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Disability Gap in Job Satisfaction: Work from Home & Accommodations Evidence from the Healthcare Industry

State of the Science Conference

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Setting

Healthcare industry & cost minimization

To what extent do healthcare workers with disabilities enjoy benefits of employer practices to meet their needs in environment of efficiency maximization and cost minimization?

Introduction

Job satisfaction

Disparity by disability

- Is there a gap for the survey population?
- Does WFH improve job satisfaction? If so, does the gap narrow with WFH?
- Who asks for and gets accommodations, and how do they impact the gap?

Why the healthcare industry?

1. **Health of the population**
   Largely determined by the capacity of the healthcare system.
2. Healthcare system has **many employees with disabilities**
   Employees with disabilities are overrepresented in lower level healthcare jobs:
   4.9% of U.S. employees have disabilities compared to 5.5% of healthcare support workers (…DSPs)
3. **Diversity**
   Allows us to examine a diverse range of employees since underrepresented men and women of all races, ages, and education levels predominate in the sector

Data and Methodology

Partnered with a major state-wide university-based health system to conduct surveys and interviews with healthcare workers with and without disabilities

1,405 employees took the survey between May 26, 2023 and July 31, 2023; implemented in Qualtrics

- After dropping people with missing values we have sample size of 993 respondents

Concepts and Operationalization

Disability:

6 Census questions + social challenges & long-term activity limitations

23% have a disability

18% from Census questions alone

Over twice the 7.0% estimate from Census data for the percentage of healthcare workers in the organization's state with a disability

Concepts and Operationalization (2)

Job satisfaction:

1. **Job satisfaction question (global)**

2. **Ten indices of work experiences that contribute to job satisfaction or are outcomes of job satisfaction ('multi-faceted')**

Concepts and Operationalization (3)

Contributors to job satisfaction:

- Job autonomy
- Perceived organizational support
- Employer openness to differences
- The climate for inclusion
- Treatment of people with disabilities
- Relationship with one's manager
- Relationships with one's coworkers

Outcomes of job satisfaction:

- Turnover intentions
- Organizational commitment
- Organizational citizenship behaviors

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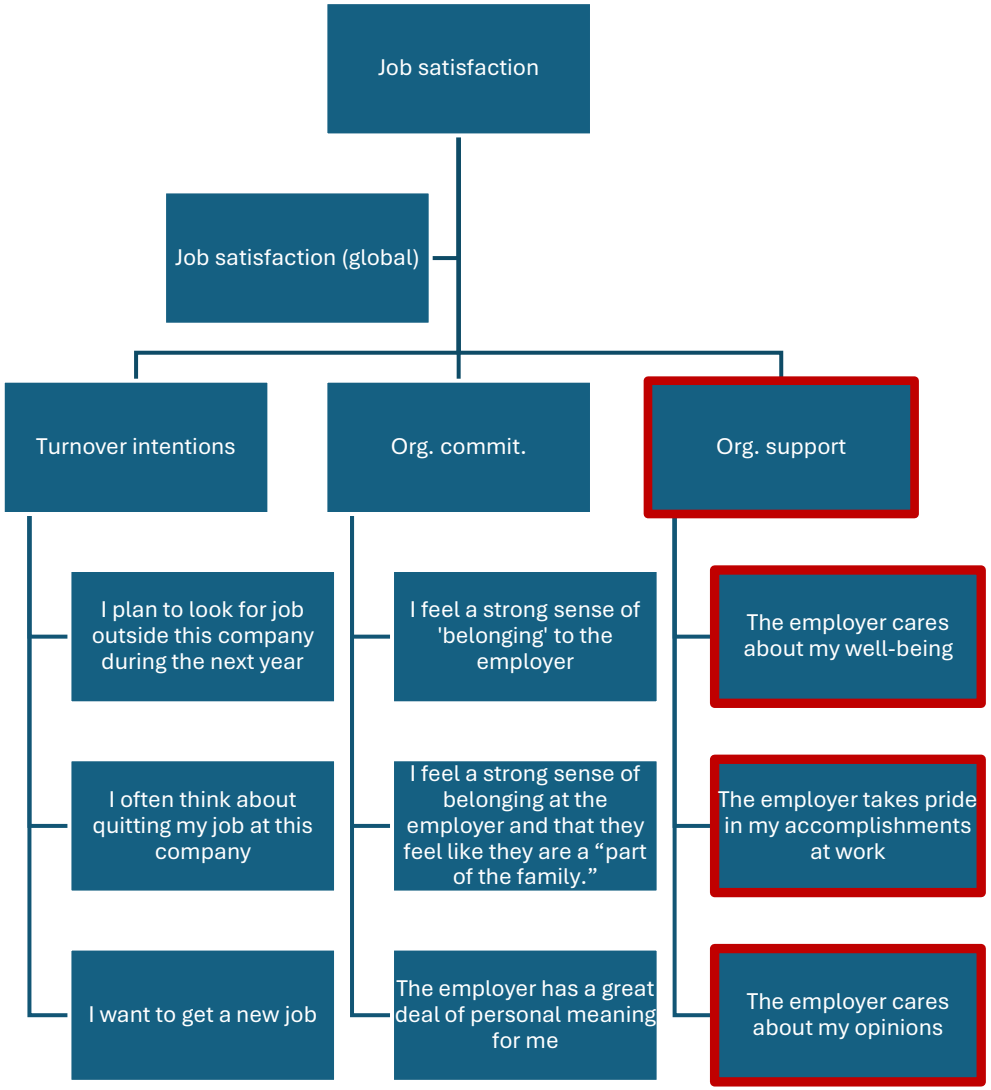
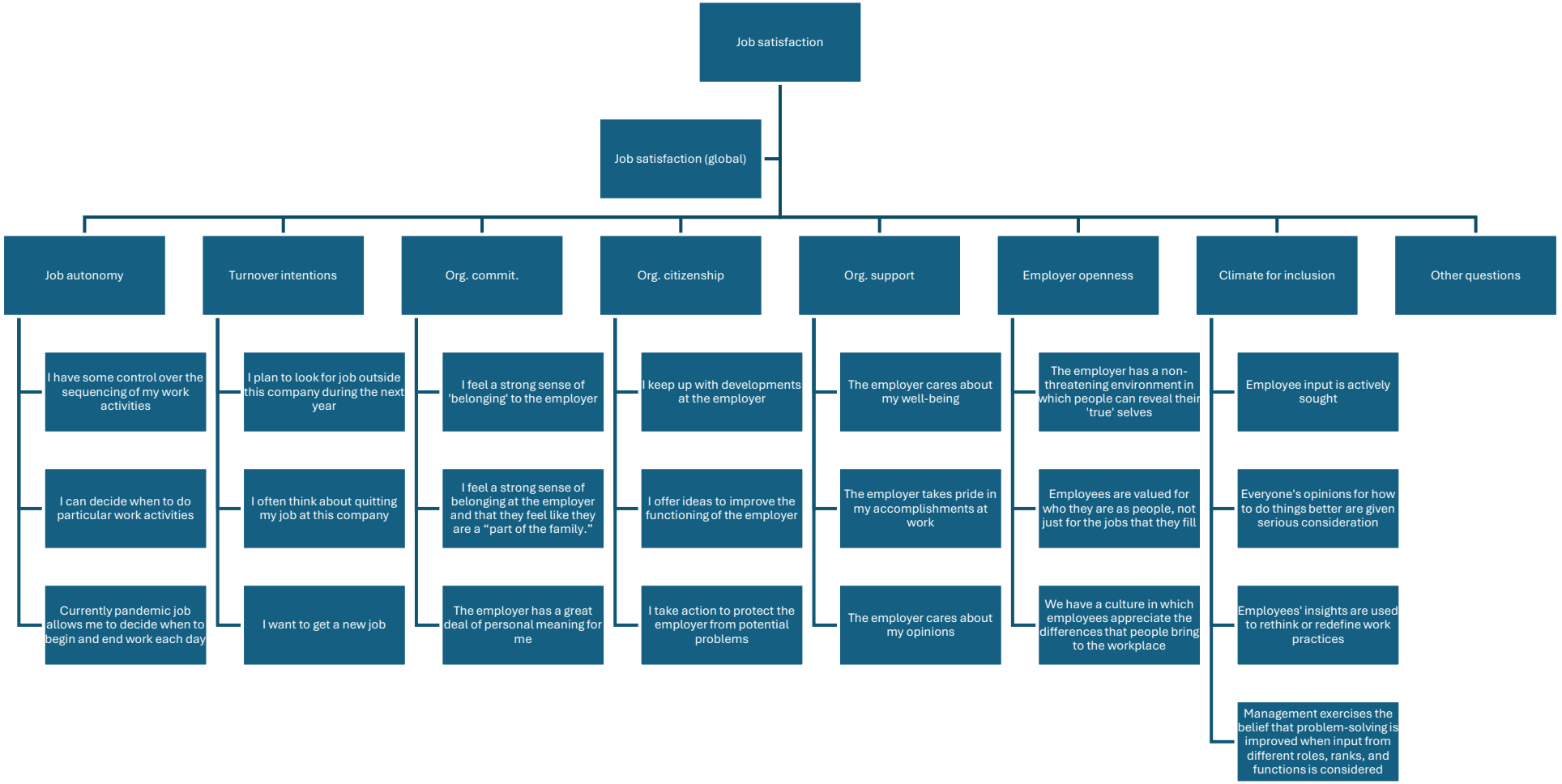

Job satisfaction
Job satisfaction (global)
Turnover intentions
Org. commit.
Org. support
I plan to look for job outside this company during the next year
I often think about quitting my job at this company
I want to get a new job
I feel a strong sense of 'belonging' to the employer
I feel a strong sense of belonging at the employer and that they feel like they are a “part of the family.”
The employer has a great deal of personal meaning for me
The employer cares about my well-being
The employer takes pride in my accomplishments at work
The employer cares about my opinions


Job satisfaction
Job satisfaction (global)
Job autonomy
I have some control over the sequencing of my work activities
I can decide when to do particular work activities
Currently pandemic job allows me to decide when to begin and end work each day
Turnover intentions
I plan to look for job outside this company during the next year
I often think about quitting my job at this company
I want to get a new job
Org. commit.
I feel a strong sense of 'belonging' to the employer
I feel a strong sense of belonging at the employer and that they feel like they are a “part of the family.”
The employer has a great deal of personal meaning for me
Org. citizenship
I keep up with developments at the employer
I offer ideas to improve the functioning of the employer
I take action to protect the employer from potential problems
Org. support
The employer cares about my well-being
The employer takes pride in my accomplishments at work
The employer cares about my opinions
Employer openness
The employer has a non-threatening environment in which people can reveal their 'true' selves
Employees are valued for who they are as people, not just for the jobs that they fill
We have a culture in which employees appreciate the differences that people bring to the workplace
Climate for inclusion
Employee input is actively sought
Everyone's opinions for how to do things better are given serious consideration
Employees' insights are used to rethink or redefine work practices
Management exercises the belief that problem-solving is improved when input from different roles, ranks, and functions is considered
Other questions

Job satisfaction
Job satisfaction (global)
Other questions
Treatment of PWD
Manager relations
Co-worker relations
Employees with disabilities have the same opportunities as people without disabilities
The employer is making strong efforts to improve conditions and opportunities for people with disabilities
The environment is such that, when accommodations are made, people with disabilities can be just as productive as people without disabilities
Bias against people with disabilities exists where I work
Where I work, employees without disabilities are treated better than employees with disabilities
Top management commits to hire people with disabilities
Employees treat people with disabilities with respect
My manager treats people with disabilities with respect
The employer is responsive to the needs of people with disabilities
My manager is responsive to the needs of people with disabilities
I usually know how satisfied my manager is with what I do
I feel that my manager understands my problems and needs
I feel that my manager recognizes my potential
I can count on my manager to support me even when I'm in a tough situation at work
I would support my manager's decision even if he or she was not present
I have an effective working relationship with my manager
If necessary, my manager would use his or her power and influence to help me
I usually know how satisfied my coworkers are with what I do
I feel that my coworkers understand my problems and needs
I can count on my coworkers to support me even when I'm in a tough situation at work
I would support my coworkers' decisions even if they were not present
I have an effective working relationship with my coworkers
If necessary, my coworkers would use their power and influence to help me

Data Analysis

- Quantitative analysis using the survey data:
  - **Descriptive statistics: sample means for people with and w/o disabilities**
  - We distinguish between disabilities (on survey) and disclosed disabilities (to the employer).
  - **Regression analysis: examine if accommodations and work-from-home have a moderating effect on the gap in job satisfaction**

Job satisfaction

	Disability	No Disability	
	Mean	Mean	Difference
Somewhat or very satisfied in job	0.592	0.648	-0.056
Index of agreement on job autonomy	0.575	0.599	-0.023
Index of perceived organizational support	0.309	0.403	-0.094***
Index of climate for inclusion	0.348	0.416	-0.069**
Index of treatment of people with disabilities	0.415	0.438	-0.023
Index of relationship with manager	0.657	0.761	-0.105***
Index of relationships with coworkers	0.706	0.801	-0.095***
Index of employer openness to differences	0.453	0.561	-0.107***
Index of turnover intentions	0.420	0.323	0.096***
Index of employee organizational commitment	0.459	0.530	-0.071**
Index of employee organizational citizenship behaviors	0.550	0.557	-0.007

Methodology

- Full model specification:
  - $Outcome_i = b_0 + b_1 Disab_i + b_2 Accomm_i + b_3 Disab_i * Accomm_i + b_4 X_i + e_i$
- $Outcome_i$ is a vector of 11 indicators of work experiences for person i
- $Disab_i$ denotes a dummy variable for disability status
- $Accomm_i$ is a set of dummy variables for extent to which accommodation was granted (or was able to work from home),
- X_i is set of demographic characteristics (gender, age, # of children at home, race/ethnicity, marital status, education, income, full-time work, tenure, and management role)
- e_i denotes error term

First: Work from Home (WFH)

1. Is there a satisfaction gap?

2. Is job satisfaction improved by WFH?

3. Does WFH narrow the satisfaction gap?

Work from Home & Job Satisfaction

1. Is there a job satisfaction gap? Yes.
2. Is job satisfaction improved by WFH? Yes, in most cases (excl relationships w manager, coworkers, and turnover intentions.
3. Does WFH narrow the satisfaction gap? No.

Improved by WFH?	No Disability	Disability
Somewhat or very satisfied in job	Yes	Yes but <
Index of agreement on job autonomy	Yes	Yes but <
Index of perceived organizational support	Yes	Yes but <
Index of climate for inclusion	Yes	Yes but <
Index of treatment of people with disabilities	If 3+ days/wk	Yes but <
Index of relationship with manager	Yes	No
Index of relationships with coworkers	No	No and worse
Index of employer openness to differences	Yes	Yes but <
Index of turnover intentions	If 3+ days/wk	No
Index of employee organizational commitment	Yes	Yes but <
Index of employee organizational citizenship behaviors	Yes	Yes but <

Second: Accommodation & Disposition

1. Who requests accommodation? The majority
2. Who gets accommodation? …about half, but…

	Disability	No Disability	
	Mean	Mean	Difference
Have you ever requested accommodations?	70.2	56.0	0.142***
Did you request this change in order to accommodate any health condition, impairment, or disability that you may have?	33.1	7.7	0.254***
Was the requested change or accommodation made?			
Yes	50.0	47.5	0.025
No	25.9	30.4	-0.044
Partially	24.1	22.1	0.019

Accommodation & Job Satisfaction

1. Is there a job satisfaction gap? Yes.
2. Is job satisfaction improved by being granted full accommodation? No.
3. Does accommodation narrow the satisfaction gap? No.

Improved by accommodation?	No Disability	Disability
Somewhat or very satisfied in job	No	No
Index of agreement on job autonomy	Yes ($p<0.05$)	No
Index of perceived organizational support	No	No
Index of climate for inclusion	No	No
Index of treatment of people with disabilities	No	No
Index of relationship with manager	No	No
Index of relationships with coworkers	No	No
Index of employer openness to differences	No	No
Index of turnover intentions	No	Yes, but higher ($p<0.10$)
Index of employee organizational commitment	No	No
Index of employee organizational citizenship behaviors	No	No

Conclusion and Policy Implications

1. Found a substantial disability gap in job satisfaction

People with disabilities report lower job satisfaction, greater turnover intentions, lower sense of belonging/inclusion, worse relations with management and co-workers, and higher perceptions of disability bias

2. Workers with disabilities and workers without disabilities both benefit from work from home, but workers *without* disabilities benefit more. The gap does not narrow

Work from home may reinforce the social isolation of employees with disabilities: fewer social interactions, less visibility, less networking, communication problems, inadequate resources, and lack of trust

3. Requests for accommodations are more likely to come from workers with disabilities, and more likely to come from workers with disabilities for health reasons but are equally likely to be granted – and denied.

Fully granting accommodations has little impact on job satisfaction. Denying accommodations or partially granting requests has a negative effect

Conclusion and Policy Implications

- **What's good policy for workers with disabilities is good policy for workers without disabilities.**

- **Need to target policies that disproportionately benefit workers with disabilities to narrow the gap.**

More Information on Data

Data Collection

- Design of the survey instrument was guided by survey questions in a previous paper on disability and includes scales commonly found in the organizational behavior literature.
- Survey instrument and interview questions approved by Institutional Review Board at Rutgers
- Our research team worked with collaborators in the statewide university-based healthcare system to distribute to employees a link to our online survey in Qualtrics, along with a cover note about the study and information about informed consent.

Data Cleaning

- Qualtrics reported 1405 respondents.
- We dropped 135 of those respondents because they clicked on the survey link but did not answer any questions.
- An additional 277 respondents did not respond to questions about their disability status, so we dropped these individuals also, leaving a sample of 993.
- Robustness checks in which these 277 respondents were kept in the sample and assumed to have no disability yielded substantively similar results to those reported in the paper.

Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis using the survey data:

- Descriptive statistics: sample means for people with and w/o disabilities.
- We distinguish between self-reported disabilities (on survey) and disclosed disabilities (to the employer).
- Regression analysis: examine if accommodations and work-from-home have a moderating effect on the relationship between disability and work experiences.

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Selected Sample Means

	Number	Percent
Difficulties Among People with Disabilities	228	100.0
Health condition has affected my ability to complete work duties with moderate or severe difficulty	32	14.0
Have you disclosed your health condition, impairment, or disability to your employer?		
Yes	117	51.8
No	57	25.2
It's complicated	52	23.0
Did not respond	2	0.9
I have sometimes been unfairly treated because of my health condition, impairment, or disability.	34	14.9
At work I feel socially isolated because of my health condition, impairment, or disability	35	15.4
I have not disclosed my health condition, impairment, or disability at work because I am afraid of being stigmatized	38	16.7

Selected Sample Means

	Disability	No Disability	
Demographic Characteristic	Mean	Mean	Difference
Age	43.638	44.935	-1.297
# Children at home	1.772	2.050	-0.278***
Gender			
Man	0.085	0.108	-0.023
Woman	0.848	0.868	-0.020
Nonbinary	0.067	0.024	0.043***
Married	0.482	0.666	-0.184***
Education			
High school graduate	0.098	0.069	0.029
Some college, no degree	0.209	0.147	0.062**
Associate degree	0.204	0.167	0.038
Bachelor's degree	0.311	0.371	-0.060
Master's degree	0.151	0.181	-0.030
Professional degree/PhD	0.022	0.065	-0.043**
Income >=$75,000	0.223	0.364	-0.141***

Accommodation & Disposition

	Disability	No Disability	
	Mean	Mean	Difference
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Index of relationship with manager (leader-member exchange)	0.657	0.761	-0.105***
Index of relationships with coworkers (coworker exchange)	0.706	0.801	-0.095***

Work from Home & JS (single question)

1. Is there a job satisfaction gap? Yes.
2. Is job satisfaction improved by WFH? Yes.
3. Does WFH narrow the satisfaction gap? No.

Variable	Job satisfaction (single Q)	
	Basic	Interaction
Disability	-0.184*	
	(0.105)	
Work from home Def 1 (exclude: no WFH)		
WFH < 3 days/week		0.124***
		(0.047)
WFH 3+ days/week		0.195***
		(0.041)
Disability interactions with:		
No WFH		-0.080
		(0.054)
WFH < 3 days/week		-0.013

Do workers with disabilities have lower job satisfaction than workers without disabilities?

Job satisfaction: Single question

Sample Mean Job Satisfaction	Disability	No Disability	
	Mean	Mean	Difference
Somewhat or very satisfied in job	0.592	0.648	-0.056

Does accommodation narrow the satisfaction gap? No.*

Variable	Job satisfaction (single question)	
	Basic	Interaction
Disability	-0.184*	
	(0.105)	
Accom requests if no disability No accom request (excluded)		
Accom request fully granted		-0.041
		(0.115)
Accom request denied		-1.098***
		(0.135)
Accom request partly granted		-0.745***
		(0.152)
Accom requests if disability		
No accom request		-0.303*
		(0.178)
Accom request fully granted		-0.223
		(0.162)
Accom request denied		-1.049***
		(0.216)
Accom request partly granted		-0.822***
		(0.227)