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## Fake Service Dogs: Leading by Example

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## Abstract

This study examines public awareness about service dogs and the effects of misrepresenting a service dog. As service dogs become more prevalent, so too, does the opportunity for individuals to misrepresent their dogs which has an impact on businesses and legitimate service teams.

## Introduction

The use of service dogs for individuals with disabilities has been increasing in recent years (Mills, 2017). Unfortunately, some people are exploiting loopholes in the validation and enforcement policies, consequently creating issues for businesses and legitimate service teams (Campbell, 2016).

## Objective

The objective of this study is to examine public awareness about service dogs to consider the impacts for the people involved.

## Methods

- **Design:** Qualitative ethnography
- **Participants:** Public Employees
- **Instrumentation:** Principal investigator acts as key instrument
- **Procedure:**
  - Normal public interactions
  - Employee can ask up to two questions per ADA
    - Service dog?
    - Specific task trained for?
  - Investigator responds with up to two f/u questions
  - Employee interactions compared to expected outcomes (Ignore, Engage, Challenge)
- **Measure:** Scored 0-5 for each expected outcome
  - 0 – no ADA compliance
  - 3 = both questions within ADA guidelines
  - 5 = 2<sup>nd</sup> f/u question correct



Figure 1. Service Dogs Welcome



Simon

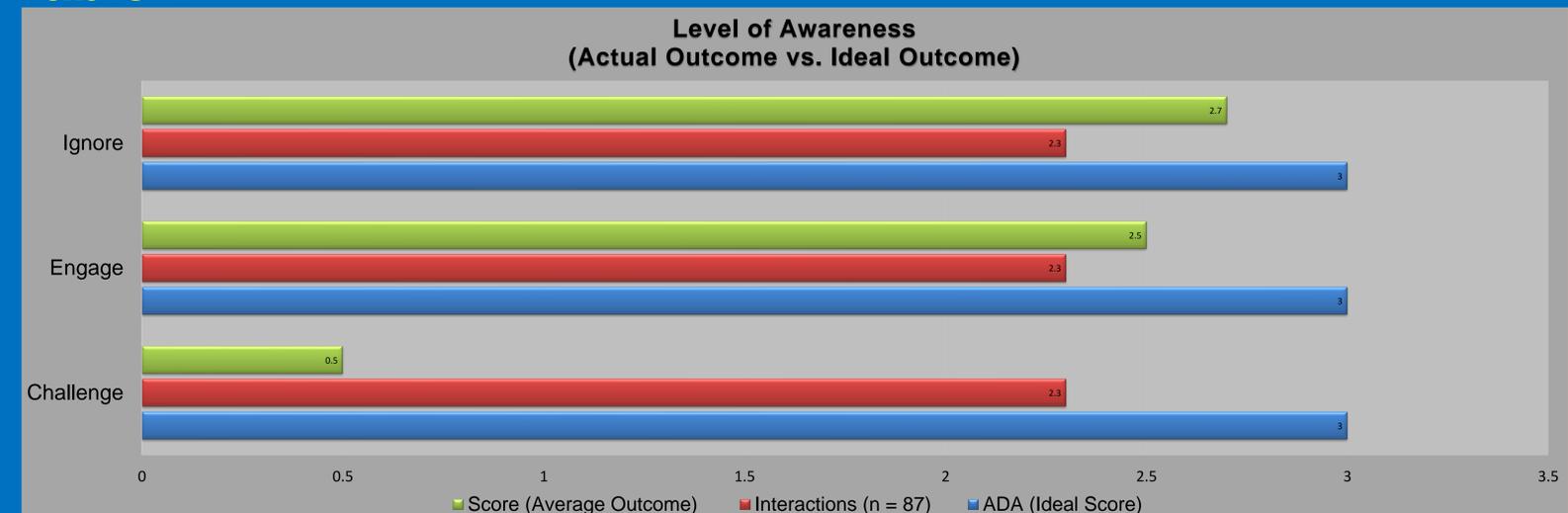
## Results (Table 1)

- Employees engaged more frequently
- Employees who ignored showed higher awareness
- Challenges yield least awareness
- Larger businesses show higher awareness (see data)

## Discussion

- This study supports current trends
- Gaps in awareness about service dogs exist
- Loopholes in the laws are being exploited
- The use of fake service dogs may suggest higher awareness of laws
- Without standardized validation or enforcement policies, problem persists
- Ideal interactions are least invasive
- Well-trained dog mitigates public concerns and fosters ideal interactions

### Table 1



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### References

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