Study of employer attitudes and supportive research on the employment of the mentally retarded

Mary Odilia Gadlage

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A STUDY OF EMPLOYER ATTITUDES AND SUPPORTIVE RESEARCH
ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE MENTALLY RETARDED

by

Sister Mary Odilia Gadlage, O.S.U.

A RESEARCH PAPER
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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This research paper has been approved for the Graduate Committee of the Cardinal Stritch College by

[Signature]
(Adviser)

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INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times society, in general, has advanced its attitudes toward the mentally retarded. From the ideas of extermination and ridicule, the attitudes moved toward the building of Asylums and inclusion of physical and custodial care. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have stressed education and even total rehabilitation for the mentally retarded. Emphasis has been placed on education with a movement toward rehabilitation.

At the International Congress in Copenhagen (1964), it was stated that:

Accumulated experience during the past decades has shown that the rehabilitation of the retarded can be achieved by a many sided approach involving the pooled skills of a variety of disciplines.¹

Total rehabilitation of retarded individuals requires the efforts of the entire community. Employers' acceptance especially is needed in order to enable the retarded to find the right avenue in which he as an individual may contribute to society and have the satisfaction of being woven in as an integral part of the community. The individual may have been part of an educational system and graduated from that system. However, when the time comes for the person to seek employment, if no employer provides a job opportunity, he will become discouraged, regress, and perhaps even become a burden to the society that rejected him.

Gellman observed, "Prejudice toward handicapped persons with their open or hidden rejection by the non-handicapped occurs at all socio-economic levels and in all regions of our country. It is evident in the social, educational, and vocational discrimination which hampers disabled persons."2

The socialization and absorption of the mentally retarded into the community life depends not only on the resourcefulness and social rehabilitation services available but also on the cooperation and the threshold tolerance level of the community as a whole, more especially employers, in shouldering their share of responsibility in regard to this issue. Society, despite some belated efforts and the stirrings of conscience awakened by the President's Panel, has still not assumed totally its share or obligations concerning the vocational rehabilitation of the mentally retarded. This arises from the failure of the community to remove these individuals from the fringe of society and integrate them and their contribution into the core of society. Major factors responsible for this lack of integration could be attributed to: (1) societies' misunderstanding of the individual's ability to manifest himself as a successful participant in community; (2) failure to provide financial provisions for the training, education, and vocational rehabilitation needs of the retarded; and (3) a scarcity of qualified personnel, such as educators, psychologists, counselors, and social workers. It would be a step forward if employers could be included in the category of qualified personnel.

Shifting the emphasis from segregation to integration of the retardate into the community mainstream should provide a multi-faceted

approach. The role of the vocational rehabilitation counselor in elevating the employer's attitudes can be an important aspect in the young adult retardate's integration into our "so-called" democratic society.

President Kennedy gave great impetus to the future of the mentally retarded person when he established the President's Panel. In his words he indicated the philosophy underlying the attitudes that our country should inherit. In his statement announcing his intention to form the President's Panel (1962) he stated:

The manner in which our Nation cares for its citizens and conserves its manpower resources is more than an index to its concern for the less fortunate. It is a key to its future. Both wisdom and humanity dictate a deep interest in the physically handicapped, the mentally ill, and the mentally retarded. Yet, although we have made considerable progress in the treatment of physical handicaps, although we have attacked on a broad front the problems of mental illness, although we have made great strides in the battle against disease, we as a nation have far too long postponed an intensive search for solutions to the problems of the mentally retarded. That failure should be corrected.

SUMMARY

Society's regard for the retarded has moved ahead since ancient times in so far as acceptance and concern for their wellbeing is of great importance at this time. These retarded individuals need more than tolerance and particular individuals in society must give leadership in this area of acceptance. This paper is concerned with employers, in particular, and their attitude toward hiring the mentally retarded. The leadership of the Federal Government and the rehabilitation counselors are channels through which help might come toward achieving more positive

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3John F. Kennedy, Statement Announcing His Intention to Form the President's Panel, Mental Retardation, Vol. 2, No. 1 (February, 1964), 33.
employer realization of the work potential and contributions of the retarded.
CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Personal knowledge of employers' negative attitudes toward the handicapped and their lack of understanding of adult retardates led the writer to undertake this research study. The investigation was concerned with the following inquiries:

1. What kind of receptivity do employers have for mentally retarded persons as projected through research?

2. What part has the Federal Government played in the employment of the mentally retarded?

3. What role does the vocational rehabilitation counselor play in forming attitudes of employers toward hiring the mentally retarded?

The Limitations and Significance of the Study

Direct research studies on employer attitudes seem to be sporadic at the present time. The literature manifests the emphasis being placed on the employment of institutionalized retardates rather than educable non-institutionalized subjects. There are further limitations in this study due to this writer's intention to investigate research findings between 1960 and 1970.

Employer understanding and attitudes were felt so important in the adjustment of the adult retardate that the writer concluded that a research study considering employer attitudes might prove of importance for the retarded, for the employers, for industry, and for society.

5
Definition of Terms

In order to be in agreement on some specific terms used in this paper, the following definitions are given:

Mentally Retarded:

When the civilian rehabilitation program uses the term "mentally retarded", it refers to the social-vocational inadequates with somewhat severe limitations in functioning intelligence who have reasonable potentialities to become totally or partially self-supporting people provided special professional and community services are given to them.4

Rehabilitation: In August, 1963, the National Council on Rehabilitation defined rehabilitation as "the restoration of the handicapped to the fullest physical, mental, social, vocational, and economic usefulness of which they are capable."5

Vocational Rehabilitation: One aspect of a total rehabilitation program has as its primary objective the development of the handicapped as a productive, wage earning, and taxpaying member of society.6

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor: This person is considered the liaison who established the rapport between the employer and the employee, as it is his obligation to secure satisfactory job placement and by continued guidance to help the retardate with acceptable adjustment.

Trained: This term is used in this paper in reference to a person who has attended established special classes on the elementary and


secondary levels, and has participated in a vocational rehabilitation program which provided the sequential building of social skills and attitudes. The training was concluded with practical application of academic skills learned during the previous years.

**Employment:** This paper considers employment as work that is performed in the environment of everyday society, and not within the confinement of a sheltered workshop.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed the problem facing society concerning the employers' negative attitudes toward employing the mentally retarded. The writer was made aware of certain limitations in the research findings. It is his desire that more emphasis be focused on practical application in dealing with retardates in daily living, more especially in his work environment and his relations with society.

It was, therefore, necessary to define certain terms in order to make a more meaningful presentation. The tendency has been to stress education, but the writer recommends more emphasis on employer preparation to accept the trained retardate as a valuable asset to society.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Receptivity of Employers for Mentally Retarded Persons

as Projected Through Research

The predominant use of the word rehabilitation in this paper does not exclude the idea of habilitation. This writer is in accord with Kirk's statement concerning the meaning of rehabilitation. Kirk placed emphasis on the misuse of the term when he stated:

...the term "Vocational Rehabilitation of the Mentally Retarded," is a misnomer. Rehabilitation means the restoration of a function that existed at an earlier time. It is properly applied to an individual who through accident or disease has sustained a physical injury. Since mental retardation exists from birth, there is really nothing that existed earlier that should be restored. The proper terminology to use is education or adjustment."

In the writer's opinion, habilitation is a correct term when speaking of the adjustment of mentally retarded youth in a social-vocational setting. However, the term rehabilitation is utilized due to its predominant application in the literature.

Rehabilitation of the retarded had a formal beginning with the enactment of the Barden-LaFollette Amendments (PL 113). The vocational rehabilitation program was expanded by a further amendment in 1954.

Phelps in his study reported only 25% of the mentally retarded persons were receiving rehabilitation services, while 53% of the blind...
were in a rehabilitation program. An additional factor stated that
retarded persons, rehabilitation personnel, and families of the retarded
often attribute the unemployment of retardates to employers' resistance. 8
Other reports (DiMichael) suggest that there are more jobs which the
retarded are capable of handling than there are retarded persons to
accomplish them. 9

Mrs. Rose Kennedy alleges:

More than 150,000 children are born retarded each year. Six
million Americans are now retarded—and more than half of these
are adults...We owe a debt to the living. To help them live
the most creative lives possible. To help them develop the
God-given potentiality that lies within all of us—even the
damaged, the handicapped, or the disadvantaged. Our obligation
becomes even more acute when we realize that more than 75% of
these mentally retarded adults are capable of employment and
could become completely self-supporting and that another 15%
could become partially self-supporting. Most of them have
never been given a chance. They have never experienced the
encouragement of self-confidence. No one has permitted them
to show what they can do. 10

The question remains then as to the employer attitudes toward
hiring the retarded person. Cohen, 11 Fraenkel, 12 Michael-Smith, 13 and

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8 W.R. Phelps. "Attitudes Related to the Employment of the Mentally
Retarded." American Journal of Mental Deficiency. 69 (January, 1965).
575-585.

9 Salvatore DiMichael. "Issues at Point--Are Jobs for Retarded
Increasing?" Mental Retardation. 5 (August, 1967), 14-20.


11 J.S. Cohen. "Employer Attitudes Toward Hiring Mentally Retarded
Individuals." American Journal of Mental Deficiency. 67 (March, 1963).
705-713.

12 W. Fraenkel. "Planning the Vocational Future of the Mentally
Retarded." Rehabilitation Literature. 22 (1961) 98-104.

13 H. Michael-Smith. "A Study of Personal Characteristics Desirable
for the Vocational Success of the Mentally Deficient." American Journal
of Mental Deficiency. 55 (July, 1950). 139-143.
Warren\textsuperscript{14} conclude that factors such as personality characteristics of the retardates and community attitudes toward mental retardation have an effect on the occupational success of the retarded individual.

Studies of attitudes of employers toward persons with other disabilities have been made but there is a definite scarcity of material on the very important area of employer attitudes toward hiring the mentally retarded. Barker's study in 1953, stressed the role of employer and the need for preparing him to accomplish an effective on-the-job training program which would lead to satisfactory employment of the mentally handicapped worker.\textsuperscript{15}

Research by Cohen in 1963, sought to investigate, determine, and analyze the relationships between certain characteristics of employers and their attitudes toward hiring retarded persons.

Employers in the day-work program of the Edward R. Johnstone Training and Research Center in Bordentown, New Jersey were the participants in a research study in connection with opinions involved in this matter.

A questionnaire was designed to obtain data in the area of employer schooling, vocational contact with the retarded, realistic concepts of mental retardation and attitudes toward hiring retardates. A seven item attitudinal scale was developed (Appendix I) as an expression of the range of attitudes toward hiring the mentally retarded. Two-hundred fifty-three were distributed; 177 or 70\% were completed and returned.


Only three employers indicated that they did not consider Johnstone students satisfactory employees. It was emphasized that once an employer had an unpleasant experience with an employee he would not hire another one.

Results indicated:

1. That the employer attitude toward hiring mentally retarded persons are related positively to the employer's realistic concept of mental retardation.

2. That the employer's attitude toward hiring mentally retarded individuals is not related to the type of vocational contact.16

Phelps (1965) conducted a study in West Virginia involving 257 service employers selected at random. Results from these employers surveyed by an attitudinal questionnaire manifested a positive relationship between the educational level of the personnel managers and favorable attitudes toward the mentally retarded. A positive relationship was evident between the size of the organization and favorable attitude. It was the opinion of the majority of the personnel managers that mentally retarded subjects could do productive work and that most organizations should be able to hire them.17

Two-hundred eighty-three industries in Frankfort, Kentucky, were studied by Hartlage in 1965 to determine the factors affecting employers' receptivity toward hiring the mentally handicapped. These results indicated, as did Phelps, that the size of the industry was a decisive factor in determining employer acceptance with a notable increase from smaller industries to the larger places of employment.

16Cohen. "Employer Attitudes." 705-713.

It was concluded that education of the employers also was not significantly related to the acceptance of retarded employees. It should be noted that this is in contradiction to the findings of the previous study.

Employer opinions in Hartlage's study showed deficiency of mentally retarded workers in their ability to adjust to new situations, and a need for more supervision. Conversely, the employers indicated that the retardate's rate of absenteeism was much lower than that of the non-handicapped worker.18

An investigation by Barber to determine employer attitudes in the Bridgeport, Connecticut, area concerning hiring the mentally retarded was undertaken by means of an eight page questionnaire. The questionnaire was filled out by 56 employers in the Bridgeport community to determine positive and negative attitudes which might have some bearing on hiring mentally handicapped workers. Barber's study sought answers to the following questions: "Are some establishments more likely to hire mentally retarded workers?, and What factors seem to influence an employer's decision to hire a mentally retarded person?"19

The selection of the population was determined by three factors: the company was listed as a manufacturing establishment; it was located in the city of Bridgeport; and it employed more than ten employees. A total of 283 industries were listed and of these a random sampling was used in this study.


During the initial time appointments for personal interviews with employers were scheduled. Twenty-nine % of the 56 employers contacted could not or would not agree to appointments. Some reasons given were: the establishment could not hire mentally retarded because of the nature of the work, or that the employer was too busy.

Barber organized what he considered to be more specific factors into the following categories: type of work; company policies; past experience and personal data about the employer.

The positive relationship between the larger industries and more receptive employer attitudes was considered less significant by Barber than in the studies previously discussed by Phelps and Hartlage, since a cause and effect relationship was not indicated.20

The results listed are according to Barber's categories:

Type of Work

"The percentage of jobs retardates could do ranged from 0 - 80%, and the mean percentage of jobs retardates could do was 8.6%.21 Employers with a high percentage of jobs retardates could perform showed positive attitudes toward hiring the mentally retarded. It is noted that none of the other studies considered the type of job factor.

Barber states, "Employers who expressed an unwillingness to hire mentally retarded workers cannot hire them because they simply do not have the type jobs retarded people can execute. A question is then raised as to what factors does an employer consider when he tries to determine what jobs a mentally retarded person can do."22

20 Ibid., 8-10.
21 Ibid., 27.
22 Ibid., 29.
In response to the above findings regarding type of jobs retardates can perform the present writer agreed with a study by Kolstoe and Shafter in 1961, that a clear cut statement of what retardates can accomplish should be made.

Kolstoe and Shafter suggest that job descriptions be recorded of work being done by retardates. They further recommend that the descriptions be arranged according to a definite scheme of level of complexity with a similar method of classifying individuals, and classifying industrial job tasks according to levels of complexity.23

Barber investigated variables that described work in industrial establishments. He listed such variables as simple and routine work, dangerous work, work that required no writing, and work that required no arithmetic. In analysis of his results he discovered that,

Employers appear to believe that retardates can do only simple and routine jobs and cannot do dangerous jobs. Therefore, employers who have a high percentage of simple and routine work and a low percentage of dangerous work consider they have a higher percentage of jobs mentally retarded workers can do.24

Considering the above findings it is interesting to note at this time that the President's Committee on Mental Retardation sponsored an ad in Newsweek Magazine as follows:

As we all know, the mentally retarded can only make baskets and other simple objects like...

Computer subassemblies.
Printed circuits for electronic test sets.
Electric meters.
Automobile instrument panels.


24 Barber. op. cit., 32.
Aircraft components.
Hospital supplies.
You already know that the retarded worker is generally more conscientious, loyal, and punctual than the average employee. Perhaps you have a few "simple" jobs he might do in your business.25

Company Policies

Barber considered the following company policies to be of specific importance: ability to provide extra supervision; ability to provide additional adjustment time; union membership and worker seniority. It was found that employers whose company policies were more flexible were more willing to hire mentally retarded individuals than employers with inflexible policies.

Experience with Mental Retardation

A strong association existed between good past experience with retarded workers and a strong positive favorable attitude toward hiring them: conversely, employers who had heard unfavorable reports about retarded workers had unfavorable attitudes toward hiring them. As expected this relationship was found to be significant.26

Personal Data

Reference to previous studies mentioned regarding personal data, Phelps stated that levels of education of employers have a great effect on the attitudes of employers.27 Cohen reported the opposite and Hartlage indicated there was no relationship at all. According to Barber, "No significant relationship was found between education and employer

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25 President's Committee on Mental Retardation. "As we all know..." Newsweek. (June 7, 1971). 114-115.
26 Barber. op. cit., 34.
27 Ibid., 40.
attitudes." Other personal data were investigated but they are not strongly associated with employer attitudes toward hiring a mentally retarded worker. 28

Bolanovich's most recent study in 1966, surveyed 720 employees in St. Louis, and 400 members of the American Society for Training and Development. 29 Each group received a questionnaire. Results brought to surface the fact that one out of four employers have had direct experience with retardates as employees; two out of three employers have had no direct experience with retardates; and employers' attitudes improve with experience or knowledge. Again, the results concurred with the other studies that attitudes are more favorable among personnel workers in larger organizations than among a more general sampling of managers and employers with lower standards of employment.

The survey further indicated that a large portion of employers observe the necessity of waiving educational standards for those retardates who demonstrate ability in lower skilled employment.

The following strengths and weaknesses of retarded workers were found:

a) They need more supervision.

b) They lack versatility.

c) They are resistant to monotonous unpleasant work.

d) They are more easily satisfied in their work.

e) They are successful in jobs such as: general labor, porters, and maids.

28 Ibid., 29.

Evidence indicates that even though employers see the need for hiring the mentally retarded they do not care to get involved and do not wish to be contacted by vocational rehabilitation counselors.

The economic value of hiring the retarded was apparent to these employers. Many see them as a good labor source only in a tight labor situation. The employers were concerned about insurance risks when hiring the retarded.

Bolanovich offered the following suggestions which may improve employer attitudes:

a) Particular attention should be given toward employer education concerning the capabilities of retardates when properly supervised.

b) Employers should be alerted to the retardates' safety records on-the-job and the fact that insurance rates are not affected.

c) There is a need for the training of supervisors.

d) There is a need for pre-employment training for the retarded. 30

Attitudes of employers toward hiring the mentally retarded as reported in all the preceding studies led the writer to an investigation regarding the role of leadership assumed by the Federal Government in this important issue of hiring the mentally retarded. The Federal Government's awareness of the importance of rehabilitating these citizens to contribute to, rather than drain from, society was influential in paving the way for better integration and acceptance of the mentally retarded person's potentiality for work. Successful work participation adds to his personal fulfillment and his ability to share in supporting the community.

30 Ibid., Appendix I
Contribution and Leadership of the Federal Government
by Employing Mentally Retarded Persons

As our economy changes, jobs not previously available for the retarded are now open to them. A new outlook in behalf of handicapped children and youth depends upon the promising efforts of state interdepartmental cooperation. In 1964, a special opportunity for cooperation between divisions of state government usually found in a single state administrative department was provided. Generally, this had involved the departments of education, welfare, health, rehabilitation, correction, mental health, and labor.

This trend toward centralizing official state inter agency coordination of services had developed gradually and the following functions have appeared:

1. Improving and extending existing state wide services.
2. Implementing local services to the handicapped...
3. Provision of wise and economical use of both public and private monies.
4. Giving major attention to orderly planned growth in the field of programs and services to handicapped people through recommendation to the legislature regarding needed or proposed legislation.
5. Continuous review of programs and services being offered to physically and mentally handicapped people.
6. Influencing federal legislation.31

As government service employment increases at local, county, state, and federal levels, retardates have been certified for suitable jobs without the impediment of written examinations.

A federal grant given to the National Association for Retarded Children opened thousands of job opportunities with such well known

companies as, Howard Johnsons, Hot Shoppes, Woolworths, Sears, Roebuck and Company, and many other firms.

The Federal Government has shown great leadership in attempting to aid the retarded to become adjusted, productive, citizens. The enactment of the Vocational Rehabilitation Amendment in 1943 by the 78th Congress, not only broadened the scope of services under the state-federal programs but also extended its benefits to the mentally handicapped who were able to be trained for and placed in suitable employment.

President Kennedy's proposal for a broad national program to alleviate the problems of the mentally retarded has modified government regulations to facilitate the employment of the mentally retarded under a two-year program ending September 30, 1965.

The following are the more important aspects:

a) The re-engineering of work conditions in certain positions to utilize mentally retarded persons.

b) Provisions to waive civil service registers. If qualified they may be hired directly for jobs.

c) Provision to waive written requirements for jobs.

d) Provisions for a series of written agreements between the Commission and various employing agencies such as:

--specific positions were set apart for the retarded,

--arrangements to be worked out between the state vocational rehabilitation agencies,

--a certificate from the vocational rehabilitation agency that the retarded person is qualified, socially competent, independent with minimal help in after working hours living,

--a commitment that the employing agency will utilize the services of the state vocational rehabilitation agencies,
--no termination of retardates' employment without prior notification of the counselor concerned.32

Great advances in creating employment for the mentally retarded in Federal Agencies were a result of the response to President Kennedy's proposal for a broad national program.

As recently as 1962 the Federal Government had not employed mentally retarded persons. President Kennedy believed that industry and businessmen needed an example from the government. Therefore, he hired a young upholsterer to work in the White House. After this first step other officials followed his example. With the adaptation of the Civil Service requirements, encouragement was given to federal, state and local agencies to hire the mentally retarded. By June, 1970, more than 6,000 were at work in almost every department of the Federal Government.

The Public Employment Office gives the following data:

| Industries where the retarded have gone to work: |  |
| construction | 5.3% | manufacturing | 21.6% |
| transportation | 2.3% | trade | 30.3% |
| services | 33.0% | government | 4.1% |
| | | others | 3.1% |

| Types of jobs the retarded have filled: |  |
| clerical and sales | 8.0% | domestic services | 10.5% |
| other service jobs | 33.8% | industrial | 47.5% |
| | | others | 26.8% |

A survey by Maine's State Commission on Rehabilitation showed a difference between what employers say and what they do. Eighty-six %


said "yes, they'd be willing to hire the mentally retarded" but only 46% did hire them.  

According to the Maine's State Commission's survey employers claimed that no one had ever contacted them about hiring the mentally handicapped. Vocational rehabilitation counselors should definitely be alerted to this statement and resolve to move from behind the desk to a more active employer-employee preparation, placement and follow-up.

Barber tends to disagree with Maine's survey due to the fact that within the last six years 20 employers recalled being asked to hire a retarded individual. Only two retardates made requests themselves while the remainder made contact with employers through a third person. Seventy % of those using professional services were able to secure employment while 3.8% of those using other means secured employment. Employers who heard unfavorable information about retardates were more unlikely to hire them. A knowledge of mental retardation does not insure favorable attitudes and lead to employment.

Role of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in Forming Attitudes of Employers Toward Hiring the Mentally Retarded

The President's Panel on Mental Retardation regarded the State Employment System as one of the crucial agencies to serve in the important role of the rehabilitation of the retarded. The role of the counselor in rehabilitation should serve as a go-between for employers and qualified available retarded workers.

34 Special Education Newsletter. op. cit., 32.
35 G. Barber. op. cit., 45.
Murray and DiMichael suggest that there are those in the employment service who maintain the fictitious idea that retardates are unemployable and can do only simple routine tasks. 36

Smith's study attempts to check this type of attitude and to discover the counselor's informational background concerning mental retardation and vocational rehabilitation. This was surveyed in the Colorado State Employment System. Smith worked with fifteen counselors who developed three instruments; a personal information sheet, Employment Counselors Attitudinal Scale, and A Test of Knowledge of Mental Retardation.

Forty-five state employment counselors were studied by the above instruments. Results showed that 38% had working experience with special class programs. Thirty-one % understood the special class programs. Sixty-two % had no working experience with special class programs, although half were from communities that had special programs.

These conclusions were drawn:

a) That the knowledge a counselor had concerning mental retardation had no demonstrated bearing on his attitude toward this condition.

b) Nearly all the counselors had favorable attitudes toward the mentally retarded.

c) The majority of counselors are apparently not well informed about mental retardation.

d) The counselors who had worked with the mentally retarded programs had a better knowledge about mental retardation.

Smith remarks, "It became apparent to the investigator during the course of this study that a majority of counselors studied did not feel it was their responsibility to find employment for the retarded because of the following reasons:

- lack of knowledge of the problem,
- inadequate time,
- lack of employer cooperation.\(^{37}\)

The counselors studied expressed the opinion that the responsibility of job placement for the mentally retarded should be with vocational rehabilitation. This appears to be a valid suggestion, although it is this writer's opinion that the counselors should realize that all agencies should be well informed and cooperate if maximum help is to be given to the mentally retarded.

A study by Oswald was made to determine job-holding stability. Included in the study were factors related to the employment, training, and counseling of 2,747 mentally retarded subjects employed by the Federal Government between 1964 and 1966. The study was concerned with 100 different kinds of jobs. Oswald communicated with vocational rehabilitation counselors, federal employers, job supervisors for mentally retarded employees, and mentally retarded employees. The majority of the mentally retarded in the sample were males with C.A. of 20 to 25 and Mean I.Q. of 72 to 79. The job classification could be broken down to 48% wage board, 31% clerical, 21% postal service.\(^{38}\)


After four years the study showed that 62% were still hired, 40% experienced job mobility to higher pay and changes in job classification. Regarding this high job-holding ability, Oswald states,

A great deal of the success of the program was due to the cooperative placement efforts of the counselors and the employers.

These findings indicate that rehabilitation counselors need adequate time to provide follow-up services for clients and employers and that rehabilitation staffs need to develop better understanding of their roles and insights about retardates among themselves and between themselves and the employers. 39

The importance and necessity of counselors' becoming more active in the relationships with mentally retarded clients, their families, and employers was reinforced by the findings of a study reported by DiMichael and Terwilliger in 1953. Ninety-seven cases were prepared and helped to find employment. Chronological ages of the clients ranged from 16 to 65 with a concentration in the 16 to 21 range. The results showed the great amount of time spent by the counselors interviewing with clients, employers, relatives, fellow-employees, friends, psychologists, psychiatrists, and school personnel. An average of 18.7 interviews and consultations were held with each case. For the most part eight sessions were devoted to direct counseling with the mentally retarded client. 40 Most of the counseling was done outside the counselor's office. A number of special problems and positive factors gleaned from this study (Appendix II) point out the complexity of finally obtaining some work adjustment for the mentally retarded. The afore-mentioned authors stated that

39 Ibid., 341.

counselors mentioned in their reports nineteen times the unusual cooperation of some employers as positive factors in rehabilitation. The clients were able to adjust more rapidly due to the patience and understanding of these employers. This study stressed a change in basic procedures in the counseling process. In other words, counselors are more effective if they move from behind the desk and become more involved in interviews, situations, persons, etc., beyond the narrow walls of their offices.

The counselor's job is not finished when the client has been placed on the job. There is a definite need for follow-up services to determine problem areas and to assist in solving problems if and when they do arise. Peckham requested counselors to define ten main problems in job adjustment experienced by their mentally retarded clients. These problems were listed as; client acceptance by fellow-workers, lack of social and vocational sophistication, salary dissatisfaction, budgeting, lack of initiative and responsibility, thoughtless quitting of the job, anxiety on the part of the family, status anxiety on the part of the client, inability to read, and family over-protection.\(^{41}\) These problems arise at different times of life and might possibly develop at any time during employment. The counselor must foresee the problem or be available when such a situation arises. It would seem that a greater part of the adjustment problems of retardates could be avoided by counselor-client interviews. Additional interviews should include counselor-employer, counselor-employer-client, and counselor-family meetings. Once again emphasis is placed on the counselor's responsibility to be actively involved in his follow-up service and not merely a passive observer.

SUMMARY

In summary, the following statements consider the main points of the three most important areas of research discussed by the writer in this paper.

Considering the favorable and unfavorable findings contained in the literature concerning employer attitudes it is evident that there is a recognized need for: an openness of acceptance on the part of the employer, an awareness of the retardate's potential and his definite contribution to society, the necessity of an understanding on-the-job supervisor, and a definite need for more cooperation with the vocational rehabilitation counselor.

Valuable leadership has been given by the Federal Government in the amendment of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act to include the retarded in its service. President Kennedy's proposal for a broad national plan to aid the retarded initiated many proposals for action to be carried out by the nation. In particular, the revising of civil service policies of admission to government service has encouraged employers to scale-down unrealistic requirements and to redesign certain jobs so that retardates can be accepted in areas requiring lesser skills of performance. Much has been done. There remains more to be done.

Meeting the employment needs of the mentally retarded means that all agencies of the Federal Government must work together with private industry and others so that the retarded may enjoy the values of self-respect, a heightened self-image and a feeling of usefulness which employment gives. Without these values life seems futile.

It is the writer's opinion that the counselor is a key person in the training, placement, follow-up and final adjustment of the mentally
retarded person. He should be well aware of the client's personality and social characteristics, capabilities and limitations, as well as, job opportunities in the surrounding community. When the counselor has located a possible suitable position, he must prepare the client, his family, and the employer for this forward step toward job placement. Follow-up services by the counselor are necessary and of utmost importance.
CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Summary

This paper was concerned with employers' attitudes toward hiring retarded individuals. It was stated that there is an apparent gap between academic education and the readiness for work. This gap seemed to be due to a stress on academic education. It was also urged that emphasis be placed on employer preparation in order that a better understanding and acceptance be reached by all.

Research studies showed some contradictory results regarding employer attitudes toward hiring the retarded; such as, the size of industry makes a difference in employer attitude and size of industry did not make a difference in attitude; education of employers did make a difference in their attitude and education of employers did not make a difference in their attitude toward hiring retarded workers. Some other factors were found: knowledge of retardation showed positive correlation with favorable attitude; less favorable attitudes where employers have more rigid company policies; even though employers acknowledge that there is a need to hire the retarded many are not eager to do so; some employers realize that the retarded could do productive work and that most organizations should hire them.

Despite the apparent lack of understanding, resistance, and opposite views regarding the hiring of the mentally retarded there has been a definite growth and maturity on the part of the public. It must
be realized that old ideas and prejudices must be worn away by time and experience. Growth toward understanding adult adjustment of the mentally retarded has been stimulated, not only by scientific and professional advances in research, but also, by the organization of special classes, training centers, social clubs, and sheltered and industrial workshops largely financed by the Federal Government.

The fact of federal leadership with regard to financial aid, amendments of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, adaptation of civil service requirements in order for the retarded to secure employment and the actuality of hiring retardates was discussed. Emphasis was given to the role of the rehabilitation counselor as the liaison between employer and retardate in order to pave the way for favorable attitudes.

Aiding the retarded to constitute a significant portion of the population should be a guide to alter their dependent status. "They should be turned from a social, economic and moral liability into a productive, useful wage-earning, tax-paying, and happy group of people with a rightful place in society." 42

For continued advancement of the retarded it will be necessary to utilize the blended services and specialized talents of disciplines such as, medicine, biochemistry, psychiatric social work, psychology, special education, vocational rehabilitation and hopefully the enthusiastic accepting attitude of employers.

Broadminded support from the public and the assistance of the above mentioned professionals would ameliorate the emotional and psychological, social and vocational difficulties facing the mentally retarded and their families at this time.

42 Kratter. op. cit., 708.
The author of this paper realizes the absolute necessity for proper training of the retardate before job placement is sought. It may be true, that there has been a gap between academic education and preparation for work. Legislative support to remedy this was given by the Vocational and Educational Amendments of 1968 (PL 90-576). It seemed that with this amendment a new era in the education of the handicapped had begun. The amendment established a basic educational principle as far as vocational education is concerned. Goals have been expanded in vocational education to include the development of human resources to their fullest potential as well as preparation for employment.

This new philosophy is seen as a total school program and the responsibility is based on the following assumptions:

1. Vocational education should be provided for every child who can profit by it. The responsibility for such education should be provided for in the curriculum.

2. Vocational education should be a continuous process from early childhood throughout life.

3. Vocational education should be the responsibility of the school and should not be limited to any discipline or department.

This legislation expected the agencies of vocational rehabilitation, vocational education, and special education to be carefully integrated in order to carry out their respective and similar goals in order to aid the handicapped child in his preparation for the working world. Interagency and interdisciplinary approaches were recommended. Each community sought ways and means of coordinating these agencies.

Besides proper training for job placement the retardate needs support from all elements of society. One such element of support might come from a suggestion that, "In the intangible area of creating positive
attitudes toward employing persons with knowledge, individual women and women's groups can make a major contribution. A word dropped in the appropriate ear at a dinner party may make a difference. The employment of the handicapped person for a job of high visibility in a club can make a difference. Articles in newspapers, magazines, house organs make a difference.43

Another means toward this broadminded support must come from business men who have had experience with hiring the mentally retarded individuals. Efforts have been made to improve employer attitudes by circulating in bulletins and newsletters the results of some employers who have already hired them. One of these bulletins reported the results of a meeting of nearly 100 businessmen at the University of Texas. The meeting was held in order for employers to hear straight-from-the-shoulder about hiring the mentally retarded. The meeting was summarized as follows: "The Texas employers agreed that retarded workers are exceptionally reliable and loyal and recommended them highly to all those assembled."44

President Kennedy once said about the retarded, "Although they may be victims of fate they will not be victims of our neglect."45 By calling the President's Panel, by hiring the retarded, by his very attitude he led government agencies to follow his example. The Civil Service Department


has taken a new look at its requirements for job placement and decided it advantageous to scale down their educational requirements for certain positions. This type of leadership tends to give impetus to others to do likewise.

It has been stated that the counselor is the key person in the placement of retardates on the job. Counselor attitudes toward the retarded and counselor approach in contacting employers is a very important factor in the placement and final adjustment of the retarded. The counselor must approach the employer knowing that this worker will lack judgment, and will need constant and close supervision, he cannot use complicated machinery, he must be trained by simplified methods so that he learns and he is slower than others. At sometime during the interview with the employer the counselor must communicate this information. It seems more desirable to begin with the job and get the employer to realize that the intelligence requirement of the job is low. From this point the counselor could describe the assets of the individual and finally, the above negative aspects could be approached.

The counselor must understand the human problem associated with retardation. He must strongly believe that the retardate can be vocationally successful and the counselor must feel that he can be successful in placing the individual. Finally, he must be capable of exploiting all the flexibility permitted him.

**For the Future**

The President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, the President's Committee on Mental Retardation and the National Association for Retarded Children, the Manpower Administration of the Department of Labor and Social and Rehabilitation Services of the Department of Health,
Education, and Welfare should continue to use joint efforts to promote employment of the mentally retarded. Thus, by the example of their leadership and initiative, labor unions may be encouraged to exempt low skilled jobs from certain unrealistic requirements so that the mentally retarded might fill them.

Special hiring procedures should be set up by state and local governments on the order of the federal government.

Some office could be formed whereby employers could obtain existing data on mentally retarded and their work potential.

Top management should be encouraged to produce written policy statements favoring employment of the mentally retarded for jobs for which they are, or can be trained.

Some system of communication should be worked out so that fellow-workers become more informed about mental retardation, its limitations and potentials, so that there will be more favorable acceptance of the retarded worker.

More employer conferences should be initiated, based on the one held by New York University and the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped. This conference was attended by 200 leading employers in New York City.

Also, counselors should become more active in knowing about the retarded person, his training, job preference and capabilities, job possibilities, employer acceptance, client placement and follow-up.

To keep the ideals of America working for all, Thomas Wolfe says, "Go seeker, if you will, throughout the land and you will find us burning in the night. To every man his choice, to every man regardless of his
birth, his shining golden opportunity—to every man the right to live, to work, to be himself, and to become whatever thing his manhood and his vision can combine to make him—this, seeker, is the promise of America."46

The vision of Thomas Wolfe should be the vision of America for the mentally retarded.

APPENDIX I

Attitudinal Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I would not hire a mentally retarded person under any circumstances.</td>
<td>1 employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I would hire a mentally retarded person only in an emergency.</td>
<td>4 employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I would hire a mentally retarded person only on a temporary basis.</td>
<td>24 employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I would hire a mentally retarded person on a trial basis.</td>
<td>50 employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I would hire a mentally retarded person only if he would work at lower salary than a normal person.</td>
<td>9 employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I would hire a mentally retarded person even if I felt he could not do the job as well as a normal person.</td>
<td>35 employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I would hire a mentally retarded person as readily as a normal person.</td>
<td>68 employers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX II

Salvatore G. DiMichael, Ph.D. and W. Bird Terwilliger, Ph.D

Special Problems in Rehabilitation of 9 Mentally Retarded Adults Into Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal and Inter-Personal Problems</th>
<th>36</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undesirable personal attitudes</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exaggerated opinions of abilities or wages</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex problems</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsustained interest in work</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulties in Locating Suitable Jobs</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unusual problems in selective placement</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitable jobs scarce</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiteracy</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person demanded job with &quot;sure&quot; advancement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulties Due to Other Disabilities, Mostly Physical</th>
<th>21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrealistically high goals for client</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overprotection and indulgence</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious maladjustment of family</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slowness in learning job</th>
<th>19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slow manual speed</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow adaptations to job</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow adaptation to supervisor</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insufficient vocational training or job experience</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previous job failures caused employer resistance</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Problems</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interim poor health during rehabilitation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requested job very close to home</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Counselors' Activities in the Vocational Rehabilitation

Crucial Positive Factors in the Rehabilitation Program of 97 Mentally Retarded Clients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unusual Positive Qualities of Client</th>
<th>.................</th>
<th>39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong willingness to work--22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good appearance and strong physique--9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasing personality--6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client's ability to gain parental independence--2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unusual participation by family .................. 24

Successful counseling .................................. 22
| Solving difficulties related to job--16 |        | |
| Solving of-the-job social problem--4   |        | |
| Breaking through resistance to wage scale--2 |      |  |

Patience and understanding of employer ........... 19

Unusual help by community ........................... 9
| By community agencies--5                  |        |  |
| By school--2                              |        |  |
| By mental hygiene clinic--2               |        |  |

Patience and competence of instructor or tutor .... 8

Improvement of physical disability through surgery .......... 5

Client's ability to master simple job .................. 5

Job found near the home ................................ 249

49 Ibid.
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