed as less appropriate for the speaker who stuttered.

- **Craig & Calver (1991)**
  - Positive job changes were experienced by individuals who successfully completed a prolonged speech therapy program. Employers also reported positive views of those who successfully completed therapy.
Support from Experiential Studies

- Educational, employment, and financial impact of stuttering
  - Blumgart, Tran, & Craig (2010a; b)
  - Tran, Blumgart, & Craig (2011)
  - O’Brian, Jones, Packman, Menzies, & Onslow (2011)
  - McAllister, Collier, & Shepstone (2012)

- Several survey studies have explored the experiences that people who stutter have with work
  - Rice & Kroll (1997; 2006)
  - Palasik, Gabel, Hughes, & Rusnak (2012)

  In all studies, there seem to be a variety of issues related to employment, including lack of opportunities, lack of advancement, difficulties with interviewing, etc.

  Support some of what we have found in the role entrapment research.
Other Research

- Qualitative studies focusing on experiences of people who stutter, including employment and quality of life
  - Klompas & Ross (2004)
  - Bricker-Kratz, Lincoln, & Cumming (in press)
    - Stuttering is always there
    - Stuttering at work reveals problems
    - Stuttering limits communication
    - Stuttering limits occupational progression
The chair of the department called me in and said that the new student was not doing well in teaching. We reviewed the teaching evaluations, very good. Reviewed the materials being used, very appropriate. The chair asked me what I thought of the individual’s stuttering, and whether his way of management was appropriate. I said that the chair needed to talk with that student about how he managed his stuttering, it was not my place to judge how well the person was doing, aside from the raw data we just discussed. Later, observing the student in class, the teaching was judged to be totally appropriate, in fact, stellar despite the obvious stuttering in his speech.
What do we know?

- Individuals who do not stutter view stuttering, in many ways, as a limitation in occupational choices.
  - Role entrapment
  - Paternalism
- Also, stuttering is viewed as limiting in occupational performance.
  - People who stutter, in certain careers, were viewed as less positively than their fluent counterparts.
What do we know?

- These perceptions appear to be impacted by certain factors, but the results are mixed.
- People who stutter report negative impact on work/occupational experiences, including occupational choices.
  - Seem to be related to reduced educational experiences and quality of life.
Closing Thoughts

- Spread phenomenon (Goffman, 1963).
  - A singular aspect about a person leads to define the entire person, or “spreads” to impact all aspects of the person’s being.

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  - When people who stutter are greeted with stereotypes.
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