

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: EMPLOYERS' USE OF WORKPLACE
REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR
RETAINING EMPLOYEES WITH
DISABILITIES.

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Two decades since the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons with disabilities still face employment challenges in the workplace. Reasonable accommodations (RA) have been associated with overall job satisfaction, enhanced job tenure, and, increased job performance for employees with disabilities. However, reasonable accommodation stakeholders still struggle with how best to effectively meet the needs of employees with disabilities in order to maximize their employability. Few studies have specifically examined the criteria that employers use to determine responses to reasonable accommodation requests by employees with disabilities. A sample of U.S. employers was asked to respond to a reasonable accommodation scenario, and rate the influences of a priori identified items on their response to the accommodation request. Exploratory factor analytic procedures and regression analyses are used to identify the factors correlated with employers' likelihood of approving or denying reasonable accommodation requests. Three factors were identified to underlie the criteria for

employers' accommodation decisions - employer logistics and obligations in providing accommodations, relationships between employer and employee, and accommodation costs and resource. Employers' gender and having a centralized budget process for supporting accommodations were found to significantly predict with their response to accommodation requests among employer and organizational variables respectively. Our understanding of the rationale by which employers respond to reasonable accommodation requests is essential to seeking solutions for hiring and retaining persons with disabilities. The three criteria by which employers make accommodation decisions will assist employment service providers to better focus ADA knowledge and awareness training workshops for employers. Employees with disabilities will structure their accommodation requests to address or meet employers' criteria and maximize the potential for positive responses from their employers.

EMPLOYERS' USES OF WORKPLACE REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS
FOR RETAINING EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES.

By

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Dedication

Had it not been for His hand about me, I wouldn't have realized this dream. I give thanks to God for His hand of providence, protection, and guidance over me and my family as only He would. To Isabella, my wife, who endured and tolerated my present absence and occasional moodiness over the past several years knowing this was a family project, I love you. Thank you for tolerating me even though I have been far less than an ideal husband during this process. You urged me on and often reminded me what only you seemed to know, especially when I stared long onto the ceiling – 'you're smart, keep writing, there will be more gain after the pain. To my children, Faith, Emma, Purity, and Justus, who at times confirmed their worst fears – dad is going crazy – I will try to make up for lost time. The house doesn't have to be dead quiet anymore!

Of course, this work wouldn't have taken shape without the crafty hand of my advisor, Dr. Paul Gold, who worked tirelessly to shape it with seemingly unending iterations. You taught me how to write, and then write for the reader; to that, I'm professionally becoming that which I'm to be, and to you, I'm grateful. To my committee, that agreed to shepherd the process and ensure that this product makes sense, I'm grateful, though at that time it seemed like the push was a bit too hard – now I can confess.

To all my friends who took this project as their own, I hope you'll find a way to make sense of this product. You prayed for me and with me and reminded me that you were watching – that was really the wind behind my back that kept me going. I will always cherish your friendship, your support, and your prayers.

In the white spaces throughout this dissertation are marked the names and ways that each reader hereafter will be remembered for – making sense of the contents of this dissertation and seeking to expand opportunities for persons with disabilities worldwide. Let it add to your thirst for inquiry and exploration on these issues.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Labor Force Participation Rates (LFPR) of working-age adults (aged 16 to 64) with disabilities (20.9%) are less than one-third of those for persons with no disabilities (69.4%) (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], August 2012). Among persons with disabilities, these extremely low employment rates contribute to high rates of poverty, early onset of chronic illness, social isolation, and inadequate housing among other challenges (e.g., Ball, Monaco, Schmeling, Schartz, & Blanck, 2005; Kruse & Schur 2003; Schur, 2002; Stapleton & Burkhauser 2003), requiring the federal government to expand their benefit programs to more of these persons for providing income assistance, health insurance, and subsidized housing. The majority (80%) of working-age unemployed persons with disabilities report strong preferences to work, a rate nearly identical to the rate of 79% for employed persons without disabilities (Harris Interactive, Inc. 2000; Schur, Kruse, Blasi, & Blanck, 2009), contradicting stubbornly persisting beliefs among the general public that persons with disabilities lack work motivation. Persons with disabilities strive just as much for job security, income, and chances for career advancement as do persons without disabilities.

Over the past 40 years, multiple federal legislative acts and associated regulations have attempted to increase LFPRs among persons with disabilities. Some of the most notable ones include the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1970, the Rehabilitation Acts of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, and the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIIA) of 1999.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990) and Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA, 2008).

Summary of the ADA. The ADA consists of five Titles mandating specific services and responsibilities to service providers ensuring that persons with disabilities experience enjoy equal opportunities for participating fully in their communities.¹ Title I, the subject of this study, requires employers with 15 or more employees to assist qualified persons with disabilities to benefit from the full range of employment-related opportunities (ADA, 1990; ADAAA, 2008; U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [U.S. EEOC], 2000). Title 1 provisions require employers to protect the jobs of those persons with disabilities, who possess all the requisite qualifications, skills, and prior work experience to fulfill a particular job’s essential tasks and responsibilities. Such protections frequently demand employers to modify workplace environments and job tasks to minimize the impact of employees’ physical, psychological, intellectual, and other impairments on their job performance. ADA refers to these modifications as “reasonable accommodations.”

Definition of disability under the ADA. The ADA Amendment Act (2008) defines “disability” as (a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of an individual; (b) a record of such impairment; or (c) being regarded as having such impairment. To meet the criterion of “substantially limited in a major life activity,” an individual’s impairment must prevent or severely restrict his/her capacities for carrying out activities of daily living, such as caring for oneself; performing

¹ Title I (Employment); Title II (State and Local Government Activities); Title III (Public Accommodations); Title IV (Telecommunications Relay Services); and Title V (Miscellaneous Provisions).

routine manual tasks; seeing, hearing, and eating; among others. To be eligible for protections under Title 1, an individual must provide adequate evidence of impairments that severely interfere with his/her job performance, as typically verified and reported in formal medical evaluations of impairments.

Reasonable accommodations under the ADA. Reasonable accommodations generally consist of three main features: (a) modifying job application procedures ensuring all qualified applicants have nearly the same probability of selection; (b) modifying existing facilities to be readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities; and (c) job restructuring, including, for example, modifying work schedules (e.g., part-time, telework); reassigning an employee with a disability to a vacant position; acquiring or modifying equipment or devices (e.g., ergonomic chairs, TTY telephones, screen reading software); modifying administration of examinations; and providing qualified readers or interpreters.

Negotiating reasonable accommodation under the ADA. The EEOC describes negotiation of reasonable accommodation requests between employers and employees with disabilities as a set of interactive steps or procedures, by which they reach consensus about a job's essential functions; job skills of particular employees with disabilities; and selection of the best accommodation from among a range of potential accommodations for reducing impacts of impairments on job performance (U.S. EEOC, 2005). On a case-by-case basis, employers decide whether to approve or deny requests for reasonable accommodations by employees with disabilities.

Employers' Knowledge, and Experience with Reasonable Accommodations

Despite ADA requirements that stipulate employers negotiate in good faith with employees with disabilities about reasonable workplace accommodations, employers have struggled with handling accommodation requests. Factors that account for employers' limited success with managing reasonable accommodation requests have not yet been adequately investigated. Considerable attention has been directed to describing employer failures, and their occasional modest successes in responding to accommodation requests.

On the failure side, although it is well known that accommodations enhance hiring of individuals with disabilities, employers find it difficult to determine what evidentiary standard should be met in order to approve accommodation requests (Dong, Fabian, & MacDonald-Wilson, 2010; Dong, Oire, & Fabian, in print; Gold, Oire, Fabian, & Wewiorski, 2012; MacDonald-Wilson, Fabian, & Dong, 2008). On the modest success side, the limited proportion of accommodation requests approved and implemented by employers seem to occur under circumstances in which accommodations cost little and can be easily implemented (Bruyere, Erickson, & VanLooy, 2006; Dench, Meager, & Morris, 1996; Hernandez, Keys, & Balcazar, 2000; Mitchell & Kovera, 2006).

Proposed Model of Negotiating Reasonable Accommodation Requests.

At present, no conceptual model enjoys broad consensus that comprehensively accounts for how employers and employees with disabilities negotiate reasonable accommodations. Thus, for purposes of this study, I adapted Stone and Colella's (1996) employee-focused conceptual model (Figure 1.1) to be relevant for employers. The model proposes that three sets of characteristics interact in complex, but poorly

understood, ways in shaping ways in which employees with disabilities are treated in the workplace, and by inference, the seriousness by which their accommodation requests are adjudicated. These characteristics include those of (a) persons with disabilities and employers; (b) their organizations (e.g. norms, values, policies, nature of the job); and (c) their shared policy and legislative environment. Although this model views interaction of these characteristics from employees' perspectives, some key model components can logically be viewed from employers' perspectives as indicated by a "star" in Stone and Colella's (1996) model (Fig. 1.1).

In modifying Stone and Colella's (1996) model, I first organized the eight empirically-derived factors that (a) employees with disabilities; (b) employers managing persons with disabilities; and (c) service providers aiding both of these parties, perceive as important elements in successfully negotiating reasonable accommodation requests (Table 1; Dong, MacDonald-Wilson, & Fabian, 2010) into three hierarchical arranged sets of attributes that may influence how negotiating requests might turn out (Fig. 1.2). Second, I substituted some of Stone and Colella's (1996) model constructs and indicators with the three sets of empirically-derived factors to produce a model (Fig. 1.3), which specifies that two exogenous constructs, (a) attributes of individuals (e.g., employers, employees with disabilities), and (b) attributes of organizations (e.g., accommodation policies; practices; dedicated budgets for covering costs of accommodations) interact to influence the likelihood of a successfully negotiated accommodation request.

I concede that this "hybrid model" is, for purposes of this study, of heuristic value only, because I cannot directly test its construct and predictive validity. However, the model does aid understanding about what attributes of employers and their organizations,

in concert with how employers use available evidence in support of their accommodation requests, in deciding whether to approve or deny their requests.

Figure 1.1: Factors affecting the workplace treatment of people with disabilities (Stone & Colella, 1996; Pg. 355; Fig. 1)

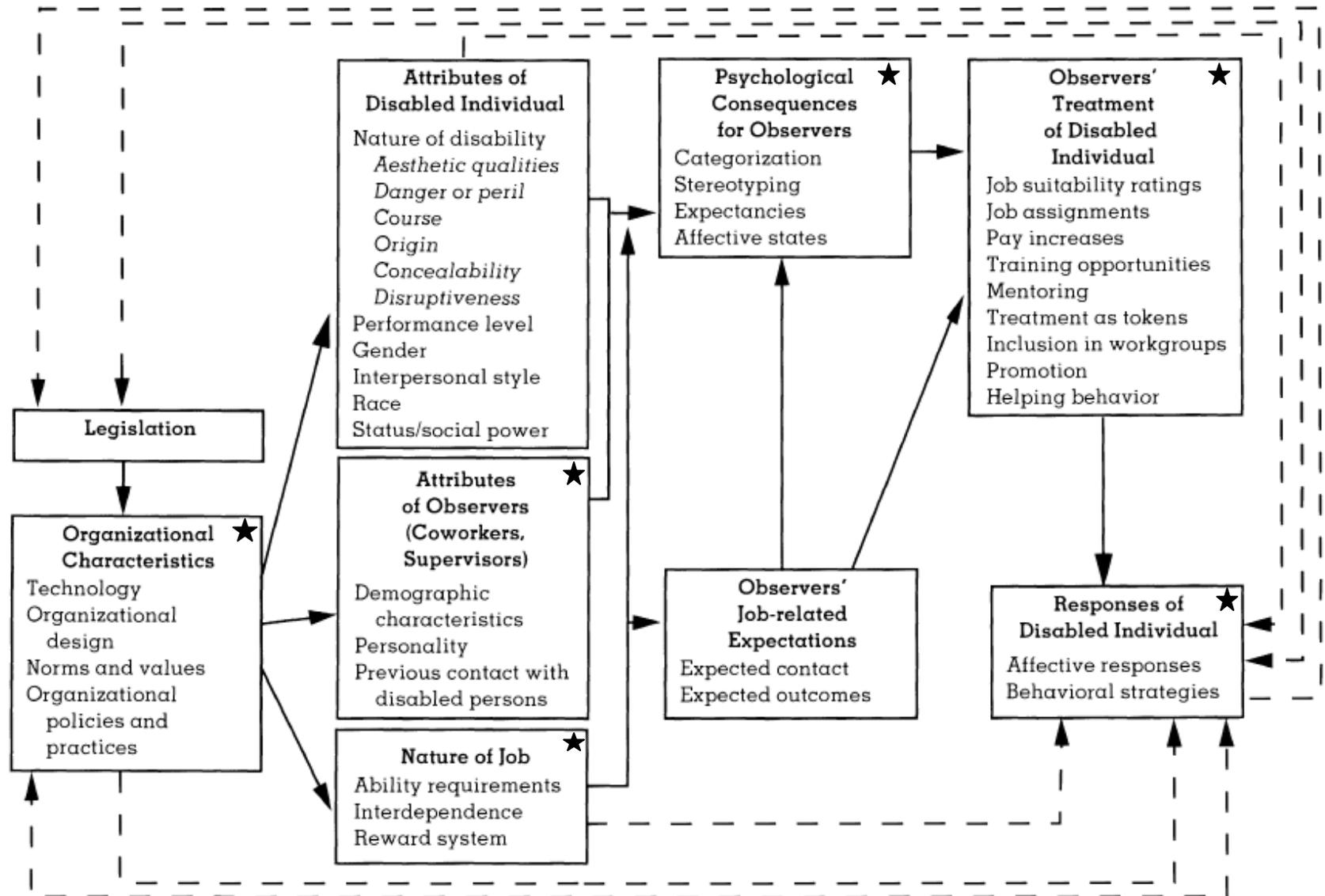
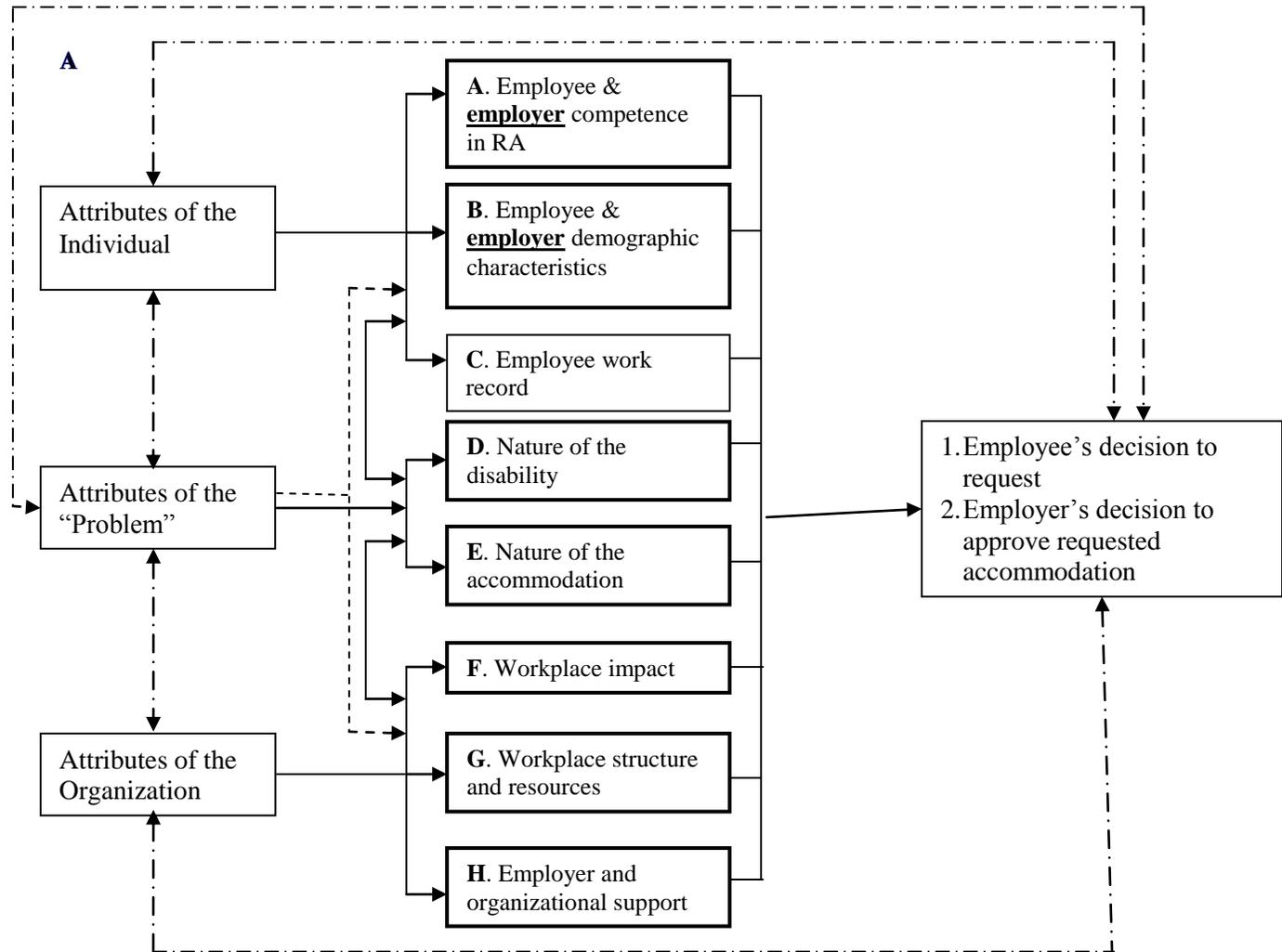


Table 1.1. Empirically-derived factors viewed by employers, employees with disabilities, and service providers as important elements in negotiating accommodation requests

Factor	Selected RAFS items representing each factor	M (SD)
A. Employer & Organizational Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer understanding of disability & ADA • Supportiveness of employee's direct supervisor 	4.14 (1.00)
B. Employee Competence with Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity in requesting accommodations • Communication • Making a credible case for needed accommodation 	3.27 (1.28)
C. Employee Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age, Race, Gender 	1.33 (0.78)
D. Workplace Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coworkers supportiveness • Relationships between employee & employer 	2.89 (1.27)
E. Workplace Structure and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of organization, • Availability of resources 	2.92 (1.42)
F. Employee Work Record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee tenure, position, & overall productivity/performance 	2.21 (1.24)
G. Accommodation Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits of accommodation • Credibility of request • Ease of use of implemented accommodation 	3.72 (1.09)
H. Nature of Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severity of disability • Visibility of disability 	2.78 (1.32)

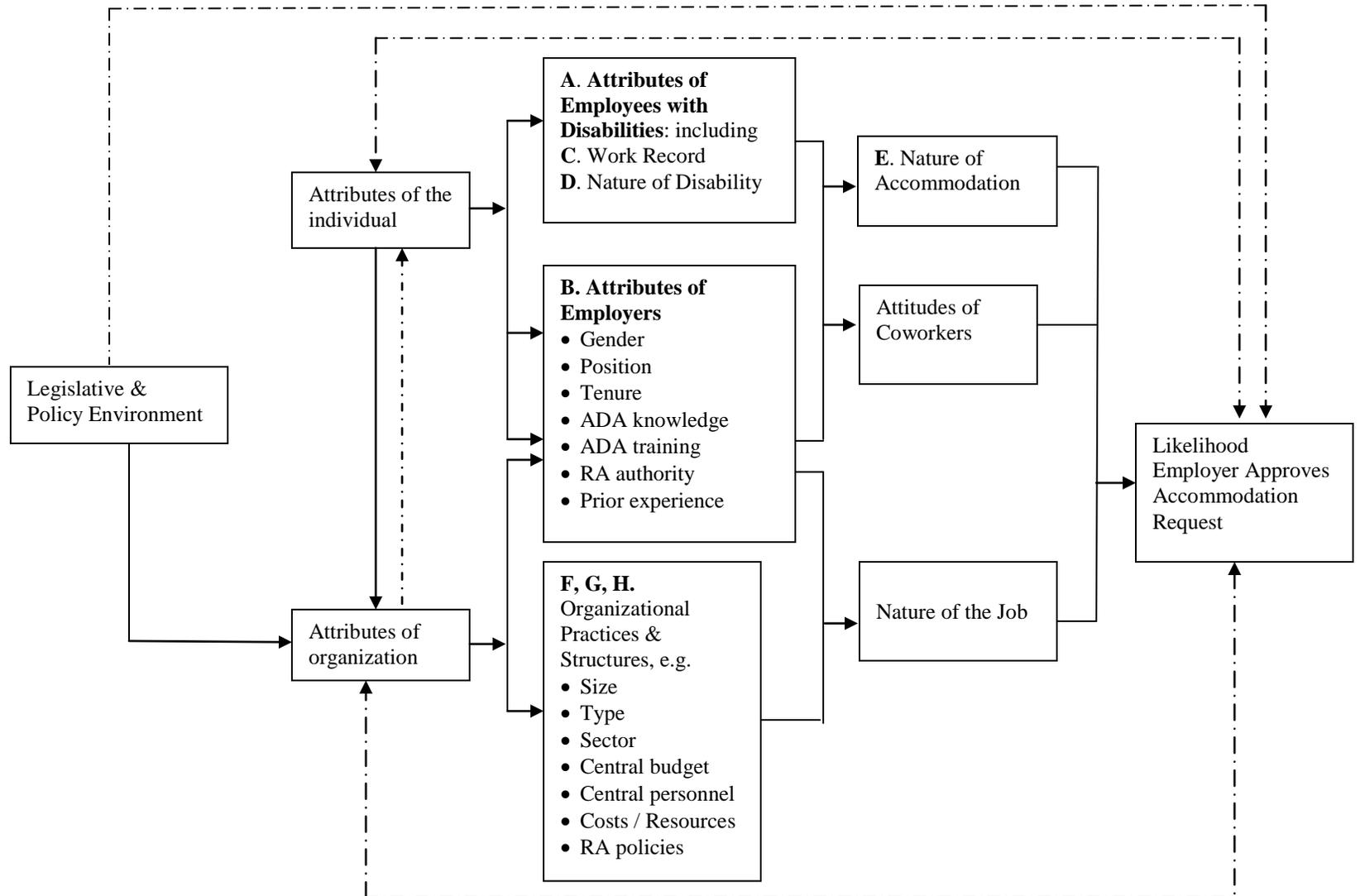
Note: adapted from Dong, Fabian, & MacDonald-Wilson, (2010)

Figure 1.2: Hierarchical arrangement of (Dong et al., 2010) factors in a reasonable accommodation process



Note: Letters A-H correspond with the eight accommodation factors listed on Pg. 7 above from Dong et al, (2010)

Figure 1.3: Modification of Stone & Colella (1996; 355, Fig. 1) model with Dong et al.'s (2010) empirically-derived factors hypothesized to be associated with employers' accommodation responses



Study Purpose and Research Questions

For decades, LFPRs and retention rates of highly skilled persons with disabilities in high-quality jobs have been unacceptably low. Since the 1970s, a long series of US Congressional legislative acts, especially the ADA of 1990 as amended in 2008, have not appreciably improved the labor market success of persons with disabilities. At present, there is neither consensus about what other causes exacerbate their persisting poor labor market performance, nor about what reasons account for employers' low rates of approving and implementing reasonable workplace accommodation requests by employees with disabilities as authorized under the ADA.

This exploratory study addresses four questions:

- **Research Question 1.** Which of four employer characteristics are associated with approving or denying requests from employees with disabilities: (a) "Knowledge about the ADA;" (b) "Authority to Provide Accommodations;" (c) "Prior Experience Hiring or Supervising Employees with Disabilities;" and (d) "Gender"?
- **Research question 2.** Which of four employers' organizational characteristics are associated with approving or denying requests from employees with disabilities: (a) "Centralized Budget for Providing Accommodations;" (b) "Designated Individual or Office Handles Workplace Accommodations;" (c) "Designated Individual or Office Handles All Workplace Accommodations;" and (d) "Clear Accommodation Policies?"
- **Research question 3.** What criteria do employers use in making decisions to approve or deny an accommodation request from an employee with a disability?
- **Research question 4.** Which of these criteria, from research question 3, do employers, subdivided by four personal characteristics (as listed in research question 1); and four

organizational characteristics (as listed in research question 2), use in making decisions to approve or deny an accommodation request from an employee with a disability?

Chapter II: Literature Review

This review covers four major areas relevant for understanding how employers manage their responsibilities under Title I of the ADA to respond to requests for reasonable workplace accommodations by qualified employees with disabilities:

1. What are labor market participation rates for persons with disabilities in the U.S.?
2. Which U.S. Congressional legislative acts do employers; employees with disabilities; and other relevant parties take into account when negotiating reasonable workplace accommodations for employees with disabilities?
3. Under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) as Amended (ADAAA, 2008), how do employers, employees with disabilities, and other relevant parties negotiate reasonable workplace accommodations for employees with disabilities?
4. What barriers and facilitators do employers; employees with disabilities; and other relevant parties confront in negotiating reasonable workplace accommodations?
5. By what criteria do employers decide whether to approve or deny reasonable accommodation requests from employees with disabilities?

Labor Market Participation Rates for Persons with Disabilities in the U.S.

Approximately 36 million civilian, working-age adults (aged 16 to 64 years), comprising 12% of the total U.S. population, have physical, intellectual, or psychiatric disabilities (US Census Bureau, 2011). Historically, working-age adults with disabilities have fared poorly in the US labor force (Braddock & Bachelder, 1994; Burkhauser, Daly, & Houtenville, 2001). In 2012, their Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) of 20.9% was less than one-third than that for persons without disabilities (69.1%), (Bureau of

Labor Statistics [BLS], August 2012). Table 2.1 compares labor market activity of working-age adults with and without disabilities.

Most employees with disabilities struggle to obtain and keep jobs, but those who face severe workplace discrimination tend to quit jobs or retire prematurely.

Unfortunately, even in organizations with a history of providing accommodations, employees with disabilities with lengthy job tenure are no less likely to perceive discrimination, and no more likely to have their accommodation requests approved (Balsler, 2000).

*Table 2.1: Employment status of the civilian working-age adult population by disability status**

	Employment status ¹	
	Persons with disabilities	Persons with no disabilities
Civilian non-institutional population	28,209	214,574
Civilian labor force	5,736	148,169
Participation rate	20.3%	69.1%
Employed	5,021	136,974
Employment-population ratio	17.8	63.8
Unemployed	715	11,195
Unemployment rate	12.5%	7.6%
Not in labor force	22,473	66,406

*Source: U.S. Department of Labor–Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economic News Release, 05/2012

¹ Numbers in thousands

Legislative Acts and Policies Considered by Employers When Negotiating

Reasonable Accommodations

Over the past 40 years, U.S. Congressional legislative acts have attempted to increase LFPRs among persons with disabilities. Some of the most notable acts include the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1970; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990; the Workforce Investment Act of 1998; and the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIIA) of 1999. The Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), has perhaps been the most effective legislative act to increase LFPRs of persons with disabilities.

How employers and employees with disabilities negotiate reasonable accommodations under the ADA.

Summary of the ADA. The ADA, a wide-ranging civil rights law that prohibits discrimination of persons with disabilities, resembles aspects of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination against persons based on race, religion, sex, and national origin. The ADA consists of five Titles mandating specific services and responsibilities to service providers ensuring that persons with disabilities experience equal opportunities for participating fully in their communities.² Title I, the subject of this study, requires employers with 15 or more employees to assist qualified individuals with disabilities to benefit from the full range of employment-related opportunities available to persons without disabilities (ADA, 1990; ADAAA, 2008). For

² Title I (Employment); Title II (State and Local Government Activities); Title III (Public Accommodations); Title IV (Telecommunications Relay Services); and Title V (Miscellaneous Provisions).

example, Title 1 prohibits discriminating against persons with disabilities in the workplace in recruiting, hiring, and training; paying lower wages to employees with disabilities for the same work compared to employees without disabilities; and offering social activities to workers.

Reasonable accommodations under the ADA. Title 1 provisions require employers to protect the jobs of those employees with disabilities, who possess all the requisite skills and prior experience for fulfilling a particular job's essential tasks and responsibilities. By modifying workplace environments, and/or job tasks that minimize impacts of employees' physical, psychological, intellectual, and other impairments on their job performance, so employees with disabilities can enjoy equal employment opportunities as persons without disabilities (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [EEOC], 2000; ADA, 2008). Employing organizations must approve and implement accommodations to qualified individuals under the ADA, except if doing so threatens an organization's financial and operational survival.

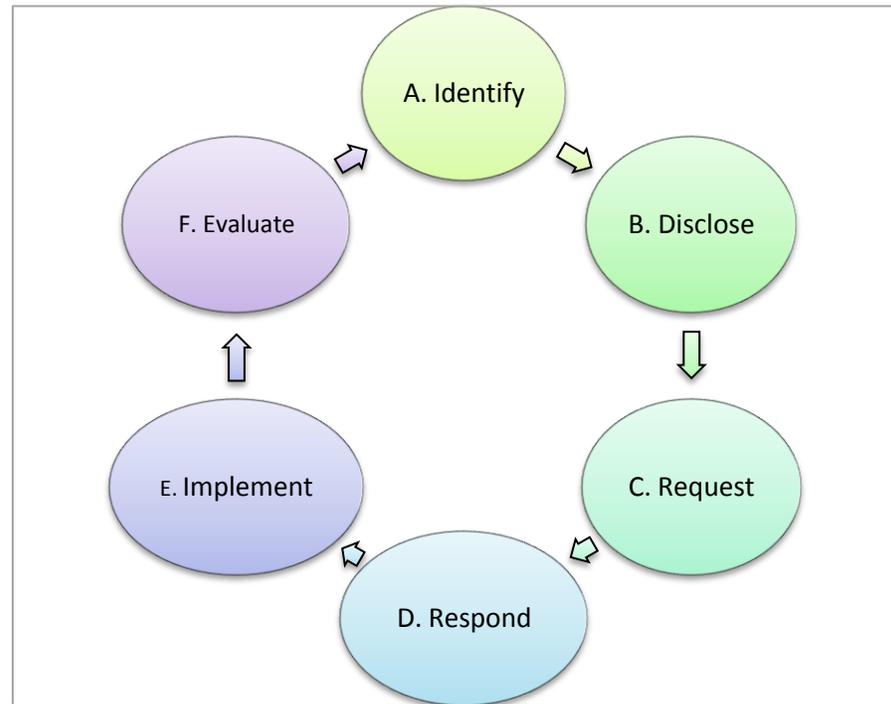
Reasonable accommodations generally consist of three main features: (a) modifying job application procedures ensuring all qualified applicants have nearly the same probability of selection; (b) modifying existing facilities to be readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities; and (c) job restructuring, including, for example, modifying work schedules (e.g., part-time, telework); reassigning an employee with a disability to a vacant position; acquiring or modifying equipment or devices (e.g., ergonomic chairs, TTY telephones, screen reading software); modifying administration of examinations; and providing qualified readers or interpreters.

Proposed model of negotiating reasonable accommodations. Although ADA Title 1 does not prescribe formal mechanisms for initiating, requesting, negotiating and providing workplace accommodations, a general sequence of employer and employee actions, as presented in Figure 2.2, ultimately leads to employer decisions to approve or deny requests.

Following Figure 2.2's six-stage heuristic model (Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, 2010), an employee with a disability initiates negotiations by (a) identifying a need for an accommodation; (b) disclosing his/her disability to an employer; and (c) requesting an accommodation from an employer. Employers then consider requests from eligible and qualified employees with disabilities, by (d) responding, on a case-by-case basis, by (i) examining the essential functions of an employee's job; (ii) consulting with the employee to determine the extent to which his or her impairments interfere with performing a job's essential functions; (iii) determining whether the employee's impairments meet criteria for a disability designation under ADA Title 1; and (iv) investigating a range of potential accommodations that may preserve/enhance an employee's job performance.

If the employer approves an accommodation request, then the employer and employee will (e) negotiate and implement the agreed-upon accommodations; and (f) collaboratively evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodation over time (US EEOC, 2005; Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, 2010).

Figure 2.2: A Proposed Model of Negotiating Reasonable Accommodations



Source: Mid-Atlantic ADA Center. (2010).

Identifying a need for accommodation. ADA Title 1 places responsibility for initiating a reasonable accommodation request on the employee with a disability. Some employees, especially those with non-apparent disabilities, fail to recognize and/or acknowledge that their work limitations may be related to their medical condition. In these instances, employment service providers (e.g., rehabilitation counselors; job developers) can help employees with disabilities recognize how their impairments affect performance and identify a need for a reasonable accommodation (e.g., MacDonald-Wilson, Rogers, Massaro, Lyass, A., & Crean, T., 2002).

Disclosing disabilities to employers. Under Title 1, the employee with a disability, not the employer, must take the first step toward seeking a workplace accommodation, by disclosing his/her disability to the employer. Even though some

employers may recognize that decrements in an employee's work performance might be due to some undisclosed medical condition, they are prohibited from reporting such speculations into an employee's performance evaluation, and from initiating accommodation negotiations. More often than not, Employers may be entirely unaware that an employee has a disability, especially for so-called "non-apparent" (i.e. hidden or invisible) disabilities, such as traumatic brain injury, and cognitive disabilities, and will learn of such problems only if employees with disabilities directly inform them.

Disclosing disabilities and requesting accommodations almost always requires that employees with disabilities to carefully weigh the risks and benefits of disclosure. Once the employee discloses a disability to an employer, the employee cedes control over who communicates and judges the disclosed information. On the risk side, disclosure may result in a variety of negative responses from employers, and possibly co-workers. For example, individuals who disclose historically stigmatized, non-apparent disabilities (e.g., psychiatric disabilities, HIV/AIDS) have often confronted disbelief about the existence of their disabilities; differentially high rejection rates of their accommodation requests; and/or coworker perceptions and resentment that employees with disabilities receive preferential treatment in the workplace (e.g., Dalgin & Gilbride, 2003; Diksa, & Rogers, 1996; McAlpine & Warner, 2000; Popovich, Scherbaum, Scherbaum, & Polinko, 2003; Scheid, 1999).

Requesting accommodations from employers. An employee with a disability must demonstrate to the employer how a medical condition (disability) and its associated functional limitations (e.g., physical, cognitive, social, or emotional) impair job performance (e.g., MacDonald-Wilson, Rogers, & Massaro, 2003).

Some employers prefer following a formal protocol for submitting requests (e.g., formal letters, filling out standardized forms), whereas others prefer to manage requests informally. A small number of studies report that that for employers, the protocol process is equally as important as the outcome, whereas for employees, the outcome is more important than the protocol process (Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, 2010).

Responding to an employee’s request. An employer will vet the credibility of an employee’s accommodation request, evaluating submitted evidence supporting employee assertions that a disclosed medical condition adversely affects his/her performance of essential job functions, and whether the requested accommodation will adequately compensate and/or restore the employee’s performance. In some instances, employers may consult with other experts, such as physicians, attorneys, vocational rehabilitation specialists, to assist with evaluating requests.

It is at this step—*employer response to requests by employees with disabilities*—where employees face their greatest hurdles toward employer approval of their accommodation requests. Despite ADA requirements stipulating that employers dispassionately evaluate employees’ submitted documentation and attesting to the validity of an accommodation requests, and negotiates in good faith with employees with disabilities, employers have struggled making fair-minded decisions on employees’ requests for several possible reasons.

First, determining the association of impairments to job performance by medical conditions is frequently complicated. Diagnosing many medical problems can be difficult; showing how specific symptoms of medical conditions (i.e. cause) impair specific human functions and performance of specific job tasks (i.e. effect) may be

impossible to pin down with high certainty. Second, even if an employee with a disability can produce such persuasive cause-effect evidence, the next challenge, specifying and designing an accommodation that will adequately mitigate effects of an impairment on job performance, is a formidable task, and as much an art as science.

Thus, employees with disabilities need to be sensitive to employers' technical difficulties in assessing accommodation requests. Adequate information (e.g. medical documentation) from multiple parties (e.g., physicians, rehabilitation specialists), and effort exerted (e.g. time and resources) require careful planning about how to present evidence prior to making requests, and holding realistic expectations about whether negotiations will lead to employers' decisions to approve or deny requests.

Despite the daunting tasks that employers must undertake to arrive at a justified decisions to approve or deny accommodation requests, the extraordinary large number of complaints filed by employees with disabilities with the EEOC alleging workplace discrimination, many of which involve disputes over accommodation requests, may be associated with some employers' failure to exercise due diligence in evaluating employees' requests. In fiscal year 2011 alone, workplace discrimination charge filings reached a record-high number of nearly one hundred thousand cases, including a record-high number of more than twenty-five thousand of filings about reasonable accommodation requests (25,742; EEOC, 2012). To put these numbers into perspective, disability discrimination charges represented the fourth highest category of charges (25.8%), after complaints about workplace retaliation, and workplace discrimination associated with race and sex.

Negotiating and implementing an accommodation. Negotiating reasonable accommodations is fundamentally an exercise in basic interpersonal interactions, involving ongoing and frequent communication between employees and their employers, with an ultimate aim of building long-term relationships founded upon mutual trust and respect. The more trust and respect employer and employee develop over time, and the more they agree that their primary aim in negotiating accommodations is to increase the efficiency, effectiveness, inclusivity, and affirmation of the workplace, the more likely will be confident about each other's intentions. Negotiations are then more likely to result in employer approval of employee requests (Dong, MacDonald-Wilson and Fabian, 2010; Gilbride et al., 2003; Gold et al., 2012; Rumrill, 1999).

Evaluating effectiveness/utility of an accommodation. Both employer and employee conduct periodic evaluations on the extent to which an agreed-upon accommodation effectively enables the employee to perform the essential functions of the job at appropriate levels of quality and productivity. Should an employee's performance fall below expectations, the two parties may consider further modifying the accommodation, and/or exploring alternative accommodations. In weighing alternative accommodations, all parties remain cognizant that Title 1 exempts employers from providing accommodations if doing so results in undue burden on the organization's operational and financial survival, while not losing sight that both parties stand to gain from persistent efforts to find optimal solutions. Viewed in practical business terms, as Sunstein (2007) argues, an actionable cost-benefit analysis "... properly focuses attention on the issue of potential benefits to the disabled and potential costs to the employer; and it disciplines intuitions that may be insufficiently anchored in reality" (p.1896).

Barriers and Facilitators in Negotiating Reasonable Accommodations

Why have employers experienced little success with accommodations?

Several major barriers to serious consideration of accommodation requests by employers have been described in multiple studies: (a) general stereotypes about persons with disabilities; (b) differential stigmatizing of persons with psychiatric disabilities compared to those with physical disabilities; (c) uninformed socio-cultural tendencies to infer that persons with certain types of disabilities have voluntarily and irresponsibly brought illness and disability upon themselves; can exert control over the causes of their conditions; and therefore deserve no special consideration in the workplace or in everyday life; (d) employers lacking basic knowledge of their obligations under the ADA; (e) and employer worries that co-workers may perceive and eventually resent accommodations as preferential attention to employees with disabilities, poisoning organizational climate (e.g. Colella, 2001; Colella, Paetzold, & Belliveau, 2004; Gold, et al 2012; Michaels, & Risucci, 1993).

General stereotypes about persons with disabilities. Employers who hold stereotypical views of employees with disabilities as incapable of excelling at competitive jobs, are less likely to recruit, hire, and retain them (Blessing & Jamieson, 1999; Bruyère, 2000; Diksa, & Rogers, 1996; Hernandez, Keys, & Balcazar, 2000; Robinson 2000; Schur, Kruse, & Blanc, 2005; Wilgosh, & Skaret, 1987). Such stereotyping may account for, in part, employers' low rates of approving accommodations requests (Goldstone, 2002; Hernandez, Keys, & Balcazar, 2000; Lopreset, 2007; Pearson, Yip, Ip, Lo, Ho, & Hui, 2003; Unger, 2002).

Stigmatization of persons with psychiatric disabilities compared to persons with physical disabilities. Employers appear to be more reluctant to hire, and approve accommodation requests from, employees with psychiatric disabilities compared to employees with physical disabilities (Diksa, & Rogers, 1996; Laird, 1990; McAlpine & Warner, 2000; Scheid, 1998; 1999). Employees with psychiatric disabilities also report much higher rates of workplace discrimination compared to those with physical disabilities (e.g., Granger, Baron, & Robinson, 1997; Mechanic, 1998; Michaels, Nappo, Barrett, Risucci, & Harles, 1993; Popovich, Scherbaum, Scherbaum, & Polinko, 2003).

Socio-cultural views that some persons have irresponsibly caused their disabilities and therefore deserve no accommodation. Several recent studies report that employers approve more accommodation requests from employees (a) whose disabilities employers believe as caused by problems not under the employees' direct control of (e.g., visual impairments; cancers; cardiovascular diseases' spinal cord injuries resulting from automobile accidents and combat-related events) versus employees whose disabilities employers believe as caused by irresponsible behavior, and therefore deserve no special attention in the workplace or in everyday life (e.g., depression, schizophrenia, alcohol and drug abuse, HIV/AIDS) (Mitchell & Kovera, 2006). In a study of 35,763 workplace discrimination complaints filed by employees with disabilities with the EEOC, Chan, McMahon, Cheing, Rosenthal, & Bezyak, (2005) found that, for workplace discrimination, a similar pattern of employers believed that irresponsible behavior by employees brought about their.

Employer and employee lack of knowledge of their ADA obligations.

Although a significant proportion of employers express willingness to provide accommodations to employees with disabilities, many of them lack basic knowledge about (a) how disabilities impact job performance; (b) their legal obligations to each other in negotiating accommodation requests under the ADA; (c) how to negotiate accommodation requests; and (d) external financial and other resources available to cover the very modest direct costs of most accommodations. The less each party knows, the less likely they will successfully negotiate accommodation requests (Dong, Fabian, & MacDonald-Wilson, 2010; Gold, Oire, Fabian, & Wewiorski, 2012; MacDonald-Wilson, Fabian, & Dong, 2008; Roberts & Macan, 2006; Unger et al., 2003). Some of these employers, who lack such knowledge, especially those with no prior experience interacting with employees with disabilities, state that they both distrust intentions of these employees who submit accommodation requests; and convey skepticism about the efficacy of workplace accommodations to mitigate impact of impairments on job performance (Gold et al., 2012; MacDonald-Wilson, Fabian, & Dong, 2008). Additionally, employees with disabilities also lack basic knowledge about (a) how disabilities impact their own job performance; and (b) their employers' organizational accommodation policies.

Co-workers resent provision of workplace accommodations to employees with disabilities. Some employers express concern that coworkers may judge providing workplace accommodations to employees with disabilities as unfair, accompanied by the possibility that their resentment may poison workplace climate (e.g. Colella, 2001; Colella, Paetzold, & Belliveau, 2004; Gold, et al 2012; Michaels, & Risucci, 1993).

However, the more information that employers share with coworkers about the rationale for providing accommodations, the more likely coworkers will perceive accommodations as in the best interests of the entire organization (Gates, 2000; Green, 2006).

By what criteria do employers decide whether to approve or deny reasonable accommodation requests?

It has been more than 20 years since passage of the ADA in 1990. Despite extensive investigation about accommodation requests by employees with disabilities, and decisions made on those requests by employers, researchers; policy makers; rehabilitation service providers; and employees with disabilities and their employers themselves, still do not fully understand reasons associated with low approval rates for workplace accommodation requests.

At a minimum, most stakeholders agree that, at a conceptual level, a complex array of specific factors, internal and external to an organization, interact in intricate, but in unknown ways, to shape negotiation of accommodation requests (e.g., Balser, 2007; Balser & Harris, 2008; Cleveland et al., 1997; Colella, 2001), in the context of specific factors internal and external to an organization regarding disability and accommodations.

Internal factors include, for example, organizational culture and climate (Gilbride, Stensrud, Vandergoot, & Golden, 2003); organizational policies and procedures (Floreay & Harrison, 2000; Lee, 1996); employer and coworker attitudes about inferred causes and responsibility for employees' illnesses and disabilities (Colella, Paetzold, & Belliveau, 2004; Chan et al., 2005; Mitchell & Kovera, 2006); employee characteristics, especially competence with managing accommodations requests (Banks, Novak, Mank, & Grossi, 2007; Frank & Bellini, 2005; Gioia & Brekke, 2003); differential responses to persons

with particular disabilities, especially psychiatric versus physical disabilities that can be traced to widespread, but unfounded stereotypes (McAlpine & Warner, 2000; (Link, Phelan, Bresnahan, Stueve, & Pescosolido, 1999; Phelan & Link, 2004; Scheid, 1998; 1999); incentives and disincentives for employees disclosing a disability. External factors include, for example, business size and sector (Bruyere, Erickson, & VanLooy, 2006). Factors involving cost, duration, and timing of providing accommodations may act as both internal and external influences on accommodation decisions (Friedman, 1993; Hendricks, Batiste, Hirsh Schartz, & Blanck, 2005; Michaels & Risucci, 1993; Unger & Kregel, 2003).

This association of factors, internal and external to organizations, with employers' decisions on accommodation requests made by employees with disabilities, is impressive. However, these studies have largely examined bivariate relationships between one or two of these factors and employer decisions, leaving the field under-informed about how employers and employees with disabilities navigate from identifying a disability, at the front end, as presented in Figure 2.2 ("A Proposed Model of Negotiating Reasonable Accommodations," p. 28), to evaluating the effectiveness of approved and implemented accommodations at the back end.

To broaden the inquiry from bivariate associations to dynamic processes that may better describe how employers and employees with disabilities negotiate accommodation requests, several teams of researchers have surveyed perspectives of employers, employees with disabilities, and other stakeholders, especially vocational rehabilitation service providers, about what necessary and sufficient elements of negotiating accommodations bring about settlements satisfactory to all parties (Dong et al. 2010;

Gilbride et al., 2003; Gold et al., 2012). Findings from these studies converge on three themes: (a) mutual trust and respect between an employer and an employee with a disability making an accommodation request; (b) compelling arguments made by an employee with a disability that demonstrates logical links among medical condition, impairments associated with the condition that interfere with job performance, and proposal of feasible accommodations to mitigate impacts of impairments on job performance.

In developing the Reasonable Accommodation Factor Scale (RAFS), a 52-item Likert-type measure for gathering perspectives about negotiating workplace accommodations from three key stakeholder groups—employers, employees with disabilities, and vocational rehabilitation service providers, Dong et al. (2010) found that, in the eight empirically-derived scales, the three stakeholder groups identified three principal elements likely to result in approving accommodation requests: (a) employer support for, experience with, and commitment to providing accommodations; (b) employees with disabilities' skills with making credible cases about their need for accommodations, and proposing creative accommodation alternatives; and (c) the potential benefit of an agreed-upon accommodation to the entire organization (Table 1.1, p. 18).

In a focus group study employers, employees with disabilities, and vocational rehabilitation service providers, Gilbride, Stensrud, Vandergoot, & Golden, (2003) identified three themes associated with employers willingness to hire and accommodate employees with disabilities: employers (a) dedicate themselves to identifying, approving, and implementing accommodations); (b) focus on matching accommodation with

essential job functions; and (c) reach out to all stakeholders who can contribute to negotiations and provide ongoing consultation to ensure effectiveness of accommodations over time.

In a focus-group study of employers, employees with disabilities, and vocational rehabilitation service providers, Gold, Oire, Fabian, and Wewiorski (2012) identified three themes that these three sets of stakeholders report as most influencing the trajectories employers and employees with disabilities take in negotiating accommodation requests. First, employers expect employees with disabilities to present a compelling case showing how specific symptoms of medical conditions impair performance of specific job tasks, and proposing a feasible accommodation mitigating effects of impairments on job performance. Second, negotiating reasonable accommodations is fundamentally an exercise in basic interpersonal interactions. The more employer and employee trust and respect each other over time, and the more they agree that their primary aim is to increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and inclusivity of the workplace, the more likely they will negotiate an acceptable accommodation. Third, some employers exert considerable effort weighing their competing legal and financial demands against a moral imperative to approve and implement accommodations.

Summary of findings and basis of research questions.

Since the 1970s, LFPRs and retention rates of highly skilled persons with disabilities in high-quality jobs have been unacceptably low. During these decades, a long series of US Congressional legislative acts have not appreciably improved their labor market success. At present, there is neither consensus about what other causes exacerbate their persisting poor labor market performance, nor consensus about what reasons

account for employers' low rates of approving and implementing reasonable workplace accommodation requests by employees with disabilities as authorized under the ADA.

The bulk of prior studies on how employers decide to approve or deny reasonable workplace accommodation requests by employees with disabilities have largely confined themselves to examining bivariate relationships between attributes of employers and the decisions they make (e.g., expectations about performance capacities of employees with disabilities; reluctance to hire and accommodate individuals with psychiatric and other “non-apparent” disabilities; knowledge of their obligations to employees with disabilities under the ADA; prior experience with managing/supervising employees with disabilities; concerns with costs of accommodations; and awareness of resources external to the organization that can aid with implementing agreed-upon accommodations).

Our lack of understanding about employer decision takes on considerable urgency, because of (a) the low LFPRs of individuals with disabilities, and (b) the extraordinary large number of complaints filed by employees with disabilities with the EEOC alleging workplace discrimination, which represents the fourth highest category of charges, after complaints about workplace retaliation, and workplace discrimination associated with race and sex.

What remains poorly understood is how employers respond to accommodation requests from their employees, specifically on what criteria they rely to formulate a defensible decision. To build upon the few prior studies probing into employers' decision-making approaches to adjudicating and negotiating reasonable workplace accommodation requests from employees with disabilities, in this study, a sample of employer participants were presented brief scenarios in which a hypothetical employee, a

middle-aged man who has worked as a highly-valued mid-level manager for many years at a specific company, becomes ill with a chronic medical condition, whose ambiguous and diffuse symptoms are not readily visible to other persons, but considerably impair his work performance at his high-demand job. This employee makes a request for a reasonable workplace accommodation. These stimuli were carefully formulated to elicit the basis on which the study participants decide whether to approve or deny this hypothetical employee's request. This study addresses four questions:

- **Research Question 1.** Which of four employer characteristics – (a) “Knowledge about the ADA;” (b) “Authority to Provide Accommodations;” (c) “Prior Experience Hiring or Supervising Employees with Disabilities;” and (d) “Gender” – are associated with approving or denying requests from employees with disabilities?
- **Research Question 1.** Which of four employer characteristics are associated with approving or denying requests from employees with disabilities: (a) “Knowledge about the ADA;” (b) “Authority to Provide Accommodations;” (c) “Prior Experience Hiring or Supervising Employees with Disabilities;” and (d) “Gender”
- **Research question 2.** Which of four employers’ organizational characteristics are associated with approving or denying requests from employees with disabilities: (a) “Centralized Budget for Providing Accommodations;” (b) “Designated Individual or Office Handles Workplace Accommodations;” (c) “Designated Individual or Office Handles All Workplace Accommodations;” and (d) “Clear Accommodation Policies?”

- **Research question 3.** What criteria do employers use in making decisions to approve or deny an accommodation request from an employee with a disability?
- **Research question 4.** Which of these criteria, from research question 3, do employers, subdivided by four personal characteristics (as listed in research question 1); and four organizational characteristics (as listed in research question 2), use in making decisions to approve or deny an accommodation request from an employee with a disability?

Chapter III: Study Design, Methods, and Procedures

Study design

The Institutional Review Board of the University of Maryland at College Park reviewed the proposed research protocol (Appendix A1), and issued its approval (Appendix A2). The IRB closure report appears in Appendix A3. This observational cross-sectional survey study explored criteria that employers use in deciding to approve or deny accommodation requests made by employees with disabilities. Data analyzed in this study were collected between March 2011 and October 2011.

Population and selection criteria

The study population was operationalized as persons self-identifying as “employers” of persons with disabilities in the U.S. Selection criteria were: persons 18 years and older with (a) authority to manage and supervise employees with disabilities for an employing entity (e.g., organization, institution, agency); and (b) experience with evaluating and negotiating requests for reasonable accommodations.

Recruitment protocol

The research team on which I served identified sources of eligible participants with assistance from several agency networks involved in disability advocacy, including (a) the Americans with Disabilities Act Center (Region III of the Disability Business and Technical Assistance Center [DBTAC]); (b) the Job Accommodation Network (JAN); and (c) the Maryland State Business Leadership Networks (BLN). The research team asked directors of these organizations to invite their constituents and collaborators to

participate in this study, and they published to our online survey in their electronic newsletters, list-serves, and on their websites (Appendix B2).

Consent and eligibility determination

Interested employers accessed the online survey without need for direct contact with the research team. Page 1 of the online survey presented the consent form (Appendix B1), which (a) described the study's purpose and procedures; (b) explained the reasons why they were eligible and selected for participation; (c) emphasized they were free to withdraw from completing the survey at any point without penalty; (d) ensured that data collected from them would be held confidentially; (e) estimated that the costs of participation would likely range between 15 and 20 minutes to complete the survey; (e) laid out potential risks (primarily breach of confidentiality); (f) described how risks of confidentiality breaches would be minimized; (g) stated that they would not directly benefit from participation, but that the study might increase understanding about how employers make decisions to approve or deny accommodation requests from employees with disabilities; and (h) directed participants to contact the researchers or the University of Maryland's Institutional Review Board with any questions regarding the study and their rights as research participants. Each participant completing the survey was offered an opportunity to enter a raffle for a \$25 gift certificate, which required that he/she provide his/her name and contact information, so the researchers could reach a participant should she/he win a prize (Appendix B2).

Sampling protocol

The research team recruited a non-probability (convenience) sample, using a web-based survey program, SurveyGizmo.com, located on a secure server. Because most of our promotion and recruitment activities were conducted through notices posted on the websites of our partner agencies, I had no way of estimating the maximum size of our eligible sample (i.e. denominator) from which to compute a response rate. I downloaded survey responses from SurveyGizmo.com into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, which was stored on a password-protected computer accessible only to the researcher team. A three-step data cleaning process began with (a) filtering out survey responses from ineligible persons, most of whom responded from countries outside the US (n=212); (b) dropped incomplete surveys from analysis; and (c) coding the cleaned data in preparation for data analysis with SPSS and SAS.

Measures

Employer–Reasonable Accommodations Factor Survey (E-RAFS). The E-RAFS derives from the Reasonable Accommodation Factor Survey (RAFS; Dong, MacDonald-Wilson, & Fabian, 2010), a 52-item inventory developed to measure which criteria that (a) *employees* with disabilities use to decide whether or not to request accommodations; (b) *employers* use to decide whether to approve or deny employee requests; and (c) *vocational rehabilitation service providers* use to decide whether or not to intervene and assist employers and employees with negotiating reasonable accommodations (Appendix D). Content of the questionnaire instrument drew from a comprehensive review of empirical studies published between 1992 and 2008, describing correlates of employers' responses to requests for reasonable accommodations from

employees with disabilities (MacDonald-Wilson, Fabian, & Dong, 2008). Participants rate each of the 52 items along a Likert-type scale with response options ranging from (1) not at all important to (5) extremely important. Internal consistency reliability (coefficient alpha) was high at .93 for the RAFS total score. A principal components analysis of the responses to the 52 RAFS items by a sample 531 participants yielded eight components (Dong, MacDonald-Wilson, & Fabian, 2010) (Table 1.1; Chapter 1).

For the present study, the research team developed the *Employer-Reasonable Accommodation Factor Survey* (E-RAFS; third page of Appendix B3), by selecting items from the RAFS scale that (a) employers rated as highly important (scores of 3 and above on the 5-point Likert scale); and (b) described employer responses to workplace accommodation requests from employees with disabilities. Participants rate the extent to which they weighed the importance of each of the 19 E-RAFS items along the same Likert-type scale as the RAFs with response options ranging from (1) not at all important to (5) extremely important.

Eliciting employer decision-making on accommodation requests. To better understand how employers respond to accommodation requests from employees with disabilities, the research team constructed three brief scenarios in which, a hypothetical an employee with a disability named “John,” a 52-year old male employee, who has worked as a manager of a company for the past five years, becomes ill with a chronic medical condition, and whose ambiguous/diffuse symptoms, though not readily visible to other persons, considerably impair his performance in a high-demand job (Appendix C). The wording of the three scenarios was identical, except for one crucial detail: the

medical condition. Each of the three scenarios briefly describes one medical condition as follows:

- A. About 18 months ago John was diagnosed with coronary artery disease and was out of work for three months recovering from cardiac surgery.
- B. About 18 months ago John was diagnosed with macular degeneration (a significant visual disorder that may lead to blindness). His eyesight has been rapidly deteriorating. He has been out of work for three months undergoing training and rehabilitation.
- C. About 18 months ago John was diagnosed with severe depression and was out of work for three months seeking treatment.

In each scenario, John states his belief that his illness impairs his work performance. He requests a reasonable accommodation from his employer, but only provides his employer with only a limited documentation in support of his request describing how the symptoms of his illness impair his work performance.

Survey participants (a) randomly selected and read one of three scenarios; (b) rated each of the 19 E-RAF items; and (c) responded to John's request, by choosing one or more of *six* possible workplace accommodation options: (a) *four different approval options* (i) "telework;" (ii) "shift change;" (iii) "time off from work;" and (iv) "purchase computer/software"); (b) *one deferral option* ("none without additional documentation"), which equates to a "temporary denial" that could subsequently approve contingent on submitting adequate documentation; and (c) "other," permitting participants to suggest other courses of action they might take.

The details of the three disabilities, one per scenarios, were carefully crafted by the research team according to six criteria. First, presenting medical conditions, whose ambiguous and diffuse symptoms are not readily recognizable by the average person, makes it difficult to assess severity of impairments secondary to the medical condition, thereby weakening the evidentiary basis upon which participants might justify approving

or denying an accommodation request. Second, medical conditions were selected and described in a manner to reduce the possibility that an average person would attribute the cause of an employee's illness and disability to voluntary and irresponsible behavior. Third, presenting three different medical conditions in the scenarios allowed exploration into whether participants' decisions varied according to the different medical conditions and associated disabilities.

Fourth, impairments to job performance presented in the three scenarios can be accommodated easily in multiple ways. That is, the participants were presented a stimulus that would force them to conscientiously and carefully weigh whether to approve or deny an accommodation request, and if deciding to approve, which of the six offered low-cost alternative accommodation options they would recommend for implementation. Fifth, each scenario contained employer personal characteristics identified in multiple research studies to be associated with decisions to approve or deny accommodation requests (i.e. "Knowledge about the ADA," "Authority to Provide Accommodations," "Prior Experience Hiring or Supervising Employees with Disabilities"). Sixth, most employers place a high premium on employees with long job tenure and advanced skills (i.e. John performed well as a manager for his company for over 5 years); and most employers would likely approve accommodation requests from such valued employees as compared to employees with brief tenure, and more limited skills and experience.

Data Analysis

Table 3.1 summarizes the study research questions, variables, measures, and data analytic methods.

Missing data imputation. Thirty-three of the 384 participants failed to respond to all 19 E-RAFS items: 23 missed one item; 10 missed 2 or more. For participants who missed only one item, I calculated the mean of the other 18 items, and imputed this value for the item with the missing value. I dropped the other 10 participants from further analysis, yielding a final sample size of 374.

Employer and organizational characteristics associated with decisions to approve or deny an employee's accommodation request. I cross-tabulated the frequencies and computed the odds ratios of decisions to approve or deny an accommodated request by four employer characteristics: (a) "Knowledge about the ADA;" (b) "Authority to Provide Accommodations;" (c) "Prior Experience Hiring or Supervising Employees with Disabilities;" and (d) "Gender." I did the same for four organizational characteristics: (a) "Centralized Budget for Providing Accommodations;" (b) "Designated Individual or Office Handles Workplace Accommodations;" (c) "Designated Individual or Office Handles All Workplace Accommodations;" and (d) "Clear Accommodation Policies."

E-RAFS Factor Structure. I selected an exploratory method, principal axis factor analysis (PAF), for drawing tentative inferences about how the 19 observed E-RAFS items (manifest variables) reflect unobservable (latent) constructs. The 19 E-RAFS item responses obtained from the 373 employer participants, transformed into an inter-correlation matrix, were subjected to a principal-axis factor analysis, specifying for 2-, 3-, 4-, and 5-factor solutions with an oblique (promax) rotation. I called for multiple factor solutions, because little is known about criteria employers rely upon for making accommodation decisions. To select the factor solution with the simplest structure for

further analysis, I relied on: (a) the scree plot of eigenvalues; (b) the number of eigenvalues greater than 1.0; and (c) the extent to which items loaded highly one more than one factors.

E-RAFS factor-derived mean scale scores by employer decisions to approve or deny accommodation requests, and by choice of accommodation. Using one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA), I compared employers' E-RAFS factor-derived mean scale scores by (a) decision to approve or deny an accommodation request; and (b) choice of one or more of six possible workplace accommodation options.

E-RAFS factor-derived mean scale scores by employer characteristics, and by organizational characteristics. Using one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA), I compared E-RAFS factor-derived mean scale scores the four employer characteristics: (a) "Knowledge about the ADA;" (b) "Authority to Provide Accommodations;" (c) "Prior Experience Hiring or Supervising Employees with Disabilities;" and (d) "Gender." I did the same for four organizational characteristics: (a) "Centralized Budget for Providing Accommodations;" (b) "Designated Individual or Office Handles Workplace Accommodations;" (c) "Designated Individual or Office Handles All Workplace Accommodations;" and (d) "Clear Accommodation Policies."

Table 3.1: Summary of research questions, study variables, measures, and data analytic methods

Research Question	Variable/Measure	Analysis/Tables
RQ1		
Which <i>four employer characteristics</i> are associated with approving or denying an accommodation request from the hypothetical employee in the three case scenarios?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Knowledge about the ADA;” (b) “Authority to Provide Accommodations” 2. “Authority to Provide Accommodations” 3. “Prior Experience Hiring or Supervising Employees with Disabilities” 4. “Gender” 	<p>Tables 4.1.2.a through 4.1.2.d</p> <hr/> <p>Cross-tabulations & chi-square tests for each employer characteristic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve/deny • Accommodation option selected
RQ2		
Which of <i>four organizational characteristics</i> are associated with the employer approving or denying an accommodation request from the hypothetical employee in the three case scenarios?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Centralized Budget for Providing Accommodations” 2. “Designated Individual or Office Handles Workplace Accommodations” 3. “Designated Individual or Office Handles All Workplace Accommodations” 4. “Clear Accommodation Policies” 	<p>Tables 4.2.2.a through 4.2.2.d</p> <hr/> <p>Cross-tabulations & chi-square tests for each organizational characteristic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve/deny • Accommodation option selected
RQ3		
<i>What criteria</i> do employers use in making <i>decisions to approve or deny an accommodation request</i> from the hypothetical employee in the 3 case scenarios?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decision: approve/deny accommodation request in scenarios 2. Accommodation choice: one or more of six options 3. E-RAFS factor-derived scale means 	<p>Tables 4.3.5 & Tables 4.3.6</p> <hr/> <p>One-way ANOVA: E-RAFS scale means</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer decision (approve/deny) • Employer choice (6 options)
RQ4		
<i>Which of these criteria</i> do employers, subdivided by their <i>4 personal, and 4 organizational characteristics</i> , use in making <i>decisions to approve or deny an accommodation request</i> from the hypothetical employee in the 3 case scenarios?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employer characteristics (from RQ1) E-RAFS factor-derived scale means 2. Organizational characteristics (from RQ2) E-RAFS factor-derived scale means 	<p>Employers Tables 4.4.1.a to 4.4.1.d</p> <p>Organization: Tables 4.4.2.a to 4.4.2.d</p> <hr/> <p>One-way ANOVA: E-RAFS scale means</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer characteristics • Organizational characteristics

Chapter IV: Results

Research Question 1: Which of four employer characteristics are associated with approving or denying requests from employees with disabilities: (a) “Knowledge about the ADA;” (b) “Authority to Provide Accommodations;” (c) “Prior Experience Hiring or Supervising Employees with Disabilities;” and (d) “Gender?”

Employer characteristics. Table 4.1 profiles characteristics of the employer participants (n = 374): slightly more than half were women (58%); and slightly less than one-third self-reported a disability (30%), although 77% reported a family member or a close friend with a disability. One-third (32%) worked as human resources professionals; 16% as supervisors; 16% as mid-level managers; 11% as senior managers; and 4% as CEOs. Most participants (64%) reported working with their current employer-organization for more than five years. A large majority stated a history of participation in ADA-related training (84%), and almost all assessed their knowledge about the ADA as broad and deep (97%). More than three-quarters reported both authority to provide accommodations (77%), and prior experience hiring or supervising employees with disabilities (78%). Overall, this sample of employer participants could be described as (a) highly knowledgeable about their obligations under the ADA; (b) highly experienced with managing employees with disabilities; and (c) vested with authority for responding employees’ requests for reasonable workplace accommodations.

Table 4.1.1 Employer characteristics (n = 374)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
<i>1. Position (n = 370)</i>			
	Human Resources	117	(31.6)
	Supervisors	60	(16.2)
	Mid-level manager	59	(15.9)
	Senior-level manager	40	(10.8)
	CEO	14	(3.8)
	Other	80	(21.6)
<i>2. ADA-related training (n = 374)</i>			
	Yes	313	(83.7)
	No	61	(16.3)
<i>3. Knowledge about ADA (n = 374)</i>			
	Knowledgeable	362	(96.9)
	Not knowledgeable	12	(3.1)
<i>4. Tenure at current job (n = 372)</i>			
	Under 5 years	134	(36.0)
	More than 5 years	238	(64.0)
<i>5. Authority to Provide Accommodations (n = 373)</i>			
	Yes	288	(77.2)
	No	85	(22.8)
<i>6. Prior Experience Hiring/Supervising Employees with Disabilities (n = 373)</i>			
	Yes	289	(77.5)
	No	84	(22.5)
<i>7. Family member with a disability (n = 373)</i>			
	Yes	287	(76.9)
	No	86	(23.1)
<i>8. Has a disability (n = 369)</i>			
	Yes	108	(29.3)
	No	261	(70.7)
<i>9. Gender (n = 370)</i>			
	Male	157	(42.4)
	Female	213	(57.6)

Employer characteristics associated with decisions to approve or deny an employee's accommodation request. An almost equal number of employers responded to each of the three scenarios describing a hypothetical employee with a disability: A (coronary heart disease: n=127, 34.0%); B (macular degeneration: n=139, 37.2%); and C

(severe depression: n=108, 28.9%). Overall, participants were three times more likely to approve versus deny an accommodation request from hypothetical employee with a disability (n = 273, 75.2%; versus n = 90, 24.8%). However, participants’ approval rates did not differ across the three scenarios (coronary artery disease, n = 94, 75.2%; macular degeneration, n = 101, 74.8%; severe depression, n = 78, 75.0%). Their approval rates did vary significantly according to their organization role: *Direct Supervisors* were the most likely to approve, and *Human Resource Personnel* were the least likely to approve accommodation requests (n = 54, 93.1% versus n = 75, 65.8%, respectively).

Neither participants’ “*Knowledge about the ADA,*” nor their “*Authority to Provide Accommodations,*” were associated with their decision to approve or deny the accommodation request made by the hypothetical employee in the scenarios (Tables 4.1.2.a and 4.1.2.b, respectively). Participants who reported “*Prior Experience Hiring or Supervising Employees with Disabilities*” were 2.1 times more likely to approve the hypothetical employee’s accommodation request compared to those reporting no prior experience (Table 4.1.2.c). Male participants were 3.9 times more likely to approve the employee’s accommodation request compared to female participants (Table 4.1.2.d).

Table 4.1.2.a. Employer accommodation decision by Knowledge about the ADA

Decision	ADA knowledge (n = 351)		χ^2 (df)	p
	High knowledge (n, %)	Some knowledge (n, %)		
Approve	151 (57.6)	111 (42.4)	3.59(1)	0.06
Deny	41(46.1)	48 (53.9)		

Note: Employers responding “Unsure” were deleted from analysis (Approve: n = 11; Deny: n = 1)

Table 4.1.2.b. Employer accommodation decision by Authority to Provide Accommodations

Authority (n = 345)				
Decision	Yes (n, %)	No (n, %)	χ^2 (df)	p
Approve	210 (79.8)	53 (20.5)	0.38	.54
Deny	68 (82.9)	14 (17.1)		

Note: Employers responding “Unsure” were deleted from analysis (Approve: n = 10; Deny: n = 7)

Table 4.1.2.c Employer accommodation decision by Prior Experience Hiring or Supervising Employees with Disabilities

Prior experience (n = 362)				
Decision	Yes (n, %)	No (n, %)	χ^2 (df)	p
Approve	222 (81.3)	51 (18.7)	7.53(1)	.006
Deny	60 (67.4)	29 (32.6)		

Table 4.1.2.d Employer accommodation decision by Gender

Gender (n = 360)				
Decision	Men (n, %)	Women (n, %)	χ^2 (df)	p
Approve	136 (50.0)	136 (50.0)	23.71 (1)	<.0001
Deny	18 (20.4)	70 (79.6)		

Research Question 2: Which of four employers’ organizational characteristics are associated with approving or denying requests from employees with disabilities: (a) “Centralized Budget for Providing Accommodations;” (b) “Designated Individual or Office Handles Workplace Accommodations;” (c) “Designated Individual or Office Handles All Workplace Accommodations;” and (d) “Clear Accommodation Policies?”

Employers’ organizational characteristics. Table 4.2 profiles characteristics of the employer participants’ organizations: they reported affiliations in sub-equal proportions across organizational size: small (≤ 50 employees; 25.1%); medium (≥ 51 and ≤ 500 employees; 41.2%); and large (> 500 employees; 33.7%). According to geographic sphere of operations, slightly more than one-third reported working for an organization operating locally (36.3%) or regionally (35.2%). A smaller proportion worked for multi-state (16.7%), or multi-national organizations (11.8%). Participants represented a wide variety of organizational types (e.g., public, private, profit, non-profit); and economic sectors (e.g., government, education, health care).

Approximately two-fifths of participants indicated their organizations dedicated a centralized budget for providing accommodations (43.4%) and roughly an equal proportion indicated no dedicated budget (39.1%; note that 17.5% reported being unsure). A large majority of organizations designated an individual or an office to handle workplace accommodations (77.4%; note that 6.7% reported being unsure); a slight majority of organizations designated an individual or an office to handle all workplace accommodations (57.5%; note that 13.3% reported being unsure). Three-quarters of employers reported their organizations follow clear accommodation policies (75.3%; note that 7.8% reported being unsure). Overall, this sample of employer participants represented a wide variety of organizational sizes; types; spheres of operation; and economic sectors. Most of their organizations adhered to clear accommodation policies, which were enforced by an individual or an office dedicated to handling workplace

accommodations. About half of the organizations set up centralized budget for providing accommodations.

Table 4.2.1 Organizational characteristics (n = 374)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
<i>1. Size (n = 374)</i>			
	Small (1-50 employees)	94	(25.1)
	Medium (51-500 Employees)	154	(41.2)
	Large (Over 500 employees)	126	(33.7)
<i>2. Sphere of operation (n = 372)</i>			
	Local	135	(36.3)
	Regional	131	(35.2)
	Multi-state	62	(16.7)
	Multinational	44	(11.8)
<i>3. Type [Top 8 by frequency] (n = 372)</i>			
	Public	51	(13.7)
	Private	29	(7.8)
	For profit	9	(2.4)
	Nonprofit	42	(11.3)
	Corporation	28	(7.5)
	Sole proprietor	19	(5.1)
	Partnership	5	(1.3)
	Federal/state government	64	(17.2)
<i>4. Economic sector [Top 5 sectors by frequency] (n = 372)</i>			
	Government/Public Admin	91	(24.5)
	Education	49	(13.2)
	Professional services	28	(7.5)
	Financial / business services	25	(6.7)
	Healthcare	24	(6.4)
<i>5. Centralized Budget for Providing Accommodations (n = 371)</i>			
	Yes	161	(43.4)
	No	145	(39.1)
	Unsure	65	(17.5)
<i>6. Designated Individual/Office Handles Workplace Accommodations (n = 372)</i>			
	Yes	288	(77.4)
	No	59	(15.9)
	Unsure	25	(6.7)
<i>7. Designated Individual/Office Handles All Accommodations (n = 367)</i>			
	Yes	211	(57.5)
	No	107	(29.2)
	Unsure	49	(13.3)
<i>8. Clear Accommodation Policies (n = 373)</i>			
	Yes	281	(75.3)
	No	63	(16.9)
	Unsure	29	(7.8)

Organizational characteristics associated with employers’ decisions to approve or deny an employee’s accommodation request.

Organizations reported by participants that dedicated a “*Centralized Budget for Providing Accommodations*” were 4.8 times more likely to provide accommodations compared to those with none (Table 4.2.2.a; 88.0% versus 60.4%, $\chi^2 (1) = 29.99$, $p < .0001$). However, neither “*Designated Individual or Office Handles Workplace Accommodations;*” nor “*Designated Individual or Office Handles All Workplace Accommodations;*” nor “*Clear Accommodations Policies;*” was associated with participants’ decisions to approve or deny the accommodation request made by the hypothetical employee in the scenarios (Tables 4.2.2.b, 4.2.2.c, and 4.2.2.d, respectively).

Table 4.2.2.a. *Employer accommodation decision by “Centralized Budget for Providing Accommodations”*

Centralized Budget (n = 297)				
Decision	Yes (n, %)	No (n, %)	$\chi^2 (df)$	<i>p</i>
Approve	139 (62.3)	84 (37.7)	29.99	<.0001
Deny	19 (25.7)	55 (74.3)		

Note: Employers responding “Unsure” were deleted from analysis (Approve: n = 47; Deny: n = 16)

Table 4.2.2.b. Employer accommodation decision by “Designated Individual or Office Handles Workplace Accommodations”

<i>Individual/Office Handles Accommodations (n = 339)</i>				
Decision	Yes (n, %)	No (n, %)	χ^2 (df)	p
Approve	213 (83.2)	43 (16.8)	0.06	0.81
Deny	70 (84.3)	13 (15.7)		

Note: Employers responding “Unsure” were deleted from analysis (Approve: n = 16; Deny: n = 7)

Table 4.2.2.c Employer accommodation decision by “Designated Individual or Office Handles All Workplace Accommodations”

<i>Individual/Office Handles <u>All</u> Accommodations (n = 311)</i>				
Decision	Yes (n, %)	No (n, %)	χ^2 (df)	p
Approve	162 (69.8)	70 (30.2)	3.58	0.058
Deny	46 (58.2)	33 (41.8)		

Note: Employers responding “Unsure” were deleted from analysis (Approve: n = 37; Deny: n = 9)

Table 4.2.2.d Employer accommodation decision by “Clear Accommodations Policies”

Clear Policies (n = 335)				
Decision	Yes (n, %)	No (n, %)	χ^2 (df)	p
Approve	207 (82.5)	44 (17.5)	0.63	0.43
Deny	66 (78.6)	18 (21.4)		

Note: Employers responding “Unsure” were deleted from analysis (Approve: n = 22; Deny: n = 5)

Research Question 3: What criteria do employers use in making decisions to approve or deny an accommodation request from an employee with a disability?

Psychometric properties of the Employer Reasonable Accommodation

Factor Survey (E-RAFS). Table 4.3.1 summarizes the item-level descriptive statistics for the E-RAFS Survey; Table 4.3.2 reports the 19-item inter-correlation matrix. Item means ranged from a low of 2.67 (SD = 1.28) for “*My relationship with this employee*” (Item #8) to a high of 4.37 (SD = 0.92) for “*My belief that employees with disabilities deserve support to do their jobs well*” (Item #3). Response distributions for approximately half of the items show ceiling effects with the upper end of the first standard deviation exceeding the highest response option of “5.” Such restriction in range of participants’ responses may complicate obtaining, through a principal axis factor analysis, an interpretable simple factor structure.

Principal Axis Factor Analysis. The 19 E-RAFS item responses obtained from the 373 employer participants, transformed into an inter-correlation matrix, were subjected to a principal-axis factor analysis, specifying 2-, 3-, 4-, and 5-factor solutions with an oblique (promax) rotation. Kaiser’s measures of sampling adequacy for each of the 19 items ranged from 0.64 to 0.86, with an average of 0.78, indicating that the 19 items likely constituted an adequate amount of factor content coverage necessary for obtaining an interpretable common factor solution. Examining (a) the scree plot of eigenvalues and the plot of variance explained by 1- to 19-factor solutions of the reduced correlation matrix (Fig. 4.3.1); and (b) distributions item-factor loadings for both

orthogonally- and obliquely-rotated two-, three-, four-, and five-factor solutions, revealed that the two-factor solution provided the simplest structure for interpretation.

Tables 4.3.3 and 4.3.4 present the promax-rotated factor structure, and factor pattern, matrices, respectively. Ten items load on the first factor; 9 items load on the second. Only three of 19 items showed modest cross-loading (#5 on Factor 1; #10 and #17 on Factor 2). Residual correlations (off-diagonal elements) for the two-factor solution are relatively low, ranging from 0.04 to 0.11, with an average of 0.07. The magnitude of item-factor loadings differs little between the factor structure and pattern matrices. The two factors are modestly correlated ($r = 0.21$). The common variance explained by the two promax-rotated factors are 3.25 and 2.96, respectively, but do not sum up to the total communality estimate of 5.87 (Table 4.3.3), because variance explained by obliquely-rotated factors cannot be partitioned between each of the two factors. Instead, to compute variance explained by each of the two common factors, one ignores the contribution from the other factor. Internal consistency reliabilities for both Factors 1 and 2 were moderately high (.79 and .78, respectively; Table 4.3.3).

Table 4.3.1 Means, standard deviations, and ranges of the E-RAFS items (n = 374)

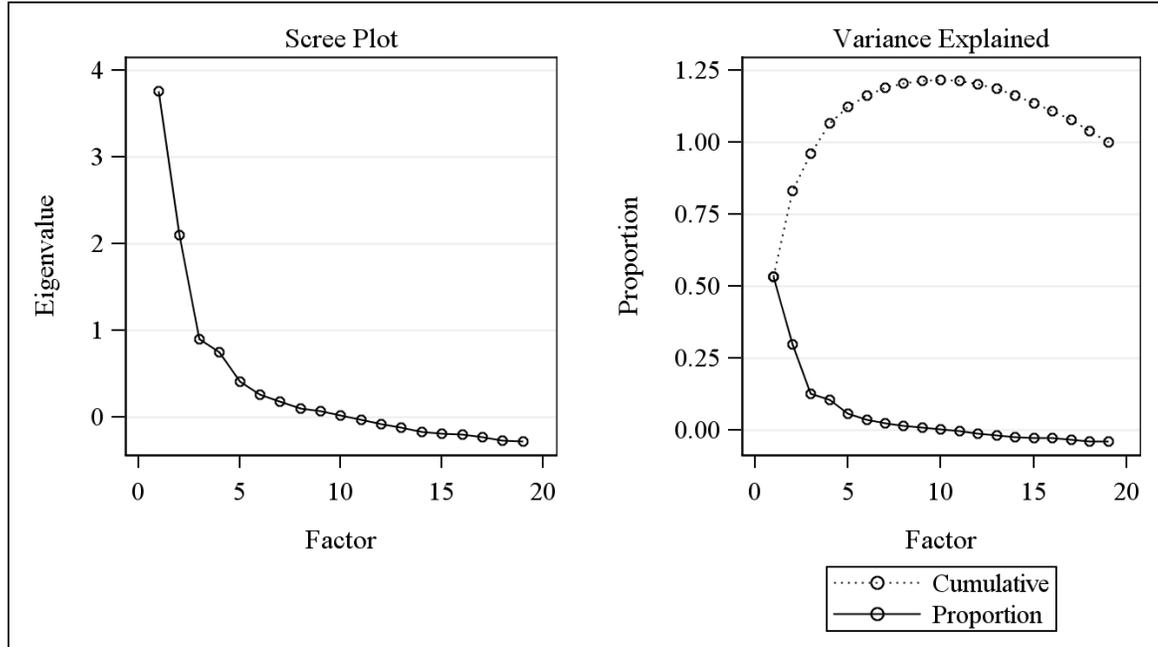
Item	n	M (SD)	Range
01 My belief that this employee can work as effectively as other employees	374	3.82 (1.02)	1-5
02 The feasibility of implementing the accommodation(s) requested	374	4.16 (1.03)	1-5
03 My belief that employees with disabilities deserve support to do their jobs well	374	4.37 (0.92)	1-5
04 The effectiveness of the RA(s) in improving employee productivity	374	4.29 (0.90)	1-5
05 The duration of the RA(s) (whether it is a one-time or an ongoing RA)	374	3.75 (1.16)	1-5
06 By law, we are obligated to provide RA(s) to qualified employees with disabilities	374	4.22 (1.07)	1-5
07 The way this employee requested for the accommodation(s)	374	3.16 (1.21)	1-5
08 My relationship with this employee	374	2.67 (1.28)	1-5
09 My prior experience working with employees with disabilities	374	3.32 (1.26)	1-5
10 The impact of the requested accommodation(s) on coworkers	374	3.46 (1.16)	1-5
11 The timing of the employee's disclosure about disability	374	2.93 (1.27)	1-5
12 A clear link between the disability, the job and the requested RA(s)	374	4.23 (0.99)	1-5
13 The direct or indirect financial cost(s) of the RA(s) to the organization	374	3.41 (1.20)	1-5
14 Financial resources available	374	3.48 (1.20)	1-5
15 The involvement of this employee in the accommodation request process	374	4.02 (1.05)	1-5
16 Availability of documentation of needed accommodation(s)	374	4.25 (0.92)	1-5
17 The type and nature of the employee's disability(ies)	374	3.60 (1.30)	1-5
18 My knowledge of the ADA and employee rights	374	4.20 (0.90)	1-5
19 The ease of implementing the requested accommodation(s)	374	3.56 (1.07)	1-5

Table 4.3.2 *E-RAFS items input correlation matrix for principal axis factor analysis (n = 373)*

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7	V8	V9	V10	V11	V12	V13	V14	V15	V16	V17	V18	V19
V1	1.00																		
V2	.32	1.00																	
V3	.37	.24	1.00																
V4	.19	.21	.48	1.00															
V5	.00	.13	.10	.30	1.00														
V6	.17	.20	.14	.27	.37	1.00													
V7	.11	.00	.04	.04	.22	.22	1.00												
V8	-.02	.11	-.05	-.16	.04	-.13	.42	1.00											
V9	.14	.05	.11	.08	.06	-.00	.29	.45	1.00										
V10	.15	.22	.16	.19	.24	.05	.19	.23	.29	1.00									
V11	-.04	-.02	-.03	-.00	.12	-.15	.40	.45	.29	.34	1.00								
V12	.12	.22	.20	.38	.28	.32	.05	-.16	-.05	.09	.01	1.00							
V13	.05	.21	.03	.04	.20	.15	.27	.15	.11	.25	.20	.14	1.00						
V14	.19	.29	.08	.15	.25	.20	.28	.20	.21	.24	.21	.12	.72	1.00					
V15	.21	.29	.24	.30	.23	.41	.19	.04	.20	.15	-.02	.26	.21	.33	1.00				
V16	.11	.23	.19	.34	.33	.41	.19	-.05	.02	.16	.02	.28	.05	.14	.46	1.00			
V17	.09	.10	.06	.06	.22	.08	.27	.25	.23	.20	.34	.09	.17	.20	.14	.30	1.00		
V18	.26	.32	.29	.34	.22	.39	.12	-.11	.15	.11	.02	.35	.09	.12	.33	.34	.21	1.00	
V19	.19	.22	.23	.13	.17	.06	.29	.29	.23	.27	.31	.06	.38	.32	.17	.11	.31	.22	1.00

Notes: V1-V19 in the table are used to represent E-RAFS1-E-RAFS19

Figure 4.3.1: Scree plot and variance explained plot



Tables 4.3.3 and 4.3.4 present the promax-rotated factor structure, and factor pattern, matrices, respectively. Ten items load on the first factor; 9 items load on the second. Only three of 19 items showed modest cross-loading (#5 on Factor 1; #10 and #17 on Factor 2). Residual correlations (off-diagonal elements) for the two-factor solution are relatively low, ranging from 0.04 to 0.11, with an average of 0.07. The magnitude of item-factor loadings differs little between the factor structure and pattern matrices. The two factors were modestly correlated ($r = 0.21$). The common variance explained by the two promax-rotated factors are 3.25 and 2.96, respectively, but do not sum up to the total communality estimate of 5.87 (Table 4.3.3), because variance explained by obliquely-rotated factors cannot be partitioned between the two each factors. Rather, to compute variance explained by each of the two common factors, one ignores the contribution from the other factor. Internal consistency reliabilities for Factor 1 and Factor 2 were moderately high (.79 and .78, respectively).

Table 4.3.3 *E-RAFS Factor structure matrix: item loadings, item communalities, variance accounted for, and internal consistency (alpha) estimates for each factor.*

E-RAFS Item	h²	Factor	
		1	2
RAFS04: Accommodations Effectiveness	.15	.60	.07
RAFS06: Legal Obligation	.23	.60	.07
RAFS18: ADA Knowledge	.23	.60	.14
RAFS16: Documentation	.37	.58	.16
RAFS15: Johns Involvement	.22	.58	.26
RAFS12: Accommodations-Disability Match	.36	.51	.04
RAFS03: Support for John	.33	.48	.09
RAFS02: Accommodations Feasibility	.47	.48	.16
RAFS05: Accommodations Duration	.25	.44	.27
RAFS01: Believe in John	.24	.38	.14
RAFS08: Relationship with John	.40	-.18	.61
RAFS11: Timing Disclosure	.27	-.06	.60
RAFS07: How Accommodations Requested	.34	.17	.57
RAFS14: Availability of Resources	.41	.36	.60
RAFS13: Accommodations Cost	.36	.26	.56
RAFS19: Accommodations Ease of Implementation	.34	.26	.54
RAFS09: Prior Accommodations Experience	.22	.08	.50
RAFS10: Accommodations Impact	.36	.24	.46
RAFS17: Johns Disability	.32	.21	.45
Variance explained by each factor ignoring other factor	5.87	3.25	2.96
M (SD) of participant scores for each factor		41.3 (5.8)	29.6 (6.6)
Internal consistency reliability (alpha)		.79	.78

Note: Factor labels: (1) = “Decision: Approving/Denying Accommodation Request;” (2) = “Implementation: Employer/Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources.” Bolded numbers represent dominant item loadings on the factor.

For purposes of this study, factor scores were treated as scale scores; that is, the total scores of participants’ responses to the items loading on each factor. The sample mean score (SD) for Factor 1 was quite high at 41.3 (5.8), given the maximum possible score for the 10-item scale is 50. An average item score of 4.1 represents a rating of a given criterion for making an accommodation decision of “somewhat important.” Compared to Factor 1, the sample mean score (SD) for Factor 2 was relatively lower at 29.6 (6.6), with a maximum possible score for this 9-item scale of 45. An average item

score of 3.0 represents a rating of a given criterion for making an accommodation decision of “neutral.”

Table 4.3.4 E-RAFS Factor pattern matrix

E-RAFS Item	h ²	Factor	
		1	2
RAFS04:Accommodations Effectiveness	.15	.62	-.06
RAFS06:Legal Obligation	.23	.61	-.06
RAFS18:ADA Knowledge	.23	.59	.02
RAFS16:Documentation	.37	.57	.04
RAFS15:Johns Involvement	.22	.56	.14
RAFS12:Accommodations-Disability Match	.36	.53	-.07
RAFS03:Support for John	.33	.48	-.01
RAFS02:Accommodations Feasibility	.47	.46	.06
RAFS05:Accommodations Duration	.25	.40	.18
RAFS01:Believe in John	.24	.36	.06
RAFS08:Relationship with John	.40	-.33	.68
RAFS11:Timing Disclosure	.27	-.19	.65
RAFS07:How Accommodations Requested	.34	.05	.56
RAFS14:Availability of Resources	.41	.25	.54
RAFS13:Accommodations Cost	.36	.15	.53
RAFS19:Accommod(s) Ease of Implement	.34	.15	.51
RAFS09:Prior Accommodations Experience	.22	-.02	.51
RAFS10:Accommodations Impact	.36	.15	.43
RAFS17:Johns Disability	.32	.12	.43

Note: Factor labels: (1) = “Decision: Approving/Denying Accommodation Request;” (2) = “Implementation: Employer/Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources.” Bolded numbers represent dominant item loadings on the factor.

Constructs inferred from factor content. Inspecting the distribution and magnitude of item loadings on the two factors, we named Factor 1, “Decision: Justifying Approving or Denying an Accommodation Request;” and Factor 2, “Implementation: Employer/Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources.” Items on Factor 1 reflect steps in the sequence of adjudication an accommodation request by an employee with a disability. First, under the ADA, the employer understands employee rights (Item

#18), and their obligations to provide reasonable workplace accommodations (Item #6). Second, the employer expresses beliefs that a specific employee works as effectively as other employees without disabilities (Item #1), while, at the same time, holding a general attitude that employees with disabilities with well-developed skills deserve every effort from employers to respond to accommodations with fair mindedness, and if approved, then to design and implement accommodations (Item #3).

Third, the employee submitting an accommodation request carefully develops a credible case (Item #15) that his/her disability impairs work performance can be mitigated with an accommodation (Item #12), and supports the case with adequate material evidence (Item #16, e.g., medical examinations, job task performance evaluations). Fourth, if the employer approves the request, then he/she considers the likelihood that an accommodation will effectively (Item #4) and feasibly (Item #2) lessens the impact of the impairments on, and/or restores capacity for, task performance over time (Item #5).

Items on Factor 2 reflect three closely related elements underlying effective implementation of accommodations. First, the employer possesses the necessary skill for implementing accommodations, while ensuring continuity in the organization's operations (Item #10). Second, the employer and employee form a partnership, based on their prior development of a good working relationship over time (Item #8), and the employer judges the employee as adept in proposing practical accommodation alternatives, as observed by the employer during the adjudication process, in the event that a particular accommodation proves not to be feasible or effective (Item #11). Third, given the severity of an employee's disability; the extent to which it impairs task

performance; and the potential complexity of the workplace modification (Item #17); the employer’s organization has to assess whether it possesses the needed financial resources (Item #14) to cover the cost (Item #13) of the agreed-upon accommodation.

E-RAFS Factor-derived mean scale scores by employer decision to approve or deny an accommodation request, and by accommodation option selected.

Participants who approved the accommodation request made by the hypothetical employee in the scenarios scored significantly lower on Factor 1 compared to those who denied the request ($M = 40.3, SD = 5.9, F(1) = 27.15, p <.0001$; Table 4.3.5), but no difference was found for Factor 2.

Table 4.3.5 *E-RAFS scale scores by employers’ decisions to approve/deny accommodations*

E-RAFS Scale	Decision	n	M (SD)	F(df)	p
1. Decision: Approving/Denying Accommodation Request				27.15	<.0001
	Approve	273	40.3 (5.9)		
	Deny	90	43.9 (4.5)		
2. Implementation: Employer/Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources				1.09	.30
	Approve	273	29.8 (6.6)		
	Deny	90	28.9 (6.9)		

Participants who denied the accommodation request pending more documentation of need scored significantly higher on Factor 1 compared to those who recommended the accommodations of Telework; Shift Change; and Time Off ($F(1) = 8.80, p <.0001$; Table 4.3.6), but no differences were found for Factor 2.

Table 4.3.6 E-RAFS scale scores by employers' decisions by accommodation option

E-RAFS Scale	Decision	n	M (SD)	F(df)	p
1. Decision: Approving/Denying Accommodation Request				8.80	<.0001
	Telework	14	39.1 (5.7)		
	Shift change	28	41.2 (6.3)		
	Time off	33	38.6 (6.5)		
	Purchase equip	9	34.6 (7.7)		
	None w/o more documentation	90	43.9 (4.5)		
	Other	189	40.8 (5.6)		
2. Implementation: Employer/Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources				1.43	.21
	Telework	14	30.5 (8.1)		
	Shift change	28	31.7 (5.4)		
	Time off	33	27.6 (9.1)		
	Purchase equip	9	30.0 (4.8)		
	None w/o more documentation	90	28.9 (6.9)		
	Other	189	29.8 (6.1)		

Research Question 4: Which of these criteria, from research question 3, do employers, subdivided by four personal characteristics (as listed in research question 1); and four organizational characteristics (as listed in research question 2), use in making decisions to approve or deny an accommodation request from an employee with a disability?

E-RAFS Factor-derived mean scale scores by employer characteristics.

Participants' scale scores on both Factors 1 and 2 neither differed according to their random selection of Scenarios A, B, and C (Table 4.4.1.a); nor to "*Knowledge about the ADA*" (Table 4.4.1.b). However, participants' scale scores on Factor 1 statistically and significantly differed according to their "*Authority to Provide Accommodations*" (participants responding, "yes," scored lower compared to those responding, "no"); to "*Prior Experience Hiring or Supervising Employees with Disabilities*" (participants

responding, “yes,” scored lower compared to those responding, “no”); and “Gender” (male participants scored lower compared to female participants) (Tables 4.4.1.c; 4.4.1.d; and 4.4.1.e, respectively). In contrast, participants’ scale scores on Factor 2 statistically and significantly differed according only according to their “*Authority to Provide Accommodations*” (participants responding, “yes,” scored higher compared to those responding, “no;” Table 4.4.1.c); and “Gender” (male participants scored higher compared to female participants; Table 4.4.1.e).

Table 4.4.1.a *E-RAFS scale scores by employer by selection of Scenario A, B, C*

E-RAFS Scale	Scenario	n	M (SD)	F(df)	p
1. Decision: Approving/Denying Accommodation Request				0.02	.98
	Scenario A ^a	127	41.3 (5.5)		
	Scenario B ^b	139	41.4 (6.0)		
	Scenario C ^c	108	41.3 (6.0)		
2. Implementation: Employer/Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources				1.98	.14
	Scenario A ^a	127	30.5 (6.2)		
	Scenario B ^b	139	29.0 (6.6)		
	Scenario C ^c	108	29.2 (7.1)		

Note. ^a n=127, 34%; ^b n=139, 37%; ^c n=108, 29%

Table 4.4.1.b *E-RAFS scale scores by employer “Knowledge about the ADA”*

E-RAFS Scale	Knowledge	n	M (SD)	F(df)	p
1. Decision: Approving/Denying Accommodation Request				2.72	.07
	High	197	41.0 (6.0)		
	Medium	165	41.9 (5.5)		
	Low	12	38.2 (5.5)		
2. Implementation: Employer/Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources				0.41	.66
	High	197	29.6 (6.6)		
	Medium	165	29.5 (6.7)		
	Low	12	31.3 (4.1)		

Table 4.4.1.c *E-RAFS scale scores by employer “Authority to Provide Accommodations”*

E-RAFS Scale	Authority	n	M (SD)	F(df)	p
1. Decision: Approving/Denying Accommodation Request				4.83	.029
	Yes	288	41.0 (5.8)		
	No	68	42.7 (5.7)		
2. Implementation: Employer/Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources				8.63	.004
	Yes	288	30.0 (6.2)		
	No	68	27.4 (7.7)		

Note: Employers responding “Unsure” were deleted from analysis ($n = 17$)

Table 4.4.1.d *E-RAFS scale scores by employer “Prior Experience Hiring or Supervising Employees with Disabilities”*

E-RAFS Scale	Prior experience	n	M (SD)	F(df)	p
1. Decision: Approving/Denying Accommodation Request				14.25	.0002
	Yes	289	40.7 (5.7)		
	No	84	43.4 (5.6)		
2. Implementation: Employer/Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources				0.68	.41
	Yes	289	29.7 (6.6)		
	No	84	29.1 (6.6)		

Table 4.4.1.e
E-RAFS scale scores by employer “Gender”

E-RAFS Scale	Gender	n	M (SD)	F(df)	p
1. Decision: Approving/Denying Accommodation Request				83.12	<.0001
	Men	157	38.4 (6.1)		
	Women	213	43.4 (4.6)		
2. Implementation: Employer/Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources				5.38	.021
	Men	157	30.5 (6.1)		
	Women	213	28.9 (6.9)		

E-RAFS Factor-derived mean scale scores by organizational characteristics.

Participants’ scale scores on both Factors 1 and 2 statistically and significantly differed according to “*Centralized Budget for Providing Accommodations*” (Factor 1: participants responding, “yes,” scored lower compared to those responding, “no;” and Factor 2: participants responding, “yes,” scored higher compared to those responding, “no;” Table 4.4.2.a); and “*Designated Individual or Office Handles All Workplace Accommodations*” In contrast, participants’ scale scores on Factors 1 and 2 neither differed according to “*Designated Individual or Office Handles Workplace Accommodations*” (Table 4.4.2.b); nor to “*Clear Accommodations Policies*” (Table 4.4.2.d).

Table 4.4.2.a *E-RAFS factor-derived scale scores by “Centralized Budget for Providing Accommodations”*

E-RAFS Scale	Centralized budget	n	M (SD)	F(df)	p
1. Decision: Approving/Denying Accommodation Request				50.15	<.0001
	Yes	161	38.8 (5.4)		
	No	145	43.2 (5.4)		
2. Implementation: Employer/Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources				7.37	.007
	Yes	161	30.4 (6.2)		
	No	145	28.4 (6.9)		

Note: Employers responding “Unsure” were deleted from analysis ($n = 65$)

Table 4.4.2.b *E-RAFS factor-derived scale scores by “Designated Individual or Office Handles Workplace Accommodations”*

E-RAFS Scale	Designated to specific office	n	M (SD)	F(df)	p
1. Decision: Approving/Denying Accommodation Request				0.85	.36
	Yes	288	41.2 (5.6)		
	No	59	41.9 (6.7)		
2. Implementation: Employer/Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources				0.19	.66
	Yes	288	29.6 (6.5)		
	No	59	29.2 (7.4)		

Note: Employers responding “Unsure” were deleted from analysis ($n = 25$)

Table 4.4.2.c *E-RAFS factor-derived scale scores by “Designated Individual or Office Handles All Workplace Accommodations”*

E-RAFS Scale	Designated one specific individual	n	M (SD)	F(df)	p
1. Decision: Approving/Denying Accommodation Request				13.64	.0003
	Yes	211	40.2 (5.6)		
	No	107	42.6 (5.4)		
2. Implementation: Employer/Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources				15.42	.0001
	Yes	211	30.4 (6.0)		
	No	107	27.5 (6.9)		

Note: Employers responding “Unsure” were deleted from analysis ($n = 49$)

Table 4.4.2.d *E-RAFS factor-derived scale scores by “Clear Accommodations Policies”*

E-RAFS Scale	Clear policies	n	M (SD)	F(df)	p
1. Decision: Approving/Denying Accommodation Request				0.55	.46
	Yes	281	41.4		
	No	63	40.8		
2. Implementation: Employer/Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources				0.43	.51
	Yes	281	29.4		
	No	63	30.0		

Note: Employers responding “Unsure” were deleted from analysis ($n = 29$)

Summary of findings

Overall, this sample of employer participants could be described as (a) highly knowledgeable about their obligations under the ADA; (b) highly experienced with managing employees with disabilities; and (c) vested with authority for responding employees’ requests for reasonable workplace accommodations. Overall, this sample of employer participants represented organizations varying considerably across multiple characteristics: sizes; types; spheres of operation; and economic sectors. Most of their organizations adhered to clear accommodation policies, which were enforced by an individual or an office dedicated to handling workplace accommodations. About half of the organizations set up centralized budget for providing accommodations.

Research Question #1: Employer participants with “*Prior Experience Hiring or Supervising Employees with Disabilities*” were 2.1 times more likely to approve accommodation requests compared to those without experience. *Men* were 3.9 times more likely to approve accommodation requests compared to *Women*. Neither

“*Knowledge about the ADA,*” nor “*Authority to Provide Accommodations,*” was associated with accommodation decisions.

Research Question #2: Employers’ organizations with a “*Centralized Budget for Providing Accommodations*” were 4.8 more likely to approve accommodation requests compared to those without such a budget. Neither “*Designated Individual or Office Handles Workplace Accommodations;*” nor “*Designated Individual or Office Handles All Workplace Accommodations;*” nor “*Clear Accommodation Policies;*” was associated with accommodation decisions.

Research Question #3: A principal axis factor analysis yielded an interpretable two-factor solution with simple structure. Taken together, the 10 items comprising Factor 1, “Decision: Justifying Approving or Denying an Accommodation Request,” contain elements that might characterize the first four of six elements of the six-stage heuristic model proposed in Chapter 2, which describes negotiation of reasonable accommodations by employers and employees with disabilities (Figure 2.2; (Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, 2010) beginning with an employee with a disability identifying a need for an accommodation; continuing with his/her disclosing and requesting an accommodation; following by employer responding with an approval or denial of the request.

Taken together, the 9 items comprising Factor 2, “Implementation: Employer-Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources)” contain elements of last two of six elements of the proposed, involving employer and employee partnering to negotiate, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness an agreed-upon accommodation, as the employers’ organizations assesses whether it possesses sufficient personnel experienced

with accommodation implementation, and adequate financial means to cover costs of agreed-upon accommodations.

Employer participants who categorically approved an accommodation request submitted by the hypothetical employee depicted with an impairing medical condition in the three scenarios (coronary heart disease; macular degeneration; severe depression) scored lower on Factor 1 than those who denied the request. On Factor 2, scores of those who approved and denied the request did not differ. Employer participants who recommended the accommodation option of “*None without Additional Documentation*” scored higher on Factor 1 compared to those who recommended the options of “*Telework*,” “*Shift Change*,” and “*Time Off*.” Employer participants’ scores of Factor 2 did not differ across accommodation option.

Research Question #4: Across two sets of four employer and organizational characteristics, a mixed pattern emerged of statistically significant differences of scores on the two E-RAFS factor-derived scales. Regarding employer characteristics, participants with “*Authority to Provide Accommodations*” scored lower on Factor 1, and higher on Factor 2, compared to those without authority. Those with “*Prior Experience Hiring or Supervising Employees with Disabilities*” scored lower on Factor 1 compared to those without experience; they did not differ on Factor 2. *Men* scored lower on Factor 1, and higher on Factor 2, compared to *Women*. No differences in scores for Factors 1 and 2 were found for level of “*Knowledge about the ADA*.”

Regarding employer organizational characteristics, employer participants working for organizations with a “*Centralized Budget for Providing Accommodations*” scored lower on Factor 1, and higher on Factor 2, compared to those working for organizations

without such a budget. Employer participants working for organizations with a “*Designated Individual or Office Handles All Workplace Accommodations*” scored lower on Factor 1, and higher on Factor 2 than those working for organizations without such an arrangement. No differences in scores for Factors 1 and 2 were for found “*Designated Individual or Office Handles Workplace Accommodations;*” nor “*Clear Accommodation Policies.*”

Chapter V: Discussion of Findings

Statement of the Problem. For decades, Labor Force Participation Rates (LFPR), and retention rates, of highly skilled persons with disabilities in high-quality jobs have been unacceptably low. A long series of US Congressional legislative acts signed into law since the 1970s, especially the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, have not appreciably improved their labor market success. ADA Title 1 provisions require employers to protect the jobs of employees with disabilities, who possess all the requisite skills and prior work experience to fulfill a particular job's essential tasks and responsibilities, by approving and implementing "workplace reasonable accommodations," which modify workplace environments and job tasks to minimize the impact of employees' impairments on their job performance.

Since passage of the ADA, a large corpus of research studies report positive associations of reasonable workplace accommodations with superior job tenure, job performance, and job satisfaction (e.g., Balser, 2007; Balser & Harris, 2008; Lengnick-Hall, Gaunt, & Kulkarni, 2008; Schartz et al., 2006). At present, however, there is neither consensus about causes of their persisting poor labor market performance, nor consensus about what accounts for employers' low rates of approving their ADA-authorized reasonable workplace accommodation requests, necessary for improving their workforce success.

Little is known about how employers decide to approve or deny accommodation requests from employees with disabilities. Despite extensive investigation about decisions made by employers on accommodation requests from employees with disabilities, the field still does not fully understand reasons associated

with low approval rates for workplace accommodation requests. Most prior studies about employers' decisions to approve or deny accommodation requests by employees with disabilities have largely been confined to examining bivariate relationships between employers' attributes and their decisions. These attributes include, for example: (a) low expectations about performance capacities of employees with disabilities (e.g., Colella, Paetzold, & Belliveau, 2004); (b) reluctance to hire and accommodate individuals with psychiatric and other "non-apparent" disabilities (e.g., Phelan & Link, 2004; Scheid, 1998; 1999); (c) knowledge of their obligations to employees with disabilities under the ADA (e.g., Dong, Fabian, & MacDonald-Wilson, 2010; Gold, Oire, Fabian, & Wewiorski, 2012); (d) prior experience with managing and supervising employees with disabilities (e.g., MacDonald-Wilson, Fabian, & Dong, 2008; Roberts & Macan, 2006; Unger & Kregel, 2003); and (e) concerns with costs of accommodations (e.g., Hendricks, Batiste, Hirsh Schartz, & Blanck, 2005).

The purposes and findings of such studies have not appreciably improved our understanding about how employers respond to accommodation requests, especially the criteria they use in formulating defensible decisions. This knowledge gap takes on considerable urgency, because (a) the low LFPRs of individuals with disabilities; and (b) the extraordinary large number of complaints filed by employees with disabilities with the EEOC alleging workplace discrimination, pose an enormous socioeconomic burden on the general population. These EEOC complaints about discrimination based on disability represent the fourth highest category of charges, after complaints about workplace retaliation and discrimination associated with race and sex.

Purpose and methods of the study. This study builds upon the few prior studies probing into employers' decision-making approaches to adjudicating and negotiating accommodation requests from employees with disabilities. To a sample of employer participants, we presented brief scenarios in which a hypothetical employee, a middle-aged man who has worked as a highly-valued mid-level manager for many years at a specific company, becomes ill with a chronic medical condition, manifesting ambiguous and diffuse symptoms that ordinarily would go unrecognized by the average person. However, this employee's medical condition considerably impairs his work performance, and he requests an accommodation from his employer. These stimuli were carefully formulated to elicit, from the study's employer participants, the basis upon which they might approve or deny the request from this this hypothetical employee, according to 19 criteria comprising in a new scale developed in this study, the "Employer-Reasonable Accommodation Factor Survey (E-RAFS)."

Principal findings by research questions.

Research Question 1: Which of four employer characteristics are associated with approving or denying requests from employees with disabilities: (a) "Knowledge about the ADA;" (b) "Authority to Provide Accommodations;" (c) "Prior Experience Hiring or Supervising Employees with Disabilities;" and (d) "Gender?"

On the E-RAFS, employer participants with "*Prior Experience Hiring or Supervising Employees with Disabilities*" were 2.1 times more likely to approve the hypothetical employee's accommodation request compared to those without experience. By "*gender*," men were 3.9 times more likely to approve the request compared to

women. Neither participants' "*Knowledge about the ADA*," nor their "*Authority to Provide Accommodations*," was associated with their accommodation decisions.

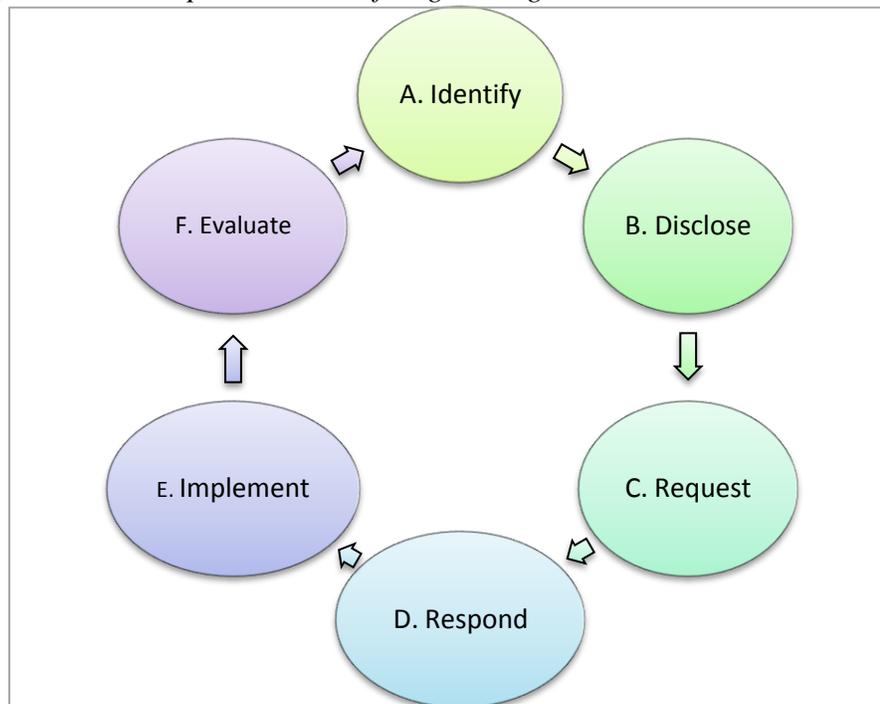
Research Question 2: Which of four employers' organizational characteristics are associated with approving or denying requests from employees with disabilities: (a) "Centralized Budget for Providing Accommodations;" (b) "Designated Individual or Office Handles Workplace Accommodations;" (c) "Designated Individual or Office Handles All Workplace Accommodations;" and (d) "Clear Accommodation Policies?"

Employers' organizations with a "*Centralized Budget for Providing Accommodations*" were 4.8 times more likely to approve the hypothetical employee's accommodation request compared to those without such a budget. Accommodation decisions were not associated with whether or not an organization had a "*Designated Individual or Office Handles Workplace Accommodations*;" nor "*Designated Individual or Office Handles All Workplace Accommodations*;" nor "*Clear Accommodation Policies*."

Research Question 3: What criteria do employers use in making decisions to approve or deny an accommodation request from an employee with a disability?

E-RAFS constructs and psychometric properties. A principal axis factor analysis of the 19-item E-RAFS scale yielded an interpretable two-factor solution. The ten items comprising Factor 1, "*Decision: Justifying Approving or Denying an Accommodation Request*," contain elements that seem to resemble the first four of six stages of the idealized model, proposed in Chapter 2, describing sequences of actions that employers and employees with disabilities take in negotiating reasonable accommodations (Fig. 5.1; Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, 2010).

Figure 5.1: *A Proposed Model of Negotiating Reasonable Accommodations*



Source: Fabian, MacDonald-Wilson, Dong, & Oire (2010).

The sequence begins with an employee with a disability (a) identifying a need for an accommodation; (b) continuing with his/her disclosing and requesting an accommodation from an employer; and followed by the employer responding with an approval or denial of the request.

The nine items comprising Factor 2, “**Implementation: Employer-Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources**,” contain elements seem to resemble the last two of the six stages of the proposed idealized model, involving (a) employer and employee partnering to negotiate, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness an agreed-upon accommodation; while the employers’ organization (b) assesses whether it possesses personnel sufficiently experienced with implementation; and adequate financial means to cover accommodation costs.

Comparing constructs: E-RAFS versus RAFS factor structures. Table 5.1 presents which *E-RAFS* items load on which *RAFS* factor-derived scales. Table 5.2 presents the reverse: which *RAFS* items load on which *E-RAFS* factor-derived scales. Most *E-RAFS* Factor 1 items (7 out of 10) load on to two of the eight *RAFS* factor-derived scales: *RAFS* Factor 1: “*Employer/Organizational Support*,” and *RAFS* Factor 7: “*Accommodation Characteristics*.” In contrast, *E-RAFS* Factor 2 items load relatively evenly on six of the eight *RAFS* factor-derived scales.

The distribution of the two sets of *E-RAFS* items defined by their factor loadings, across the eight factor-derived scales of the parent *RAFS* measure do not show any distinct convergence of constructs. For example, although *E-RAFS* Factor 1 items overlap, for the most part, with the *RAFS* Factor 1 (Table 5.2), there is no other discernible concentration of *E-RAFS* Factor 1 and 2 items across the other *RAFS* scales, especially *RAFS* Factor 7, with three *E-RAFS* Factor 1 items and two Factor 2 items. Further understanding of the content (i.e. construct) relationship between the *RAFS* and *E-RAFS* will require testing these measures on more heterogeneous samples of employers than those surveyed in the present study.

Table 5.1: RAFS Factors on which E-RAFS Items load

<u>RAFS</u> Factors on which <u>E-RAFS</u> Items load [see Table 5.2]	E-RAFS		RAFS
	Loadings		RAFS
	E1	E2	RAFS
<u>RAFS</u> Factor 01: “Employer/Organizational Support”			
E-RAFS18: ADA Knowledge [RAFS 1.2]	.60	.14	.76
E-RAFS06: Legal Obligation [RAFS 1.3]	.60	.07	.76
E-RAFS01: Employee works as well as other employees [RAFS 1.8]	.48	.09	.59
E-RAFS03: Believe in John [RAFS 1.5]	.38	.14	.67
E-RAFS09: Prior Accommodations Experience [RAFS 1.1]	.08	.50	.46
<u>RAFS</u> Factor 02: “Employee Competence in Accommodation”			
E-RAFS15: Employee involved in accommodation negotiation [RAFS 2.1]	.58	.26	.73
E-RAFS07: How Accommodations Requested [RAFS 2.3]	.17	.57	.66
<u>RAFS</u> Factor 03: “Employee Demographic Characteristics” No E-RAFS items			
<u>RAFS</u> Factor 04: “Workplace Impact”			
E-RAFS05: Accommodations Duration [RAFS 4.4]	.44	.27	.46
E-RAFS08: Relationship with John [RAFS 4.7]	-.18	.61	.33
E-RAFS10: Accommodations Impact on coworkers [RAFS 4.2]	.24	.46	.75
<u>RAFS</u> Factor 05: “Workplace Structure/Resources”			
E-RAFS02: Accommodations Feasibility [RAFS 5.6]	.48	.16	.35
E-RAFS14: Availability of Resources [RAFS 5.2]	.36	.60	.71
E-RAFS13: Accommodations Cost [RAFS 5.5]	.26	.56	.52
<u>RAFS</u> Factor 06: “Employee Work Record” No E-RAFS items			
<u>RAFS</u> Factor 07: “Accommodation Characteristics”			
E-RAFS04: Accommodations Effectiveness [RAFS 7.1]	.60	.07	.64
E-RAFS16: Documentation [RAFS 7.6]	.58	.16	.36
E-RAFS12: Accommodations-Disability Match [RAFS 7.3]	.51	.04	.59
E-RAFS11: Timing Disclosure [RAFS 7.5]	-.06	.60	.41
E-RAFS19: Accommodations Ease of Implementation [RAFS 7.4]	.26	.54	.47
<u>RAFS</u> Factor 08: “Nature of Disability”			
E-RAFS17 Type & nature of employee’s disability(ies) [RAFS 8.2]	.21	.45	.81

Note:

RAFS = Reasonable Accommodation Factor Survey (Dong, MacDonald-Wilson, & Fabian, 2010)

E-RAFS = Employer-Reasonable Accommodation Factor Survey

E-RAFS Factor labels

E1 = “Decision: Approving/Denying Accommodation Request”

E2 = “Implementation: Employer/Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources.”

Bolded numbers represent dominant item loadings on the factor.

Table 5.2*RAFS item-factor assignments & loadings compared to E-RAFS item-factor assignment*

<u>RAFS</u> Factors on which <u>E-RAFS</u> Items load [see Table 5.1]	E-RAFS	RAFS
	Loading	
<u>RAFS</u> Factor 01: “Employer/Organizational Support”		
Employer’s support for requesting accommodations		.78
Employer’s understanding of disabilities and ADA eligibility	F1: E-RAFS18	.76
Organizational policies concerning ADA and workplace accommodations		.76
Supervisor’s knowledge of accommodation procedures in the organization	F1: E-RAFS06	.73
Supportiveness of the employee’s direct supervisor	F1: E-RAFS03	.67
Role of individual who handling request (e.g., direct supervisor)		.66
Extent to which the supervisor is involved in the accommodation process		.60
Employer’s attitudes toward employees with disabilities	F1: E-RAFS01	.59
Communication between the employee and employer		.59
Employer’s knowledge of technology and other means of accommodations	F2: E-RAFS09	.46
<u>RAFS</u> Factor 02: “Employee Competence in Accommodation”		
Employee’s capacity to address barriers when seeking accommodations	F1: E-RAFS05	.73
Employee’s creativity in identifying accommodations		.71
Employee’s communication skills in requesting accommodations	F2: E-RAFS07	.66
Employee’s perception of benefits & risks with requesting accommodations		.64
Employee’s knowledge & awareness of & ADA & accommodations		.60
Employee’s knowledge of RA procedures in the organization		.57
Employee’s experience with stigma or discrimination		.52
<u>RAFS</u> Factor 03: “Employee Demographic Characteristics”		
Employee’s race		.90
Employee’s gender		.89
Sexual orientation of the employee		.86
Employee’s age		.72
<u>RAFS</u> Factor 04: “Workplace Impact”		
Perceived fairness of the accommodation by coworkers		.78
Coworkers’ reactions to accommodations provided	F2: E-RAFS10	.75
Supportiveness of coworkers with regard to the request		.69
Duration of the accommodation	F1: E-RAFS05	.46
Scope and intensity of the accommodation		.39
Employer’s perceptions of the cause of disabilities/illness		.37
Relationships between the employee making the request and the supervisor	F2: E-RAFS08	.33
Type of accommodations requested		.31
Whether a job coach/service provider is available		.29

Table continues

Table 5.2 continued

<u>RAFS</u> Factor 05: “Workplace Structure/Resources”		
Physical size of the workplace where the employee is located		.74
Overall resources of the organization (e.g., size, profitability)	<u>F2</u>: E-RAFS14	.71
Size of business in terms of number of employees		.70
Type of business		.64
Cost of the accommodation requested	<u>F2</u>: E-RAFS13	.52
Structural modifications necessary to provide accommodations	<u>F1</u>: E-RAFS02	.35
<u>RAFS</u> Factor 06: “Employee Work Record”		
Occupational classification of the employee’s job		.68
Employee’s educational level		.61
Whether the employee’s position is temporary or permanent		.60
Employee’s job level (managerial/entry level) in the workplace		.58
Phase of the employment process when seeking accommodations		.52
Employee’s job tenure (years of employment) in the organization		.35
Employee’s productivity/performance		.26
<u>RAFS</u> Factor 07: “Accommodation Characteristics”		
Benefits of providing accommodations	<u>F1</u>: E-RAFS04	.64
Urgency of the accommodation request		.63
The extent to which the accommodations are matched to job requirements	<u>F1</u>: E-RAFS02	.59
Ease of use of the accommodations	<u>F2</u>: E-RAFS19	.47
Timing of the request to the employer	<u>F2</u>: E-RAFS11	.41
Formality of the accommodation process/procedure in the organization	<u>F1</u>: E-RAFS16	.36
<u>RAFS</u> Factor 08: “Nature of Disability”		
Severity of the employee’s disability and resulting functional limitations		.82
Employee’s type of disability	<u>F2</u>: E-RAFS17	.81
Visibility of the disability		.48

Note:

RAFS = Reasonable Accommodation Factor Survey (Dong, MacDonald-Wilson, & Fabian, 2010)

E-RAFS = Employer- Reasonable Accommodation Factor Survey

E-RAFS Factor labels

E1 = “Decision: Approving/Denying Accommodation Request”

E2 = “Implementation: Employer/Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources.”

E-RAFS factor-derived mean scale scores by employer decision to approve the hypothetical employee’s request for an accommodation. Employer participants who categorically approved an accommodation request submitted by the hypothetical employee depicted with an impairing medical condition in the three scenarios (coronary heart disease; macular degeneration; severe depression) scored lower on **Factor 1** than those who denied the request. On **Factor 2**, scores of those who approved and denied the request did not differ. Employer participants who recommended the accommodation option of, “*None without Additional Documentation,*” scored higher on Factor 1 compared to those who recommended the options of “*Telework;*” “*Shift Change;*” and “*Time Off.*” Employer participants’ mean scores on Factor 2 did not differ by accommodation option.

This is a counter-intuitive finding. One would expect that employer participants, who approved the hypothetical employee’s accommodation request, would set high evidentiary standards for employees with disabilities, and therefore score higher on Factor 1, compared to those who denied requests. On the other hand, those employer participants, who denied the hypothetical employee’s accommodation request, may be setting unrealistically high evidentiary standards, all other things being equal. Perhaps, excessively high standards of proof set by employers in the field might account for the large number of complaints filed with the EEOC by employees with disabilities, who have had their accommodation requests denied.

Research Question 4: Which of these criteria, from research question 3, do employers, subdivided by four personal characteristics (as listed in research question 1); and four organizational characteristics (as listed in research question 2), use in making decisions to approve or deny an accommodation request from an employee with a disability?

E-RAFS factor-derived mean scale scores by employer and organization

characteristics. Table 5.3 summarizes the mixed pattern of statistically significant differences in E-RAFS factor-derived mean scale score differences across four employer, and four organizational, characteristics. Regarding employer characteristics, participants with “*Authority to Provide Accommodations*” scored lower on Factor 1, and higher on Factor 2, compared to those without authority. Those with “*Prior Experience Hiring or Supervising Employees with Disabilities*” scored lower on Factor 1 compared to those without experience; they did not differ on Factor 2. By “*Gender*,” men scored lower on Factor 1, and higher on Factor 2, compared to women. No differences in mean scores for Factors 1 and 2 were found for level of “*Knowledge about the ADA*.”

Regarding organizational characteristics, employer participants working for organizations with a “*Centralized Budget for Providing Accommodations*” scored lower on Factor 1, and higher on Factor 2, compared to those working for organizations without such a budget. Employer participants working for organizations with a “*Designated Individual or Office [that] Handles All Workplace Accommodations*” scored lower on Factor 1, and higher on Factor 2 than those working for organizations without such an arrangement. No differences in mean scores for Factors 1 and 2 were found for “*Designated Individual or Office Handles Workplace Accommodations*,” nor “*Clear Accommodation Policies*.”

Table 5.3: E-RAFS factor-derived scale score differences by employer and organizational characteristics

Characteristic	Scale Scores		Characteristic	Scale Scores	
	F1	F2		F1	F2
4.4.1.c. Authority	X	X	4.4.2.a. Budget	X	X
4.4.1.e. Gender	X	X	4.4.2.c. Office: All Requests	X	X
4.4.1.d. Prior Experience	X	0	4.4.2.b. Office: General	0	0
4.4.1.b. Knowledge	0	0	4.4.2.d. Policies	0	0

Note:

E-RAFS Factor labels

F1 = “Decision: Approving/Denying Accommodation Request”

F2 = “Implementation: Employer/Employee Partnership and Organizational Resources”

Y/N = Yes/No

M/F = Male/Female

X = statistically significant mean score difference on E-RAFS factor-derived F1, F2 scales by characteristic

0 = no mean score difference on E-RAFS factor-derived F1, F2 scales by characteristic

In this study, taking the responses of the entire sample of employer participants together, they approved the reasonable workplace accommodation request of a hypothetical employee with a disability by a factor of three-to-one. Differentiating the employer participants by the two sets of characteristics (personal and organizational), it seems that a distinct subset of them defined by their “*Authority to Provide Accommodations*” (Yes); their “*Gender*” (Men); who work for organizations dedicating a “*Centralized Budget for Providing Accommodations*” (Yes), administered by a “*Designated Individual or Office [that] Handles All Workplace Accommodations*” (Yes); were the most likely to approve the accommodation request.

However, this subset of employers most likely to approve the request scored lower on a factor-derived scale that seems to tap the importance employers place on

meeting high evidentiary and practical standards for approving accommodation requests, and then implementing the accommodation. The few prior studies probing into employers' decision-making approaches toward adjudicating and negotiating accommodation requests from employees with disabilities makes it difficult to determine whether our findings are consistent across studies conducted in different contexts.

Study limitations

First, the sample of employers were homogeneous with respect to their experience with handling employee accommodation requests, because they constituted a non-probability (convenience) sample, who were recruited through organizations engaged in disability advocacy for persons with disabilities. Second, and relatedly, homogeneity in characteristics may account for distributions of responses to the E-RAFS items showing ceiling effects, with the upper end of the first standard deviation exceeding the highest response option of "5." Such restriction in range of participants' responses may complicate obtaining, through a principal axis factor analysis, an interpretable simple factor structure. Third, in constructing the E-RAFS survey from the parent RAFS survey, items written about employers whose mean scores fell below "3" were not included in the E-RAFS, which may also constrain response variability. Fourth, the construct validity of employer and organizational characteristics as predictors of decisions made to approve or deny accommodation requests has not been estimated.

Next steps for exploring employer responses to reasonable accommodation requests.

Understanding criteria by which employers respond to, and decide upon approving, an accommodation requests will aid employees with disabilities in

formulating arguments for accommodation that employers will find persuasive. However, the field needs to investigate decision making using multi-method, multi-trait study designs with more heterogeneous samples of employers. Convenience samples of employers with histories of advocacy on behalf of persons with disabilities will not deepen our understanding the complex sequencing of actions taken by employers and employees negotiating reasonable workplace accommodations as we proposed in our idealized six-stage model.

Appendices

Appendix A: IRB

Appendix A1: IRB Application and Approval for the Study

Principal Investigator/ Project Faculty Advisor <i>(NOT a student or fellow)</i>	Ellen Fabian	Email Address	efabian@umd.edu
		Telephone Number	301-405-2872

Co-Investigator	Kim MacDonald-Wilson	Email Address	kmacdona@umd.edu
		Telephone Number	301-405-0686

Student Investigator	Shengli Dong Spalatin Oire	Email Address	
		Telephone Number	301-405-9126

Project Title	Survey on Job Accommodations in the Workplace
----------------------	---

Department/ Unit Administering the Project	<i>Department of Counseling and Personnel Services</i>
---	--

Where to send Approval Documents	Dr. Ellen Fabian, 3214 Benjamin Building, CAPS, University of Maryland, College Park
---	---

Check if this is	Student master's thesis <input type="checkbox"/> OR Dissertation research project <input type="checkbox"/>
-------------------------	--

Funding Agency(s)	National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)
--------------------------	--

ORAA Proposal ID Number	
--------------------------------	--

Target Population: The study population will include (Check all that apply):

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> pregnant women | <input type="checkbox"/> neonates | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> individuals with mental disabilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> minors/children | <input type="checkbox"/> prisoners | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> individuals with physical disabilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> human fetuses | <input type="checkbox"/> students | |

Exempt (Optional): You may suggest this protocol meets the requirements for Exempt Review by checking the box below and listing the Exempt category(s) that may apply. Please refer to the Exempt Category document for additional information.

Exemption Category(s):

Rationale:

Date Signature of Principal Investigator [REQUIRED]

Date Signature of Co-Principal Investigator

Date Signature of Student Investigator

Date Signature of IRB Liaison/Department Chair [REQUIRED]

1. **Abstract:** The purpose of the research study is to examine and refine factors associated with provision of job accommodation in the workplace. Participants will be invited to participate in a 15-minute survey on factors associated with provision of job accommodation. The study will adhere to confidentiality standards at the University of Maryland, College Park.
2. **Subject Selection:** Participants in this study will include employers who are employing/employed PWDs. All participants should have the experience of handling reasonable job accommodations. In addition, they should be 18 years or older. Participants in this study will be recruited from the following entities: ten regional Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs), their affiliates, the State Business Leadership Networks, the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), and the local US Chambers of Commerce.

Approximately, 400 participants will be recruited for this study. The data collection will last approximately about 4 months.

3. **Procedure:** Participants in this study will be recruited through the following ways. First, the investigators will contact the directors of the regional III DBTAC (covering states of Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and Washington DC) and ask them to invite their constituents to participate in this study. In addition, the directors of regional III DBTAC will contact other regional DBTAC and ask their support for recruiting participants for this study. DBTAC staff will invite individuals who seek information and technical assistance to participate in this study. In addition, they will announce the study through their E-newsletters/ list-serves to recruit participants. A consent form (see Appendix A) and a recruiting email to potential participants (see Appendix B) and the reasonable accommodation survey (see Appendix C) will be posted in the E-newsletters and websites. Participants may choose to fill out and submit the surveys online. Should the participants prefer to complete a paper copy of the survey or other alternative forms (i.e. Braille), appropriate surveys, consent forms and self-addressed prepaid envelopes will be mailed to participants by investigators.

Second, the investigators will contact the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), the State Business Leadership Networks and the local US Chambers of Commerce, and ask them to invite their constituents to participate in this study.

Those who choose to participate and complete the surveys are eligible to enter a case study research fund lottery and win a \$25.00 gift card by providing their names and email/ mailing addresses. One of every five participants who have completed the survey will receive the card. Once raffle results come out, the gift codes will be mailed to those winners according to the contact information provided.

4. Risk and benefits: There is no known risk for participation in the research study. This research is not designed to assist subjects personally, but the result may help investigators/service providers/employers learn more about the factors affecting job accommodation. We hope that, in the future, persons with disabilities might benefit through improved services based upon the new understandings.
5. Confidentiality: Strict confidentiality will be maintained in this study. For those surveys collected online, the survey results will be stored in a professional and password-protected account of the Survey Gizmo, in which only the investigators have the access to the online data. The researchers are not going to utilize the Survey Gizmo features that are provided for research subject management. All identifying information will be retained and secured on campus. In addition, respondents (or anyone using the respondent's password) cannot access the results of their survey once the survey has been completed. Participants will be advised to close the browser once the online survey has been completed.

For those surveys collected in hard copies, the completed surveys will be placed in a locked file drawer in the investigators' office, to which only the investigators have the access to the files.

After being entered, the data will be stored in a password-protected database on the investigators' computer and encoded so it is not identifiable. The investigators will be the only individuals with access to the data. All the surveys will be destroyed after the data is entered into the database and analyzed. Participants only provide their contact information after completing the survey if they choose to participate in the raffle. The contact information will be recorded in a separate file to protect their identity. All contact information will be destroyed once the raffle results come out. Research results will be disseminated in collective manners. No individual identifying information will be disclosed.

6. Information and Consent Forms: Information regarding the nature of this investigation is included in the consent form that participants need to read before starting the survey (See

Appendix A). The consent form will have the following information that participants will read prior to participating in the study: the purpose of the study, the procedures for which to participate in the study, potential benefits for participating in the study, and the contact information of both the faculty advisor and student investigator. Confidentiality information and a statement pertaining to discontinuing participating in the study at any time without any penalty. There is no deceptive information for this study. Informed consent will be implied should participants fill out and submit the survey to investigators.

7. Conflict of Interests: Not Applicable
8. HIPPA Compliance: Not applicable
9. Research Outside of the United States: Not applicable
10. Research Involving Prisoners: Not applicable.

Appendix A2: IRB Approval for the Study



Initial Application Approval

To: Principal Investigator, Dr. Ellen Fabian, Counseling and Personnel Services
Co-Investigator, Dr. Kim MacDonald Wilson, Counseling and Personnel Services
Student, Spalatin Oire, Counseling and Personnel Services
Student, Shengli Dong, Counseling and Personnel Services

From: James M. Hagberg, IRB Co-Chair, University of Maryland College Park

Re: IRB Protocol: 11-0113 - Survey on Job Accommodations in the Workplace

Approval Date: March 09, 2011
Expiration Date: March 09, 2012
Application: Initial
Review Path: Expedited

The University of Maryland, College Park Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office approved your Initial IRB Application. This transaction was approved in accordance with the University's IRB policies and procedures and 45 CFR 46, the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects. Please reference the above-cited IRB Protocol number in any future communications with our office regarding this research.

Recruitment/Consent: For research requiring written informed consent, the IRB-approved and stamped informed consent document will be sent via mail. The IRB approval expiration date has been stamped on the informed consent document. Please note that research participants must sign a stamped version of the informed consent form and receive a copy.

Continuing Review: If you intend to continue to collect data from human subjects or to analyze private, identifiable data collected from human subjects, beyond the expiration date of this protocol, you must submit a Renewal Application to the IRB Office 45 days prior to the expiration date. If IRB Approval of your protocol expires, all human subject research activities including enrollment of new subjects, data collection and analysis of identifiable, private information must cease until the Renewal Application is approved. If work on the human subject portion of your project is complete and you wish to close the protocol, please submit a Closure Report to irb@umd.edu.

Modifications: Any changes to the approved protocol must be approved by the IRB before the change is implemented, except when a change is necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the subjects. If you would like to modify an approved protocol, please submit an Addendum request to the IRB Office.

Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks: You must promptly report any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others to the IRB Manager at 301-405-0678 or jsmith@umresearch.umd.edu

Additional Information: Please contact the IRB Office at 301-405-4212 if you have any IRB-related questions or concerns. Email: irb@umd.edu

The UMCP IRB is organized and operated according to guidelines of the United States Office for Human Research Protections and the United States Code of Federal Regulations and operates under Federal Wide Assurance No. FWA00005856.

1204 Marie Mount Hall
College Park, MD 20742-5125
TEL 301.405.4212
FAX 301.314.1475
irb@umd.edu
<http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB>

Appendix A3: IRB Closure Form

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK
Institutional Review Board
Closure Report Form

Protocol Number	11-0113		
Protocol Title	Survey on Job Accommodations in the Workplace		
Risk Classification <i>(check one)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Greater than Minimal Risk <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minimal Risk		
Principal Investigator	Ellen Fabian	Email Address	efabian@umd.edu
Address for Approval Letter	3214 Benjamin Building, University of Maryland, College Park, MD	Telephone Number	301-405-52872
Student/Co-Investigators	Kim MacDonald-Wilson Shengli Dong Spalatin Oire	Email Addresses	kmacdona@umd.edu Shenglidongchina@yahoo.com Spalatin.Oire@gmail.com
Telephone Number	301-405-0686		

Appendix A4: IRB Closure Report
IRB Protocol #: 11-0113
Protocol Title: Survey on Job Accommodations in the Workplace

The closure report should include summary of the overall conduct of the study. The investigator must also provide proper assurance that there are no active participants or potential risks to prior participants. The Closure Report should identify the measures taken to prevent any potential risks to prior participants.

Please send this to irb@umd.edu

The “Survey on Job Accommodations in the Workplace” study has been completed. We have therefore made the decision to close this protocol based on IRB criteria:

- a) All data collection has been completed (no additional data will be sought for this project);
- b) All participant contact ceased with the data collection and there are no follow-ups; and,
- c) The only research activity remaining is data analysis and reporting of de-identified data.

This study utilized a survey to investigate the factors considered in making reasonable accommodation decisions. The “employer survey” was posted online through Survey Gizmo, a survey distribution and data collection engine. The link to the survey was sent out to employers in the U.S. through regional and national agencies such as the National Network of ADA Centers, Job Accommodation Network, and Local & State VR Offices. The purpose of the study was to explore the factors related to the provision of job accommodations. We were interested in the respondents’ perception of factors affecting the provision of job accommodations. Close to 600 responses were received.

All survey data had been downloaded from Survey Gizmo, and stored on a password-secured computer in a locked office in a locked office at the University of Maryland in Cole Field House (B-0100A). The data files are only accessible to the research team. No personally identifiable information was collected as part of the research analysis.

Data analysis is ongoing and it is expected to be complete soon, with publication of the results. There is no analysis or reporting of any information that would link the results/findings to any particular participant in the study. We therefore assess that there is no potential risk to study participants.

Preliminary analysis indicates that employers are generally knowledgeable about the ADA. Majority of the respondents indicated that a clear link between the employee’s disability and the requested RA is an important consideration in the making the RA decision. They also indicated that they proactively provide RAs because they believe people with disabilities need additional support to complete assigned tasks.

Appendix: B Data Collection Instrument

Appendix B1: Online Consent Form

Dear Interested Participant,

We, researchers at the University of Maryland College Park, are conducting a study on factors related to provision of job accommodation in the workplace. We are interested in learning your perception of factors affecting provision of job accommodation. For the purpose of this study, we will focus on employers who are employing/employed individuals with disabilities. All participants should be over age 18 years and have experience in handling workplace accommodations. If you meet these requirements, please consider participating in this study.

Your participation will be a valuable contribution to the body of research on the job accommodation in the workplace. This research is not designed to assist you personally. However, the result may help investigators/service providers/employers learn more about factors affecting job accommodations provision, and help improve services for employees with disabilities and employers who employ persons with disabilities. There are no known risks associated with participating in this study

This study consists of filling out the Job Accommodations Factor survey and a few questions about yourself and your organization. It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Some of the factors in the Survey include employee's productivity, employer's attitudes toward employees with disability and overall resources of the organization etc. After completing the survey, you may choose to participate in a case study research fund lottery for a chance to win a \$25 gift card by providing your contact information. One of every five participants who have completed the survey will receive the card.

Your survey responses and your contact information (if you choose to participate in the raffle) will be kept completely confidential. Your name and other identifying information will not be linked to your survey responses. Your survey response is only accessible to the investigators.

Once the survey response is entered into a database and the raffle results come out, all the survey data and contact information will be destroyed. The survey result will only be reported in collective manner to maintain confidentiality. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to discontinue participating at any time without being penalized.

If you have any questions about the research study itself or need alternative formats of the survey, you can contact us directly at (301)405-9126 or by email at dbtac07@umd.edu. For questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland at (301)405-0678 or by email at irb@deans.umd.edu.

By continuing to the survey, you are agreeing that you have read the information above and agreed to participate in the study! To protect yourself, please remember to close your computer browser once the online survey has been completed. Thank you in advance for taking the time to fill out this survey!

Appendix B2: Recruiting Email

Dear Sir or Madam,

We, researchers at University of Maryland, are looking for employers and human resource professionals who are interested in accommodations in the workplace. By sharing your perceptions on workplace accommodations through a 15-minute survey, you will be able to enter a lottery and have a 1 in 5 chance of winning a \$25.00 Gift Card! In addition, you will be assisting us to learn more about how to improve the workplace accommodation process.

If interested and if you are an employer or a HR professional please click the link below to get more information and get started.

<http://sgiz.mobi/s3/DBTAC>

If you have any questions about the research study itself or need alternative formats of the survey, you can contact us directly at (301)405-9126 or by email at dbtac07@umd.edu.

Thanks so much – your assistance is invaluable!

Appendix B3: Employer Reasonable Accommodations Survey (E-RAFS)
Survey Related to Workplace Accommodation Provision

Before filling out the Workplace Accommodations Survey, please answer a few questions about yourself:

1. What is your position in the organization?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources Personnel | <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mid-level manager | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior-Level Manager |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organization CEO | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

2. Have you participated in any Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) related training?

- Yes No

3. How knowledgeable are you on the ADA?

- Very knowledgeable Some knowledge Not at all knowledgeable

4. How long have you been working in the organization?

- Less than a year 1~3 years 3~5 years more than 5 years

5. In your position, do you have the authority to provide accommodations?

- Yes No Unsure

If "No", who does have the authority?

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> HR | <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor | <input type="checkbox"/> Mid-level manager |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CEO | <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation Unit | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ | | |

6. Do you have prior experience hiring or supervising employees with disabilities?

- Yes No

7. Do you have a close friend or a family member who has a disability?

- Yes No

8. Do you have a disability?

- Yes No

9. What is your gender?

- Male Female

10. In which state is your organization located? _____

Read the following scenario (Appendix C) then respond as if you are the person in your organization that was approached about this work situation.

Workplace Accommodation Survey

1. Which accommodation(s) would you provide? (check all that apply)

- Tele work (2-days a week) Shift change
 Time off (Leave as requested) Purchase computer & software
 None without additional documentation Other (specify) _____

2. What other employment related decision(s) will you make for this employee? ____

3. Rate the following statements on their importance in your decision above (place an X in the column corresponding with your answer)

	Factors that influencing my decision	Not at all important	Somewhat unimportant	Neutral	Somewhat important	Very important
A	My belief that this employee can work as effectively as other employees	<input type="checkbox"/>				
B	The feasibility of implementing the accommodation(s) requested	<input type="checkbox"/>				
C	My belief that employees with disabilities deserve support to do their jobs well	<input type="checkbox"/>				
D	The effectiveness of the accommodation(s) in improving employee productivity	<input type="checkbox"/>				
E	The duration of the accommodation(s) (whether it is a one-time or an ongoing accommodation)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
F	By law, we are obligated to provide reasonable accommodation(s) to qualified employees with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
G	The way this employee requested for the accommodation(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
H	My relationship with this employee	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I	My prior experience working with employees with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
J	The impact of the requested accommodation(s) on coworkers	<input type="checkbox"/>				
K	The timing of the employee's disclosure about disability	<input type="checkbox"/>				
L	A clear link between the disability, the job and the requested accommodation(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
M	The direct or indirect financial cost(s) of the accommodation(s) to the organization	<input type="checkbox"/>				
N	Financial resources available	<input type="checkbox"/>				
O	The involvement of this employee in the accommodation request process	<input type="checkbox"/>				
P	Availability of documentation of needed accommodation(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Q	The type and nature of the employee's disability(ies)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
R	My knowledge of the Americans with Disabilities Act and employee rights	<input type="checkbox"/>				
S	The ease of implementing the requested accommodation(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Please answer a few more questions about your organization.

1. How many employees are in your organization?

- 1-14
- 15-50
- 51-100
- 101-500
- Over 500

2. Please indicate whether your organization is:

- Local
- Regional
- Multi-State
- Multi-National
- Other _____

3. Please indicate whether your organization is (check all that apply)

- Public
- Private
- For-profit
- Non-profit
- Corporation
- Sole-Proprietor
- Partnership
- Federal /State or Local Agency

4. Please indicate the sector in which your organization belongs (check all that apply)

- Agriculture
- Automotive
- Construction
- Consumer goods/Personal services
- Defense contractor/Military
- Energy
- Education
- Financial/business services
- Government/Public administration)
- Healthcare
- Hospitality/Leisure
- Housing/Real estate
- Information technology
- Manufacturing
- Mining/Natural resources
- Professional services
- Telecommunications, publishing & media
- Transportation & logistics
- Wholesale, Retail and Trade
- Other (please specify) _____

5. Does your organization have a centralized budget for providing accommodations?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

6. Does your organization have a designated individual or office handling workplace accommodations?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

7. Are all accommodations handled by this designated individual or office only?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

8. Does your organization have clear accommodation policies?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

9. If no, what other departments are involved? _____

**10. Has your organization hired an employee with a disability in the previous year?
If yes, how many?**

11. What external resources have you used in assisting with the reasonable accommodations? (check all those apply)

- Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
- Regional Disability Business and Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC)
- State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
- Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)
- Other _____

12. What other factors influenced your job accommodation decision above?

Thank you so much

Appendix C: Response Stimulus – Case Scenarios

Case A: Coronary heart disease

John, a 52 year old manager has been with your organization for five (5) years and has consistently received acceptable annual reviews. He primarily supervises staff, including assigning tasks, evaluating his employees' work and coordinating with clients or with you about needed changes at his department.

About 18 months ago John was diagnosed with coronary heart disease and was out of work for three months recovering from cardiac surgery. His work since his return seems acceptable, although you have received informal reports from colleagues that John seems stressed. You also heard that he "chewed out" an employee for a relatively minor problem, which is not typical for him. You learn that his supervisor has spoken to him about his behavior, but there are increased complaints from his supervisees and coworkers.

You know that John has visited the Employee Assistance Program although you are not privy to the specific services he received. You call him and ask him how things are going, and mention concerns that he appears to be stressed. He acknowledges having some issues without going into any details and says he is on a new medication and is not sleeping well. He asks to be able to come in a few hours later working an 11 a.m. to 7p.m. shift. He would also like to work from home a few days per week for a while until he finds the right medication dosage. He becomes fairly insistent about these accommodations, even stating that he is aware of the ADA and he knows he is entitled to an accommodation.

John's supervisor explains that she prefers that John works in the office every day, at least between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. when she is also in the office. In addition, she stated that other production managers in the organization are required to work on site. In order to work from home, the organization will need to purchase a laptop equipped with proprietary software for John.

John has brought in a letter from his doctor explaining that John may need to work part-time on a flexible schedule and/or tele-work as part of managing John's condition, without further explanation or any details regarding his condition or prognosis.

Case B: Macular degeneration

John, a 52 year old manager has been with your organization for five (5) years and has consistently received acceptable annual reviews. He primarily supervises staff, including assigning tasks, evaluating his employees' work and coordinating with clients or with you about needed changes at his department.

About 18 months ago John was diagnosed with macular degeneration (a significant visual disorder that may lead to blindness). His eyesight has been rapidly deteriorating. He has been out of work for three months undergoing training and rehabilitation. His work since his return seems acceptable, although you have received informal reports from colleagues that John seems stressed. You also heard that he "chewed out" an employee for a relatively minor problem, which is not typical for him. You learn that his supervisor has spoken to him about his behavior, but there are increased complaints from his supervisees and coworkers.

You know that John has visited the Employee Assistance Program although you are not privy to the specific services he received. You call him and ask him how things are going, and mention concerns that he appears to be stressed. He acknowledges having some issues without going into any details and says he is on a new medication and is not sleeping well. He asks to be able to come in a few hours later working an 11 a.m. to 7p.m. shift. He would also like to work from home a few days per week for a while until he finds the right medication dosage. He becomes fairly insistent about these accommodations, even stating that he is aware of the ADA and he knows he is entitled to an accommodation.

John's supervisor explains that she prefers that John works in the office every day, at least between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. when she is also in the office. In addition, she stated that other production managers in the organization are required to work on site. In order to work from home, the organization will need to purchase a laptop equipped with proprietary software for John.

John has brought in a letter from his doctor explaining that John may need to work part-time on a flexible schedule and/or tele-work as part of managing John's condition, without further explanation or any details regarding his condition or prognosis.

Case C: Depression

John, a 52 year old manager has been with your organization for five (5) years and has consistently received acceptable annual reviews. He primarily supervises staff, including assigning tasks, evaluating his employees' work and coordinating with clients or with you about needed changes at his department.

About 18 months ago John was diagnosed with severe depression and was out of work for three months seeking treatment. His work since his return seems acceptable, although you have received informal reports from colleagues that John seems stressed. You also heard that he "chewed out" an employee for a relatively minor problem, which is not typical for him. You learn that his supervisor has spoken to him about his behavior, but there are increased complaints from his supervisees and coworkers.

You know that John has visited the Employee Assistance Program although you are not privy to the specific services he received. You call him and ask him how things are going, and mention concerns that he appears to be stressed. He acknowledges having some issues without going into any details and says he is on a new medication and is not sleeping well. He asks to be able to come in a few hours later working an 11 a.m. to 7p.m. shift. He would also like to work from home a few days per week for a while until he finds the right medication dosage. He becomes fairly insistent about these accommodations, even stating that he is aware of the ADA and he knows he is entitled to an accommodation.

John's supervisor explains that she prefers that John works in the office every day, at least between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. when she is also in the office. In addition, she stated that other production managers in the organization are required to work on site. In order to work from home, the organization will need to purchase a laptop equipped with proprietary software for John.

John has brought in a letter from his doctor explaining that John may need to work part-time on a flexible schedule and/or tele-work as part of managing John's condition, without further explanation or any details regarding his condition or prognosis.

Appendix D: Reasonable Accommodation Factor Survey (RAFS)

Survey key:

- 1 = Not at all important
- 2 = Somewhat not important
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Somewhat important
- 5 = Extremely important

How important were the items below in your decision to request or provide a reasonable accommodation?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1. Benefits of providing accommodations					
2. Communication between the employee and employer					
3. Cost of the accommodation requested					
4. Coworkers' reactions to accommodations provided					
5. Duration of the accommodation					
6. Ease of use of the accommodations					
7. Employee's age					
8. Employee's capacity to address barriers when seeking accommodations					
9. Employee's communication skills in requesting accommodations					
10. Employee's creativity in identifying accommodations					
11. Employee's educational level					
12. Employee's experience with stigma or discrimination					
13. Employee's gender					
14. Employee's job level (managerial/entry level) in the workplace					
15. Employee's job tenure (years of employment) in the organization					
16. Employee's knowledge and awareness of the ADA and reasonable accommodations					
17. Employee's knowledge of RA procedures in the organization					
18. Employee's perception of the benefits and risks associated with requesting RAs					
19. Employee's productivity/performance					
20. Employee's race					
21. Employee's type of disability					
22. Employer's attitudes toward employees with disabilities					
23. Employer's knowledge of technology and other means of accommodations					
24. Employer's perceptions of the cause of disabilities/illness					
25. Employer's support for requesting accommodations					
26. Employer's understanding of disabilities and ADA eligibility					
27. Extent to which the supervisor is involved in the accommodation process					
28. Formality of the accommodation process/procedure in the organization					
29. Occupational classification of the employee's job					

How important were the items below in your decision to request or provide a reasonable accommodation?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
30. Organizational policies concerning the ADA and workplace accommodations					
31. Overall resources of the organization (e.g., size, profitability)					
32. Perceived fairness of the accommodation by coworkers					
33. Phase of the employment process when seeking accommodations					
34. Physical size of the workplace where the employee is located					
35. Relationships between the employee making the request and the supervisor					
36. Role of the individual who is handling the request (e.g. supervisor, HR manager,)					
37. Scope and intensity of the accommodation					
38. Severity of the employee's disability and resulting functional limitations					
39. Sexual orientation of the employee					
40. Size of business in terms of number of employees					
41. Structural modifications necessary to provide accommodations					
42. Supervisor's knowledge of accommodation procedures in the organization					
43. Supportiveness of coworkers with regard to the request					
44. Supportiveness of the employee's direct supervisor					
45. The extent to which the accommodations are matched to job requirements					
46. Timing of the request to the employer					
47. Type of accommodations requested					
48. Type of business					
49. Urgency of the accommodation request					
50. Visibility of the disability					
51. Whether a job coach/service provider is available					
52. Whether the employee's position is temporary or permanent					

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