

Abstract

The current study examined the stigma against people with hard-of-hearing. People with hard-of-hearing was defined in this study to be a group of individuals with relatively mild hearing loss and do not need to use hearing aids. The concealable stigma they face may not be accurately captured by previous studies targeting people with hearing impairment, thus we also investigated possible factors that correlate with stigma against this specific group of individuals with hard-of-hearing. 415 undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Chinese University of Hong Kong were recruited to participate in an online questionnaire. Results indicated that participants had a preference for individuals with normal hearing over people with hard-of-hearing when making promotion decisions. Humanitarianism-egalitarianism was found to significantly correlate with the choice to promote people with hard-of-hearing. No significant association between promotion decision and empathic concern or that between promotion decision and benevolent stigma was found. People who are high in humanitarianism-egalitarianism may have chosen people with hard-of-hearing over individuals with normal hearing because they may have perceived that the one with the disability was more worthy of their help, which could also explain their concurrent higher levels of benevolent stigma. The study provided preliminary evidence on potential discrimination against people with hard-of-hearing during the hiring process.

Keywords: stigma; hard-of-hearing; humanitarianism; egalitarianism; benevolent stigma