Employment and individuals with disabilities in Québec: A multi-study investigation of barriers and needs

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Abstract

Individuals with disabilities face inequities in various aspects of life, including employment. In the province of Québec, merely 40% of individuals with disabilities are employed, compared to 73% of the general population (Camirand, Dugas, Cardin, Dubé, Dumitru, & Fournier, 2010). The purpose of this multi-study dissertation was to utilize a Disabilities Studies Lens (Williams & Mavin, 2012) and Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) to explore employment barriers, coping efficacy, and employment facilitators of people with disabilities living in Québec. In the first study, the Barriers to Employment and Coping Efficacy Scale (Corbière, Mercier, & Lesage, 2004) was used to measure employment barriers and coping efficacy of 108 individuals with and without disabilities. Independent t-tests revealed that while individuals with disabilities perceived a significantly higher number of employment barriers, their coping efficacy was equivalent to that of participants without disabilities. The second study sought to identify employment facilitators for individuals with disabilities. Three open-ended questions were presented to 10 participants with visible disabilities and 11 participants with invisible disabilities. Responses were analyzed using inductive content analysis and revealed that while participants with visible disabilities were more likely to express the need for physical accessibility and job design needs, the invisible disability group emphasized the need for a supportive and empowering work environment as well as job design needs. The final study utilized transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994) to explore the lived experiences of four individuals with invisible disabilities in the context of employment. Emerging themes included experiencing a lack of understanding in the workplace, wanting a supportive, inclusive work environment, the importance of having a job consistent with one's assets and needs, and disability acting as a catalyst for individual development. Together, the findings of these studies shed light on the important role that the

environment plays in either facilitating or hindering employment opportunities for people with disabilities in Québec, as well as the differing experiences and needs of workers with visible and invisible disabilities. This research has implications for the development of specialized supported employment programs, as well as for the improvement of workplace accessibility.

Keywords: disability, employment, barriers, facilitators, coping efficacy, invisible disability, visible disability, accessibility, resilience

Résumé

Les personnes handicapées font face à des inégalités dans de nombreux aspects de leur vie quotidienne, y compris au niveau de l'emploi. Dans la province de Québec, seulement 40% des personnes handicapées sont sous emploi, comparativement à 73% pour la population générale (Camirand, Dugas, Cardin, Dubé, Dumitru, & Fournier, 2010). Le but de cette thèse multi-disciplinaire était d'utiliser une perspective d'études sur le handicap (Williams & Mavin, 2012) ainsi que la théorie sociale cognitive de l'orientation scolaire et professionnelle (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) pour explorer les obstacles à l'emploi, le sentiment d'efficacité et les facilitateurs d'emplois des personnes handicapées résidant au Québec. Dans la première étude, le questionnaire Obstacles à l'Insertion au Travail et Sentiment d'Efficacité pour les Surmonter (Corbière, Mercier, & Lesage, 2004) était utilisée pour mesurer les obstacle à l'emploi et le sentiment d'efficacité de 108 sujets avec et sans handicap. Des tests t indépendants ont révélé que, bien que les personnes handicapées aient perçu un nombre significativement plus élevé d'obstacles à l'emploi que les personnes non-handicapées, leur sentiment d'efficacité était semblable. La deuxième étude cherchait à identifier les facilitateurs d'emplois pour les personnes handicapées. Trois questions ouvertes ont été présentées à 10 participants ayant un handicap visible et à 11 ayant un handicap invisible. Les réponses ont été étudiées en utilisant une analyse de contenu inductive, révélant que, bien qu'il était plus probable que les participants souffrant d'un handicap visible expriment le besoin d'une accessibilité physique et de conception de tâches adaptée à leurs besoins, le groupe ayant un handicap invisible mettait l'accent sur le besoin d'un environnement de travail coopératif et valorisant en plus d'un conception de tâches adaptée à leurs besoins. La dernière étude utilisait la phénoménologie transcendante (Moustakas, 1994) pour explorer les expériences vécues de quatre personnes ayant un handicap invisible dans le contexte de l'emploi. Les thèmes émergeant incluaient expérimenter un manque de

compréhension dans le lieu de travail, désirer un environnement de travail coopératif et valorisant, l'importance d'avoir un emploi adapté aux atouts et besoins d'une personne, et l'handicap agissant comme un catalyseur pour le développement personnel. Ensemble, les résultats de ces études mettent en lumière le rôle important que joue l'environnement, ce dernier facilitant ou freinant les opportunités d'emplois pour les personnes handicapées au Québec, ainsi que les différences de besoins et d'expériences requis selon l'handicap des travailleurs (visible ou invisible). Cette recherche a des implications pour le développement de programmes spéciaux de l'emploi assisté ainsi que pour l'amélioration de l'accessibilité au lieu de travail.

Mots-clés : handicap, emploi, obstacles, facilitateurs, le sentiment d'efficacité, handicap invisible, handicap visible, accessibilité, ténacité

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Preface and Contribution of Authors

I am the primary author of each manuscript and wrote each independently. Dr. Tara Flanagan is the co-author on each manuscript, as she provided feedback on all of the initial drafts and served in an advisory capacity during the conceptualization and running of each project. The interview protocol developed for the study in Chapter 4 was created with feedback from Dr. Tara Flanagan, Dr. Jessica Ruglis, and Dr. Kevin McDonough. Dr. Kevin McDonough provided feedback on the manuscript in Chapter 3. The abstract, introduction, literature review (Chapter 1), discussion section (Chapter 5), and bridging manuscripts were written independently by myself with feedback from Dr. Tara Flanagan. The French translation of the abstract was performed by Patrice Beaudoin. All portions of this dissertation are original contributions.

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Introduction

> *"…[I]t is not the way in which people vary or the differences they have in comparison to others but what we make of those differences that matters."* (Baglieri, Valle, Connor, & Gallagher, 2011, p. 270)

What is a disability? The medical model of disability, also known as the individual model, views disability as an inherent medical problem within the individual, which is caused by a physical health problem and where the goal is to cure the individual of said disability (Oliver, 1983; World Health Organization [WHO], 2001). This has been the dominating conceptualization of disability throughout history, and has led to the severe mistreatment of people with disabilities who were viewed simply as victims whose only recourse for a better life was to seek rehabilitation or medical treatment (Barnes & Mercer, 2005). To combat the consistent marginalization of people with disabilities, a new perspective of disability was developed. The social model of disability was first articulated by Oliver (1983) in his book 'Social Work with Disabled People'. He defined this new model as one that understands disability as the consequence of societal factors, both environmental and cultural, that in turn impede full participation in society (Barnes, 2000; Oliver, 1983). The remedy is to promote social change which will eliminate barriers in order to promote full inclusion for those with disabilities (Oliver, 1983; WHO, 2001) in all areas of society to which people with disabilities are often not provided access: education, health and support services, transportation, physical spaces, and employment (Oliver, 2009).

The medical model of disability "was particularly significant in legitimating disabled people's exclusion from labour market participation" (Barnes & Mercer, 2005, p.530) and lead to

the widespread emphasis on vocational training and rehabilitation to increase participation of people with disabilities in the workforce (Oliver, 2009). A social model approach to employment, on the other hand, would entail identifying and removing barriers within workplaces and the greater society which make employment inaccessible to this population (Oliver, 2009). The medical model of disability has been the lens most utilized in the literature examining employment, management, and institutions and (also known as organization studies (Williams & Mavin, 2012), which has greatly negated the impact of the social environment on the employment experiences of individuals with disabilities.

As a result of a review of the existing literature regarding able-bodiedness, disability, and organization studies, Williams and Mavin (2012) developed a comprehensive disability studies lens which has largely influenced the discourse and philosophical perspective of this dissertation. The Disability Studies Lens (Williams & Mavin, 2012) embodies six essential principles for conducting research regarding disability: 1) to make use of social interpretation discourse with regard to disability, 2) to challenge the use of an individual or medical model discourse of disability, 3) to challenge societal expectations of able-bodiedness and the devaluation of those with disabilities in organization contexts, 4) to value experiences of disability, 5) to value the impact disability discourse has on an individual's experience of disability in society, and 6) to value the voices of people with disabilities as a critical avenue for developing theory. These six principles are essential for a respectful, insightful, and valid inquiry into the experience of disability within society, and are therefore critical to the understanding of the experiences of individuals with disabilities in the context of employment.

Despite the introduction of the social model of disability and the advances made by the Disability Rights Movement, people with disabilities are still experiencing substantial exclusion

from the workforce. The Disabilities Rights Movement, which emerged in the 1960's along with the Civil Rights Movement, consisted of individuals with disabilities and their allies who were fighting for their rights in various institutions, including schools and workplaces (Scotch, 1989). One result of this movement included new legislation to increase workplace accessibility and to protect workers with disabilities against discrimination, however, there is still a need for change. In Canada, only 49% of people with disabilities have a job, which is significantly lower than the 79% employment rate of people without disabilities (Turcotte, 2014). The rate is even lower in the province in Québec, where only 40% of people with disabilities work (Camirand, Dugas, Cardin, Dubé, Dumitru, & Fournier, 2010). People with disabilities who are employed tend to be hired for part-time work (Lee, 2013; Schur et al., 2002) in entry-level jobs (Kaye, 2009), and are even paid less than other part-time workers who do not have disabilities (Schur, 2002). As a result, people with disabilities experience higher poverty rates than the general population (Schur, 2002). Besides poverty, the repercussions of unemployment and underemployment among people with disabilities include high rates of low self-esteem (Hall & Parker, 2010), mental stress, depression (Lee, 2013), and lower life satisfaction (Konrad, Moore, Doherty, Ng, & Breward, 2012; Konrad, Moore, Ng, Doherty, & Breward, 2013; Moore, Konrad, Yang, Ng, & Doherty, 2011).

Access to employment is imperative for many reasons. According to the psychology-of-work theory by Blustein (2006), work provides a means of fulfilling some of the most basic human needs: the need for survival and power, the need for relatedness, and the need for self-determination. Having a job allows one to survive by providing an income which can be used to obtain resources and services, such as food, clothing, and housing (Blustein, 2006; Blustein, 2008; Blustein, Kenna, Gill, & Devoy, 2008), and also allows an individual to gain economic

power and social power within one's community (Blustein, 2006). Working provides an opportunity to build social connections, fulfilling the need to relate to other social beings and also offers a context in which an individual can act volitionally and choose jobs and careers that suit their strengths and needs, thus increasing motivation (Blustein, 2006).

The psychology-of-work theory is consistent with recent studies identifying the benefits of employment for individuals with disabilities. Employees with disabilities who work in jobs that are aligned with their educational backgrounds and skill levels are shown to have significantly higher life satisfaction than individuals with disabilities who are unemployed or underemployed (working below their skill level) (Konrad et al., 2012; Konrad et al., 2013; Moore et al., 2011). Quality of life is also found to be significantly and positively associated with employment among people with disabilities (Ra & King, 2016) and has also been positively related to self-report ratings of work satisfaction (Cock, Thoreson, & Lee, 2015). In their study regarding employment and well-being of individuals with chronic illness, Foubert, Levecque, and Van Rossem (2016) found that paid employment significantly moderated the relationship between chronic illness and well-being.

Individuals with disabilities are being denied access to basic human needs provided through employment. There is an impetus for more research that acknowledges the role that societal barriers play in the unemployment and underemployment of people with disabilities. While the social model of disability has begun to be applied within organizational research in order to identify employment barriers, it has yet to provide solutions to breaking down these barriers (Oliver, 2013). The purpose of this dissertation is to acknowledge this lack of information by investigating the experiences of employment, unemployment, and underemployment of people with disabilities in the province of Québec using a Disabilities

Studies Lens (Williams & Mavin, 2012). This lens highlights the use of a social model perspective of disability, challenges the notion that the unemployment of people with disabilities is due to an inherent lack of ability or potential, and stresses the importance of listening to the voices of people with disabilities. The main research questions that have prompted the investigations in the following three manuscripts are:

1) What do individuals with disabilities in Québec identify as barriers to employment, and how do these barriers differ according to type of disability?
2) What are the similarities and differences between the perceived barriers to employment for individuals with and without disabilities in Québec?
3) How much do individuals with disabilities in Québec feel able to cope with perceived and experienced barriers, and is this coping efficacy similar or different to that identified by individuals without disabilities in Québec?
4) What role do demographic factors, such as sex and ethnicity, play in the experience of employment, unemployment, and underemployment of people with disabilities in Québec?
5) What do individuals with disabilities in Québec identify as being necessary supports or facilitators to employment?

Chapter Overviews

In an attempt to answer the above-mentioned research questions, a literature review and three empirical studies were conducted and are described in the following chapters of this dissertation:

Chapter 1 consists of a comprehensive literature review concerning the current state of research regarding disability and employment. Recent statistics about employment rates of

people with disabilities are reviewed as are the topics of unemployment and underemployment for this population. Lent, Brown, and Hackett's (1994) Social Cognitive Career Theory is then described as it provides necessary developmental context to this field of study. Barriers to employment for people with disabilities are then reviewed, as are demographic characteristics that have been shown to impact the experience of such barriers. The importance of studying coping efficacy and its relation to employment barriers is emphasized, and the chapter concludes with gaps in the literature that guided the exploratory studies described in the subsequent three chapters.

In Chapter 2, I present the first of three manuscripts where the quantitative results of an empirical study evaluating perceived employment barriers and coping efficacy of 108 individuals with and without disabilities in Québec is presented. Differences between these two groups were assessed, and other demographic factors were appraised for their contributions (or lack thereof) to employment barriers and coping efficacy. Results are discussed concerning implications for supported employment programs as well as future research studies.

Chapter 3 consists of the second of three manuscripts: a qualitative study regarding the employment needs of 23 people with disabilities. These individuals are divided into two groups: those with visible and invisible disabilities. Their responses to three open-ended questions were analyzed using inductive content analysis, and similarities and differences between the themes and prevalence of themes in their answers are discussed.

In Chapter 4, I present the third of three manuscripts: a phenomenological study regarding the lived experience of having an invisible disability and employment/unemployment. Main themes, including lack of understanding, wanting a supportive and inclusive work

environment, needing a job aligned with one's needs and skills, and disability itself as a means for personal growth are explored.

Chapter 5 is a summative discussion chapter where I utilize Social Cognitive Career Theory to analyze the combined results of the three empirical studies and consider the implications of the findings. I conclude with a description of the original contributions of this dissertation.

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Chapter 1: Comprehensive Literature Review

This literature review begins with a section devoted to summarizing the current employment situation of individuals with disabilities, with a focus on the consequences of unemployment and underemployment. Next, the developmental theory that frames the research in this dissertation will be explored. The third section reviews the environmental and individual employment barriers that have been identified in the literature for people with disabilities, which is followed by an overview of the personal factors that impact one's experience of employment barriers, as well as a description of employment facilitators. The review concludes with a description of the gaps in the literature that authors in the field have identified which support the rationale for the original research conducted and described in the manuscripts that follow.

Employment Statistics for Individuals with Disabilities in Canada

Approximately 13.7%, or 3.8 million Canadians report having at least one disability that functionally affects their daily lives (Statistics Canada, 2013). The 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability showed that the top five disabilities experienced by Canadians included pain disorders (9.7% of the total population of Canadians), flexibility disorders (7.6%), mobility disabilities (7.2%), mental/psychological disabilities (3.9%), and dexterity disabilities (3.5%) (Statistics Canada, 2013). Other disabilities experienced by Canadians include hearing (3.2%), seeing (2.3%), learning (2.3%), developmental (.6%), and unknown (.3%) disabilities (Statistics Canada, 2013). The likelihood of having a disability increases with age, with those 65 years or older experiencing a disability prevalence rate of 33.2% (Statistics Canada, 2013). The disability type that one experiences also differs according to age group: Canadians between the ages of 15-24 years are more likely to have mental/psychological or learning disabilities rather than other types of disabilities, whereas pain, flexibility, and mobility disabilities are the most prevalent disability types for Canadians over the age of 45 (Statistics Canada, 2013).

The Employment Equity Act defines a person with a disability as someone who experiences

> a long-term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric or learning impairment and who a) consider themselves to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment, or b) believe that a employer or potential employer is likely to consider them to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment, and includes persons whose functional limitations owing to their impairment have been accommodated in their current job or workplace. (S.C. 1995, c.44, s.3)

While individuals with disabilities report wanting jobs at the same rate as people without disabilities (Ali, Schur, & Blanck, 2011), they experience extremely low levels of employment that differ significantly from the employment rates of people without disabilities (Ali et al., 2011; Schur, 2002; Turcotte, 2014). The Canadian rate of employment is 79% for the general population, but only 49% for Canadians with disabilities (Turcotte, 2014). The employment rate for people with more severe disabilities is half that of individuals with mild disabilities, and those with mental or psychological disabilities are at least 10% less likely to be employed than those in other disability groups (Turcotte, 2014).

Gender is an important demographic characteristic that greatly influences one's experience of employment. Canadian women are more likely to have a disability in general (Turcotte, 2014), are more likely to have severe or very severe disabilities, and are also more likely to have more than one disability (Camirand, Dugas, Cardin, Dubé, Dumitru, & Fournier, 2010). Consequently, women with disabilities are shown to have signficantly lower employment rates than men with disabilities (Turcotte, 2014). Women with disabilities also face the same

income disparity as females in the general population, with average annual incomes that are significantly lower than that of males with disabilities (Turcotte, 2014).

Québec Statistics

Québec employment statistics are consistent with those across Canada, however the employment rate for those with disabilities is even lower than the Canadian average. While 73% of Québecers without disabilities have work, only 40% of those with disabilities are employed (Camirand et al., 2010). This is significant, as a large proportion of Québec residents, approximately 10% of the population, has a disability (Camirand et al, 2010). Employment rates get smaller the more severe one's disability: Québecers with mild disabilities have an employment rate of 53%, those with moderate disabilities have a rate of 38%, and those with severe or very severe disabilities have a rate of only 22% (Camirand et al., 2010). Lower employment rates for Québecers with disabilities are consistent irregardless of education. The employment rate for university graduates with disabilities is only 57% compared to the 82% employment rate of university graduates without disabilities (Camirand et al., 2010).

Underemployment and Poverty

Many individuals with disabilities experience unemployment, however, those who do work face increased challenges in the workplace in terms of underemployment, lower income, and fewer opportunities for advancement. Underemployment, which refers to being hired for a job below one's skill level (Konrad, Moore, Doherty, Ng, & Breward, 2012; Konrad, Moore, Ng, Doherty, & Breward, 2013; Moore, Konrad, Yang, Ng, & Doherty, 2011) is a consistent problem for individuals with disabilities. The 2010 Federal Disability Report indicated that approximately 30% of working Canadians with disabilities were overqualified for the jobs in which they were working, as their education levels surpassed the difficulty of their job tasks

(Human Resources and Skills Development Canada [HRSDC], 2010). Schur, Kruse, Blasi, and Blanck (2009) found that workers with disabilities were less likely to be hired in professional or managerial jobs as compared to workers without disabilities.

People with disabilities often only find temporary (Schur, 2002), entry-level (Kaye, 2009) part-time jobs (Lee, 2013; Schur, 2002), and jobs in which advancement is unlikely (Barnes, 2000; Lee, 2013). Part-time and temporary employees receive less pay per hour in general when compared to permanent full-time workers (Schur, 2002), which in itself illuminates a disadvantage for employees with disabilities. However, part-time and temporary workers with disabilities have been found to be paid even less per hour than temporary and part-time workers without disabilities (Schur, 2002). Overall, individuals with disabilities who are employed receive lower wages than people without disabilities who have jobs (Barnes, 2000). While the average annual salary for a Canadian male is 65,588$, the average salary for a male with a mild/moderate disability is 56,624$ and 49,242$ for a male with a severe/very severe disability (Turcotte, 2014). Similarly, the average salary of Canadian females with mild/moderate and severe/very severe disabilities are 45,448$ and 42,688$, respectively, compared to the annual average of 49,565$ of females without disabilities. A study found that after controlling for factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, education, and number of hours worked, employed Canadians with disabilities earned 21% less than Canadian employees without disabilities (Gunderson & Lee, 2016).

Poverty is a widespread problem among individuals with disabilities (Hughes & Avoke, 2010; Lee, 2013; Stapleton, O'Day, Livermore, & Imparato, 2006), with rates signficantly higher compared to that of individuals without disabilities (Schur, 2002). Moreover, poverty is shown to be signficantly higher among people with disabilities compared to those without disabilities

regardless of whether they have permanent, full-time, part-time, or contract work (Schur et al., 2002). As a result, individuals with disabilities are more likely to experience food shortages than those without disabilities and express a fear of going hungry and of becoming homeless (Fawcett, 2000).

Besides poverty, the negative effects of unemployment, part-time employment, and underemployment for people with disabilities are many. Employees with disabilities are overrepresented in jobs with hazardous work conditions (Kaye, 2009) and often experience physical stress from working too many hours or from completing tasks that are too physically strenuous (Lee, 2013). Mental stress and depression are also linked to the underemployment of people with disabilities (Lee, 2013), as is low-self-esteem (Hall & Parker, 2010). These negative effects clearly indicate that "inadequate employment is associated with deleterious effects on employee well-being due to inferior need fulfillment and reduced social status" (Konrad et al., 2013, p.367) and highlight the significant impact poverty has on the well-being and quality of life of people with disabilities (Hughes & Avoke, 2010).

While the first step to addressing the dire state of employment among people with disabilities is to acknowledge that there is a problem, this is not enough. Knowing the specific obstacles that these individuals face is necessary in order to begin breaking down the barriers that contribute to their disablement in the workplace. Moreover, understanding what elements of the workplace help to facilitate their employment is integral to creating truly accessible work environments. Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) is a developmental theory that will be utilized to frame the exploration of workplace obstacles and facilitators for people with disabilities.

Social Cognitive Career Theory

The concept of workplace barriers and facilitators is central to Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, 2002). SCCT is a career development model that is based heavily on Albert Bandura's (1986) developmental theory regarding social cognition. Specifically, SCCT was conceptualized by applying Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory to the vocational context (Lent et al., 1994, 2002). Self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals are three central components of SCCT that were incorporated from Bandura's theory (Lent et al., 1994, 2002). Self-efficacy refers to an individual's beliefs about their performance capacities, which are believed to interact with an individual's outcome expectations (what they believe will happen as the result of their behaviours) as well as their personal goals (Lent et al., 1994, 2002). These cognitive aspects are theorized to then interact with the individual's personal characteristics, past experiences, and the environment, in order to explain the development of their career interests, choices, and behaviours over the lifespan (Lent et al., 1994, 2000; Lent, Morrison, & Ezeofor, 2013).

The environment plays a large role in SCCT, which draws upon "developmental-contextualist models" (Lent et al., 2000, p. 45) by incorporating a model of concentric circles delineating the various spheres of environmental areas distal and proximal to the individual that influence their career development (Lent et al., 2000). The authors of SCCT discuss how the environment can be visualized as two circles surrounding the individual, in which the circle surrounding the individual denotes the immediate and proximal environmental influences, such as friends and family, whereas the outermost circle represents the wider societal environment, which includes the economy and systemic racism (Lent et al., 2000). Lent and colleagues further explain how more complex ecological models with layers reflecting Urie Bronfenbrenner's

micro, meso, exo, and macrosystems can also be utilized to visualize the wider range of environmental influences on career development (Lent et al., 2000).

In SCCT, personal characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and disability are believed to be intricately involved in one's career development (Lent et al., 1994, 2000, 2002, Lent et al., 2013). These aspects are considered to be sociocultural with regard to SCCT, in that "their relevance to career development stems largely from the reactions they evoke from the social-cultural environment and from their relation to the structure of opportunity within which career behavior transpires" (Lent et al., 2002, p.268). Depending on the type of disability one has, an individual may be exposed to different types of experiences and feedback in their environment (Lent et al., 2013). This in turn can influence their career interests, their self-efficacy, and the choices they make in terms of employment (Lent et al., 2013). Lent and colleagues (2013) discuss the example of a child with a language processing disability who develops a lack of interest in activities involving reading and writing which then affects future career interests. The student may receive negative feedback from the environment such as teasing from peers, which in turn lowers their feelings of self-efficacy and the belief that they will be able to achieve positive outcomes in the future. This consequently leads to lower interest in career options that require the use of reading and writing skills (Lent et al., 2013). Moreover, simply observing another individual with similar characteristics succeed or fail at a particular task can impact one's self-efficacy through vicarious learning (Lent et al., 1994). This suggests that individuals with disabilities who observe others with disabilities experiencing negative school and/or work outcomes may consequently experience their own lower self-efficacy.

According to SCCT, an individual can experience both environmental barriers and supports to employment which affect their career development (Lent et al., 2013). Barriers are

conceptualized as obstacles to career development that are experienced by an element in the environment, whereas supports help to promote the development of one's career (Lent et al., 2013). Lent and colleagues (2013) have articulated that barriers and supports have particular significance in the career development of individuals with disabilities. Specifically, the extent to which career advancement opportunities are available, the career choices that are either supported or not, and the experiences in which self-efficacy, performance skills, and outcome expectations are formed are highly influenced by both environmental facilitators/supports and barriers/obstacles. Moreover, perceived environmental aspects are considered to be just as important for career development as objective environmental aspects (Lent et al., 1994, 2000). This points to the need to not only consider which environmental barriers and supports that individuals have already encountered in their lives, but also to understand what barriers and supports they perceive or expect to encounter in the future.

Barriers and Facilitators to Employment for Individuals with Disabilities

Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, 2002) emphasizes the importance of both the individual and the environment in an individual's experience of disability and employment. This theory is appropriate for the study of employment experiences among individuals with disabilities, since as argued by Barnes (2000), in order to truly understand the experience of employment for people with disabilities, one must concurrently consider the impact of personal factors, such as education level, as well as the impact of environmental factors such as culture, the physical work environment, and transportation. Specifically, it is necessary to regard how individual and environmental factors act as barriers, and facilitate, employment for individuals with disabilities.

Environmental Barriers to Employment for Individuals with Disabilities

Numerous environmental barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities have been identified in the literature. The most cited environmental barriers for people with disabilities include: workplace discrimination (Beatty, 2012; Burke et al., 2013; Hernandez, et al., 2007; Hernandez et al., 2008; Lindstrom, Kahn, & Lindsey, 2013; Louvet, 2007; Russinova, Griffin, Bloch, Wewiorski, & Rosoklija, 2011; Shier, Graham, & Jones, 2009; Till, Leonard, Yeung, & Nicholls, 2015), lack of jobs (Jorgensen et al., 2015; Noreau, Fougeyrollas, & Boschen, 2002; Till et al., 2015), lack of opportunities for career advancement (Beatty, 2012; Lee, 2013; Russinova et al., 2011; Wilson-Kovacs, Ryan, Haslam, & Rabinovich, 2008), inaccessible transportation (Beatty, 2012; Hagner, Dague, & Phillips, 2015; Hernandez et al., 2007), and loss of financial assistance due to employment (Jorgensen et al., 2015; Till et al., 2015).

Workplace discrimination. One of the most prominent barriers that individuals with disabilities express facing in the workplace is stigma and negative labelling due to their disability (Lindstrom, Kahn, & Lindsey, 2013). In Québec, 27% of individuals with disabilities reported that they had experienced discrimination in the workplace in the past 5 years (Camirand et al., 2010). Discrimination can manifest in overt or subtle ways (Snyder et al., 2010). In the workplace, overt discrimination against individuals with disabilities involves unequal pay, lack of promotions, and denial of training, while subtle discrimination includes social maltreatment (Snyder, et al., 2010). Snyder and colleagues (2010) found that among their sample of university employees, participants who had disabilities experienced significantly more overt discrimination and subtle discrimination than participants without disabilities. This difference was found after controlling for demographic factors such as age, ethnicity, and job type. In Canada, 12% of

individuals with disabilities reported that they had been refused a job due to their disability in the past 5 years (Turcotte, 2014). Severity of disability positively impacted the amount of perceived discrimination experienced by participants in the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability, where 38.4% of respondents with severe or very severe disabilities stated that they had been declined promotions or jobs whereas only 17.5% of respondents with mild or moderate disabilities reported similar acts of discrimination (Till et al., 2015).

Discrimination is often experienced via one's coworkers. In a study conducted by Beatty (2012), participants with chronic illness were interviewed regarding barriers that they had faced in the workplace, and participants reported that coworkers misunderstood the nature of their disabilities. One individual in particular recounted how their coworker asked whether her epilespy was contagious (Beatty, 2012). Participants in general felt that their coworkers pitied them because of their disabilities and doubted their capabilities to complete job tasks successfully (Beatty, 2012). A study by Robert and Harlan (2006) found that participants with various disabilities, including mobility, sensory, and developmental disabilites, experienced similar discrimination in the workplace. Participants were ignored by coworkers, left out of social networks, harassed, and those with visible disabilities reported being stared at. They also reported feeling like others judged them as being incompetent and helpless (Robert & Harlan, 2006). Analogous experiences were recounted by a sample of workers with psychiatric disabilities in a study conducted by Russinova and colleagues (2011). Participants reported various types of discriminatory practices that were engaged against them in their employment settings, including being excluded and ostracized, being harassed, and being spoken to condescendingly (Russinova et al., 2011).

In addition to experiencing discrimination from coworkers, employees with disabilities face the stigma of their employers and supervisors. On top of being ignored at work (Robert & Harlan, 2006), workers with disabilities have reported experiencing prejudice from employers when seeking a job (Hernandez et al., 2007) and reported being fired due to their disability (Russinova et al., 2011). In a study conducted by Corbière, Mercier, and Lesage (2004), participants with mental illness rated employer bias against employees with mental illness as one of the most likely barriers that could impede their work integration. Similarly, participants in the Hernandez and colleagues (2007) study "felt undervalued by employers who seemed to hold misperceptions about workers with disabilities" (p. 195). These negative attitudes are likewise experienced during the hiring process. While studies indicate that employer attitudes towards hiring workers with disabilities are generally positive, this is not actually reflected in hiring practices (Burke et al., 2013), nor when they are assessed in terms of specific attitudes, including how they feel about accommodations (Hernandez, Keys, & Balcazar, 2000). In fact, employers rate the social acceptability of hiring potential candidates with disabilities significantly higher than they rate their potential work performance (Nota et al., 2014).

A lack of understanding of disability and employment needs is at the core of discrimination. Hall and Parker (2010) found that job seekers with disabilities experienced a lack of support when seeking employment support services, due to employment service agents' lack of confidence when dealing with people with disabilities, as well as their lack of understanding of employment barriers in general. These misunderstandings of disability are reflected in the reasons employers cite as being barriers to hiring people with disabilities. The sample of employers in Kaye, Jans, and Jones' (2011) study cited that the most commonly reported barriers to hiring workers with disabilities included accommodation expenses, a lack of

awareness about disabilities and accommodations, and the fear of lawsuits should they fire the employee. Employers also report that a significant barrier to hiring people with disabilities is a lack of qualified candidates with disabilities, due to a lack of work experience or employment skills and training (Erickson, von Schrader, Bruyère, & VanLooy, 2013).

Lack of jobs or opportunities for advancement. Another frequently cited barrier to employment for individuals with disabilities is the overall lack of job opportunities (HRSDC, 2010; Jorgensen et al., 2015; Lindsay, 2010; Noreau, Fougeyrollas, & Boschen, 2002). This barrier was cited as the top job search barrier in the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability by unemployed Canadians with disabilities (Till et al., 2015). Difficulties with advancing in one's career is another significant obstacle (Barnes, 2000; Camirand et al., 2010; Lee, 2013; Wilson-Kovacs et al., 2008). Almost 50% of individuals with disabilities who responded to the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability reported that advancing in or changing their career was difficult because of their disability (Till et al., 2015). The most cited reason for this difficulty was the inability to work enough hours (Camirand et al., 2010; Till et al., 2015), which is particularly pertinent for individuals with very severe disabilities (Till et al., 2015).

Discrimination is also a key impediment to advancing in one's career (Camirand et al., 2010). Perceived discrimination among Canadians is associated with being denied jobs, job interviews, and promotions (Till et al., 2015). Workers with chronic illness have reported that others' misconceptions of their disability not only caused people to deny their abilities, but also negatively impacted their ability to advance in their job (Beatty, 2012). In the study conducted by Beatty (2012), workers with epilepsy were actually demoted to less demanding jobs after experiencing seizures. Similar experiences were found among employees with psychiatric

illnesses, who were denied promotions and salary raises as a result of their disability (Russinova et al., 2011).

Inaccessible transportation. For individuals with physical disabilities, sensory disabilities, chronic illness, and developmental disabilities, finding accessible transportation to and from work is a significant potential barrier to employment. Inaccessible transportation is a barrier when seeking a job (HRSDC, 2010; Till et al., 2015), and also in maintaining a job (Hernandez et al., 2007). Workers with epilepsy, for example, may avoid driving due to the risk of having a seizure. As a result, these individuals are limited by where they can work, as they may have to rely on taking public transportation to their jobs (Beatty, 2012). Individuals with physical disabilities not only experience difficulties when taking public transportation due to the lack of understanding of accommodation needs among public transportation workers, but also experience difficulties when utilizing adapted transportation services (Fawcett, 2000; Hernandez et al., 2007). The sample of participants with disabilities in Fawcett's (2000) study on employment and disability reported that adapted transportation was consistently late, was time consuming given the amount of individuals needed to be picked up (Fawcett, 2000; Hernandez et al., 2007), and also required being booked at least 24 hours in advance, which limited their ability to work flexible hours (Fawcett, 2000). Needing adapted transportation is even shown to be negatively related to employment success. Dutta and colleagues (2008) found that, among individuals with sensory disabilities who received vocational services, requiring transportation services was associated with a 31% reduction in the likelihood of obtaining a job.

Loss of financial assistance due to employment. Losing one's financial assistance that is provided due to one's disability is an environmental barrier to employment that many individuals with disabilities must manage, and is cited as one of the top ten job search barriers

for Canadians with disabilities (HRSDC, 2010; Till et al., 2015). Social assistance, which is provided by provincial and federal agencies to individuals who need help with paying for housing, medication, and transportation (Till et al., 2015), is typically lost if one works full-time and earns more than is permitted (Jorgensen et al., 2015). Moreover, due to factors such as underemployment, 18.5% of potential workers who received social assistance and who responded to the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability (Till et al., 2015), reported that they would likely receive a smaller income were they to become employed.

Individual Characteristics that Impact Environmental Barriers

SCCT emphasizes the need to understand the interaction between an individual's personal characterstics and the environment. This suggests the necessity for studying how individual characteristics shape the experience of employment barriers among individuals with disabilities. Authors Stone and Collela (1996) developed a model to investigate the treatment of workers with disabilities and suggested that an individual's personal characteristics interact in various ways with the characteristics of the work environment and other environmental factors such as legislation in order to explain how employees with disabilities are treated. The individual characteristics of the employee with a disability that Stone and Collela found integral to their model, which are aligned with those explored in SCCT, include: type of disability, concealability of disability, and demographic characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and social status (Stone & Collela, 1996).

Disability type. Disability type is considered a key determinant of treatment in the workplace (Stone & Collela, 1996). Specifically, able-bodied workers are likely to categorize the employee with a disability according to the information they have regarding their disability, and subsequently assign characteristics to that individual that they believe are consistent with the

assigned category (Stone & Collela, 1996). This process of stereotyping leads those able-bodied workers to (falsely) assign negative or harmful characteristics onto the person with a disability, thus significantly impacting how they then interact with them (Stone & Collela, 1996). Moreover, Stone and Collela (1996) theorized that "each disability category evokes different stereotypic perceptions and job-related expectancies about the person" (p. 362). Consequently, while in general it has been found that individuals with disabilities experience a significant amount of discrimination in the workplace (Beatty, 2012; Hernandez et al., 2007; Hernandez et al., 2008; Lindstrom, Kahn, & Lindsey, 2013; Louvet, 2007; Russinova et al., 2011; Shier et al., 2009; Till et al., 2015), the amount of negative attitudes experienced is shown to differ depending on one's disability type. There is therefore a critical need to study not only attitudes towards employing individuals with disabilities in general, but attitudes towards individuals with different types of disabilities (Bell & Klein, 2001).

Nota and colleagues (2013) found that individuals with sensory disabilities and intellectual disabilities were rated more highly by potential employers on work performance and social acceptability than those with psychological disabilities. This is consistent with the literature indicating that individuals with mental illness perceive prejudices as being the most cited obstacle to employment (Corbière, Bordeleau, Provost, & Mercier, 2002), experience a large amount of prejudice in the workplace (Russinova et al., 2011), and are 23% less likely to be employed after receiving vocational rehabilitation services than those with other disability types (Oberoi et al., 2015).

Employment is therefore more or less difficult to obtain depending on the type of disability one has. Studies have found that individuals with cognitive, mental health, and developmental disabilities have lower employment rates as compared to those with sensory or

physical disabilities (Till et al., 2015). Other studies have discovered that individuals with mobility and mental disabilities are less likely to attain work than those with other types of disabilities (Ali et al., 2011). Jorgensen and colleagues (2015) established that college and university graduates/leavers with chronic health, psychological, and visual disabilities as well as those who used wheelchairs or scooters were more likely to be unemployed as compared to graduates who were blind, had upper limb limitations, or who used canes or crutches.

While many supported employment or vocational programs exist in order to facilitate the process of obtaining a job for individuals with any kind of disability, the likelihood of becoming employed with the help of such programs also differs depending on one's disability. Dutta, Gervey, Chan, Chou, and Ditchman (2008) for example found that people with sensory disabilities experienced more employment success with vocational rehabilitation services as compared to those with physical or mental disabilities (Dutta et al., 2008). These individuals experienced a 75% employment rate following services, while those with mental and physical disabilities experienced employment rates of 55% and 56%, respectively. Moreover, clients with sensory disabilities and physical disabilities were more likely to obtain professional or technical jobs compared to those with mental disabilities (Dutta et al., 2008).

Although the majority of studies that examine barriers to employment for persons with disabilities consider all participants with disabilities as one homogenous group, Lindsay (2010) conducted a critical study that acknowledged the importance of gaining a better understanding of the barriers faced according to disability type. Participants from the study included individuals from ages 15-24 who identified as either having mobility, hearing, communication, vision, or cognitive disabilities (Lindsay, 2010). Results showed that disability type was a significant predictor of the form of barriers experienced in the workplace. For example, significantly more

teenage participants with mobility disabilities cited losing their funding or housing as a barrier to employment than those in other disability groups. Participants with hearing disabilities cited facing discrimination as a barrier significantly more than other participants, and those with cognitive disabilities reported isolation from coworkers as a significantly higher barrier than other disability groups (Lindsay, 2010).

Disability visibility. Another way in which disability can be categorized is in terms of its visibility. Some disabilities are characterised as visible, which refers to the disability having a perceptable characteristic that is apparent to other individuals. Many physical disabilities, such as paraplegia or spina bifida, for example, are identified as visible disabilities. Invisible disabilities are those that do not have any apparent features that are linked to a particular disability, and include chronic illness, sensory, psychological, developmental, and learning disabilities (Santuzzi, Waltz, Finkelstein, & Rupp, 2014). Stone and Collela (1996) refer to this aspect of disability as 'concealability', and recognize its significance in explaining how workers with disabilities are treated. They argue that, "…the more the disability is visible to others, the more negative will be the categorization and affective reactions to others" (p.364). This is consistent with research showing that disability visibility is a significant predictor of employment outcomes, where individuals with visible disabilities are 16 times less likely to be employed than those with invisible disabilities (Martz, 2003). While individuals with invisible disabilities may not experience the same immediate discrimination as those with more apparent disabilities, they experience a unique set of difficulties with respect to employment that requires inquiry.

Organization research focusing on individuals with visible social identities is not representative of the experiences that individuals with invisible social identities face (Clair,

Beatty, & MacLean, 2005). People with invisible social identities, for example, have added pressure in terms of information management regarding whether they choose to disclose their identity (Clair et al., 2005). This decision is "shaped not only by the threat of stigmatization but also by concerns of authenticity and legitimacy" (Clair et al., 2005, p.79). Such decisions cause added stress for the individual, who likely will worry about the threat of prejudice before choosing to disclose, as well as afterwards (Clair et al, 2005).

For workers with invisible disabilities, disclosure is a significant and unique issue (Lee, 2013). These individuals are shown to have increased fear of being fired compared to those with visible disabilities (von Schrader, Malzer, & Bruyère, 2014). In trying to obtain their legal rights as guaranteed by certain protections, workers with invisible disabilities may be risking the potential stigma that they are trying to avoid (Beatty & Kirby, 2006). For example, individuals who disclose invisible disabilities in order to receive needed accommodations may experience negative reactions from coworkers who do not believe they have a disability (Colella, 2001). Workers who do not disclose their disability, but experience difficulties in maintaining their work performance because of their disability, are likely to be judged as lacking knowledge or skills (Clair et al., 2005; Santuzzi et al., 2014; Stone, 2005).

Research regarding the differing employment experiences of people with invisible and visible disabilities is mixed. In one study, individuals with sensory disabilities report feeling less valued and facing increased employer discrimination compared to workers with physical disabilities (Hernandez et al., 2007). Snyder and colleagues (2010) found that individuals with non-physical disabilities experienced more subtle discrimination and procedural injustice than workers with physical disabilities. On the other hand, Louvet's (2007) study that required participants to rate hypothetical job applicants found that workers with physical disabilities were

rated as less competent and productive, though more open and conscientious, than workers without physical disabilites. Another study found that job applicants with less visible disabilities were rated more positively than applicants with more highly visible disabilities (Gouvier, Steiner, Jackson, Schlater, & Rain, 1991). These differing results suggest that more research is needed regarding the topic of disability visibility and employment outcomes.

Demographic characteristics. In addition to one's disability type and disability in/visibility, demographic factors can influence the amount of employment barriers one will encounter. Gender, education, and work status are three such factors (Fabian, Ethridge, & Beveridge, 2009). Specifically, being male, having more education, and currently working were all associated with lower perceived barrier results among participants in Fabian, Ethridge, and Beveridge's (2009) study of individuals with disabilities. Demographic characteristics can also predict the types of barriers that will be experienced. Disability severity, education level, income status, gender, and geography are all found to predict barrier type (Lindsay, 2010). In Lindsay's (2010) study based on the 2006 Participation Activity Limitation Survey data, being female, having a low income, and having either a vision, communication, or cognitive disability predicted family duties as being a barrier to employment, whereas being male, having a communication or mobility disability, having a long-term disability, living in a rural region, and having a low income predicted lack of jobs as being a barrier. The barrier of losing one's support income was explained by the following demographic factors: having more education, having a mobility, cognitive, or communication disorder, and/or having a lower income (Lindsay, 2010).

Ethnicity is another important factor that has been shown to increase the workplace barriers experienced by individuals with disabilities. Specifically, workers with disabilities of

colour report facing more employer discrimination. This is consistent with Stone and Collela's model, which suggests that "…negative reactions to persons with disabilities may be exacerbated by their race or ethnicity […because…] negative characteristics are often ascribed to the prototypical member of a racial minority group" (Stone & Collela, 1996, p.368). In a focus group study conducted by Hernandez and colleagues (2007), this discrimination was experienced by workers with disabilities of colour who were sent home for speaking Spanish, and were asked if they were legal citizens, among other racist behaviours. Likely the result of this discrimination, African Americans and Native Americans with disabilities have been shown to experience less employment success than European Americans, despite receiving the same vocational services (Dutta et al., 2008). In a study concerning women with disabilities who utilized vocational rehabilitation services, Oberoi and colleagues (2015) found that being Black was associated with 32% lower odds of having a job as compared to being White. Moreover, once an individual with a disability from a minority group is employed, they encounter further barriers in terms of pay gaps. Gunderson and Lee (2016) found that Canadian workers with disabilities who were from minority groups or identified as Aboriginal were paid significantly less than other employed Canadians with disabilities.

The individual factors of a worker with a disability are critical to consider in terms of how they may impact their experience of environmental barriers in the workplace. However, the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) acknowledges that individual factors may also play the role of barriers themselves (WHO, 2001). In the next section, individual factors that have been identified in the literature as being barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities will be explored.

Individual Factors as Barriers to Employment for Individuals with Disabilities

The most commonly identified individual factors that act as barriers to employment for people with disabilities in the literature include: lack of work skills/work experiences/education (Fabian, Ethridge, & Beveridge, 2009; Hernandez et al., 2007; HRSDC, 2010; Jorgensen et al., 2015; Lindstrom, Kahn, & Lindsey, 2013; Schur et al., 2009) and limitations due to one's disability (Beatty, 2012; HRSDC, 2010; Jorgensen et al., 2015; Shier et al., 2009; Schopp et al., 2007; Till et al., 2015). Although these are listed as individual barriers, it should be noted that such factors are likely also heavily influenced by the environment, and thus cannot be solely explained by personal characteristics.

Lack of work skills/experience/education. Individuals with disabilities cite that lacking work skills, work experience (Fabian, Ethridge, & Beveridge, 2009; Jorgensen et al., 2015), and training (HRSDC, 2010; Lindstrom, Kahn, & Lindsey, 2013) are barriers to employment. Studies have found that participants with disabilities also feel that they lack the appropriate amount of education (Hernandez et al., 2007) or certifications (Jorgensen et al., 2015) to get a job. Potential workers with disabilities reported in the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability that inadequate training or work experience was one of the top barriers to finding employment (Till et al., 2015). Again, while this is listed as an internal barrier to employment, lack of training could also be considered an environmental barrier, as it may not be under the individual's control. In fact, Schur and colleagues (2009) found that workers with disabilities were less likely to receive both formal training that is company-sponsored, and informal training given by coworkers.

Limitations due to disability. One's disability may cause particular limitations to physical or mental abilities that contribute to the difficulty of obtaining or maintaing a particular job. This is why it was one of the most highly rated barriers of employment for individuals with

disabilities (Jorgensen et al., 2015), and the reason cited by 65% of Canadians with disabilities for why they are not in the labour force (HRSDC, 2010). Of Canadians who were completely unable to work due to their disabilities, 49.5% had very severe disabilities, and 28.2% had severe disabilities (Till et al., 2015). Workers with epilepsy, for example, have reported that the seizures they experience and the side effects of the medication they take affected their work performance (Beatty, 2012), and have led to their voluntary resignation (Shier et al., 2009). Workers with multiple sclerosis reported being negatively affected by the pain, numbness, and mobility difficulties caused by their chronic illness (Beatty, 2012). Individuals with psychiatric disabilities, specifically depression, express that their symptoms negatively affect their motivation to work (Shier et al., 2009). Finally, individuals with spinal cord injuries have reported that pain and fatigue are significant employment obstacles (Schopp et al., 2007).

While it is necessary to acknowledge the significant impact that an individual's disability may have on their day to day functioning, it is even more important to consider how the environment contributes to the true disablement of that individual. Physical and psychological difficulties, while disruptive, do not necessarily disable the individual. Using a Disability Studies Lens (Williams & Mavin, 2012) necessitates identifying the aspects of the environment that prevent an individual from participating fully in the workforce. While people with disabilities identify their own disability-specific limitations as significant barriers to employment (Jorgensen et al., 2015), it is the responsibility of society to provide the right accommodations and work environments that facilitate work opportunities despite these difficulties. In so doing, these so-called limitations will no longer act as barriers, thus eliminating the vocational disablement of these individuals.

Employment Facilitators for Individuals with Disabilities

Employment barriers are critical to identify in order to begin creating inclusive employment spaces. However, it is just as important to identify the characteristics of the workplace that help to facilitate positive employment experiences (Lent et al., 2000), particularly for individuals with disabilities. The two main employment facilitators for individuals with disabilities that have been identified in the literature include: positive employer and coworker attitudes (Nevala, Pehkonen, Koskela, Ruusuvuori, & Anttila, 2015) and accommodations (Camirand et al., 2010; HRSDC, 2010; Nevala et al., 2015; Till et al., 2015).

Positive Employer and Coworker Attitudes

Employers can impact the culture of their workplace in terms of it's inclusiveness (Erikson, von Schrader, Bruyère, & VanLooy, 2014). Just as negative employer and coworker attitudes are found to be significant barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities, their positive attitudes are shown to be significant facilitators of employment (Nevala et al., 2015). In their literature review on the subject, Nevala and colleagues (2015) identified several studies indicating that having employers and coworkers who knew about disabilities, had previously worked with people with disabilities, supported workplace accommodations, and supported the process of returning to work after developing a disability, were all facilitators to employment. Employees with disabilities have indicated that good employers "included them with all employees and listened to their concerns and needs" and are flexible and understanding about their needs (Gillbride, Stensrud, Vandergoot, & Golden, 2003, p.133).

Accommodations

Reports from the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability showed that 42.3% of workers with disabilities indicated that they required workplace accommodations (Till et al., 2015).

These results are almost identical in Québec, where 41% of workers with disabilities report needing accommodations (Camirand et al., 2010). The need for accommodations increased with the severity of one's disability: 63.6% of workers with severe/very severe disabilities reported needing accommodations versus 32.3% of workers with mild/moderate disabilities (Till et al., 2015). Receiving workplace accommodations has been shown to significantly predict higher life satisfaction among employees with various types of disabilities (Konrad et al., 2013) and childhood-onset disabilities (Moore et al., 2011). A moderate amount of evidence has been found indicating that workplace accommodations facilitate the successful employment of individuals with physical disabilities (Nevala et al., 2015), but more research is needed to generalize these results to individuals with other types of disabilities.

Accommodations can include either work schedule/work duty accommodations or environmental accommodations. Working on a modified schedule is the number one needed accommodation reported by Canadians with disabilities (Camirand et al., 2010; HRSDC, 2010; Till et al., 2015) with having modified work duties a close second (HRSDC, 2010; Till et al., 2015). Working on a modified schedule was reported as a needed accommodation by almost 26% of workers with disabilities in Québec (Camirand et al., 2010). Environmental accommodations (which include modifications to the physical environment of the workplace) that workers with disabilities express needing include special chairs or back supports (Camirand et al., 2010; Till et al., 2015), ergonomic workstations (Camirand et al., 2010; Lacaille, Sheps, Spinelli, Chalmers, & Esdaile, 2004; Till et al., 2015), teleworking, adapted computers, accessible elevators, rails/ramps/wide spaces for wheelchairs, interpreters or personal assistants (Till et al., 2015) accessible transportation, accessible parking, and accessible washrooms (HRSDC, 2010).

Barriers to receiving accommodations. Notwithstanding a growing understanding of the types of accommodations needed in the workplace for employees with disabilities, many workers with disabilities are still not receiving the accommodations that they need. There are several reasons for this. Numerous workers with disabilities report that they do not feel comfortable asking their employers for accommodations and/or that they are afraid of asking for them (HRSDC, 2010). Many employers claim that accommodations are too expensive (HRSDC, 2010; Kaye, Jans, & Jones, 2011) and as a result, refuse to provide said accommodations (HRSDC, 2010). The fear of expensive accommodations is not only a barrier that keeps employers from hiring employees with disabilities, but also prevents employers from retaining employees witht disabilities (Kaye et al., 2011). This lack of understanding may be the result of deep-seated bias against the capabilities of people with disabilities. A study conducted by Paetzold and colleagues (2008) revealed that participants without disabilities rated granting an accommodation to a person with a disability as less fair than not granting the accommodation, and granting an accommodation to an individual with a disability who ends up performing better than others as even less fair. The authors suggested that this may be due to participants having an unfair bias against those with disabilities, believing that the individual in question was incompetent (Paetzold et al., 2008).

Coping

It is clear that, despite the growing awareness of accommodation options and the importance of inclusive workplaces, individuals with disabilities still face a disproportionate amount of barriers to employment. However, an analysis of both environmental barriers and an individual's ability to cope with such barriers is critical to gaining a complete understanding of the state of employment of people with disabilities (Corbière et al., 2004; Lent, Hackett, &

Brown, 1998). Coping efficacy refers to an individual's ability to overcome difficulties and is important as it can allow someone to succeed in their performance in the face of obstacles that may be hindering their progress (Hackett & Byars, 1996). It is a significant concept as it can greatly impact career goal attainment (Corbière et al., 2004). When faced with complex situations, like trying to obtain a job, not only does an individual consider how well they believe they can perform in general, but their behaviours may be impacted by how well they believe they can cope with the obstacles that could arise (Lent et al., 1998). This is corroborated by Fabian and colleagues (2009), who argue that "[p]erceived barriers are potentially mitigated by two factors: one is the individual's coping efficacy, and the other is the individual's perception of and access to contextual supports to manage the effect of them on subsequent outcomes" (p. 43).

Within disability literature, coping has largely been studied in the context of pain management and management of other symptoms related to disabilities or chronic illnesses. Wang, Badley, and Gignac (2004), for example, conducted a study which found that coping efficacy mediated the relationship between perceived independence and activity limitations among individuals with osteoarthitis and osteoporosis. A study by Alok and colleagues (2014) discovered that the use of appropriate coping strategies was associated with higher quality of life among participants with fibromyalgia. Similar results were found by Mikula and colleagues (2014), where coping self-efficacy among individuals with multiple sclerosis was shown to significantly predict higher psychological quality of life. The results from these studies are consistent with the notion that coping self-efficacy can facilitate positive outcomes when obstacles need to be overcome (Lent et al., 2000).

Gaps in the Literature

While there is a growing base of literature regarding employment and disability, there are still several areas that are lacking. Specifically, there is a need for more research that takes into account the coping efficacy of workers with disabilities, the specific barriers experienced by individuals with different types of disabilities, and the perspectives of workers with disabilities. Further, more geographically diverse qualitative research on the topic of employment and disability is imperative to move the field forward in addressing this important issue.

Social Cognitive Career Theory and Coping

With regard to SCCT, it is clear that the environment, and barriers within the environment in particular, play a significant role in career development (Lent et al., 2000, Lent et al., 2013). However, the authors of SCCT note that while this theory is readily applicable to the study of career development of individuals with disabilities, few studies on this topic have utilized their model (Lent et al., 2013). In addition, Lent and colleagues emphasize that, while some researchers have begun investigating the specific barriers that individuals with disabilities face in the workplace, more research is needed regarding how individuals cope with such obstacles (Lent et al., 2013) and how coping efficacy relates to perceived barriers (Lent et al., 2000).

Barriers According to Disability Type and Visibility

There is the need for inquiry into the specific barriers experienced by individuals with various types of disabilities (Hall & Parker, 2010; Lindsay, 2010; Shier et al., 2009; Snyder et al., 2010). The majority of studies regarding disability have typically grouped all people with disabilities into one homogenous sample (Lindsay, 2010), which does not allow researchers to account for the experience of having a particular type of disability. Knowing whether some

barriers are experienced more or less by individuals with various types of disabilities is critical in developing appropriate and efficient supported employment programs (Lindsay, 2010). In addition to more research regarding disability types, there is also a need for inquiries regarding the employment outcomes of individuals with visible and invisible disabilities (Martz, 2003). Understanding the unique needs of workers with invisible disabilities in particular has been emphasized (Santuzzi et al., 2014).

Research in Different Geographic Areas

Conducting research on employment in various geographic areas is very important. This is because the economics of the region can impact the labour market, and consequently impact the employment of individuals with disabilities (Till et al., 2015). Lindsay (2010) found that geographic area significantly impacted the types of barriers that their sample of employees with disabilities experienced. Despite these advances, there is a need for more research regarding employment barriers experienced by people with disabilities in different geographic locations (Fabian et al., 2009).

Worker Perspectives

The majority of research studies conducted regarding employment and disability have focused on employer perceptions of workers with disabilities (ie. Araten-Bergman, 2016; Erikson et al., 2014; Hernandez et al., 2000; Luecking, 2008; Shankar et al., 2014; Snyder, et al., 2010). As a result, there is a call for more research concerned with the actual work experiences of people with disabilities themselves, since “maintaining research focus solely on exploration of the attitudes of others toward disabled workers has the potential to underestimate the extent of discrimination and unfair treatment actually experienced” (Snyder et al., 2010, p.7). Williams and Mavin (2012) have articulated the need for research that embraces the perspective of the

individual with a disability, and gives voice to their experiences in employment settings as well as their self-defined needs.

Qualitative Data

There is a need for more qualitative research regarding employment barriers to support the quantitative research that dominates this field of study (Hernandez et al., 2007). Qualitative research can "[…] be a valuable window through which to view the lived experiences of individuals with disabilities…[and]…can clarify how the disability itself, societal attitudes, and social environments work in combination to affect an individual's experiences" (O'Day & Killeen, 2002, p.15). Using both quantitative and qualitative research methods together can provide an avenue for collecting generalizable data, as well as data that provides insight into how individuals with disabilities experience the world (O'Day & Killeen, 2002).

Conclusion

Research regarding the employment experiences of individuals with disabilities has been gaining traction in recent years. Studies exploring the barriers to employment have allowed for the identification of various environmental and individual barriers to employment that are common among workers with disabilities. Moreover, there is a decent body of literature about employment facilitators that promote the successful employment of persons with disabilites. Research concerning the factors that impact one's experience of barriers and facilitators, including disability type, gender, and other demographic characteristics, however, is lacking, as is a focus on how individuals with disabilities cope with employment barriers. Studies are also needed that inquire into employment and disability within specific geographic spaces. In addition, there is a lack of studies that incorporate qualitative research methodology, and the perspectives of people with disabilities themselves. The following manuscripts draw upon

Social Cognitive Career Theory and utilize a Disabilities Studies Lens in order to address these gaps in the literature and provide a comprehensive study regarding the employment experiences of individuals with disabilities living in the province of Québec.

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Chapter 2: Manuscript #1

An exploration of employment barriers and coping efficacy among individuals with and without disabilities in Québec

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Abstract

People with disabilities are known to encounter many obstacles to achieving successful employment outcomes, and consequently experience high rates of poverty. Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994), proposes the need to study both employment barriers, as well as coping efficacy in order to better understand the career trajectories of individuals with disabilities. This study sought to identify the demographic factors that are relevant to perception of employment barriers as well as coping efficacy among a sample of individuals with and without disabilities from the Canadian province of Québec. The results showed that participants with disabilities perceived an overall higher number of potential barriers to employment compared to participants without disabilities. Despite this, the coping efficacy of both groups was statistically similar. These results confirm that people with disabilities perceive more potential barriers to their employment that people without disability. However, the equivalent ratings of self-efficacy among both groups suggests the potential for the development of resiliency among this often marginalized group.

An exploration of employment barriers and coping efficacy among individuals with and without disabilities in Québec

According to Statistics Canada (2013), about 14% of Canadians report having a disability that significantly affects their lives. Disability rates are similar in the province of Québec, where 10% of the population reports experiencing a disability (Camirand, Dugas, Cardin, Dubé, Dumitru, & Fournier, 2010). There are a variety of disability types including pain disorders, physical disabilities, psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, learning disabilities, and developmental disabilities (Statistics Canada, 2013), all of which can potentially lead to experiences of disadvantage in an employment setting. In the province of Québec, the employment rate of people with disabilities is significantly lower than that of individuals without disabilities – 40% compared to 73% (Camirand et al., 2010). Workers with disabilities tend to be hired for part-time jobs (Lee, 2013; Schur, 2002), and are paid significantly less than workers without disabilities (Barnes, 2000; Gunderson & Lee, 2016; Schur, 2002; Turcotte, 2014). Consequently, people with disabilities suffer from very high poverty rates (Hughes & Avoke, 2010; Schur, 2002; Stapleton, O'day, Livermore, & Imparato, 2006).

Background

Social Cognitive Career Theory

Developmental theories can provide insight into the career trajectories of individuals with disabilities. In particular, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), conceptualized by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994), is thought to be very appropriate for research concerning employment barriers and self-efficacy of people with disabilities (Szymanski, Hershenson, Enright, & Ettinger, 1996). Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) examines career development with a focus on the relationship between the cognition of an individual, their

personal characteristics, and the environment (Lent et al., 1994, 2000, 2002; Lent, Morrison, & Ezeofor, 2013). In the matter of cognition, the model considers an individual's self-efficacy, personal goals, and outcome expectations (Lent et al., 1994, 2000, 2002). Self-efficacy is defined as an individual's personal beliefs about how likely they are to perform successfully, outcome expectations are what an individual believes will happen as a result of their performance, and personal goals refer to an individual's career goals (Lent et al., 1994, 2000, 2002). Interactions between these cognitive components and the individual's personal characteristics, environment, and learning experiences lead to the career decisions an individual makes, their career interests, and their overall work performance (Lent et al., 1994, 2000, 2002; Lent et al., 2013).

SCCT proposes that individual characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, and disability contribute to career development in that they affect how one is treated and what opportunities are provided to them, which then influence one's own behaviour and interests (Lent et al., 1994, 2000, 2002; Lent et al., 2013). The social environment can therefore play a substantial role in an individual's career development, and, depending on one's characteristics, present multiple barriers to success (Lent et al., 2013). For individuals from marginalized groups, including people with disabilities, environmental obstacles are much more likely to be encountered. In order to provide more access to employment, it is necessary to understand what barriers individuals with disabilities face throughout their careers. Moreover, SCCT suggests that it is also necessary to consider what people perceive as potential future obstacles, as this too can significantly impact their career development (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).

Employment Barriers

Numerous barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities have been identified in the literature. According to the model for functioning and disability constructed by the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), barriers may be characterised as being either physical or social aspects of the environment (World Health Organization [WHO], 2001). Physical environmental barriers refer to the physical characteristics of the workplace, including workspaces, tools and physical resources, and transportation, whereas social aspects refer to the workplace community and how coworkers and employers interact with one another. Moreover, people with disabilities have reported that obstacles to employment also arise as a result of their particular disorders.

Two of the most common social environmental employment barriers identified by individuals with disabilities are discrimination in the workplace (Beatty, 2012; Burke et al., 2013; Hernandez et al., 2007; Hernandez et al., 2008; Jongbloed, Backman, Forwell, & Carpenter, 2007; Lindsay, McDougall, Menna-Dack, Sanford, & Adams, 2015; Lindstrom, Kahn, & Lindsey, 2013; Louvet, 2007; Russinova, Griffin, Bloch, Wewiorski, & Rosoklija, 2011; Shier, Graham, & Jones, 2009; Till, Leonard, Yeung, & Nicholls, 2015) and dearth of advancement opportunities (Beatty, 2012; Lee, 2013; Russinova et al., 2011; Wilson-Kovacs, Ryan, Haslam, & Rabinovich, 2008). Being stigmatized and labelled negatively at work is a common concern for many individuals with disabilities (Lindstrom et al., 2013). Employees with disabilities report that, because of their disability, they are viewed as incompetent (Beatty, 2011; Jongbloed et al., 2007; Robert & Harlan, 2006). They experience harassment, are ignored, and are excluded by others in the workplace (Robert & Harlan, 2006; Russinova et al., 2011). It is likely due to this discrimination that people with disabilities are not provided with the same

opportunities to advance career-wise as those without disabilities. Canadians with disabilities report that being denied promotions is a significant obstacle to career development, as is being denied jobs and even interviews (Till et al., 2015). Not only are workers with disabilities barred from gaining more advanced work positions, many state that they have been fired because of their disability (Russinova et al., 2011).

With regard to the physical environment, among the most commonly cited employment barriers for people with disabilities are difficulties with transportation (Beatty, 2012; Hagner, Dague, & Phillips, 2015; Noel, Oulvey, Drake, & Bond, 2017; Hernandez et al., 2007; Schopp et al., 2007) and other physical aspects of the workplace (Lindsay, McDougall, Menna-Dack, Sanford, & Adams, 2015; Schopp et al., 2007). Transportation can be a major employment obstacle for people with various types of disabilities. Individuals with epilepsy report not being able to drive due to potential seizures, and therefore need to take public transportation to work (Beatty, 2012). Transportation is also an issue for individuals with developmental disabilities (Noel et al., 2017), physical disabilities (Fawcett, 2000; Hernandez et al., 2007), and sensory disabilities (Dutta, Gervey, Chan, Chou, & Ditchman, 2008). Obstacles emerge as the result of a lack of accessible buses, transportation workers who do not understand the accommodation needs of people with disabilities (Hernandez et al., 2007), and unreliable, time-consuming, and inflexible adapted transportation (Fawcett, 2000; Hernandez et al., 2007). In addition to transportation, people with disabilities may find some aspects of the workplace physically inaccessible. For example, individuals who have mobility difficulties may find working in a fast-paced store unrealistic, as they would not be able to walk back and forth quickly (Lindsay et al., 2015). Other physical workplace barriers for people with disabilities include the need to type on a keyboard and lack of elevator access (Lindsay et al., 2015).

It is argued that while it is critical to evaluate the environment for possible barriers, it is just as necessary to consider personal variables that individuals with disabilities report as being obstacles to their employment (Barnes, 2000). Lacking education (Hernandez et al., 2007) is a barrier to employment that people with disabilities have noted in the literature, as is lacking the appropriate training or qualifications for jobs (Jorgensen et al., 2015). In fact, lack of training or work experience is one of the top rated barriers to employment listed by Canadians with disabilities (Till et al., 2015). Moreover, many people with disabilities cite that difficulties resulting from their disability is a significant obstacle to employment (Beatty, 2012; Human Resources and Skills Development Canada [HRSDC], 2010; Jorgensen et al., 2015; Shier et al., 2009; Schopp et al., 2007; Till et al., 2015). Symptoms such as pain (Beatty, 2012; Schopp et al., 2007), fatigue (Schopp et al., 2007), mobility difficulties, and medication side effects (Beatty, 2012) have all been listed as substantial employment barriers.

While most studies examining barriers to employment for people with disabilities include participants with various types of disabilities in one sample (Lindsay, 2010), some have sought to identify the specific barriers that are experienced by specific disability groups. Beatty (2012) conducted a study that identified both physical and environmental factors that act as barriers to employment for individuals with chronic illness. Participants with epilepsy reported that medication side effects, seizures, and lack of accessible transportation to work are common employment barriers, while individuals with multiple sclerosis listed pain and mobility difficulties as key employment barriers (Beatty, 2012). Both groups highlighted that encountering coworkers' and employers' stereotypes is another common barrier, and was experienced through expressions of pity and beliefs that their disability impedes them from working at full capacity (Beatty, 2012). Individuals with mental illness have reported that

prolonged work absences, employer prejudices, and lack of self-confidence as among the most likely barriers to employment that they perceive as impeding their employment (Corbière, Mercier, & Lesage, 2004). Those with mobility disabilities, communication disabilities, and cognitive disabilities report being refused job interviewes, promotions, work accommodations, and being paid lower wages more than individuals with other types of disabilities (Lindsay, 2010). These individuals were also more likely to report that the fear of losing their disability income support was a potential barrier to employment than other disability groups (Lindsay, 2010).

Coping Efficacy

The burden of overcoming employment barriers is too often placed on the individuals who are being marginalized. Nevertheless, it is recognized that to fully comprehend the development of an individual's career trajectory, it is necessary to not only study the barriers that are expected and faced, but also the individual's ability to cope with these barriers (Corbière et al., 2004; Lent, Hackett, & Brown, 1998). Coping efficacy impacts how well an individual believes they can overcome barriers, and can significantly impact the career decisions they later make (Lent et al., 1998). This is particularly significant in terms of perceived career barriers. Those who feel that they are able to cope with potential barriers, and believe they have the appropriate resources to support them, may be less negatively impacted by these barriers should they be encountered (Hackett & Byars, 1996). It is for this reason that the creators of SCCT suggest that "there is a need to explore the nature of the relationship between coping efficacy and barrier perceptions" (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000, p. 46).

In addition to the need for research regarding perceived employment barriers, and how coping efficacy may affect one's ability to overcome such barriers (Albert & Luzzo, 1999),

research is required that examines how individuals differ in their perception of career barriers and coping efficacy in relation to age, educational background, and disability (Albert & Luzzo, 1999). These demographic characteristics are extremely relevant to one's career development, as emphasized by SCCT (Lent et al., 1994). Moreover, previous studies that have examined experienced or perceived employment barriers for people with disabilities have rarely compared this group to a group of individual without disabilities, which would be provide clear evidence of disparate expectations in the workplace. Finally, it is argued that such research is needed in different geographic areas (Fabian, Beveridge, & Ethridge, 2009), since the economy and other aspects of the region can significantly impact barriers to employment for workers with disabilities (Lindsay, 2010; Till et al., 2015). The purpose of the following exploratory study was to examine and distinguish between the perceived employment barriers and coping efficacy of individuals with and without disabilities. In addition, the study sought to identify the demographic factors, such as sex, ethnicity, and educational background, that contribute to perception of employment barriers and coping efficacy. The following research questions were therefore posed: 1) Are there differences between the perceived employment barriers of people with and without disabilities in the province of Québec?, 2) Are there differences between the coping efficacy of people with and without disabilities in Québec?, and 3) Do demographic factors and disability type affect one's perception of employment barriers and coping efficacy?

Methods

Participants

One hundred and fifty individuals agreed to participate in the study. Of these, 14 (9%) abandoned the survey after filling in the consent form, and another 28 (19%) abandoned the survey after filling in the demographic questionnaire. The final sample therefore included 108

individuals, indicating a survey completion rate of 72%. The final sample included 75 (69.4%) individuals without disabilities, and 33 (30.6%) individuals with disabilites. The non-disability group comprised of 68 (90.7%) women and 7 (9.3%) men, with an average age of 33.5 years (SD = 11.87). Of this group, 25 (33.3%) were single, 29 (38.7%) were in a relationship, 15 (20%) were married/engaged, 6 (8%) were divorced/separated. Twenty-seven (36%) participants in this group had children. Participants' mother tongues were indicated as English (41.3%), French (38.7%) and Other (20%). The majority of participants in this group (73.3%) identified themselves as White/Canadian/Québecois, while 24% were from visible minority groups, and two did not indicate their ethnicity. Among these participants, 77% had a university degree, 23% did not and twenty-seven (36%) were currently seeking employment.

Within the disability group, there were 24 (72.7%) females and 9 (27.3%) males with an average age of 38.09 years (SD = 11.28). Fourteen (42.4%) were single, 11 (33.3%) were in a relationship, 5 (15.2%) were married, 3 (9.1%) were divorced/separated, and 11 (33.3%) of these participants had children. With regard to language, 23 (69.7%) indicated their mother tongue as French, 8 (24.2%) as English, and 2 (6.1%) as Other. Twenty-seven (81.8%) of participants in this group identified as White/Canadian/Québecois, 5 (15.2%) as people of colour, and one individual did not identify their ethnicity. Fifty-five percent of these participants had a university degree whereas 45% did not. The majority (61%) were not currently seeking employment, whereas 36% were (and the remainder did not indicate whether they were). Regarding disability type, 12 (36.4%) individuals had physical disabilities, 8 (24.2%) chronic illness, 3 (9.1%) sensory disabilities, 2 (6.1%) psychological disabilities, 1 (3%) developmental disability, and 4 (12.1%) multiple disabilities. Three individuals in this group did not indicate the type of disability they had.

Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was gained by the authors' university research ethics board. Once this permission was granted, participants were sought from various universities, supported employment organizations, and adult education programs from the province of Québec, Canada. All university and school board ethics committees were first contacted for approval to recruit from among their students. Moreover, permission for participant recruitment was gained from supported employment administrators. After approval was obtained, the recruitment letter, which contained a link to the online survey, was distributed either through email, as a physical posting at employment agencies, or was advertised as a posting on the organization's corresponding internet forum or website. The recruitment letter included the link to the questionnaire, which was made available through SurveyMonkey™. Once participants clicked on the link, they were immediately brought to the first page of the survey, which asked whether they would like to complete it in French or English. After selecting their preferred language, participants were brought to the consent form, and then the subsequent questionnaire pages.

Measures

The online questionnaire comprised of a consent form, a demographic survey, a modified version of the Barriers to Employment and Coping Efficacy Scale (BECES; Corbière et al., 2004), and concluded with three open-ended questions asking participants' about their needs in employment settings. The questionnaire was available in both French and English. The demographic survey included 14 questions that encompassed information regarding participants' age, sex, family structure, ethnicity and mother tongue, educational background and current status, therapy involvement, employment status, and disability. The three open-ended questions

were: 1) “What are your needs in an employment setting?”, 2) “What would your perfect employment environment look like”, and 3) “What made your best employment experience(s) different from other employment experiences?”. The qualitative data collected through these questions are described and analyzed in another manuscript.

The BECES (Corbière et al., 2004) is a questionnaire measuring employment barriers and ability to cope with such barriers, and was originally created for use with individuals with mental illness. It contains 43 items and the following two subscales: the Barriers to Employment subscale and the Coping Efficacy subscale. Each item represents a distinct barrier that an individual may potentially face at work, for example, lack of energy, physical health problems, high unemployment rate, or working conditions. The Barriers to Employment subscale has participants respond to the following prompt for each item: “To what extent, in your current situation, could this item represent a barrier to employment?”. Participants are asked to rate the item on a 7-point Likert scale weighted from 1 (Not likely at all) to 7 (Completely likely). This subscale was found to have high internal consistency, reflected by Cronbach’s α of .93 (Corbière et al., 2004). Two minor modifications were made to the Barriers to Employment subscale for the current study. The first alteration was made to the specific item referring to “Employers’ prejudice about hiring people with mental illness”. In order to better reflect the range of participants’ potential disabilities, this item was changed to “Employers’ prejudice about hiring people with a disability”. The second alteration was made to the rating system. As an addition to the 7-point Likert scale, an 8th option of “Not applicable” was included to allow participants to indicate that the proposed barrier was not at all relevant to their work situation. This enabled a wider range of responses from participants with the goal of collecting more information. Internal

reliability of this modified Barriers to Employment subscale was high with a Cronbach's α of .912.

The Coping Efficacy subscale measures participants' self-perceived ability to cope with employment barriers items. Once participants rate the items according to the Barriers to Employment subscale, they are asked the following: "If you have rated the item as a 2 or higher, please indicate to what extent you feel able to overcome this barrier." The Coping Efficacy subscale utilizes a 7-point Likert scale weighted by 1 (Not able at all) to 7 (Completely able). The 43 items are divided in 5 dimensions: Self-confidence/self-competence, External factors, Anxiety/lack of motivation, Health, and Work Adjustment (Corbière et al., 2004). This subscale was also found to have high internal consistency, as indicated by a Cronbach's α of .90 (Corbière et al., 2004). Due to a high degree of missing data in the original dataset, internal reliability of this subscale was tested on the dataset with imputed values, and revealed a Cronbach's α of .91.

Analysis

All analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS 23. The dataset was first screened for accuracy, missing data, outliers, and normality. Descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, t-tests, correlations, and multiple regression were conducted. The original dataset was used for initial analyses of participants' characteristics and missing data, and five imputed datasets were used for hypothesis testing.

Results

Data Screening

The data were screened following Tabachnick and Fidell's (2013) Checklist for Screening Data. Out-of-range values, means and standard deviations, and univariate outliers were first inspected. 'Not applicable' responses and user-missing responses combined for a total

of 36% missing values. Missing data patterns were then examined using Little's MCAR test (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) through the SPSS Missing Values (MVA) software. Results from the test were significant ($p < .001$) and showed that the data were not missing completely at random (MCAR). Separate variance t-tests indicated that the missingness on each variable was significantly predicted ($p < .05$) by several other variables, therefore missing at random (MAR) was assumed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). MAR implies that there is a relationship between the missingness on one variable and other measured variables (Enders, 2010). Multiple imputation was used to impute missing values since this is shown to be the most valid and accurate imputation method (Shrive, Stuart, Quan, & Ghali, 2006), which "…explicitly accounts for the uncertainty associated with the missing data" (Enders, 2010, p. 189), is considered the most sophisticated data estimation technique, and does not require MCAR assumptions to be met (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). All of the BECES items, as well as key demographic variables (sex, marital status, children, mother tongue, minority, highest completed degree, employment/education status, seeking employment, disability status, and disability group) were used in the imputation model. Five imputed datasets were produced using SPSS MVA, and the pooled statistics were used to conduct inferential tests. The data were imputed before checking normality, since multiple imputation is able to impute non-normal distributions (Baio & Leurent, 2016).

Dichotomous variable outliers were not found when examining the dataset as a whole. Z-scores revealed that there was one continuous univariate outlier in the disability group on the total Coping scale. Visual inspection of histograms revealed that the Total Coping distribution for the disability group had a substantial positive skew, as did the Total Barriers distribution for the non-disability group. These variables were therefore both logarithmically transformed in

order to improve normality and to pull outliers towards the center of the distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Before conducting the multiple regression, the standard residuals were reviewed for outliers, of which there were none. Assumptions for multivariate outliers, collinearity, independent errors, and random normally distributed residuals were all met.

Participant Group Differences and 'Not Applicable' Responses

A t-test and chi-square analyses were performed to determine whether significant differences existed between the disability and non-disability groups apropos of demographic variables. Results showed that there were significant differences between the groups in terms of sex, X^2 (1, N = 108) = 5.844, $p < .05$, mother tongue, X^2 (2, N = 108) = 9.266, $p = .01$, university degree, X^2 (1, N = 108) = 5.707, $p < .05$, and employment/education status, X^2 (4, N = 107) = 13.757, $p < .01$. For more detailed information, please see Table 1.

Dummy coding was used to analyze differences between participants who rated items on the Barriers to Employment Scale as 'Not applicable'. The response 'Not applicable' was coded as 1, whereas all other responses were coded as 0 and Fisher's exact test was used to analyze possible differences since the expected count for each cell was expected to be small (Handbook of Biological Statistics, n.d.). The test was used to compare participants on the following demographic variables: sex, marital status (divided into single/divorced and in a relationship/married), visible minority status, education (university degree vs non-university degree), seeking employment, and disability. Significant findings were identified for the following barriers: medication side effects, drugs or alcohol consumption, and parental obligations. With regard to the medication side effects item, a higher proportion of participants without university degrees ($p = .05$) rated this item as 'Not applicable'. A larger proportion of participants without university degrees ($p = .005$) and with disabilities ($p = .048$) rated the drugs

and alcohol item as 'Not applicable'. For the parental obligations item, a larger proportion of participants with disabilities rated this item as 'Not applicable' ($p = .019$).

Subscale Correlations

Bivariate correlations were conducted in order to determine the relationships between the Barriers to Employment subscale, the Coping Efficacy subscale, and the Coping Efficacy dimensions. Results showed that, while there was a significant correlation among the original dataset, the pooled dataset did not reveal a significant relationship between Total Barriers and Total Coping Efficacy, $r = -.087$, $p = .39$. Moreover, there were no significant relationships between Total Barriers and any of the Coping dimensions. Total Coping Efficacy was significantly positively correlated with each Coping Dimension: Self-Confidence ($r = 714$, $p < .001$), External Factors ($r = .614$, $p < .01$), Anxiety/Amotivation ($r = .660$, $p < .001$), Health ($r = .614$, $p < .01$), and Work Adjustment ($r = .661$, $p < .001$). All of the Coping dimension scores were postively correlated with each other, except for the Health and Anxiety dimensions, which did not reveal a significant relationship (see Table 3).

Group Differences and Correlations Between Barriers to Employment and Coping

Demographic variables. Independent t-tests revealed that there were no group differences pertaining to sex, (non)university degree, minority status, and (un)employment status on either of the Barriers or Coping subscales, nor any of the Coping Efficacy dimensions. Bivariate correlation analyses were conducted for continuous demographic variables (age, years of employment), Barriers to Employment scores, Coping Efficacy scores, and Coping Efficacy dimension scores. While age and years of employment were positively correlated, $r = .816$, $p < .001$, they were not correlated with any other variables.

Disability vs non-disability groups. Independent t-tests (see results in Table 2) were run to determine whether the disability and non-disability groups differed on the Barriers to Employment and Coping Efficacy subscale total scores. Levene's test for Equality of Variances was significant for three of the five imputed datasets for the Coping subscale, therefore the pooled t-statistic for equal variances not assumed was inspected. The t-tests revealed that the disability group reported significantly more employment barriers than the non-disability group, $t(106) = 3.578$, $p = .000$, but that there were no significant differences between the groups on total Coping Efficacy, $t(106) = -.524$, $p > .05$. There were no significant differences between the disability and non-disability groups on the five Coping Efficacy dimension scores.

Independent t-tests were also performed to determine group differences on each item of the Barriers to Employment subscale. Although Likert scale items are ordinal variables, t-tests and equivalent non-parametric tests such as Mann-Whitney U test are shown to have equivalent power and low Type 1 error rates when used with such items (De Winter & Dodou, 2010). The Holm-Bonferonni method (Holm, 1979) was used to control for familywise error rate due multiple comparisons, and equal variances were not assumed. The disability group rated the following items as significantly more likely to be barriers to their employment: Physical health problems, $t(4416) = 6.076$, $p = .000$, Medication side effects $t(50) = 4.493$, $p = .000$, Employers' prejudices about hiring people with disabilities, $t(4364) = 5.289$, $p = .000$, and Prolonged absence from the workplace, $t(206) = 3.269$, $p = .001$ (see Table 2). The non-disability group did not rate any items as being significantly more likely to be barriers as compared to the disability group. The same analyses were performed on the Coping Efficacy scale items, however, no significant group differences were found.

Visible vs. invisible disabilities. Due to the small number of participants with disabilities, it was not possible to compare barriers and coping results by type of disability (ie. physical, psychological, sensory, etc.). Consequently, the authors categorized each participant in the disability group according to whether their self-identified disability/disabilities was/were visible or invisible. The visible disability group included those with physical disabilities such as spina bifida and paraplegia, and included participants who had multiple types of disabilities where at least one was visible. Invisible disabilities included psychological disabilities such as depression, chronic illnesses such as sleep conditions, sensory disabilities, and development disabilities, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder. Based on this categorization, 16 participants were included in the visible disability group, 13 participants were included in the invisible disability group, and one participant was not included in either group due to lack of information regarding their disability type. Differences between these participants were examined with regard to Barriers to Employment, Coping Efficacy, individual items on both subscales, and the Coping Efficacy dimensions using independent t-tests. None of these tests were significant.

Predicting Barriers to Employment

A multiple regression with backward elimination method was conducted to determine which demographic characteristics predicted total employment barriers. The demographic variables originally included in the model were sex, university/no university education, minority status, and disability status, but all variables save for disability status were excluded due to insignificant p-values. The R^2 for the final model for each of the five imputed datasets ranged from .104 to .112, suggesting that disability status explained approximately 10-11% of the variance in total employment barriers. Since SPSS does not report pooled betas, it was

calculated by averaging the betas from each imputed dataset (Rubin, 1987, as cited in Enders, 2010), and resulted in $\beta = -.329$, $p = .000$.

Discussion

Results from this study indicate that individuals with disabilities in Québec perceive a significantly higher number of overall barriers to their employment compared to individuals without disabilities, and that disability significantly predicts higher overall barriers to employment ratings. This result is consistent with the current rate of employment of people with disabilities in this province, which is significantly lower than that of people without disabilities (Camirand et al., 2010). Moreover, numerous studies, as described in the literature review, have indicated that workers with disabilities encounter myriad workplace barriers that limit their employment success. However, the current study's finding is unique in two ways. Firstly, the majority of studies on this topic focus on obstacles people with disabilities report having already encountered in the workplace, whereas this study places emphasis on what this population believes could be a *potential* barrier to employment. According to Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1994), gaining an understanding of an individual's cognitive processes is key to understanding their career interests and behaviours. Corbière and colleagues (2004) emphasize that "potential barriers and their impact on work integration should not solely be assessed from an observable or objective perspective but also from a subjective one" (p. 461), as this can provide rich information regarding aspects that affect career planning and decision-making behaviours. The second reason this finding is significant is that it clearly demonstrates that people with disabilities foresee significantly more potential difficulties in their work experiences than people without disabilities. Such an assertion is missing in the literature on this

topic, and provides needed confirmation that individuals with disabilities encounter, or expect to encounter, more hurdles than other individuals in gaining employment.

Participants with disabilities in this study rated several items as significantly more likely to be barriers to their employment than those without disabilities. Three of these specific barriers included physical health problems, medication side effects, and prolonged absence from the workplace. These findings are sound given that the majority of participants in the disability group had physical disabilities or chronic illnesses, and is reasonable given previous studies indicating that this population often cites limitations resulting from one's disability as an employment barrier (Beatty, 2012; HRSDC, 2010; Jorgensen et al., 2015; Shier et al., 2009; Schoff et al., 2007; Till et al., 2015). Medication side effects in particular was a reported employment barrier in Beatty's (2012) study of career barriers for individuals with chronic illness. The fourth barrier, employers' prejudices about hiring people with disabilities, was also expected to be rated significantly higher for this group. Other studies have emphasized the common experience of workplace discrimination for employees with disabilities (Beatty, 2012; Burke et al., 2013; Hernandez et al., 2007; Hernandez et al., 2008; Lindstrom et al., 2013; Louvet, 2007; Russinova et al., 2011; Shier et al., 2009; Till et al., 2015). The participants in this study, whether or not they have actually experienced discrimination, are clearly aware of the potential for marginalization that is unfortunately all too common for this population in the workplace.

Despite expectations, none of the demographic factors other than disability were significantly associated with differences in overall barrier scores or with specific employment barriers. This is a surprising finding since previous research on the topic has found that gender, education, current employment (Fabian et al., 2009; Lindsay, 2010), and ethnicity (Gundersen &

Lee, 2016; Hernandez et al., 2007; Oberoi, Balcazar, Suarez-Balcazar, Langi, & Lukyanova, 2015) are all elements that significantly impact the barriers and overall work experiences encountered by workers with disabilities. The authors of Social Cognitive Career Theory also argue for the importance of such characteristics in an individual's career development (Lent et al., 1994, 2000, 2002, Lent et al., 2013). This study's non-significant results, however, should be interpreted with caution. The sample was overall quite homogenous in that the majority of participants were White, female university graduates, and such comparisons should be replicated with a larger and more diverse sample.

The finding that participants with disabilities had equivalent coping efficacy scores as the non-disability group is particularly noteworthy. Despite perceiving significantly more potential obstacles to their employment, their self-rated coping efficacy was seemingly not affected. Moreover, coping efficacy and total barrier scores were not shown to be at all correlated, implying that they are perhaps two separate constructs. Again, it is necessary to interpret this result carefully, as the two scales were significantly correlated in the original dataset, as well as in the study in which the questionnaire was validated (Corbière et al., 2004). More studies are needed to replicate and confirm the relationship between employment barriers and coping efficacy.

Nevertheless, the fact that the disability and non-disability groups reported equivalent total coping efficacy scores and equivalent scores on all five coping dimensions reveals that people with disabilities may feel just as able to overcome the greater number of obstacles they are likely to face as those without disabilities. This suggests that people with disabilities, due to the need to overcome hurdles throughout their lives, may gain particular skills that individuals who do not have to overcome such hurdles will not necessarily develop. This could be the result

of needing to develop coping and mastery skills in the process of experiencing stressful situations related to their disability (Seery, 2011). This finding is very positive, as it is suggested that high coping efficacy could allow an individual to perform successfully despite experiencing obstacles such as prejudice and stigma (Hackett & Byars, 1996), suggesting the development of resilience. However, Fabian and colleagues (2009) assert that, in addition to coping efficacy, access to necessary supports is required to overcome perceived barriers. The importance that the environment plays, inasmuch as resources are or are not provided, is paramount to successful employment for individuals with disabilities, and individuals from marginalized groups in general.

The obstacles that people with disabilities must overcome to find and maintain employment can be viewed largely through the Social Model of Disability. This model views societal barriers as what truly 'disables' the individual and limits their full participation within society (Oliver, 1983). It is often due to societal reactions to disability, and the barriers that are inherent in our ableist communities, rather than disabilities themselves, that create many of the barriers that impede employment for this population. Even those barriers listed by participants in this study, such as physical health problems and medication side effects, could be overcome given appropriate accommodations such as flexible scheduling and the ability to work from home. It is thus necessary to go beyond the typical conceptualization of 'barrier' in order to determine whether there are underlying societal causes that are the true root of such employment obstacles.

In addition to refocusing from individualistic to systemic barriers to employment, it is argued that it is necessary to restructure the common notion of what 'resilience' is, particularly in relation to populations with disabilities. Runswick-Cole and Goodley (2013) argue that "by

attending to the social construction of resilience, we are not seeking to deny the existence of individual attributes of resilience but we see these attributes as culturally situated and socially mediated" (p.70). Young, Green, and Rogers (2008) argue that fostering resilience among individuals with disabilities is not simply about providing more support and helping individuals build more capacity to deal with adversity, but also requires challenging the societal barriers that create the adverse situations in the first place.

Limitations and Conclusion

While this study has important findings, there are several limitations that should be addressed. Firstly, the study's sample was dependent on the self-identification of individuals with disabilities. There is still stigma surrounding having a disability, particularly for those who have mental health and psychiatric disabilities (Nota, Santilli, Ginevra, & Soresi, 2013; Oberoi et al., 2015; Russinova et al., 2011). This stigma may have influenced those with such disabilities either to not respond to the survey, or to not disclose their disability status. Moreover, many individuals with invisible disabilities, again particularly those with mental health issues, are undiagnosed, and therefore may be unaware of their disability status. Self-selection bias may also have lead to individuals with higher self-efficacy being more likely to participate in the study. This in turn may have affected the overall ratings of self-efficacy, the results of which may not be generalizable to all individuals with and without disabilities.

Perhaps for the above-mentioned reasons, there was a much larger proportion of individuals without disabilities who responded to the survey, despite multiple targeted attempts to recruit from supported employment programs and university disability services. Additionally, the sample of participants was quite homogenous, and did not allow for convincing comparisons between males and females, people of different ethnic groups, individuals with different

educational backgrounds, and individuals with various types of disabilities. Within the group of participants with disabilities, for example, there were no individuals with intellectual disabilities, which again influences the generalizability of the results. More studies are needed with larger, diverse participant samples in order to determine the impact such characteristics have on perceived employment barriers and coping efficacy.

Finally, Corbière and colleagues (2004) created and validated the BECES questionnaire specifically for use with individuals with mental illness. It may therefore not be as sensitive and relevant for samples without this type of disability, or for people without disabilities in general. An important future study would entail validating a larger and more representative list of potential barriers to employment that are gathered based on research and through dialogues with those who experience chronic illness, physical, psychological, learning, developmental, and sensory disabilities. Creating such a survey would likely lend to a more rigorous examination of disability group differences with respect to work obstacles.

Despite these limitations, this study has provided an important initial examination of the differences between people with and without disabilities in Québec in regard to employment barriers and coping efficacy. This information is relevant for supported employment programs, who can utilize this information to consider possible accommodations that could eliminate the presence of some of the aforementioned barriers for their clients with disabilities. Moreover, employers are encouraged to consider the strengths that people with disabilities can bring to their workplaces, including the resilience and coping skills that are likely honed through consistent exposure to adverse societal conditions. Having to repeatedly overcome societal barriers that impede many individuals with disabilities, and individuals from other marginalized groups, from full participation demonstrates unique qualities that should be regarded as highly valuable.

Nevertheless, it is imperative that society continues to work towards creating more inclusive and accessible work environments so that all individuals who desire it can obtain meaningful and successful careers.

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Table 1

Demographic Variables and Group Differences

	No Disability Group (n = 75)	Disability Group (n = 33)		
Variable	m̄ (SD)	m̄ (SD)	*t*	*p*
Age	33.53 (11.87)	38.09 (11.28)	1.857	.066
	n (%)	*n* (%)	X^2	*p*
Sex				
Female	68 (90.7)	24 (72.7)	5.844	.016
Male	7 (9.3)	9 (27.3)		
Marital status				
Single	25 (33.3)	14 (42.4)		
In a relationship	29 (38.7)	11 (33.3)	1.024	.795
Married/engaged	15 (20)	5 (15.2)		
Divorced/separated	6 (8)	3 (9.1)		
Children				
Yes	27 (36)	11 (33.3)	.071	.789
No	48 (64)	22 (66.7)		
Mother tongue				
English	31 (41.3)	8 (24.2)		
French	29 (38.7)	23 (69.7)	9.266	.01
Other	15 (20)	2 (6.1)		
Visible Minority				
No	55 (73.3)	27 (81.8)	1.061	.303
Yes	18 (24)	5 (15.2)		
Education				
No university degree	17 (22.7)	15 (45.5)	5.707	.017
University degree	58 (77.3)	18 (54.5)		
Employment and education status				
Employed and in school	25 (33.3)	3 (9.1)		
Employed and not in school	16 (21.3)	12 (36.4)		
Unemployed and in school	20 (26.7)	8 (24.2)	13.757	.009
Unemployed and not in school	5 (6.7)	8 (24.2)		
Other	8 (10.7)	2 (6.1)		
Employment status				
Employed full-time	21 (28)	7 (21.2)		
Part-time	20 (26.7)	8 (24.2)	2.354	.502
Unemployed	25 (33.3)	16 (48.5)		
Other	8 (10.7)	2 (6.1)		
Seeking employment				
Yes	27 (36)	12 (36.4)	.022	1.00
No	48 (64)	20 (60.6)		

Table 2

Differences on Barriers to Employment and Coping Efficacy Total Scores and Individual Barriers Items for Participants with and without Disabilities

	No Disability Group	Disability Group	
Variable	m̄ (SD)	m̄ (SD)	*t*
Total Score on Barriers to Employment Subscale	1.94 (.17)	2.086 (.18)	3.578*
Total Score on Coping Efficacy Subscale	2.308 (.04)	2.302 (.06)	-.524
Physical health problems	1.62 (1.57)	4.19 (2.27)	6.076*
Employers' prejudices about hiring people with disabilities	1.76 (1.90)	4.07 (2.31)	5.489*
Medication side effects	1.46 (1.36)	3.80 (2.84)	4.493*
Prolonged absence from the workplace	1.91 (2.05)	3.45 (2.42)	3.269*

Note. Standard deviations (SD) are not produced by SPSS for multiple imputation datasets, therefore they were hand-calculated using pooled standard errors and means.

*$p < .001$.

Table 3

Bivariate Correlations Between Continuous Demographic Variables, Barriers and Coping Scores

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age								
2. Years worked	.82**							
3. Total Barriers score	.03	-.11						
4. Total Coping score	.09	.09	-.09					
5. Self-Confidence coping	.09	.05	-.08	.72***				
6. External coping	.12	.15	-.21	.61**	.34*			
7. Anxiety/Amotivation coping	.00	.04	-.16	.66***	.40**	.39**		
8. Health coping	-.02	-.07	.03	.61**	.30*	.30*	.06	
9. Work Adjustment coping	.06	.10	-.08	.66***	.40**	.34*	.34*	.31*

Bridging Manuscript #1: Using SCCT to Investigate Employment Barriers and Needs

In Chapter 1, I presented a study that utilized Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1994) to examine the similarities and differences between perceived employment barriers and coping efficacy of people with and without disabilities. The results suggested that while individuals with disabilities perceive more potential work obstacles, they retain the same amount of coping efficacy as individuals without disabilities. This finding is encouraging, as high coping efficacy is believed to mitigate the negative effects of workplace barriers by prompting the individual to persevere despite such obstacles. However, as we note in the conclusion of the chapter, the onus should be on employers and workplaces to become more accessible and inclusive of employees with disabilities. Utilizing a social model of disability lens, it is suggested that creating more accessibility in the workplace will reduce the number of people who are 'disabled' by such barriers as those examined in this chapter.

Chapter 2 consists of a manuscript based on the analysis of qualitative data collected in the same online questionnaire that was described in Chapter 1. Three open-ended questions at the end of the survey provided participants with the space to describe their needs in employment settings. Social Cognitive Career Theory purports that both environmental barriers and supports are integral to understanding an individual's career development. Therefore, this data builds on that of the previous chapter as it provides concrete suggestions for how the barriers identified by the participants could be reduced or eliminated in order to facilitate successful employment experiences. Moreover, the needs of participants with visible and invisible disabilities are compared and contrasted, providing a new layer of understanding the unique experiences and needs of people with various types of disabilities.

Chapter 3: Manuscript #2

An exploratory inquiry into employment needs in the context of in/visibility of disability

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Abstract

Individuals with disabilities experience significantly lower employment rates than the general population. In order to facilitate successful employment outcomes, an understanding of their needs within the work environment is required. It is necessary, however, to have research that distinguishes the employment needs of workers with visible and invisible disabilities, as they experience strikingly different barriers within the work environment. Using inductive content analysis, this study investigated the employment needs of 10 individuals with visible disabilities and 11 individuals with invisible disabilities. The three main themes that emerged from the responses of the entire sample were the need for a supportive work environment, physical accessibility, and specific job design needs. Differences between the two groups, however, were found in relation to the frequency of each of the themes in their responses, as well as with their descriptions of specific needs relative to the themes.

An exploratory inquiry into employment needs in the context of in/visibility of disability

Despite the various gains that people with disabilities have fought to achieve over the past century, there still are many areas of typical day to day life that remain relatively inaccesible to this population. Employment, a critical aspect of adulthood that provides the fulfillment of basic human needs such as survival, relatedness, and self-determination (Blustein, 2006), is one such area within which people with disabilities continue to encounter barriers. In Canada, people with disabilities have an overall rate of employment of 49% which, compared to the employment rate of 79% among the general population, is insufficient (Turcotte, 2014). Individuals with disabilities express wanting jobs just as much as individuals without disabilities (Ali, Schur, & Blanck, 2011) but due to discrimination, difficulties with transportation, and other substantial obstacles, they face significant rates of unemployment (Turcotte, 2014). It is critical to consider the needs of people with disabilities within employment settings in order to establish more accessible workplaces and facilitate more successful employment outcomes.

Background

Accommodations

In order to make the work environment accessible for individuals with disabilities, accommodations are sometimes needed. In a 2012 national survey concerning disability and employment in Canada, 42.3% of employees with disabilities reported a need for workplace accommodations (Till, Leonard, Yeung, & Nicholls, 2015). The most common accommodations that Canadians with disabilities have identified needing are a modified work schedule, modified work duties (Camirand et al., 2010; Human Resources and Skills Development Canada [HRSDC], 2010; Till et al., 2015) and environmental accommodations (Till et al., 2015).

Schedule and work duty modifications. Modified work schedules are one of the most common accommodations reported in the literature (Butterfield & Ramseur, 2004; Hartnett, Stuart, Thurman, Loy, & Batiste, 2011; Jongbloed, Backman, Forwell, & Carpenter, 2007), and Canadians with disabilities report that having a modified schedule is their most needed work accommodation (Camirand et al., 2010; HRSDC, 2010; Till et al., 2015). Approximately 23% of Canadians with disabilities who are employed reported needing this accommodation in the national survey, compared to 42% of potential workers with disabilities (Till et al., 2015). Moreover, individuals with more severe disabilities were more likely to report requiring schedule modification (Till et al., 2015). Modified work schedules are also shown to be the most likely type of accommodation provided to workers with disabilities (Hartnett et al., 2011). Having modified work duties, also known as job redesign, is one of the next most commonly needed accommodation for workers with disabilities (Camirand et al., 2010; HRSDC, 2010; Till et al., 2015) and is required for 31% of potential workers and 13% of current workers in Canada (Till et al., 2015). Despite this major need, a 2006 survey found that only 45% of workers with disabilities in Canada who needed job redesign had actually received that accommodation (HRSDC, 2010).

Environmental accommodations. Many individuals with disabilities, particularly those with physical or sensory disabilities, require environmental accommodations. Environmental accommodations include the need for ergonomic workstations (Camirand et al., 2010; Lacaille, Sheps, Spinelli, Chalmers, & Esdaile, 2004; Till et al., 2015), special chairs and/or back support (Camirand et al., 2010; HRSDC, 2010; Till et al., 2015), accessible parking (Camirand et al., 2010; HRSDC, 2010), accessible washrooms (Butterfield & Ramseur, 2004; HRSDC, 2010), wide hallways or areas with handrails and ramps (Butterfield & Ramseur, 2004; HRSDC, 2010;

Till et al., 2015) and specialized computer programs/equipement (Butterfield & Ramseur, 2004; HRSDC, 2010; Nevala, Pehkonen, Koskela, Ruusuvuori, & Anttila, 2015; Till et al., 2015). A systematic review conducted by Nevala and colleagues (2015) found moderate support indicating that workplace accommodations promote better employment outcomes among individuals with physical disabilities.

Technology can be used in such a way to increase employment participation, particularly for individuals with physical disabilities (Noreau et al., 2002). Butterfield and Ramseur (2004) conducted a comprehensive literature review regarding workplace accommodations and identified computer technologies as being the most widely researched accommodation. These authors suggested that the many functions of the computer, including voice recognition software and the transportability of laptops, help to eliminate many of the barriers experienced in the workplace by individuals with disabilities (Butterfield & Ramseur, 2004).

Receiving accommodations has been shown to have positive effects for workers with disabilities. Having an ergonomically adapted workstation is correlated with 2.6 times less work disability for individuals with rheumatoid arthritis (Lacaille, Sheps, Spinelli, Chalmers, & Esdaile, 2004). Not only has it been revealed that receiving accommodations can increase positive employment outcomes (Nevala et al., 2015), but they have also been shown to predict increased life satisfaction among workers with disabilities (Konrad, Moore, Ng, Doherty, & Breward, 2013; Moore, Konrad, Yang, Ng, & Doherty, 2011). However, it is critical to acknowledge that the accommodations and overall employment needs of individuals with various types of disabilities likely differ. Despite this, most studies that explore the notion of disability utilize a participant pool that is not characterized by disability type (Lindsay, 2010), thus negating the significant uniqueness of one's experience with disability. Specifically, it has

been indicated that the visibility of one's disability impacts hiring discrimination (Gouvier, Steiner, Jackson, Schlater, and Rain, 1991), employment status (Martz, 2003), and accommodation fairness judgments (Colella, 2001), and thus has significant implications for gaining a better understanding of employment needs and outcomes among individuals with disabilities.

Disability In/Visibility

According to Stone and Colella's (1996) Model of Factors Affecting the Treatment of Disabled Individuals in Organizations, an individual's personal characteristics, along with characteristics of the environment, influence how employees with disabilities are perceived and acted towards. Specifically, whether one's disability is visible or not is believed to significantly impact the way that employees are treated. Stone and Colella (1996) hypothesize that when an individual encounters a person with a disability in the work environment, they instantly begin to categorize, or stereotype, that person. Categories and traits are then assigned to the person with the disability (Stone & Colella, 1996). These stereotypes are influenced by many factors, including traits of the observer, and traits of the worker with the disability. Visibility, or concealability of one's disability, is one of several factors that Stone and Colella (1996) believe contribute to the treatment of the employee with the disability within the workplace.

In general, it is understood that the more visible one's disability, the more likely that they will be assigned negative traits associated with that disability and will receive negative reactions due to negative stereotyping (Stone & Colella, 1996). When an individual experiences an invisible disability (a disability that has no discernible visible traits that can be associated with a specific disability) they cannot be readily identified by others as belonging to a particular disability group, thereby potentially avoiding the stereotyping process (Santuzzi, Waltz, Rupp, &

Finkelstein, 2014). Types of invisible disabilities include sensory, learning, psychological, and developmental disabilities, as well as chronic illness and sleep disorders (Santuzzi et al., 2014) whereas visible disabilities include physical disabilities such as paraplegia and muscular dystrophy, as well as some developmental disabilities, such as Down's syndrome and cerebral palsy.

Findings regarding employment outcomes and disability visibility are inconsistent. Disclosure of a physical disability in an interview setting has been shown to be associated with significantly higher employability ratings than disclosure of a psychiatric disability (Dalgin & Bellini, 2008). A study conducted by Gouvier and colleagues (1991) found opposing results, where ratings of potential job applicants were significantly higher for those with less visible disabilities. Another study found that disability invisibility significantly predicted current employment status, with participants who had invisible disabilities being 16 times more likely to be currently employed than those with visible disabilities (Martz, 2003). It also appears that the type of disability, whether visible or invisible, may impact employment outcomes. Gouvier, Sytsma-Jordan, and Mayville (2003) reported in their study on hiring discrimination that job applicants with back injuries were more likely to get the job than those with mental illness, developmental disabilities, and neurological injuries. This perhaps points to the idea that the more a disability is high in social awareness (such as back injury or physical disabilities), the less likely it will result in challenging situations in the workplace (Santuzzi et al., 2014), and the more intuitive it would be to provide accommodations to facilitate employment Many invisible disabilities, on the other hand, "tend to be less known about by the general public" (Santuzzi et al., 2014, p. 20), and may lead to more situations of discrimination.

For individuals with any type of invisible social identity that is readily stigmatized, deciding whether or not to disclose this identity in the workplace can be problematic (Beatty & Kirby, 2006; Clair, Beatty, & MacLean, 2005). In the matter of legal protection against discrimination, for example, people with invisible disabilities are faced with a difficult choice about whether or not to disclose their identity before receiving such benefits, thus potentially leading to stigma (Beatty & Kirby, 2006). They have the unique experience of information management where they must not only decide whether they want to confront possible prejudice once disclosing, but also whether they want to have that "feeling of authenticity when they can be fully "themselves" in public" (Clair et al., 2005, p.79). Moreover, should workers with invisible disabilities choose not to disclose their disability while also experiencing difficulties that affect their work performance, they may be viewed as a a poor worker (Clair et al., 2005; Santuzzi et al., 2014; Stone, 2005). The individual therefore not only has to deal psychologically with possible repercussions of disclosing after the fact, but they also must deal with making the decision beforehand (Clair et al., 2005) while also considering the possible negative consequences of not disclosing. This decision-making can be stressful and taxing (Clair et al., 2005).

Individuals with visible and invisible disabilities share some similar experiences, but also encounter their own set of difficulties within employment settings. They have different experiences of being stereotyped, needing to disclose their disability, and how their disability affects them physically and/or emotionally. Despite these differences, very little previous research has been conducted in which the work experiences of individuals with various kinds of disabilities are compared and contrasted (Lindsay, 2010). Such gaps have lead authors to argue for the need to conduct more research about the employment of people with invisible and visible

disabilities (Martz, 2003), and that particular attention be paid to the unique employment needs of workers with invisible disabilities (Santuzzi et al., 2014).

The purpose of this exploratory study was to address these research gaps by inquiring into the self-identified employment needs of individuals with visible and invisible disabilities. Due to differing experiences as a result of the perceptibility of one's disability, it was hypothesized that the employment needs of both groups would differ. Open-ended questions were used to collect the data in order to allow for participants to provide their own accounts of what they require in employment settings (Williams & Mavin, 2012), rather than having them select items from a pre-determined list. Inductive content analysis was then used to analyze the themes emerging from participants' responses, and comparisons were made between the responses of participants with visible and invisible disabilities in order to explore divergent employment needs.

Methods

Procedure

Supported employment programs, universities, and adult education programs from across the province of Québec were contacted for permission to recruit participants from their student and client bases. Approval was obtained from each university and school board research ethics committee, as well as from supported employment agency administrators, prior to recruitment. Once permission was granted, the recruitment letter was distributed to potential participants through email, through physical postings, or through postings on the institution's online forum or website. The recruitment letter contained a short description of the study, as well as a link to the questionnaire on the SurveyMonkey™ website which connected participants directly to the online survey.

Measures

The online survey was made available in both English and French. Participants indicated their preferred language on the first page of the survey, and were then asked to fill in a consent form, a demographic questionnaire, a modified version of the Barriers to Employment and Coping Efficacy Scale (Corbière, Laisné, & Mercier, 2004), as well as three open-ended questions regarding participants' employment needs. The demographic questionnaire contained 14 questions regarding participants' age, sex, marital status and children, first language, ethnicity, educational background, therapeutic history, employment and education status, and disability status. The Barriers to Employment and Coping Efficacy Scale included 43 items rated on a Likert scale, the data from which are described in another article. The open-ended questions were written by the authors, and included the following prompts: 1) "What are your needs in an employment setting?", 2) "What would your perfect employment environment look like", and 3) "What made your best employment experience(s) different from other employment experiences?". Participants were asked to answer these questions with as much detail as possible.

Participants

Thirty-three individuals with disabilities responded to the online survey. Of this sample, nine individuals did not respond to the open-ended questions, two individuals did not indicate their disability type, and one individual did not answer the open-ended questions, nor indicate their disability type. These twelve participants were excluded from analyses, leaving 21 participants in the final sample. Of the 21 participants, 10 were categorized as having visible disabilities, which included spina bifida, limb loss, severe muscular dystrophy, and spinal cord injuries. Sixty percent of this group was female, and their average age was 45.5 years (SD =

8.16). The majority of the group (80%) identified as White/Eastern European, with the remaining 20% identifying as Canadian/Québecois. With respect to employment, 60% of this group were working (30% full-time and 30% part-time) and 40% were unemployed, however, only two individuals were seeking employment.

The invisible disability group consisted of 11 individuals. Disabilities listed by this group included chronic health conditions, visual and auditory disabilities, anxiety disorder, learning disabilities, and Asperger's syndrome. Ninety-one percent of the group was female, with an average age of 33.18 (SD = 12.97). In terms of ethnicity, six individuals identified as White/Eastern European, two as Canadian/Québecer, and three as Black, Arabic, and Hispanic. Of this group, 36% were in school and not working, 36% were employed (9% full-time, 27% part-time), one individual was seeking work, and one was attending employment training. More information regarding participants' demographics can be found in Table 1.

Analysis

IBM SPSS Statistics 22 package was used to calculate descriptive statistics to analyze participants' demographic data. The first author independently analyzed the data from the open-ended questions using inductive content analysis. Inductive analysis was appropriate for this exploratory study, as it allows for themes to emerge from the data (Thomas, 2003). With regard to the analytic process, open codes were assigned to the raw data. Based on these codes, categories were created, and general themes were extracted from those categories (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). Comparisons were then made between the responses of the visible and invisible disability groups. To ensure validity, peer debriefing (Creswell, 2014) was conducted with the second author as well as another expert in the field. Moreover, rich descriptions of the study's results have been provided, in addition to the coding scheme that emerged from the inductive

analysis (Creswell, 2014). Reliability of the data was ensured through numerous reviews of the raw data, as well as through consistent comparisons between the codes and the raw data during the analysis process (Gibbs, 2007, as cited in Creswell, 2014).

Results

Main Themes

Results from the inductive content analysis revealed three main themes that emerged from participants' responses regarding their employment needs: supportive and empowering social environments, physical accessibility, and having specific job design needs. The open codes, categories, and main themes can be found in Figure 1.

Supportive and empowering social environments.

The need for a supportive and empowering social environment within the workplace was a common theme among participants' responses. This theme consisted of two categories of needs: the need for understanding and supportive supervisors and coworkers, as well as the need to be in a work environment that addressed the individual's personal need for respect, acceptance, and autonomy. Twelve participants in total (57%) discussed needing elements pertaining to this theme in their answers to the open-ended questions. Needing or wanting supportive supervisors and colleagues was a common inclusion in respondents' answers. They emphasized the importance of working with a "supportive team", where there is "good communication". The second category of needs consisted of a complex interplay of related but different psychological concepts, including self-determination, acceptance, and feeling valued. The need for working in an environment "where everyone respects each other and is treated equally" and the individual felt "accepted as I am" was critical. Participants needed to feel "autonomous" and that others believed in their abilities.

Physical accessibility.

The theme of physical accessibility emerged from the responses of 57% of participants. This theme referred to the need to have physically accessible washrooms and workspaces, as well as the need for assistive technology and physical help. Participants discussed their need for "an accessible bathroom" and adaptive technology such as a computer with programs that allow for "magnification and colour inversion", and text-to-speech programs. Two participants commented on their need for physical support, from either a person or a service dog. Several participants also discussed requiring a desk that would be accessible for their wheelchair, as well as adapted or ergonomic chairs.

Job design needs.

The need for specific job design requirements was the third main theme that emerged from participants' responses. This theme referred to needing a flexible schedule, the ability to work from home, the need for stable work conditions, and monetary needs. In total, 67% of participants discussed an element related to this theme. Flexibility was a key term used throughout many of the respondents' answers. Six participants indicated their need for flexible schedules. Stability and security was another category found within this theme. Two individuals discussed the need for a "fixed schedule", and others described their need for organization in the workplace, as well as the need for specific, pre-determined work tasks. Finally, salaries and other benefits were cited as important employment factors.

Analysis of Group Differences

While the two groups of participants discussed similar themes concerning their employment needs, ideal work environments, and best jobs, the frequency of these themes differed. The visible disability group most frequently reported employment needs related to

physical accessibility (90%), followed by the need for job design requirements (50%), and then the need for a supportive and empowering work environment (40%). The invisible disability group, on the other hand, most frequently cited specific job design needs (82%), then the need for a supportive and empowering workplace (73%), with physical accessibility (27%) the least reported theme in their answers. For a detailed breakdown of the themes with regard to the two groups of participants, please see Figure 2.

Differences between the two groups were also found with respect to their specific necessities within the three main categories of needs. The physical accessibility needs of the visible disability group were extremely consistent. All participants from this group who discussed the need for physical accessibility reported needing either office or architectural adaptations. Specifically, these participants needed work stations, office spaces and washrooms that were wheelchair accessible or accessible for those with severe mobility disabilities. One individual discussed how they needed their workspace to have equipment at their height, since things like “photocopiers are always too high”. Having desks and equipment at the right height was a need identified by three (30%) participants from this group. Participants reported that their ideal work environment would have “automatic doors”, “large hallways”, and for the entrance to be plowed during the winter to allow for wheelchair access. In addition, two visible disability participants discussed their need for physical support (human or canine), and others elaborated on the assistive technology that would allow for more accessibility in their offices. Only two individuals from the invisible disability group cited their need for work environment accommodations, and these needs were both very different: one participant required assistive technology for their computer due to a visual disability, the other needed a work environment

where there were “no work activities with food present, [and] employees wash hands after eating and do not eat in my work space”, due to their chronic illness related to food allergens.

With regard to the theme of needing a supportive and empowering workplace, the groups had differing needs once again. More than half (64%) of the invisible disability group cited their need for either support and/or understanding in the workplace, with respect to supervisors, coworkers, or both. Participants reported that their employment needs and ideal work environments would include having an “understanding” and “…approachable supervisor who I can ask questions of”, and that their best jobs included “having a supervisor and coworkers who understood and respected my condition”. Participants in this group also discussed their desire for a friendly atmosphere where collaboration is prioritized, and others emphasized their need for respectful and accepting colleagues. Only two individuals in the visible disability group, however, reported a need for understanding. Participants from this group whose answers were relevant to this theme were more likely to discuss their need for acceptance, respect, and the need for their colleagues to believe in their ability to perform well. One individual specifically reported the benefit of having a supervisor who realizes that “…my needs do not prevent me from producing – that I bring something to my organization”.

Job design was the most common theme that emerged from responses of participants in the invisible disability group. Flexible schedules were needed by four participants of this group (36%), with one individual explaining that, due to their disability, they needed the “flexibility to […] alter working hours in case of illness”. Only two visible group participants (20%) cited this need. Forty-five percent of the invisible disability group also cited the need for stable work conditions which revolved around the need for “a calm environment” and “a structured and organized environment, with tasks and a schedule established in advance”. None of the

participants from the visible disability group cited this need. Each group had two individuals whose answers referred to monetary needs, such as having a "fixed salary", "retirement program" or "medical insurance".

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that, while individuals with visible and invisible disabilities share some common needs within employment settings, they also vary somewhat. Both groups of participants desired physical, emotional, and job-related accessibility, but their priorities relevant to these needs were different. Participants with invisible disabilities were concerned with working in a supportive environment and the design of their jobs, whereas participants with visible disabilities were more likely to report needing physical accessibility in the workplace. These needs are consistent with existing research in the field, but shed light on the clear divergences between the experiences and desires of workers with visible and invisible disabilities.

In this study, participants with invisible disabilities had a substantial need for job design accommodations. Flexible schedules and the ability to work from home were major needs for this group. Job control and work schedule flexibility has been associated with higher return-to-work rates for individuals with chronic disability (Krause, Dasinger, Deegan, Rudolph, & Brand, 2001), and likely has similar effects for individuals with other types of invisible disabilities. Such accommodations are among the most commonly requested in Canada (HRSDC, 2010), however this study illuminated this particular need for people with invisible disabilities. Job design accommodations such as modified schedules likely necessitate the involvement and collaboration of coworkers (Colella, 2001), and therefore bring to light the importance of social support and understanding among the workplace.

Individuals with invisible disabilities, as previously discussed, face unique employment experiences where they must decide whether or not to disclose their disability identity. They can choose to disclose in order to receive accommodations that can allow for accessibility within the workplace (Dalgin & Bellini, 2008), such as job design accommodations. People who choose not to disclose may be less effective in the workplace than they could have been should those needs have been addressed (Clair et al., 2005), and "these performance decrements would be attributed by others (who are unaware of the true cause of the disability) to the employee's lack of knowledge, skill, or ability to do the job" (Santuzzi et al., 2014, p.9). However, individuals with invisible disabilities may also encounter coworkers who doubt that their disability is in fact real, and not simply made up in order to receive extra accommodations (Colella, 2001).

The need, therefore, for supportive and understanding coworkers and supervisors, is compelling given these barriers in the workplace. People with invisible disabilities are often very aware of the challenges that they could or do experience in the workplace, and the heightened need for social support is reasonable. Lacaille and colleagues (2004) found that more coworker support was related to less work disability for participants with arthritis, an invisible disability. Having understanding coworkers and supervisors has many positive implications: less stressful disclosure decisions, more confidence when requesting accommodations, and less fear with regard to being stereotyped and discriminated against.

Workers with visible disabilities do not face the same decision-making process regarding disclosure as those with invisible disabilities, since there are salient cues of their disability (Dalgin & Bellini, 2008). Due to the visibility of their disability, they are more likely to experience discrimination upon meeting potential supervisors and coworkers, as they can be immediately categorized and stereotyped (Stone & Colella, 1996), which explains their

significantly lower employment rates compared to those with invisible disabilities (Martz, 2003). Individuals with spinal cord injuries have vocalized in previous studies the need to work even harder than employees without disabilities in order to show their colleagues and supervisors that they were just as useful and valuable (Jongbloed et al., 2007). This is consistent with the responses of participants with visible disabilities in this study, as they were more concerned with being treated as equals and not being underestimated with respect to their work capabilities, rather than being supported.

Physical accessibility was the most needed accommodation for this group of participants, and likely reflects a significant barrier to employment for this population. For individuals with physical disabilities, the ability to conduct work behaviours may be limited without accommodations (Noreau et al., 2002). Previous research has found that, among all requested accommodations for Canadians with disabilities, the most unmet needs were "communication aids, specialized computers, human aids and technical supports" (Till et al., 2015, p. 13), which are all accommodations that would provide physical accessibility. Reasons behind this lack of accommodations includes employers' beliefs that they are too expensive, and employer overall refusal to provide the accommodations (HRSDC, 2010). Belief that accommodations are too expensive is one of the main explanations employers express for choosing not to hire workers with disabilities (Kaye, Jans, & Jones, 2011). Physical barriers are clearly an important obstacle that individuals with physical and visible disabiltiies must face in the workplace, which clearly links to why physical accessibility accommodations would be the most cited need for participants with visible disabilities.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. Responses to open-ended questions, while illuminating, require follow-up in interview or focus group settings in order to delve deeper into the topic of discussion. Participants in this study were able to list their employment needs, but more information regarding their past work experiences and their disability would allow for a more detailed and significant understanding of their employment experiences in relation to these needs. Specifically, whether these individuals have faced discrimination in the past, what fields they have/would like to work in, whether their disability had a childhood or adult-onset, and whether their disability is chronic or fluctuates would all add to a richer, and more comprehensive study of workplace needs.

Another limitation to this study was the homogenous nature of the sample. The majority of participants were White and female, and these demographic characteristics could impact the work experience and needs of these individuals. Sex has been shown to not only significantly affect the amount of perceived employment barriers for people with disabilities (Fabian, Ethridge, & Beveridge, 2009), but also to affect the types of barriers that are encountered (Lindsay, 2010). Ethnicity significantly affects employment experiences, with Black (Dutta, Gervey, Chan, Chou, & Ditchman, 2008; Oberoi, Balcazar, Suarez-Balcazar, Langi, & Lukyanova, 2015) and Native (Dutta et al., 2008) workers with disabilities being significantly less likely to be employed than White workers with disabilities. Furthermore, the types of disabilities represented in each group of participants were not representative of the full spectrum of disabilities. Of particular note, there were no participants with intellectual disabilities in the invisible disability group. People with intellectual disabilities are among those who experience the most barriers to employment (Till et al., 2015), therefore understanding their needs is critical.

Future studies should ensure that this population is included within participant samples, and that the methodology used is inclusive and accessible in order to enable these individuals to participate fully.

Implications and Future Directions

Despite the limitations, there are important implications for the results from this study. Supported employment programs that cater to the need of individuals with disabilities can utilize this information when assisting clients in finding jobs. By knowing the needs of workers with invisible and visible disabilities, support workers can either specifically seek out workplaces that already display such characteristics and accommodations, or ensure that workplaces will be willing to fulfill these needs for their employees with disabilities. Moreover, support workers who have clients that are encountering barriers in their workplaces can consider the needs described in this study and determine whether or not these needs are being met and what accommodations may be required to facilitate successful employment outcomes.

Future vocational or organizational psychology research can build on the results of this study by using the qualitative results to inform quantitative research designs. Developing standardized workplace needs questionnaires would allow for definitive and quantifiable comparisons between individuals with visible and invisible disabilities and their employment needs. Quantitative methodologies could be used to explore the distinct psychological needs that were only briefly explored in this study, such as self-determination, respect, and feeling valued. Researchers can seek to measure these psychological features in order to explore the complex relationships between these concepts and employment needs. Moreover, demographic characteristics could be evaluated through regression analyses to determine whether and to what extent they predict employment needs. Such research would contribute to this developing field

of study, and provide more information that can be used to help create more accessible and inclusive vocational settings.

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Table 1

Demographic Variables of Visible and Invisible Groups

	Visible Disability Group n = 10	Invisible Disability Group n = 11
Variable	$\bar{m}$ (SD)	$\bar{m}$ (SD)
Age	45.5 (8.16)	33.18 (12.97)
	n (%)	*n* (%)
Sex		
Female	6 (60)	10 (91)
Male	4 (40)	1 (9)
Mother tongue		
English	0 (0)	3 (27)
French	10 (100)	7 (64)
Other	0 (0)	1 (9)
Ethnicity		
White/Eastern European	8 (80)	6 (54.5)
Black	0 (0)	1 (9)
Arabic	0 (0)	1 (9)
Hispanic	0 (0)	1 (9)
Canadian/Québecois	2 (20)	2 (18)
Highest Education		
Less than high school	2 (20)	0 (0)
High school	0 (0)	2 (18)
CEGEP	0 (0)	3 (27)
Professional	1 (10)	1 (9)
University degree	6 (60)	5 (45)
Current employment/education status		
Employed full time + not in school	3 (30)	1 (9)
Employed part-time + in school	0 (0)	2 (18)
Employed part-time + not in school	3 (30)	1 (9)
Unemployed + in school	0 (0)	4 (36)
Unemployed + not in school	4 (40)	1 (9)
Other	0 (0)	2 (18)
Currently seeking employment		
Yes	2 (20)	5 (45.5)
No	8 (80)	6 (54.5)

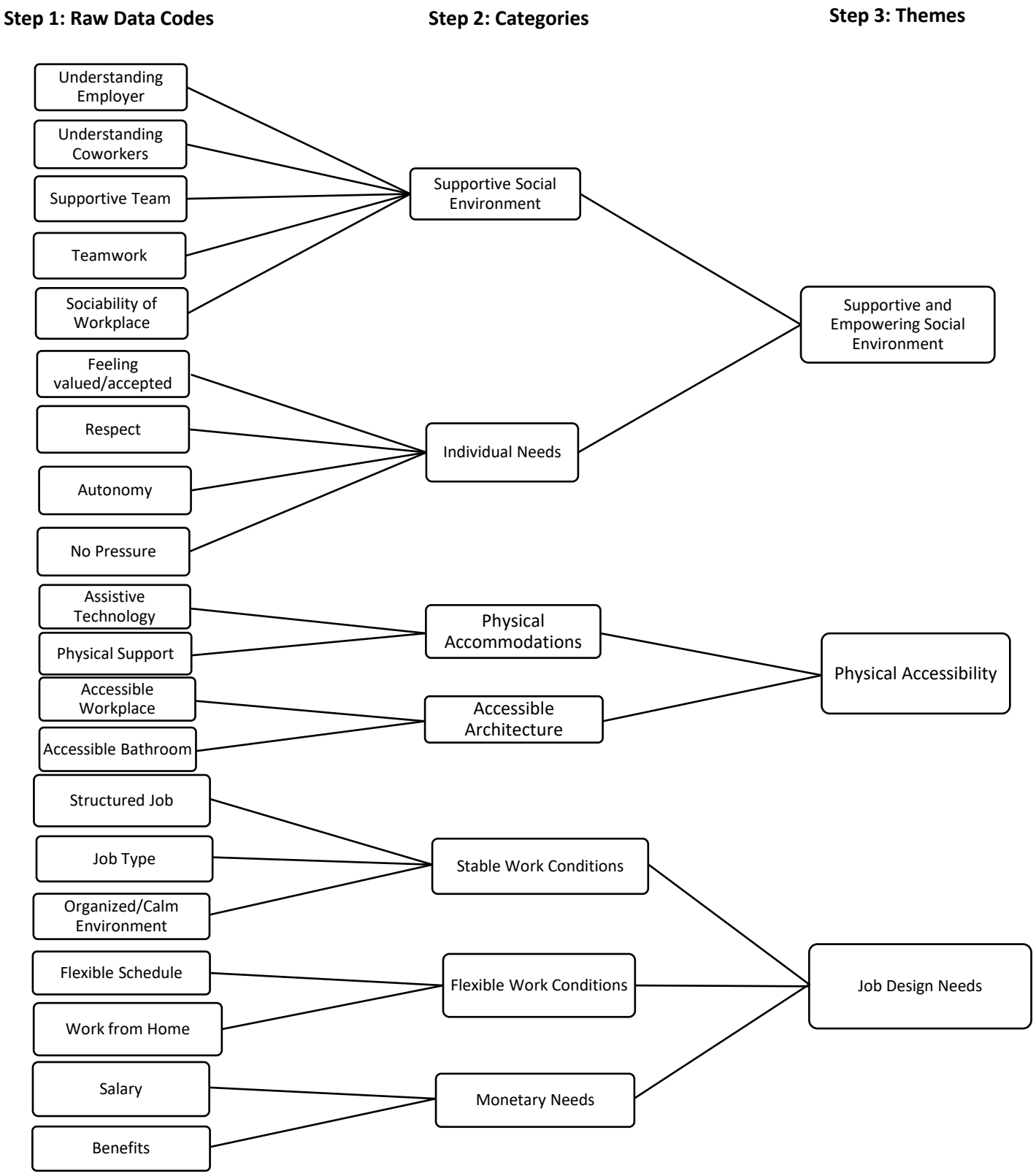

Figure 1. Inductive content analysis of employment needs data

Resulting Themes		Visible Disability Group (n = 10)	Invisible Disability Group (n = 11)
Theme 1: Supportive and Empowering Social Environment	# of participants	n = 4 (40%)	n = 8 (73%)
	Example of responses	• No judgments or discrimination • Belief in abilities • Respect • Acceptance	• Understanding supervisors and co-workers • Respect and support • No discrimination • Accepting of differences
Theme 2: Physical Accessibility	# of participants	n = 9 (90%)	n = 3 (27%)
	Examples of responses	• Desk at height appropriate for wheelchair • Large hallways • Wheelchair accessible bathrooms • Physical help (person or support dog)	• Gluten-free environment • Assistive technology for computers
Theme 3: Job Design Needs	# of participants	n = 5 (50%)	n = 9 (82%)
	Examples of responses	• Work from home • Flexible schedule • Retirement program	• Work from home • Flexible schedule • Fixed schedule • Organized work environment • Fixed salary and benefits

Figure 2. Matrix of responses of visible and invisible disability group

Bridging Manuscript #2: SCCT and Disability In/Visibility

In Chapter 4, I presented a comparison of employment needs expressed by individuals with visible and invisible disabilities. The content analysis revealed that, while overall main themes were consistent across these two groups, the prevalence of these themes differed. Moreover, specific aspects related to the main themes varied in accordance with group membership. Conclusions from this manuscript were that, while individuals with visible disabilities were more likely to cite the need for physical environment accommodations, participants with invisible disabilities stressed the need for job design requirements and a supportive work environment. These results are consistent with Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1994), which proposes that disability type can significantly impact one's career development through interactions with the various ecological systems of the individual's environment throughout the lifespan (Lent et al., 2013). These experiences affect one's cognitive processes, including self-efficacy and outcome expectations, that, in turn, influence one's employment choices, interests, and performance (Lent et al., 1994; 2000; Lent et al., 2013).

In Chapter 5 I extend the findings of Chapter 4 and utilize SCCT as a guide to explore the impact of one's experiences with disability type and barriers on career interests, choices, and performance. Specifically, I conduct a phenomenological study that explores the lived experiences of individuals with invisible disabilities in the workplace. The main themes that emerged from the data were lack of understanding leading to misattributions and feelings of incompetence, desiring a supportive, positive, and inclusive workplace, needing a job that is consistent with one's strengths and needs, and disability as a catalyst for personal growth. These themes were shown to be relevant with respect to the participants' career interests, how they felt

they performed in their jobs, and what jobs they either stayed in or quit. Further, the participants were shaped by their experiences of facing inaccessibility and discrimination in school and in the workplace.

Chapter 5: Manuscript #3

"It makes me wonder if people really appreciate what someone with a disability is bringing to the table": A phenomenological inquiry of employment and invisible disability in Québec

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Abstract

When it comes to employment, growing evidence shows that the type of disability one has can greatly affect how one experiences the job. Specifically, whether one's disability is visible or invisible is shown to impact the type of stigma encountered, decisions to disclose, and the types of accommodations that are available in the workplace. In this study, transcendental-phenomenology was used to inquire into the lived experiences of individuals with invisible disabilities in relation to employment. The lived experience of having an invisible disability and being employed elicited the following four themes: facing a lack of understanding by supervisors and coworkers, which lead to misattributions and feelings of incompetence, desiring a workplace that is supportive, positive, and inclusive, requiring a job aligned with one's strengths and needs, and the experience of disability leading to personal growth.

"It makes me wonder if people really appreciate what someone with a disability is bringing to the table": A phenomenological inquiry of employment and invisible disability in Québec

Throughout history, people with disabilities have faced discrimination and have fought for their right to be fully included in society. Over time, people with disabilities have gained access to education, prompted the development of physically accessible spaces, and have pushed for laws that protect their rights as equal members of their communities. Despite these political gains, this group of individuals is consistently excluded from various of aspects of everyday life. Employment is one such aspect, and people with disabilities are actively engaged in the fight for equal treatment in relation to hiring opportunities, wages, and opportunities for advancement.

Background

Disabilities and Employment in Québec

In Canada, approximately 14% of the population has a disability (Statistics Canada, 2013). These include both visible disabilities, such as physical impairments, and invisible disabilities, such as sensory or learning disabilities. Canadians with disabilities are only hired at a rate of 49%, which is almost half the rate of Canadians without disabilities (Turcotte, 2014). Workers with disabilities in the province of Québec fare no better. With employment rates of 40% (Camirand et al., 2010), these individuals often struggle against the impending threat of poverty (Hughes & Avoke, 2010; Schur, 2002; Stapleton, O'day, Livermore, & Imparato, 2006).

The reasons behind these low rates of employment are wide-ranging and include, among others, stigma against people with disabilities (Beatty, 2012; Burke et al., 2013; Hernandez et al., 2007; Hernandez et al., 2008; Lindstrom, Kahn, & Lindsey, 2013; Louvet, 2007; Russinova, Griffin, Bloch, Wewiorski, & Rosoklija, 2011; Shier, Graham, & Jones, 2009; Till et al., 2015), inaccessible transportation (Beatty, 2012; Hagner, Dague, & Phillips, 2015; Hernandez et al.,

2007), lack of opportunities for career advancement (Beatty, 2012; Lee, 2013; Russinova et al., 2011; Wilson-Kovacs, Ryan, Haslam, & Rabinovich, 2008), and work limitations as a result of one's symptoms (Beatty, 2012; Human Resources and Skills Development Canada [HRSDC], 2010; Jorgensen et al., 2015; Shier, Graham, & Jones, 2009; Schopp et al., 2007; Till et al., 2015). Such barriers are consistent across studies investigating the employment experiences of people with disabilities. However, it is imperative to consider the unique employment experiences of individuals with diverse disabilities, including the specific barriers that those in different disability groups encounter (Hall & Parker, 2010; Lindsay, 2010; Shier, Graham, & Jones, 2009; Snyder et al., 2010).

Invisible Disabilities

Invisible disabilities are significantly different from visible disabilities due to a variety of factors. People with invisible disabilities face unique barriers due to the inperceptability of a very real difficulties. People within an individual's life, including employers, may not understand the extent to which an individual is being prevented from full participation in their lives as a result of their disability. This can be a constant source of conflict and can lead to lowered self-esteem and increased social isolation for the individual (Sturge-Jacobs, 2002). While the general notion of disability is still not widely understood, individuals with invisible disabilities report feeling even more misunderstood than their counterparts with visible disabilities (Mullins & Preyde, 2013). They experience unique forms of stigma and discrimination, have to consider whether or not to disclose their disability, and encounter difficulties receiving accommodations, all due to the invisible nature of their disabilities.

Stigma. Research and theories regarding stigma and the visibility of one's disability are conflicting. Some invisible identities are believed to be threatening to outsiders due to the fear

of possibly acquiring that identity at some point in one's life (Beatty & Kirby, 2006). Beatty and Kirby (2006) emphasize in particular how threatening it could be for an individual without a disability to consider the possibility of developing an invisible disability, such as a chronic illness. This threat may then cause the individual to remove themselves from the presence of the individual with the disability and consequently stigmatize that individual (Beatty & Kirby, 2006). In addition to being threatening to able-bodied individuals, people with invisible disabilities may seem unpredictable and strange. Gouvier, Steiner, Jackson, Schlater, and Rain (1991), for example, suggest that supervisors of work candidates with neurological disorders may feel unsure about hiring such individuals due to "uncertainties about what behaviors and limitations are associated with this condition" (p.127). In a study conducted by Mullins and Preyde (2013), students with invisible disabilities reported that misunderstandings about disability in general were made worse by the imperceptability of their disabilities, which in turn lead to negative perceptions and even to discriminatory comments.

However, the findings are mixed as other authors suggest that, when it comes to stigma, invisible disability can serve as a protective factor. Stone and Colella (1996) propose in their *Model of Factors Affecting the Treatment of Disabled Individuals in Organization* that the more concealable or invisible one's disability is, the less likely that individual will be categorized and stigmatized. They suggest that those whose disability is invisible are more likely to "(a) be assigned to challenging jobs, (b) included in workgroup activities, (d) mentored by supervisors, and (c) offered opportunities for promotion than when the disability is initially apparent to others" (Stone & Colella, 1996, p.364). Other studies have supported this model by finding that people with invisible disabilities are significantly more likely to be employed than those with visible disabilities (Martz, 2003). However, this model does not consider what may occur after

one discloses their invisible disability to others, and how this disclosure may impact experiences of stigma and prejudice. Moreover, despite the possible ability to avoid experiencing stigma by concealing one's identity, this model does not consider the psychological distress that can occur when the individual considers whether or not to disclose (Clair, Beatty, & MacLean, 2005).

Disclosure. Disclosure is a significant issue for individuals who have any invisible social identity. Specifically, for those who desire to be protected legally against possible discrimination, they must disclose their identity, and consequently risk experiencing that discrimination (Beatty & Kirby, 2006; Clair et al., 2005). In addition to fears of facing prejudice, individuals with invisible social identities have an added concern of not being authentic and truthful if they do not disclose (Clair et al., 2005). Pressure is added when the individual feels the need to isolate themselves from coworkers in order to hide their identity (Clair et al., 2005). If they choose to disclose, the individual could still face psychological distress in imagining how others will react to this information (Clair et al., 2005).

Such fears of discrimination are not unwarranted. Dalgin and Bellini (2008) conducted a study in order to determine how disability type affects hiring decisions and employability ratings in a hypothetical job interview. They found that individuals who disclosed a physical disability during an interview were given significantly higher hiring and employability ratings by employers as compared to individuals who disclosed a psychiatric disability (Dalgin & Bellini, 2008). Another study conducted by Gouvier, Sytsma-Jordan, and Mayville (2003) showed that hypothetical job applicants who disclosed back injuries had significantly better hiring ratings compared to those with mental illness, neurological, or developmental disabilities, and that those with mental illness had the lowest ratings of all four groups.

Not disclosing an invisible disability has more repercussions in addition to feelings of inauthenticity. Should one's disability (and the barriers they experience) prevent them from performing as well as they could, this may be misattributed by others as a lack of skills (Santuzzi, Waltz, Finkelstein, & Rupp, 2014), incompetence, or laziness (Stone, 2005). Since employers may attribute gaps in work histories or difficulties on the job as evidence that the individual is not a good employee, this could hinder the individual from either getting a job, or keeping a job (Martz, 2003).

Accommodations. Some workers with invisible disabilities require accommodations to allow them to access their workspace and work without any barriers. However, those with invisible disabilities face unique problems when it comes to accommodations. Invisible difficulties may make receiving appropriate accommodations more difficult, and may affect one's ability to keep a job (Johnson et al., 2004). Firstly, coworkers who cannot readily identify that a worker has a disability may not believe them (Colella, 2001). Moreover, coworkers may believe that the individual is simply pretending to have a disability in order to get an unfair advantage (Colella, 2001) and "their case may be viewed as suspicious or illegitimate when the disability is not visible" (Santuzzi et al., 2014, p.10-11). Disclosure during the hiring process can lead to acquiring helpful accommodations when one begins a new job, but can also lead to discrimination, specifically having access to fewer hiring opportunities and opportunities for advancement (Dalgin & Bellini, 2008).

For all of the above-mentioned reasons, people with invisible disabilities are a unique group of employees. Despite this, little research has been conducted regarding the specific experiences that these individuals have in the workplace, prompting authors to argue for the need for more research on this topic (Martz, 2003; Santuzzi et al., 2014). Such information is

necessary in order to ensure the full inclusion of this population within employment settings. The following phenomenological study attempted to fill this research gap by asking the following research question: What are the unique employment experiences of people with invisible disabilities?

Methods

Phenomenology

A phenomenological research design was most appropriate for this study, as the research question was focused on understanding the shared experiences of disability and employment in order to influence practice and policies (Creswell, 2007). Phenomenological research is a qualitative method that "describes the meaning for several individuals of their *lived experiences* of a concept or a phenomenon" (Creswell, 2007, p.57). Interviews are typically used to collect data for phenomenologies, and interview data is analyzed for significant statements, meaning units, and descriptions of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Specifically, transcendental phenomenology was utilized for this study (Moustakas, 1994).

Transcendental phenomenology, compared to hermeneutical phenomenology, is primarily focused on the actual experiences lived by the individual participants, rather than the subjective interpretations of these experiences by the researcher (Creswell, 2007). It consists of three specific processes: transcendental-phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and epoche (Moustakas, 1994). Transcendental-phenomenological reduction refers to describing the data gained through what the researcher observes and continually reflecting and looking back at the data to determine their meaning by reducing them to meaningful themes. Imaginative variation denotes the act of explaining the structure behind the experience, or "the underlying and precipitating factors that account for what is being experienced" (Moustakas, 1994, p.98).

Finally, as described by Moustakas (1994), Epoche or bracketing requires that the researcher leave behind their biases and pre-existing notions, particularly in relation to the subject under study.

Understanding the context in which a researcher conducts their inquiry is critical. It affects the entire research process: the questions the researcher asks, their epistemological and theoretical influences, the methodology they choose to utilize, how they analyze the data, and the way that they communicate the results of the research. As such, a subjectivity statement not only contributes to the readers' knowledge of the research, but also allows the researcher to develop insight into their own belief systems. This reflexivity is paramount to qualitative research in general (Creswell, 2014), and transcendental phenomenology specifically (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology requires that, as much as possible, the researcher 'brackets out' their personal experiences and beliefs in order to describe the phenomenon as objectively as possible (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). The research conducted in this manuscript was mainly conceptualized and actualized by myself, the first author, therefore my subjectivity statement is presented.

Subjectivity Statement

I am a white, physically able-bodied, heterosexual, cis-gender female of Eastern European descent from a middle-class Canadian family. When I was 12 years old, I developed an invisible episodic psychological disability. I received an official diagnosis at the age of 15, when I began undergoing treatment. This disability significantly impacted a large portion of my life, at times leading to disabling periods of depression and anxiety in which day to day activities such as attending classes, work, and social events were incredibly challenging. During other times, the effects of this disability were seemingly non-existent, leading to typical everyday experiences. I have never disclosed this disability to any of my employers. Reasons for this

included believing that the disability would not have an impact on my work performance, not knowing of any accommodations that I could receive, feeling a sense of shame and embarrassment as a result of having the disability, and developing coping strategies to compensate for difficulties. Invisible disabilities are common within my family; many members have psychological disabilities, and my brother has autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

These experiences with disability have greatly shaped my understanding of ableism, inclusion, and the role that society plays in creating disabling environments. Specifically, I believe that we live in a society that places high value on able-bodiedness and neurotypicalism, and that people with disabilities are at a disadvantage within many of the environments in which they live. I strongly believe in the Social Model of Disability (Oliver, 1983), which argues that people with disabilities are disabled by societal barriers. This does not negate the fact that having a disability is often extremely difficult, disruptive, and painful, but suggests that policies exacerbate the negative experiences that people with disabilities have. Despite these preconceptions of what it means to live with a disability, I have as much as possible focused on my participants' expressions of their experiences in order to guide the findings of this study.

Participants

Criterion sampling was used to recruit participants. Initially, the purpose of the study was to examine the lived experiences of individuals with either visible or invisible disabilities, thus the recruitment letter simply specified the requirement of having a disability, without specifying a type of disability. However, those who consented and were available to participate in the in-person interviews were all individuals with invisible disabilities. The final participant sample therefore only consisted of people with invisible disabilities. The sample size needed for phenomenological inquiries is small, as "[t]he aim of a phenomenological study is, finally, to

uncover the necessary structural invariants of an experience, and those invariants are fully discoverable in any individual case" (Dukes, 1984). Creswell and Poth (2018) cite Duke's (1984) recommendation of including samples ranging from three to ten individuals for phenomenological studies.

Four individuals (two male and two female) participated in this study's in-person interviews. All four individuals were young adults (below the age of 32), and current university students. They included Violet, a young woman with mood and anxiety disorders, Sam, a young man with a hearing disability and eating disorder, Jesse, a young man with ADHD and a specific learning disability, and Diana, a young woman with a hearing disability. In order to maintain strict confidentiality of the participants, additional demographic details have not been included in this manuscript.

Procedure

Participants from a previous study who consented to being contacted for future research projects were contacted with a recruitment flyer to determine if they would like to participate. In addition, the recruitment flyer was advertised digitally to students through a student services department and graduate student society at a Canadian university. Ethics board approval was obtained from the university prior to recruitment, as was approval from the student services department. Once individuals agreed to participate in the study, they were sent a digital copy of the consent form for review. I met participants at a physically-accessible building at the university, and the interview was conducted in a private room. We read through the consent form and the participant was provided with an opportunity to ask any questions or obtain further information regarding the study. They were then asked to sign the consent form, and were provided with their own copy. Interviews were semi-structured, and lasted between 15 - 45

minutes long. I utilized an interview protocol which was developed through consultation with the second author as well as two experts in the field, and took notes throughout the interview.

The recorded interview was transcribed verbatim, and the transcriptions were compared to the recordings two times after the initial transcription was completed to ensure accuracy. The prolonged time (Creswell, 2014) spent listening to the recordings allowed for deep engagement with the raw data, leading to extensive memo-writing. The transcriptions were sent to participants for their review, and were coded and analyzed. Coding was used to identify recurring themes or concepts that were deemed important (Maxwell, 2012). Participants were given a pseudonym which was used to identify them in all transcribed data and in the release of the findings. In addition, names of any other individuals or identifiable places that participants provided in their interviews were completely omitted in the release of the findings, to protect their anonymity.

Validity

Several steps were taken to ensure the validity of the study. Firstly, the interview transcriptions were sent to each participant to allow for member checking, so that they had the opportunity to make clarifications or additions to their comments (Creswell, 2007). The subjectivity statement allowed for me to be fully transparent about any previous bias (Creswell, 2014) and the comprehensive descriptions of the data in the results section allowed for the results to be "more realistic and richer" (Creswell, 2014, p.202). Finally, having been responsible for not only conducting the interviews, but also transcribing and coding the data, provided me with extended time in the field which lead to an enhanced understanding of the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2014).

Analysis

The data were analyzed in the following manner. During the interview transcription phase, memos were written in the margins of the transcriptions regarding emerging themes and topics. Once the transcriptions were reviewed for accuracy, significant statements were identified and listed in an excel spreadsheet as meaning units (Moustakas, 1994). These meaning units were then analyzed for similarities and clustered into themes, consistent with the processes of transcendental-phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994). Finally, from these themes, an analysis of the structure of the experience (imaginative variation) was conducted (Moustakas, 1994).

Despite the small sample size and short duration of interviews, data saturation was considered to be achieved. The constant comparison method was used during the transcendental-phenomenological reduction in order to ensure that all data was compared to, and subsequently fit within, emerging categories (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Further data collection was determined unneccesary after the four interviews, as the constant comparison between the data and codes ensured that the results were reliable (Gibbs, 2007, as cited in Creswell, 2014).

Results

Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction

Using transcendental-phenomenological reduction, the participants' significant statements were reduced into four main themes: lack of understanding leading to misattributions and feelings of incompetence, desiring a supportive, positive, and inclusive workplace, needing a job that is consistent with one's strengths and needs, and disability as a catalyst for personal growth. Descriptions of these main themes as well as examples of representative significant

statements follow. Small edits (ie. removal of non-verbal sounds, fillers, repeated words) have been made to the quotes to improve clarity.

Lack of understanding leading to misattributions and feelings of incompetence

Experiencing a lack of understanding from coworkers and supervisors in the work environment was encountered by all of the participants in this study. They discussed how this lack of understanding lead others to misattribute their behaviours to negative qualities, such as laziness, rudeness, and hypersensitivity. Moreover, some of the participants attributed this lack of understanding to their own personal feelings of incompetence. Violet recognised that while no one at her workplace knew about her disabilities, they were still passing judgment on her behaviours. She discussed how she can become very distressed at work over various things, but that "no one knows that its because I have this anxiety. Everyone thinks that I'm just a very sensitive person, is what I hear." She went on to describe how, when she began taking medication for her anxiety, the side effects were misinterpreted by her coworkers:

> I had a tremor. And then people kept asking, like "Are you nervous about something? What's wrong?" And people, they like, jump into conclusion[s], but there could be a thousand different reasons, why someone has a resting tremor, so…and that was very difficult to explain. […] So, but the judging part of it is what – it happens in a lot of situations where they look at you, they see you doing something and automatically they assume something about you.

Jesse felt similarly in that others, particularly supervisors, were likely to misattribute his organizational and attentional difficulties to negative personal characteristics: "to an employer who doesn't know a lot about the way my mind works – seems to be like laziness, or being slow…or just not paying attention". He also discussed how these misattributions were unique to

having an invisible disability. Since these types of disabilities are undetectable by outsiders, he felt that, "the outward signs are so often confused with the signs of someone who's just a bad worker […] I think when it comes to other forms of disability, there's something that you can really point to".

Both Sam and Diana had trouble at work due to others not knowing, or not believing, that they had a hearing disability. As a result of the imperceptibility of their disabilities, neither consistently received the accommodations that they needed in order to perform their jobs successfully. Diana expressed that, because her disability was invisible, "it was hard to convince people at work, that 'Yes, I'm actually hearing-impaired, can you please just help me out' ". She felt that she "didn't know if they truly understood that I legitimately needed some help" and because of that, "people might think I'm incompetent sometimes, or maybe a bit rude cause I - if I don't hear something, people might take it as me ignoring them or me just kinda trying to just brush them off". Because she had to keep reminding her coworkers to help her, she describes how, "it just made me feel incompetent at my job. So, its sad, cause I feel like I wasn't". Sam had similar experiences in his workplace. Because his supervisor and coworkers didn't know about his disability, they also did not know about accommodations that he would have needed. While he would first ask for others to repeat themselves when they asked him to complete a task, he would stop after a time "because often they get annoyed". As a result, he would end up making mistakes.

Needing a supportive, positive, and inclusive workplace

The need for a workplace where supervisors and coworkers are supportive, understanding, motivating, and aware of the strengths of people with disabilities was clearly expressed by each participant. Being an employee with an invisible disability entailed knowing

the importance that having an inclusive work environment with supportive colleagues would have on their work performance and emotional states. It was also critical for these individuals to know that others in their work environment valued them, and recognized that they are valuable employees, regardless of any disabilities.

When asked about what characteristics her ideal supervisor would have, Violet replied, "the first thing that comes to mind is caring; someone who is...you know they're not just there to do the job and leave, but they actually care about, you know, the unit, they care about the employees". Violet also described how it was important to have a supervisor who was not only supportive, but also understanding of the needs of employees with disabilities, particularly those with anxiety or mood disorders.

> I think also someone who doesn't jump into conclusions. Like just because - like it's very easy for me to cry, doesn't mean that there's something necessarily wrong with me. That is just part of my personality, and it's okay. It's okay for people to have anxiety, it's okay for people to get emotional very fast, because you don't know what's going on in their head. You don't know what they're going through. And it doesn't mean that they can't advance at work or their ideas are couldn't be taken into consideration, because of that.

Jesse talked about wanting a supervisor who would be open to discussing his needs and accommodations in the workplace. He also suggested that having a supervisor who was willing to initiate that kind of conversation would be ideal:

> [I]t's nice to be able to talk with an employer openly about what I need and what I don't need. And it's better if the employer brings that up because then it feels less like a 'I'm asking to be special' situation.

Having an employer who was both motivating and flexible was also very important to Jesse. He discussed how "having a degree of flexibility to…allow for systems that work" in the workplace would be an ideal characteristic as that would allow for him to overcome workplace barriers. Jesse also mentioned the need to be supervised by someone who was motivating and believed in his abilities since, "[if] they don't have confidence in me, I lose confidence in myself".

Both Sam and Diana also emphasized their desire for employers and coworkers who provided the accommodations that they needed, but understood that irregardless of their hearing impairments, they were very effective employees. Diana discussed how she would want a supervisor who, "spoke loudly, actually looked at me when they talked, didn't mind repeating things and know that they have to repeat things sometimes. I guess that's pretty much it. Yeah, just someone who's understanding". She discussed wanting a work environment where others would, "understand that I'm hearing-impaired and […] just repeat things if necessary but also know that it has no affect on my ability to do my job". Having a supervisor who is cognizant of both his needs and strengths was important to Sam as well. He wanted an employer who, "doesn't treat me differently just because I have a disability but also understanding that sometimes I may have barriers to completing certain duties". Sam also desired to work in a positive environment where "there's no conflict" and where disagreements are resolved "in a civilized manner".

Needing a job consistent with one's strengths and needs

For all individuals, job fit is very important. To succeed and be motivated in one's job, there needs to be a good balance of enjoyable tasks, feelings of competence, and believing that one can advance through hard work. These aspects of needing a job that are consistent with

one's strengths and needs was particularly salient in the participants' dialogues. Not only was adequate job fit important for the above-mentioned reasons, but it was also discussed in relation to disability. In order for these individuals with invisible disabilities to flourish in the workplace, they needed not only to like the specific works tasks that they had, but also to work in an accessible environment that was free of unnecessary barriers. Such barriers could greatly reduce their work performance and cause emotional distress.

For Jesse, working in an environment in which he has a "structured schedule" was necessary. Due to his particular difficulties with attention and working memory, he emphasized that this structure was critical in order for him to succeed. He talked about a previous job he had in which he felt, "I didn't do as well as I would've liked to because it was very not structured, it was kind of a show up and work when you want sort of thing". He also discussed needing a "dedicated place" to work, and the opportunity to work on different projects and tasks in "chunks" where he could "hyper-focus" since "that's the way [his] mind works". While Jesse discussed being interested in almost everything, he felt particularly drawn to "passing out knowledge, or - and working with people who are learning something".

Job fit was also very important to Violet. She recounted the difficulties she had at a previous call-center job, where the boredom exacerbated her symptoms and lead to her to being very unhappy. She described how she "started to make mistakes on purpose" so that eventually she got fired. Like Jesse, she preferred jobs in which she was teaching: "transferring the knowledge to someone on - in the work - in the environment. I think that's what I like". While she was happy in her current job in the health care field, she discussed wanting a position with more "independent work", and one in which she was not being restricted due to other's perceptions of her emotionality. Violet felt that, due to her anxiety, she doesn't receive "the very

high-risk [clients]", and that this is possibly due to her supervisors not believing that she could handle it.

When discussing his ideal job, Sam talked about diversity and flexibility. He wanted "diversity in the tasks" where "you're not just dealing with paperwork all the time you're also doing other stuff". He also emphasized the need for some flexibility in respect to working independently or with coworkers: "there's some times when you're alone and can just do whatever and some times when, if you want to, you can collaborate with other people". Sam also preferred a job that "not physically demanding" and where there's "no obstacles on what I do". Diana referred to the need for flexibility with regard to being able to take time off "to spend time with my family". She also discussed the need to love her job, and to have financial security.

Disability as a catalyst for personal growth

All of the participants discussed how their disability allowed them to grow as individuals and to gain important personal traits. These traits were valuable not only for the workplace, but also in their everyday lives. When discussing the effects of having a disability, Sam expressed that "it's made me more sympathetic to people who are not, I dunno what word to describe it, […] people who are disadvantaged because of something they have, or of who they are. And it's made me more caring, I guess?". He went on to discuss how having a disability also provided the opportunity for him to better recognize the people who he felt were worth his time:

> [W]hen meeting people who I don't really know, when they say something negative about people with disabilities or make offensive jokes or when they insult people who have that, it made me realize who decent people [are] and who are the other way around! And it helps me root out people who I don't want to associate with or people I want to.

Similarly, Diana discussed how having a disability allowed her to really value those individuals in her life who were understanding of her needs: "you really know who your friends are because they're willing to put in the extra effort to accommodate you."

For Violet, having mood and anxiety disorders prompted her development of strong self-advocacy skills. This was in stark contrast to her personality before she developed the disability.

> So I used to be very calm, quiet and then I became, as the symptoms became more present, I was becoming very…felt I was becoming very aggressive but because of fear. Like fear that something will happen if I don't fight for myself. But then after the medication, it sort of calmed down, but I still have this energy in me, I still have this fighting energy in me but its appropriate. […] And I wasn't like that before, so I guess that's a positive that was - like how it impacted me.

Her self-identified "fighting energy" prompted her to advocate for herself when she was discriminated against due to her disability and refused several jobs, and also helped her fight for accommodations and therapy for her children who also have disabilities. She explains that,

> It helps me to say, 'It's okay that I have all these things, and it's okay that I have to take medication, and it's okay that I have to keep seeing a psychiatrist and have to be observed, and - because, if it weren't for that, then I wouldn't, you know, be where I am today'.

Jesse developed strategies as a response to his disabilities that allowed him to navigate school and work environments. When he was first diagnosed, he found it an "almost liberating experience" which prompted him "to develop, essentially, systems to live my life better". Using these strategies, he was able to succeed, and to learn about himself in the process. In addition to

creating this new way of living, Jesse also discussed how his disability prompted him to choose the career path that he did.

> I think I probably do a lot of the work I do because of that aspect of my identity. I think, again, when you have challenges put upon you, at least the way that I react to them, is to [...] to try to help other people with those challenges, and again, young people are often dealing with all these things or learning to deal with them and, or developing the systems that are gonna help them or not help them later on, so, I'd like to try to get maybe the help that I didn't get.

Imaginative Variation

It is important to consider the "structure" of participants' experiences, which refers to the contexts and other factors that have shaped their experience of the phenomenon under analysis (Moustakas, 1994). For the participants in this study, their experiences with employment and invisible disability were greatly shaped by the obstacles that they had to face in school and in other aspects of their lives. Specifically, participants discussed how they had to overcome barriers to accessible education, as well as how they dealt with prejudice and discrimination, both in reaction to their disabilities, as well as other personal characteristics.

Most of the participants discussed how they struggled in school as a consequence of having a disability that was often not accommodated. As Diana stated, "it's hard sometimes I guess, cause in school, like in high school, it's hard to hear the teacher, so its hard to be taught the material. So you have to, kind of do some extra work to learn in school". The problem of having to learn despite encountering barriers to accessing classroom material persisted into university. Not being able to "listen to Youtube videos, or any videos that a professor might show in class" or having professors who "just lecture and talk" without including any visual aids

prevented Diana from being able to perceive all of the information that other students were provided with, putting her at a clear disadvantage.

Both Jesse and Violet faced similar difficulties relating to their university experiences. At one point, Jesse was at risk of "being kicked out" of university due to his low marks, which was not caused by lack of interest, but because of difficulties arising from his disabilities. Once he was afforded with accommodations, such as the ability to take smaller courseloads and to have extended deadlines, and learned about the strategies and systems which help him stay organized, he was able to flourish academically. Violet encountered a university professor who "refused to accommodate" her needs, despite registering with student services after she was diagnosed with her disabilities. Regardless of her needs, she was made to complete her degree in the same amount of time as all other students, which she described as not only "exhausting", but also left her unable to work for 6 months.

Despite all of the obstacles that they faced in school, these three individuals continued to pursue education through graduate degrees. Their resilience to persist despite encountering continual obstacles likely also contributed to their ability to persevere in the workplace in the face of even more barriers. Violet in particular faced outright discrimination in her field once she disclosed her disabilities in job applications. While her other classmates were getting interviews, she was not offered any despite high grades and good work experience. She later found out that this was directly due to her having disclosed her disabilities. Her strong self-advocacy skills and resilience lead her to fight for her rights and obtain a very successful career, but this was after having to overcome numerous obstacles on the way.

In addition to disability, the majority of the participants discussed having been discriminated against or encountering difficult situations due to other personal characteristics.

Sexual orientation, perceived physical weakness, and ethnicity were all factors that they believed contributed to feeling mistreated or alienated in the workplace. All of these characteristics, whether visible or invisible, lead to either maltreatment from coworkers, lack of opportunities to obtain jobs, or strained relationships with supervisors. Again, these individuals perservered despite these obstacles, either by leaving toxic work environments or choosing to continue working.

Textural-Structural Synthesis

In transcendental phenomenology, conclusions are based on the synthesis of both the textural and structural descriptions, which provides a complete description of the phenomenon under study (Moustakas, 1994). In this study, we explored the lived experience of being an employee with an invisible disability. For these individuals, working with an invisible disability meant having to deal with consistent unfair misattributions by supervisors and coworkers due to the imperceptability of their disabilities. Such mischaracterizations often lead to their self-identified feelings of incompetence. Having experienced this lack of understanding contributed to these individuals' placing value on working in a job in which people are supportive, inclusive, and also value the strengths of people with disabilities. In addition to a supportive work environment, working in a job that fits with one's interests, strengths, and specific needs was extremely important, as that would not only allow for these individuals to flourish, but would also prevent any barriers to working at their full potential. Despite, or perhaps as a result of, the many obstacles that were faced by these individuals both throughout their educational careers and their work experiences, their lived experience with invisible disability allowed them to develop extremely exceptional and valuable personal traits. They perservered and overcame numerous difficulties that they encountered throughout their lives, whether it was due to

discrimination against their disability or other personal characteristics. Living with an invisible disability meant understanding one's own difficulties, valuing one's strengths, and knowing that workplaces need to be accepting, accommodating, and respectful of their worth in order for them to be truly inclusive and accessible.

Limitations

Limitations of this study encompass the sample, procedure, and analysis. Although the sample size was small, it was still within the range suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018) and Creswell (2014). However, the sample was quite homogenous. Despite having an equal number of males and females from various ethnicities and backgrounds, participants were all young adults enrolled in higher education. The resulting themes may therefore be a reflection of the lived experiences of university students with invisible disabilities in employment settings, rather than that of all individuals with invisible disabilities. Having high self-efficacy, knowing about the rights of people with disabilities, and knowing what accommodations would be appropriate to eliminate workplace barriers may all have been influenced by this sample's educational background. Furthermore, since all participants were still in the beginning stages of their careers, the results may only reflect their experiences in terms of this particular career development phase. Future studies building on these results should recruit participants from various age groups, educational backgrounds, and career development stages in order to determine whether the themes are transferable to other populations.

Another limitation of this study was the brevity of the interviews. While the data gathered from the interviews were enough to reach saturation of the main themes, longer interviews may have provided more information regarding the structural or contextual components of the participants' experiences. In terms of the analysis, utilizing member-checking

by allowing participants to review the final themes and determine whether they agreed with the results (Creswell, 2014) would have increased the credibility of the findings. Furthermore, since only one researcher coded and analyzed the data, determining the consistency of intercoder agreement, a common method used to ensure reliability (Creswell, 2014), was not possible. Studies aimed at building on these results should include at least two researchers who are available to code interview data in order to guarantee that the results are reliable.

Implications and Conclusion

Results from this study provide needed understanding regarding the experiences of employees with invisible disabilities. This information can be utilized in order to sensitize workplaces to the needs of employees with invisible disabilities. For work environments to be accessible, employers need to be cognizant of the accommodations and other workplace factors that promote inclusivity for all of their employees. For workers with invisible disabilities, this is particularly critical, as they have unique experiences with regard to stigma and disclosure, as well as needs that must be accommodated. Moreover, it is imperative that workplaces, and society in general, understand the major contributions that individuals with invisible disabilities can make. Having had to overcome countless barriers throughout their lives due to accessibility, discrimination, and mischaracterizations has helped these individuals become extremely resilient, a characteristic that should be valued and actively sought. Disability can certainly cause distress, but can also lead to many positive outcomes. The individuals in this study provided a needed example of what it means to have a disability, overcome societal barriers, become self-advocates, and believe fiercely in the strengths of people with disabilities.

While the participants in this study were able to overcome the numerous barriers they encountered in work settings, it is necessary for societal expectations to shift from a medical

model perspective wherein the burden to cope with obstacles is placed on the individual, to that of a social model (Oliver, 1983). Such a shift would necessitate that both educational and employment institutions eliminate any uneccessary barriers that impede individuals from full access to participation (Oliver, 1983; Williams & Mavin, 2012). Not only are individuals with disabilities valuable employees, they have the right to employment. As this right is so often denied, it is imperative that we continue to push for changes and advocate for equal access to education and employment.

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Chapter 5: Final Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The three research studies presented in this dissertation were conducted for the purpose of gaining needed information regarding employment barriers and facilitators for individuals with disabilities living in the province of Québec. Gaps in the literature were addressed, with particular attention on the applicability of Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). Original contributions, limitations, and future directions of this dissertation will now be discussed in the context of the three main research needs identified in the literature review: 1) Coping, 2) Barriers according to type of disability and visibility, and 3) Worker perspectives and qualitative data.

Coping

According to the authors of SCCT (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994), there is a lack of research investigating how individuals cope with the barriers they face within the workplace (Lent, Morrison, & Ezeofor, 2013), and how this coping self-efficacy is implicated in their perception of career barriers (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000). In Chapter 2, I investigated the relationship between perceived employment barriers and coping self-efficacy for individuals with and without disabilities. Results showed that total employment barriers was not significantly correlated with total coping self-efficacy, for either the disability nor the non-disability groups. While it was hypothesized that self-efficacy may be negatively correlated with barriers in that higher self-efficacy reduces the amount of perceived barriers, the authors of SCCT also suggest other possible mechanisms in which coping mediates or moderates the relationship between barriers and choice behaviour (Lent et al., 2000). Future studies should include designs in which not only perceived barriers and coping are measured, but employment choice behaviour as well, in order to delve deeper into the relationships between these constructs.

Notwithstanding this non-significant finding, the results of Chapter 2 are important in that they revealed that despite perceiving significantly more potential barriers to employment, participants with disabilities had equivalent ratings of coping self-efficacy as participants without disabilities. As suggested in the discussion section of that article, this may point to the development of resiliency among this generally marginalized population, a characteristic which should be highly valued by employers and society at large. These results were reinforced by those found in Chapter 4. In that article, a qualitative approach was used to explore coping and employment barriers experienced by individuals with invisible disabilities. The results showed that while people with invisible disabilities encounter many obstacles within employment settings, they do not feel that their disabilities singularly prevent them from being as effective as other employees without disabilities. Rather, it is the barriers that they face regarding lack of accommodations that cause work performance difficulties. While coping was not measured, it was clear through the participants' discourse that their self-efficacy to overcome obstacles both in educational and employment settings contributed to their ability to perservere and choose to continue working in their preferred fields, despite accessibility issues in the work environment. This is consistent with SCCT, which suggests the possibility of self-efficacy playing a role in facilitating more positive work outcomes despite the experience of obstacles (Lent et al., 2000).

Barriers According to Disability Type and Visibility

In the context of SCCT, personal characteristics such as disability type are expected to elicit differing reactions from the environment, and can therefore effect career interests, choices, and self-efficacy (Lent et al., 2013). Specifically, the form of disability one has is expected to affect the types of experiences and opportunities one is presented with (Lent et al., 2013). Surprisingly, research regarding comparisons of employment barriers experienced by individuals

in different disability groups is lacking (Hall & Parker, 2010; Lindsay, 2010; Shier, Graham, & Jones, 2009; Snyder et al., 2010), as is research regarding the employment outcomes of workers with visible and invisible disabilities (Martz, 2003; Santuzzi, Waltz, Finkelstein, & Rupp, 2014). In order to understand how work environments can be made to be more inclusive of workers with disabilities, such information is critical.

In Chapter 2, I aimed to collect a large enough data sample to compare employment barriers among people with different types of disabilities. Unfortunately due to the small participant sample, such a comparison was not possible. Further comparisons were then made to determine whether there were differences between participants with visible and invisible disabilities in relation to perceived barriers and coping efficacy. These differences were also insignificant, and again may have been due to the small sample size. Future studies could build on the study by collecting data from a larger sample of individuals with disabilities in order to make the desired comparisons. Moreover, our lack of significant findings may have been due to the instrument used. The BECES (Corbière, Mercier, & Lesage, 2004) was developed for use with populations who have mental illness, therefore this instrument may not have been sensitive enough to capture subtle differences among the participants with different types of disabilities. The development of a questionnaire that is validated with individuals with various types of disabilities would be a significant addition to this field of research, and would allow future studies of this nature to gain more information.

I did find, however, in the qualitative studies outlined in Chapters 3 and 4 that there were particular barriers and needs unique to individuals with visible and invisible disabilities. In Chapter 3, it was found that while individuals with visible and invisible disabilities cite similar main themes concerning employment needs, the frequency of these themes in their responses

were quite divergent, as were the specific needs within these themes. While individuals with visible disabilities cited the need for physical accessibility as their primary requirement for a desirable workplace, those with invisible disabilities needed specific aspects of job design that would make working more accessible, as well as the need for a supportive work environment. These results provided important confirmation that workplace accessibility is highly dependent on the type of disability that one is experiencing. The phenomenological study in Chapter 4 provided additional information regarding not only employment needs, but also employment barriers, choices, performance, and self-efficacy, all important aspects of SCCT, among a group of individuals with invisible disabilities. The responses highlighted the unique lived experiences of having an invisible disability in the workplace. To build on these results, phenomenological studies should be conducted that focus on the employment experiences of workers with visible disabilities.

Worker Perspectives and Qualitative Data

Finally, many authors have cited the importance of conducting research that is not just *about* people with disabilities, but seeks information directly *from* them, rather than from those who interact with them (Snyder et al., 2010; Williams & Mavin, 2012). Likewise, the need to conduct more studies using qualitative research methods that value the voices of participants and provides a deeper understanding into the lived experiences of those with disabilities has been emphasized in this field (Hernandez et al., 2007; O'Day & Killeen, 2002). Not only are these features very consistent with a Disability Studies Lens (Williams & Mavin, 2012), but they also allow for deeper, richer investigation into the various aspects of SCCT.

All three of the research studies presented in this dissertation were aimed at gaining a better understanding of the employment experiences of people with disabilities. As these

individuals are the experts of their own lives, it was clear that to gain the most valid and useful information, these individuals would have to play a central role in each of the studies. In Chapter 2, while people without disabilities were included as participants, this was done in order to facilitate an important comparison that elucidated the large disparity between the amount of workplace barriers perceived by those with and without disabilities. The responses to the three open-ended questions described in Chapter 3 provided an opportunity for participants with disabilities to discuss their particular needs in employment settings, and gave them the flexibility to list anything that they felt was pertinent to their experience. Lastly, Chapter 4 provided the most freedom for the participants to express their needs, desires, and experiences apropos of employment and invisible disability. The qualitative data from these articles can be used to add evidence for the applicability of SCCT to the employment experiences of people with disabilities, and can prompt future qualitative investigations that seek to gain more explicit data regarding how the components of SCCT interact to explain the career experiences of people with disabilities.

Original Contributions and Conclusion

The original contributions of this research to the field of Human Development include my use of William and Mavin's (2012) Disability Studies Lens in order to: 1) emphasize the social aspects of society that bar people with disabilities from full access to employment, and in so doing, steer away from a medical model discourse, 2) emphasize the value and strengths of individuals with disabilities by focusing on their self-identified self-efficacy and resiliency, with a particular focus on employment settings, and 3) place high value on the voices of people with disabilities, and highlight their self-expressed needs and barriers within work contexts. Moreover, I applied a unique career development model, Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent

et al., 1994), to the study of employment barriers, coping efficacy, and employment facilitators of individuals with disabilities in the province of Québec. This theory, which draws upon both Social Cognitive Theory and ecological systems models, provided a developmental lens through which novel findings regarding the work experiences of individuals with disabilities were discovered. Specifically, the role of the environment as both a facilitator and barrier to employment for this population, the unique experiences and needs of individuals with in/visible disabilities, and the resilience of employees with disabilities in the Québec context were important and original findings that add a new layer of understanding to the career development literature.

Like most dissertations, this was sparked by my own personal experiences, values, and beliefs about disability. Living with an episodic disability, having friends and family members with disabilities, and working with people with disabilities prompted my desire to seek information that would not only be academically rigorous, but would also provide a needed focus on the strengths and struggles of this particular group of individuals within society. It is my hope that this research will add to a growing body of literature which seeks to provide an avenue to promote social justice for people with disabilities, who despite centuries of exclusion, have continued to fight for their rights within society.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Advertisement for Employment Survey

Request for Research Participants!

Student Researcher: Amanda Saxe, PhD Candidate
SPARC Research Team
Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, McGill University
Contact information: SPARC Lab (514) 398-2765 or amanda.saxe@mail.mcgill.ca

Research Supervisor: Dr. Tara Flanagan
SPARC Research Team
Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, McGill University
Contact information: Office (514) 398-3441 or taradawn.flanagan@mcgill.ca

Hello!

I am currently recruiting participants for a study concerning employment needs and barriers faced by individuals with and without disabilities living in the province of Quebec. Participation involves filling in an online survey that will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. Participants will be entered in a raffle to win one of four 50$ Amazon.ca gift cards!

If you are 18 years of age or older and are interested in participating, please click on the link below.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Q2SCMKQ

Thank you so much for your time!

Appendix B

Employment Survey Research Consent Form

Employment experiences of individuals with and without disabilities in Quebec

Student Researcher: Amanda Saxe, PhD Candidate
SPARC Research Team
Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, McGill University
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The objective of this study is to investigate the employment needs and barriers faced by individuals with and without disabilities living in the province of Quebec. The goal is to recruit adults with various disabilities and adults without disabilities to compare and contrast their employment needs and barriers experienced in the workplace. The data collected in this study will be analyzed and reported in a written article. It is intended for this article to be submitted as part of the student researcher's dissertation, as well as published in an academic research journal. The data collected may also be used in future research conducted by the student researcher and/or the research supervisor.

Participants of this research study will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire, a questionnaire regarding employment barriers, and three open-ended questions regarding employment needs. The questionnaires will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You may choose to exit the survey at any time and you may refuse to answer any question(s) you are not comfortable answering. There are no known risks associated with participating in this study. Questionnaires can be completed anonymously.

Should you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the McGill Research Ethics Officer at (514) 398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca. Any questions about the research itself should be directed to the research supervisor.

Please print or save a copy of this document for your own reference.

I am 18 years of age or older. **YES** **NO**

I have read and understood the above information, and agree to participate in this study. **YES** **NO**

Appendix C

Employment Survey Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your age?
   _____

2. What is your gender?
   a. Female
   b. Male
   c. Other_____

3. What is your marital status?
   a. Single
   b. In a relationship
   c. Married
   d. Divorced/separated
   e. Other_____

4. Do you have children?
   a. Yes
      Please indicate how many: _____
   b. No
   c. Other_____

5. What is your mother tongue?
   a. English
   b. French
   c. Other_____

6. What is your ethnicity (ie. African American, Asian, Caucasian)?
   _____

7. What type of elementary school did you attend? You may select more than one.
   a. Mainstream school
   b. Special education school
   c. Inclusive school (students with and without disabilities)
   d. Other_____

8. What type of high school did you attend? You may select more than one.
   a. Mainstream school
   b. Special education school
   c. Inclusive school (students with and without disabilities)
   d. Other_____

9. Please select any therapy programs that you have participated in. You may select more than one.
    a. Occupational therapy
    b. Physical therapy
    c. Supported employment program
    d. Psychological therapy
    e. Other_____

10. What is the highest level of education that you have attained?
    a. Did not complete high school
    b. High School
    c. Adult Education program (ex. WOTP)
    d. CEGEP (Diploma of Collegial Studies)
    e. Professional degree
    f. Bachelor's degree
    g. Master's degree
    h. Doctoral degree
    i. Post-doctoral degree
    j. Other_____

11. Please choose the option that most adequately represents your current employment/educational situation.
    a. Employed full-time and in school
    b. Employed full-time and not in school
    c. Employed part-time and in school
    d. Employed part-time and not in school
    e. Unemployed and in school
    f. Unemployed and not in school
    g. Other_____

12. How many years in total have you been employed in your lifetime?
    _____

13. Are you currently seeking employment?
    a. Yes
    b. No

14. Do you have a disability?
    a. Yes
       Please specify: _____
    b. No

Appendix D

Modified Barriers to Employment and Coping Efficacy Scale

(Corbière, Mercier, & Lesage, 2004) and Open-Ended Questions

To what extent, in your current situation, could this item represent a barrier to employment?

Not likely at all	Not very likely	Somewhat unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat likely	Very likely	Completely likely	Not applicable
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

If you have rated the item as a 2 or higher, please indicate to what extent you feel able to overcome this barrier.

Not able to at all	Not very able	Somewhat unable	Neutral	Somewhat able	Very able	Completely able
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Items

1. Physical health problems
2. Means of transport
3. Lack of motivation or self-determination
4. Anxiety or fears
5. Poor work experience or background
6. Indecision with respect to job opportunities
7. Lack of energy
8. Lack of education or training
9. Loss of unemployment benefits or financial support if you obtain a job
10. People think your work plans are unrealistic
11. Medication side effects (e.g., hand shaking or tremors)
12. Drugs or alcohol consumption
13. Lack of work skills
14. Lack of social support (e.g., friends, family)
15. Lack of self-confidence
16. Lack of available jobs in your field
17. Low productivity in workplace
18. Employers' prejudices about hiring people with disabilities
19. Difficulties working with others
20. Lack of sleep
21. Frequent mood changes
22. High unemployment rate
23. Difficulties interacting with others
24. Difficulties adapting to the demands of a new job
25. Lack of employer flexibility (e.g., schedule, productivity)
26. Stress related to job search

27. Difficulties coping with frequent changes (e.g., schedule) in your future job
28. Stressful events (e.g., bereavement, break up)
29. Working conditions (e.g., responsibility, tasks)
30. Low success rate at previous work experience (e.g., job loss)
31. Lack initiative in seeking a job (lack of driving ambition, resourcefulness)
32. Job market instability
33. Competition in workplace
34. Parental obligations (e.g., children, family member)
35. Lack of follow-up or therapeutic help when obtaining a job
36. Prolonged absence from the workplace
37. Interruption in medication
38. Lack of coworker support when obtaining a job
39. Difficulties in being punctual
40. Asserting oneself with coworkers
41. Have a good appearance in your job (well groomed)
42. Be autonomous in your job
43. Pressure related to the job

Please answer the following long-answer questions with as much detail as possible.

1. What are your needs in an employment setting?

   _____
   _____
   _____

2. What would your perfect employment environment look like?

   _____
   _____
   _____

3. What made your best employment experience(s) different from other employment experiences?

   _____
   _____
   _____

Appendix E

Recruitment Advertisement for Phenomenology Study

Request for Research Participants!

I am currently recruiting participants for a study about employment needs and barriers faced by individuals with disabilities. Participants will partake in an 1-1.5-hour long interview and receive a 30$ Amazon Gift Card for participation in the study.

If you are 18 years of age or older, have a disability, live in the city of Montreal, and are interested in participating in this study, please contact Amanda at amanda.saxe@mail.mcgill.ca.

Thank you so much for your time!

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Appendix F

Research Consent Form for Phenomenology Study

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Participant Consent Form

Title of Project: Employment and Disabilities: A Phenomenological Inquiry

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Sponsor(s): Fonds de recherche sur la société et la culture (FRQSC) Doctoral Bursary

Purpose of the Study: This is an invitation to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to gain a better understanding of the work experiences of people with disabilities. We would like to know what obstacles are encountered in work situations, and what makes employment experiences more successful, for people with disabilities.

Study Procedures*:* Your participation in this study will involve being interviewed at McGill University in a private room on the downtown campus at a physically accessible building. The interview will take approximately 1-1.5 hours. You will first read through this consent form with the researcher, and have time to ask any questions. You will then be asked interview questions regarding your disability and employment experiences. The interview will be recorded, and the researcher will take notes. Recording the interview will let the researcher focus on the discussion taking place while making sure not to miss any important facts, which can then be reviewed later. The entire recorded interview will be written out by the researcher or by a hired transcriber. You will then be sent the interview transcription so that you can clarify anything that was said, or add more information that you feel is important. The interview data will then be analyzed by the researcher.

Voluntary Participation*:* Participation in this project is voluntary. You may choose to leave the interview at any time and for any reason. You may refuse to answer any question(s) you are not comfortable answering. If you decide to withdraw from the study, all data collected in the interview will be destroyed unless you give permission otherwise

Potential Risks: There are two potential risks for participants in this study. You may experience emotional discomfort when discussing employment experiences that may have been unpleasant. To reduce this risk, you may refuse to answer any questions that you are not comfortable answering, and may choose to stop the interview at any time. Secondly, in discussing negative aspects of your current employment, you may risk, or fear the risk, of being penalized or fired from your job. To reduce this risk, you will be given a pseudonym which will be used to identify you in all research materials, and no names of individuals, identifiable places or organizations that you mention will be included in any published materials.

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Benefits: While you may or may not benefit directly from this study, the information gained will help us get a better understanding of what makes employment accessible/not accessible to people with disabilities. This information can then be used to help make workplaces more inclusive for people with disabilities.

Compensation: You will receive a 30$ Amazon.com gift card for participation in this study.

Confidentiality: You will be given a pseudonym which will be used to identify you in all research materials, and no names of individuals, identifiable places or organizations that you mention will be included in any published materials. The list of names and pseudonyms will be password protected and saved only on the researcher's personal computer. There will not be any use of the data by others. Recordings of interviews will only be used by the researcher.

Because an individual may be hired to transcribe the interview data, privacy and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. However, if a transcriber is hired, they will be required to sign a confidentiality form. The results of the study will be written in the student researcher's PhD thesis, and may be published in a journal article and presented at research conferences. In addition, a handout with a summary of the research results and implications will be created and provided to supported employment organizations in Quebec so that it can benefit other workers with disabilities.

Questions*:* Should you have any questions or concerns about the research study, please contact Amanda, the primary researcher, at amanda.saxe@mail.mcgill.ca, or at the SPARC Lab (514) 398-2765.

If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca.

Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Appendix G

Interview Protocol

1. Greet participant

2. Read through participant consent form and answer any questions

3. Alert the participant that I will begin the interview and that I will turn the recorder on

4. Begin interview:

Main Question: Tell me a little about yourself.

a) **Follow-up**:
- As you know, I am interviewing people with disabilities in order to gain a better understanding of disability and employment experiences. Can you tell me about your experience with disability?

b) **Prompts**:
- What type of disability do you have?
- What characterizes your disability?
  (Who) characterizes your disability this way? Do you characterize your disability differently? Please describe.
- How would you define and describe your disability?
- How long have you lived with your disability?

Main Question: Tell me more about how your disability has impacted your daily life.

a) **Follow-up:**
- Has your disability had an impact on the way that you approach life? If so, how? For how long?

b) **Prompts:**
- How has your disability negatively impacted your life?
- How has your disability positively impacted your life?

Main Question: Can you describe your past and current jobs?

a) **Follow-up**:
- Which of these was your favourite job? Why?
  -Who made this job good? What did they do? What were they like? What about this job made it your favorite? How did it feel? When and where was this job?
- Which of these was your least favourite job? Why?

b) **Prompt**:

- Tell me about the place, the space, the people, the environment, the policies
- Describe what you do/did at this/these job(s).
- What was enjoyable? Meaningful? Fulfilling?
- What was Difficult? Challenges?

Main Question: Has your disability had an impact on your employment experiences?

a) **Follow-up**:

- How have employers and coworkers treated you?
- Were your workplaces physically accessible for you?

b) **Prompts**:

- Have you ever felt that having a disability impacted whether you had a negative or positive work experience? How so?

Main Question: Do you feel like you have experienced prejudice in the workplace because of your disability?

a) Follow-up:

- If so, in what ways? Who was involved?

b) Prompts:

- Were you ever treated differently than other workers at your job(s) because of your disability?

Main Question: Are there factors other than disability that you feel have influenced your employment experiences?

a) **Follow-up**:

- Were your work experiences positively or negative affected by these characteristics? Please explain.

b) **Prompts**:

- Do you think characteristics like sex, ethnicity, gender, or age have had an impact on your work experiences? If so, how?

Main Question: Can you describe your ideal job?

a) **Follow-up**:

- Why would this be your ideal job?
- What aspects of this job are most important?
- What would the work environment of this ideal job look like?

b) **Prompts**:

- If you could work somewhere for the rest of your life, where would that be? Who would it be with (who would be there with you)?
- Describe your ideal work environment.
- Describe your ideal work tasks.

Main Question: What characteristics would your ideal supervisor have?

a) **Follow-up**:

- Describe these characteristics.
- Why are these characteristics important to you?
- What characteristics would your ideal co-workers have?

b) **Prompts**:

- Tell be about what you liked best about your past/current employer(s).

Main Question: Is there anything else that you would like to talk about before we finish the interview?

Probing Questions (after any main or follow-up questions):

- Can you elaborate on that?
- Can you give me an example of ...
- Please tell me more about …
- What makes you think that?
- Can you describe an incident where that happened?