

EMPLOYERS' ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCES REGARDING EMPLOYEES
WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation, EMPLOYERS' ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCES REGARDING EMPLOYEES WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY is my own work and that all resources that were used or referred to by me during this research study, are indicated by means of a complete reference and acknowledgement.

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ABSTRACT

Persons with intellectual disability were often segregated from the community during the 20th century. As the social model of disability replaces the medical model, normalisation, deinstitutionalisation and job placement occur. However, in South Africa only a minority of persons with intellectual disability work in the open labour market.

A qualitative study was conducted to explore and describe employers' attitudes and experiences regarding employees with intellectual disability. The research design was exploratory, descriptive and contextual, utilising purposive and snowball sampling. Semi-structured interviews were conducted; thereafter, Tesch's eight steps were used to conduct the data analysis. The findings were described according to themes and sub-themes and subsequently verified. Factors impacting upon employers' attitudes and their positive experiences were described. The challenges employers faced and their experiences of their role in the employment of persons with intellectual disability, may be used as guidelines for employers of such persons. Recommendations for further action and research are suggested.

KEYWORDS

Employers

Attitudes

Experiences

Employees

Employees with intellectual disability

Intellectual disability

Mental Retardation

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAMR	American Association on Mental Retardation
DART	Disability Action Research Team
DPSA	Disabled Persons South Africa
DSSA	Down Syndrome South Africa
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health Model
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INDS	White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (1997)
NRF	National Research Foundation
SAFMH	South African Federation for Mental Health
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
TAG	Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of People with Disabilities, Department of Labour (2004)
WHO	World Health Organisation

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout the 20th century the so-called "medical model" of disability led to widespread institutionalisation of persons with intellectual disability, resulting in the rejection of their full citizenship through physical and psychological segregation. The disability was viewed as the central problem, with the focus on the diagnosis and curing of the disability (Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of People with Disabilities [TAG], 2004). Vocational training was mainly conducted in specialised sheltered workshops, as it was believed that intensive preparation was needed before persons with intellectual disability could attempt to enter the labour market (Parmenter in Albrecht, Seelman & Bury, 2000:286-287; Lynch, 2002:225-226).

The International Year of Disabled Persons in 1981 heralded Resolution 37/52 of 1982 by the General Assembly of the United Nations, at which the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons was adopted. The "right of persons with disabilities to the same opportunities as other citizens and to an equal share in the improvements in living conditions resulting from economic and social development" was emphasised (Development Bank of Southern Africa, 2005:9). The United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992) culminated in the Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Persons with Disabilities, based on the principles of equal opportunity, equal treatment, non-discrimination and mainstreaming (Development Bank of Southern Africa, 2005:9). The most recent United Nations document on disability, adopted in March 2007, is the Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. The aim of this document is, as stated in the preamble, to "make a significant contribution to redressing the profound social disadvantage of persons with disabilities and promote their participation in the civil, political, economic, social and cultural spheres with equal opportunities, in both developing and

developed countries” (<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/convtexte.htm>)
The International Labour Organisation (ILO), through various conventions and resolutions, also contributed to the field of employment for persons with disabilities. The so-called "Social Model", which views disability as a "human rights and development issue", thus gradually replaces the medical model (White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy [INDS], 1997).

Especially in developed countries, persons with disabilities, including intellectual disability, were deinstitutionalised into community living and work programmes. People with intellectual disability started lobbying for themselves, empowering them to challenge "conventional attitudes and practices, including the attribution of impairment and disability that had historically set them apart from the rest of society" (Parmenter in Albrecht *et al.*, 2000:286-287).

The South African government, in adherence to the principles of the social model, has succeeded in creating an enabling environment for policy development and implementation for all people with disabilities. These interventions and programmes are described by the Development Bank of Southern Africa (2005:29-30) as follows:

- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996, acknowledges legal equality for all South Africans, without discrimination and with rights to education and to work. Specific mention is made of the need to develop the employment, training and the re-adaptation of policies, with a particular focus on people with disabilities.
- The White Paper on the Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) of 1997 introduced a paradigm shift from the medical or welfare model of disability to the social model, with an emphasis on non-discrimination, inclusion and equal opportunities.
- The Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 recommended that 2% of employees in organisations with more than 50 employees should be persons with disabilities. The aim of the Code of Good Practice for the employment of Persons with Disabilities of 2000, followed by the Technical Assistance Guidelines to the employment of Persons with Disabilities of 2004, was to assist employers in the recruitment of people with disabilities.

- The Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 and Skills Development Levy Act No. 9 of 1999 implemented structures and processes to improve the employment prospects of previously disadvantaged groups, including persons with disabilities, through training and education.

Thus far, attention has been given to the perspectives on disability issues, both internationally and within the South African contexts. The paradigm shift from the medical to the social model of disability and the deinstitutionalisation and integration of people with disabilities, were noted. As the focus of the proposed study will be specifically on the attitudes and experiences of employers regarding the employment of persons with intellectual disability, it is necessary to consider what “disability” in general, but more specifically “intellectual disability” entail.

There is considerable confusion and controversy among policy-makers and scholars concerning terms and definitions used in the disability field. Definitions are often dependent on the context within which they are used such as for medical treatment, classification, writing policies, determining funding, planning services or determining needed supports (Schreiner in Albrecht *et al.*, 2000:643).

In the ICF (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health Model, World Health Organisation, 2001), "disability" is an umbrella term for a significant problem in functioning and is characterised by marked and severe problems in the capacity ('impairment') and the ability to perform ('activity limitations'), as well as the opportunity to function (participation restrictions).

The American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR, 2002:8), uses the term "mental retardation" and defines it as follows: "a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before age 18".

The South African Federation for Mental Health (SAFMH) uses the above definition, but replaces the term "mental retardation" with the term "intellectual disability" (South African Federation for Mental Health (<http://www.safmh.org.za/glossary.html>). The Mental Health Act (Act 17 of 2002) also uses the term "intellectual disability" for instance when defining “severe or

profound intellectual disability". For the purposes of this study, the term "intellectual disability" will thus be used, in keeping with the recommended usage by the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disabilities (Hernandez, 2000:2 http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0825/is_4_66/ai_68865430/print).

As indicated above, in South Africa, persons with disabilities may participate actively in the economy through equal opportunities created by the positive policy and legislative environment in which employers actively seek to employ persons with disabilities. However, a study conducted by Global Business Solutions in 2001, showed that a mere 1% of 150 000 employees in companies were persons with disabilities, whereas the Commission for Employment Equity report for 2002/2003 confirms an employment rate of only 1% for persons with disabilities in both the private and public sectors (Dube, 2005:7, 17). It can thus be deduced that if there are ± 206 451 persons with intellectual disability, only about 2 065 might be gainfully employed (Statistics South Africa 2005:6).

The Supported Employment model utilised by trained job coaches in mainly developed countries, has been implemented on a small scale in South Africa for approximately five years (Ms A Smeeton, Board Member Down's Syndrome South Africa, 28/02/2007). Supported employment encompasses the employment of individuals with disabilities, especially intellectual disability, in real jobs in regular settings, where training and other support is provided on an ongoing basis (Lynch, 2002:225-226). However, it should be noted that persons with intellectual disability were, and still are, also employed in the open labour market without, or with varying degrees of support from organisations within the disability field.

The current unemployment, institutionalisation or sheltered employment of persons with intellectual disability in South Africa, may be attributed to various factors including historical policies, culture, the unemployment rate and limited support structures within the community. The contemporary view is that the social issues of intellectual disability are not only situated in the person with the disability, but in the nature of society as a whole (Parmenter in Albrecht *et al.*, 2000:267-268).

Research findings from several studies show that employers play a critical role in the employment of persons with disabilities, especially intellectual disability. Their attitudes, myths, misconceptions and apprehensions concerning persons with disability, may contribute largely to the low employment rate. Other research findings include:

- The extent to which persons with disabilities are included in the workforce depends on the type and severity of the disability. Employers expressed greater concern about employing persons with intellectual disability than persons with physical disabilities.
- Employers appear, to a certain extent, to sacrifice work performance for dependability, but economic and labour market conditions and perceptions of co-workers might influence this attitude.
- Employers' concerns about the work potential of persons with disabilities might originate in myths and misconceptions, rather than in direct experience.
- Employers increasingly recognise the significance of employing persons with disabilities so as to enhance their image in the community and to demonstrate corporate responsibility (Unger, 2002:2).

Given the above-mentioned underemployment of persons with disabilities in South Africa, including intellectual disability, as visualised in The Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998) on the one hand, and the concerns, scepticism and inexperience of prospective employers on the other, it is of vital importance that the attitudes and experiences of employers of persons with intellectual disability are researched. These employers are in the position to provide important information (by means of their experiences regarding employees with intellectual disability) which can be utilised to:

- assist employers with meeting the requirements of the Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998);
- dispel concerns and misconceptions of prospective employers;
- contribute towards awareness and knowledge among professionals working with clients with intellectual disabilities; and

- promote the rights and participation of persons with disabilities in our society as envisaged in the White Paper on the Integrated National Disability Strategy of 1997.

At the outset of the proposed research, an extensive literature survey was conducted at various university libraries, with the help of subject librarians. In addition, the researcher searched the internet, including the South African Medical Research Council, The Human Sciences Research Council, the Ebsco Host and Nexus databases. Practitioners of several organisations, working with persons with intellectual disability, as well as experts in the field of intellectual disability from at least four universities, were also contacted to locate relevant scientific literature.

A large number of books and articles was located concerning general disability issues, supported employment and intellectual disability. However, only limited literature could be located specifically on the employment of persons with intellectual disability in the open labour market within the South African context. A few research projects have been conducted on the subjects of employment of persons with disabilities and employment equity, but no studies could be located which specifically focus on the employment of persons with intellectual disability. The only recommendations made to this effect were found in dissertations by Smit, (2001:124) and Le Roux, (2004:115). They stated that their studies exclude persons with intellectual disability (mental handicap) and recommended that issues pertaining to their employment should be researched. Although the researcher included "intellectual impairment" in a study aimed at providing guidelines for a training programme for employers regarding the employment of persons with disabilities, Naude (2002:245) recommends that more research should be done "to gather information regarding the employment possibilities for disabled people, their potential and the needs of disabled people regarding employment in the open labour market, the functioning and needs of different companies and practical examples of job placements of disabled people in the labour market". Research to explore the experiences of line managers who have actually managed people with disabilities within their teams, is recommended by Gida (2003:80).

The lack of local research literature is clearly stated in the following quotation:

"Whilst South Africa is fortunate to have amongst its disabled population leaders, activists and campaigners who carry immense experience and knowledge of the nature of disability politics, a distinctly South African Disability Studies literature is yet to emerge and develop" (Watermeyer, Swartz, Lorenzo, Schneider & Priestley, 2006:3).

1.2 PROBLEM FORMULATION

Historically, while the medical model of disability was in use, vocational training of persons with intellectual disability was mainly conducted in specialised sheltered workshops as it was believed that intensive preparation was needed before they could attempt to enter the labour market (Lynch, 2002:225-226). When a paradigm shift took place from the medical model of disability to the social model, non-discrimination, inclusion and equal opportunities was emphasised (INDS, 1997). People with intellectual disability started lobbying for themselves, empowering them to challenge "conventional attitudes and practices, including the attribution of impairment and disability that had historically set them apart from the rest of society" (Parmenter in Albrecht *et al.*, 2000:286-287).

In South Africa, an enabling environment was created for persons with disabilities through the development and implementation of, for example, the INDS (1997) and the Employment Equity Act (Act no. 55 of 1998). This Act recommended that 2% of employees in organisations with more than 50 employees should be persons with disabilities, but statistics show that only about 1% of persons employed in the private and public sectors are persons with disabilities (Dube, 2005:7, 17). It can thus be deduced that only a minority of persons with intellectual disability are employed in the open labour market.

Unger (2002:2) states that several researchers have found that, apart from economic factors, labour market conditions and perceptions of co-workers and employers' attitudes play a critical role in the high unemployment rate of persons with disabilities. They are especially concerned about the employment of persons with intellectual disability, but their concerns about the employability of persons

with disabilities are often based on myths and misconceptions rather than on "direct experience".

Gainful employment for persons with intellectual disability signifies a relatively new direction in services for these clients in South Africa. However, some employers currently do employ persons with intellectual disability, but no scientific documentation regarding their attitudes towards, or experiences of, disability and specifically, the employment of persons with intellectual disability could be located.

Employers' attitudes and experiences regarding employees with intellectual disability should therefore be researched and documented in order to gain knowledge and understanding about employers' attitudes and their experiences and challenges: especially their role in the employment of employees with intellectual disability in the open labour market.

Given the above-mentioned scenario and the stated lack of scientific literature on the subject, the researcher deems it necessary to undertake qualitative research into the attitudes and experiences of employers regarding employees with intellectual disability.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

Creswell (1998:19) states that a qualitative study commences by posing a research question concerning a topic in the social or human sciences. Qualitative research is an "inquiry process of understanding" with its basis in "distinct methodological traditions of inquiry". The nature of the research question enables the researcher to answer "what" questions when variables cannot be easily defined, to present a detailed view of the topic and to study participants within their natural setting. Keeping these guidelines in mind, the research question for this study can be formulated as:

What are the attitudes and experiences of employers regarding employees with intellectual disability?

1.4 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 Goal

Maxwell in Bickman & Rog, (1998:71) describes the purpose or goal of a study by stating that the researcher should determine which issues the intended study should illuminate, what implications it would have for practice and why the results would be important. The goal of the study will therefore be:

engaging with employers of persons with intellectual disability to gain insight into their direct experiences.

1.4.2 Objectives

Holloway and Wheeler (1998:27) state that some researchers prefer to state steps or objectives to reach the research goal and advise that these objectives should be clear and specific. The objectives for this research are the following:

- To explore and describe employers' attitudes and experiences regarding employees with intellectual disability;
- To analyse and interpret the data by reducing them to themes and sub-themes;
- To verify the exploratory descriptive data by reviewing existing literature and research relating to employers of persons with intellectual disability; and
- To compile a comprehensive research report based on the findings, including recommendations.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 Research Approach

Fouché and Delport (in De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport, 2005:73) describe the two "well-known and recognised approaches to research, namely, the quantitative and qualitative paradigms". They recommend that the researcher

distinguish clearly between the two approaches and then choose the most suitable approach or even a combined quantitative/qualitative (mixed) approach.

For the quantitative approach, the basic assumption is that there is an objective reality which can be measured. The research question is predictive with a cause-effect relationship between variables (the hypothesis). The study is focused and conducted within structured guidelines. Predefined concepts, variables and hypotheses are used, relatively large and random samples are drawn and measurement instruments are standardised to produce numerical data. The scientific method implies that research is mostly impersonal, context-free and replicable. Norms and averages are statistically calculated from the data.

For the current research, however, the qualitative approach was chosen. This approach is suitable for the exploration and description of the different realities constructed by individuals within their contexts (employers' attitudes and experiences regarding the employment of persons with intellectual disability). The study will be holistic and the researcher expects that the focus, variables and interpretations will develop and change throughout the research. The researcher, being the "measuring tool", will interact with participants identified by purposive sampling, through semi-structured interviews and observations. A flexible strategy for problem formulation and data collection will be necessary, as variables cannot be identified at the outset of the research. As data will be textual, inductive reasoning will be used to define themes and categories to draw inferences about employers' attitudes and experiences regarding the employment of persons with intellectual disability. Participants' (employers') experiences will be constructed into a narrative report capturing their attitudes and experiences in their "own language". Findings will be correlated with the literature concerning human resource management, employment of persons with disabilities and intellectual disability. Conclusions will be drawn and recommendations will be made (Fouché & Delport in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:73; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:96-97, 106-107 and Creswell, 1998:55).

Following the decision concerning the research approach, the researcher should choose a research design best suited to the exploration of the research question. The research design will thus be discussed in the following paragraphs.

1.5.2 Research Design

The researcher plans to use explorative, descriptive and contextual research designs. These designs, as well as the researcher's decisions as to why these designs are deemed appropriate for this study, are explained in the following paragraphs.

1.5.2.1 Exploratory Research

A study seeking to develop an initial understanding of a situation, phenomenon, community or person (including asking respondents 'what?' or to explain their actions), is likely to be exploratory. The need for exploratory research arises out of a lack of knowledge in a new area of interest and may form the first step in a series of studies. It has a basic research goal for which researchers often use qualitative data (Fouché & De Vos in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:107). Having identified a lack of scientific knowledge about the employment of persons with intellectual disability in South Africa, the researcher thus intends to undertake an exploratory study to gain knowledge and understanding of employers' attitudes and experiences regarding the employment of persons with intellectual disability, before it can be documented as research.

1.5.2.2 Descriptive Research

The research will be descriptive in the sense that a "picture of the specific details of a situation, social setting or relationship" will be presented and will focus on 'how' and 'why' questions (Neuman, as cited by Fouché & Delport in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:107). In descriptive research, the researcher begins with a well-defined subject and through the research, aims to describe it accurately (Fouché & Delport in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:107). Although various aspects regarding the employment of persons with disabilities and the employment of persons with intellectual disability, especially by means of supported employment, have been described extensively in the literature, this study will focus specifically on attitudes and experiences of employers who employ employees with intellectual disability within the South African context, as relevant scientific literature could not be located.

1.5.2.3 Contextual Research

Kelly in Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter (2006:346) describes contextual research as "being concerned with making sense of human experiences from within their context and perspective", while Babbie & Mouton (2005:272) state that in the contextual or holistic research strategy, the researcher prefers to understand "events, actions and processes in their context". The researcher's aim is to understand and describe employers' attitudes and experiences regarding employing persons with intellectual disability in their workplace, which is their natural context.

1.5.3 Method of Data Collection

Creswell (1998:109) describes data collection as a process of the following seven (7)"interrelated activities", not necessarily always in the same sequence, for gathering good information to answer the research question:

- (1) Locating a site or people
- (2) Gaining access and making a rapport
- (3) Sampling purposefully
- (4) Collecting data
- (5) Recording information
- (6) Exploring field issues
- (7) Storing data

These activities will be used as a guideline for the process of data collection in the current study.

1.5.3.1 Gaining Access

The research question states that the researcher aims to gain knowledge and understanding of the attitudes and experiences of employers regarding employees with intellectual disability. In accordance with the second activity in the process of data collection, the proposal for the study will be reviewed by the research committee of Huguenot College, Wellington for clearance to proceed with the

study. As for gaining a rapport – that aspect will be incorporated under the preparation of participants (par. 1.5.3.4).

1.5.3.2 Population

Participants in a qualitative study should be individuals who have experienced and are able to relate to the phenomenon the researcher wishes to explore. They need not necessarily be at one site (Creswell, 1998:111). Researchers are faced with a dilemma as, if they want to draw inferences about an entire population of people, ideally a completely random selection process should be undertaken to choose a sample that would represent the population of interest. In the case of this study, all employers in South Africa who employ employees with intellectual disability represent the population of interest. Time and cost, however, permit researchers to collect only data from a limited number of population members (Henry in Bickman & Rog, 1998:101; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:145).

1.5.3.3 Sample

Having defined the population, drawing the sample for the study is the third activity in the data collection process suggested by Creswell (par. 1.5.3). Henry in Bickman & Rog (1998:101) defines a sample as "a model of the population or a subset of the population that is used to gain information about the entire population". In quantitative research, samples tend to be structured, quantitative and strictly applied, whereas in qualitative research, where interviews and observation are used as methods of collecting individual, detailed and in depth information (rich data), an unstructured element is implied. Non-probability samples are mostly used; they are relatively limited, the size is not statistically determined and not representative, but based on the saturation of collected data (De Vos and Sarantakos as cited in Strydom and Delpont in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:327).

As a qualitative research approach will be used for this study and time and cost constraints necessitate the selection of a sample, the researcher will use purposive sampling by stipulating several criteria for participants, which will ensure "typical and divergent" data (Strydom & Delpont in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:329). Creswell (1998: 118) elaborates by stating that "purposeful selection of participants represents a key decision point in a qualitative study. Researchers

designing qualitative studies need clear criteria and need to provide rationales for their decisions". The number of participants will thus not be pre-determined, but will depend on data saturation, which means that interviews yield little or no new knowledge (Kvale, 1996:102).

Creswell, citing Hammersley & Atkinson, describes a "gatekeeper" as a person who is the initial contact and who can lead the researcher to informants (Creswell, 1998:117). Although gatekeepers are suggested for ethnographical and case studies, this approach will be used for the current research. The researcher will enlist the assistance of organisations supporting persons with intellectual disability to gain access to employers who can participate in the research.

The purposive sample in this study will be drawn according to the following criteria:

- Participants will be employers of persons with intellectual disability in the open labour market.
- The employee with the intellectual disability should have been employed for at least six months, to ensure that the employer (participant) has had sufficient experience of working with the employee.
- Organisations working with clients with intellectual disability, such as Mental Health Societies and Down's Syndrome South Africa, will be requested to bring the researcher into contact with employers of employees with intellectual disability. This correlates with Creswell's step 2 of the data collection process.
- Employers will reside in South African locations in the vicinity of Kimberley, Cape Town and/or Johannesburg as organisations in these areas are known to be involved in job placement of persons with intellectual disability.
- As the researcher is proficient in Afrikaans and English, employers should be either Afrikaans or English speaking to ensure sound communication.

1.5.3.4 Preparation of participants

In accordance with Creswell's model (par. 1.5.3) of data collection, a rapport needs to be established with participants (activity 2). Preliminary telephone interviews will be conducted with prospective participants where the researcher will introduce herself and participants will be informed about the goal, objectives

and research process. An explanation about the selection criteria for the purposive sample will be provided. It will be ascertained whether they are interested in participating in the research and a date and time for the interview will subsequently be established.

Contact interviews will be followed immediately by a letter or email confirming the initial telephone interview. Additional aspects will be dealt with, such as:

- The necessity of and consent for recording the interview.
- Assurance of confidentiality, including the fact that the data will be seen only by the supervisor of the research project and an independent coder. For all other purposes, anonymity and confidentiality will be observed.
- The interview guide will be provided to enable participants to prepare for the interview.
- Participants will be asked to complete and sign a consent form for voluntary participation in the study during the interview.
- Appointments will be confirmed for a convenient date, time and venue, ensuring sufficient time for the interviews.
- Steps will be taken to ensure a quiet venue where interruptions and extraneous noises may be controlled.

1.5.3.5 Data collection

After the sample has been drawn and participants have been prepared, the researcher can proceed with collecting the data – activity 4 in Creswell's model (par. 1.5.3).

- (a) Interviewer role/qualifications: Kvale (1996:147-149) states that in contrast to quantitative instruments and scales, the interviewer him/herself is the research instrument. He/she is knowledgeable about the topic, without attempting to impress others. The interviewer should be able to structure the interview, express him/herself clearly without using academic jargon and by being gentle, allowing the interviewee to think and speak at his/her own rate. The interviewer should have a curious, persistent and critical attitude and know when to use, for instance, probing, specific, direct, indirect and structured questions. Other techniques such as silence or

pauses, reflection, interpretation, speculation, clarification and encouragement may be used. The interviewer should be intent on differentiating between the contents and the process (Kvale, 1996: 134; De Vos, 2005:289, 290; Greeff in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:291). The researcher is a registered social worker who works with persons with intellectual disability. She has gained knowledge and experience in interviewing techniques, as well as issues pertaining to intellectual disability. She should thus be able to conduct the research pertaining to the attitudes and experiences of employers regarding employees with intellectual disability.

- (b) Semi-structured interviews as method of data collection: The researcher proposes to use semi-structured interviews for collecting data. "Semi-structured interviews are defined as those organised around areas of particular interest, while still allowing considerable flexibility in scope and depth" (May as cited by Greeff in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:293). Smith (as cited in Greeff in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:296) states that the participant should be perceived as the expert on the subject and must be given maximum opportunity to tell his/her story. Semi-structured interviews will give employers of employees with intellectual disability ample opportunity to relate their attitudes and experiences in their own words.
- (c) Interview Guide: The continuous nature of qualitative interviewing implies that questions are redesigned throughout the research project. The researcher may consider appropriate questions relating to all areas of interest, ensuring that the topic is covered thoroughly. An interview guide should be used, which covers the topics and their general order in the interview. The questions, however, should be limited in number, neutral and open-ended, rather than leading, arranged from simple to complex and from broad to specific. Questions should be brief, thematically and dynamically effective, producing knowledge and promoting good interaction during the interview. As the researcher intends categorising the answers during the analysis stage of the research process in accordance with the research objectives, frequent clarification of answers will be done with respect to possible themes and categories that will be used later (Kvale, 1996:12, 129 -131; Greeff in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:297; Babbie & Mouton,

2005:289). With these guidelines in mind, the statements or questions included in the proposed interview guide are the following:

- Describe your attitude towards persons with a disability before employing a person with intellectual disability?
 - Please describe your attitude towards intellectual disability, in particular, before employing such a person?
 - How did it happen that you employed the person with intellectual disability?
 - Tell me about your experiences regarding employing an employee with intellectual disability in your organisation?
 - How would you describe your role in relation to the employee with intellectual disability in your service?
 - What advice or comments would you offer to other employers who consider employing a person with intellectual disability?
- (d) Recording of data: Creswell suggests the recording of data gathered during interviews in activity 5 (par. 1.5.3) of his model. Greeff in De Vos *et al.*, (2005:298) advises that if participants give their permission, a tape recorder is very helpful. It enables the interviewer to concentrate solely on the content and process of the interview and ensures the capturing of all data. One disadvantage is that it may unnerve participants; therefore, it is advisable to place the tape recorder in an inconspicuous place and refrain from handling it during the interview. In this study, interviews will be recorded on a digital recorder after the participants' consent. The sound file of each interview will be transferred to at least two computers and the interviews will be typed out, verbatim, on a word processor. The original transcripts will be stored in the safe in the researcher's office, while copies will be made for data analysis. This procedure is in agreement with activity 7 of Creswell's model (par. 1.5.3).
- (e) Field notes: Field notes will be written directly after interviews to capture observations concerning the participants and the natural setting in which the interview was conducted. Theoretical notes will be taken in which observations, contradicting or enhancing the researcher's original

theoretical ideas, may be studied continuously to develop and refine the study (Babbie & Mouton 2005:275).

- (f) Pilot study: As the researcher's organisation was involved in some job placements of persons with intellectual disability in Kimberley, a pilot study will be conducted at one of these firms. The aim is to explore the feasibility of the study with reference to the practical issues such as recording interviews, organising suitable venues and determining if the proposed guide for semi-structured interviews will render the desired data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:110). The pilot study is a procedure aimed at gaining experience of the field setting, as Creswell indicates in activity 6 of his model (par. 1.5.3).

1.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Terre Blanche *et al.*, (2006:322) describe the process of data analysis as reading through the data repeatedly, breaking the data down into themes and categories and building it up again into a compelling account of the phenomenon being studied, close enough to the context for others to recognise it as true, but far enough removed for it to be seen in a new perspective. In the proposed study, the researcher will use the 8 steps of Tesch (1990) (in Creswell 2003:192) in order to follow a systematic process of data analysis. These steps are the following:

1. The researcher will attempt to gain a sense of the whole by reading all the interview transcriptions carefully and noting down some preliminary ideas.
2. The most interesting document will be chosen to be read. The researcher will make notes in the margin, attempting to discern its meaning. The information is not as important at this stage as the underlying meaning.
3. When the researcher has completed the task for several informants, a list of all the topics will be compiled. Similar topics will be clustered together and arranged into columns that may be arranged as "major topics, unique topics, and leftovers".
4. This list will then be used with the data. The topics will be arranged as codes and written next to the appropriate segments of the text. This

preliminary organising scheme will then be tested to see if new categories and codes emerge.

5. The researcher will decide on the most descriptive wording for the topics and convert them into categories. She will then endeavour to reduce the total list of categories by grouping related topics.
6. A final decision will then be made on the abbreviation for each category and codes will be alphabetised.
7. Data material belonging to each category will be assembled in one place and a preliminary analysis will be performed.
8. If necessary, existing data will be recoded.

Following these steps will ensure that the data analysis occurs in a comprehensive and systematic manner.

1.7 METHOD OF DATA VERIFICATION

Krefting (1991:215) quotes Leininger's definition of validity in qualitative research as "gaining knowledge and understanding of the nature (i.e., the meaning, attributes, and characteristics) of the phenomenon under study". This definition is contrasted to the quantitative definition of validity, which refers to the degree to which the measuring instrument is suitable to measure what it is supposed to measure. Given the fact that qualitative research refers to several different research methods, there will be different ways of determining their validity or trustworthiness. Krefting (1991:215-219) presents a model based on Guba's (1985) work for determining trustworthiness in both qualitative and quantitative research. Four aspects of trustworthiness are identified, namely, truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality. These aspects will be described according to their relevance to the proposed research pertaining to employers' attitudes and experiences regarding employees with intellectual disability. The strategies the researcher will use to increase the trustworthiness of the research are included.

1.7.1 Truth Value

This is one of the most important criteria for the assessment of qualitative research. It assesses whether the researcher has established credibility or confidence in the truth of the findings for the participants and in the context in which the study was conducted. Truth value is obtained through the individual's experiences and is subject orientated, not defined by the researcher.

Krefting (1991:216) cites Sandelowski who suggests that when human experiences are described and interpreted in such a way that others who share the experiences may immediately identify with the descriptions, the qualitative study is credible. Truth value may be determined using the strategy of credibility, which can be established by, for example, prolonged and varied field experience, triangulation, reflexivity, peer examination, interview technique and establishing the authority of the researcher (Krefting, 1991:217).

- As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Krefting, 1991:218), a *field journal* will be kept in which the researcher will note her thoughts, experiences, decisions, frustrations and methodology to help identify any bias or preconceived ideas. *Triangulation*, a method of comparing data gained from various sources such as from semi-structured interviews, observations, field notes and details supplied by gatekeeper non-profit organisations, will be used (Knafl and Breitmayer as cited in Krefting 1991:219).
- The researcher will draw on the knowledge of colleagues with experience in either the research methods or through the research topic (*peer examination*).
- The *interviewing process* itself may enhance credibility by verifying interviewees' interpretations and portrayals of their experiences. Inconsistencies or divergent data will be described and interpreted to enhance structural coherence and to contribute to describing a range of experiences.
- Finally, Miles & Huberman (as cited in Krefting, 1991:220) state that the *authority of the researcher as instrument* should also be included as a means of establishing credibility. The researcher is a social worker who

has been working with persons with intellectual disability for 30 years in a multi-disciplinary team with an interest in the disability field.

1.7.2 Applicability

Applicability in qualitative research refers to transferability, which means that the findings in the study situation should be applicable to those in other similar contexts. Thus, the researcher should provide "sufficient descriptive data to allow comparison" (Krefting 1991:217). The strategy that will be utilised to ensure applicability or transferability, is that the researcher draws a purposive sample to include employers from organisations varying in size in purpose and who employ persons with intellectual disability in different kinds of jobs. This strategy will make it possible for other researchers to judge if the demographics of the sample are representative of those of the group, namely, employers of persons with intellectual disability.

1.7.3 Consistency

Consistency of data is the third criterion for determining the trustworthiness of research. This concept implies that, should the inquiry be repeated in a similar context and/or with the same subjects, the findings would be consistent. However, contrary to the relative stability gained by controlled experimental designs, restricted observation and the notion of a single reality in quantitative research, qualitative research assumes that there are multiple realities which impact greatly on the notion of reliability. Variables stemming from the uniqueness of the human situation or those situated in the subjects and the researcher as instrument, complicate the qualitative field setting: "variation in experience rather than identical repetition is sought" (Field & Morse as cited in Krefting, 1991:216).

The strategy, applicable to consistency, is to explain and describe the methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation in a "dense" way (Krefting, 1991:221). It may then be determined whether the phenomenon and setting are unique or whether the study might be able to be repeated. The coding and recoding of the data in the analysis phase of the study may increase the consistency (dependability). The researcher also proposes to make use of an independent coder in order to enhance dependability.

1.7.4 Neutrality

Neutrality signifies that bias, perspectives or motivations, do not, in any way, impact on data gained from informants, findings and research procedures. Contrary to the quantitative method, where neutrality is situated in the objectivity of the researcher and distance from subjects, the qualitative researcher narrows the distance between him/herself and the subjects. Neutrality thus shifts from the researcher to the data.

Auditing by an independent researcher of the research proposal, research process, data, findings, analysis, interpretation and recommendations will ensure neutrality or confirmability. The audit should be an ongoing process throughout the study. The study supervisor, who has both training and experience in qualitative research, will assume the role of auditor for this study.

Creswell (1998:201-202) concludes by stating that data verification is a distinct strength of qualitative research, as the time spent in the field, the closeness to participants and the detailed description, all contribute to the value of the study. Verification emphasises qualitative research as a distinct, legitimate mode of inquiry.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Bickman & Rog (1998:127) state that the ethics of social research is about "creating a mutually respectful, win-win relationship in which participants are pleased to respond candidly, valid results are obtained, and the community considers the conclusions constructive".

"The ethics of science concerns what is wrong and what is right in the conduct of research. Because scientific research is a form of human conduct, it follows that such conduct has to conform to generally accepted norms and values" (Mouton, 2005:238). Although the researcher has the right to search for the truth, the rights of others should never be placed in jeopardy. The ethical responsibilities of the researcher, relevant to the research concerning the attitudes and experiences of employers of persons with intellectual disability, are divided into four categories as

described by Mouton, (2005:239-244) and Bickman & Rog (1998:228-230). The applicability thereof to the current study will be pointed out in each case.

1.8.1 The practice of science (Professional Ethics)

Researchers should display objectivity and integrity in their conduct by adhering to technical standards, acknowledging the limits of their findings and methodological constraints, portraying fields of expertise meticulously and reporting findings accurately and fully. The researcher is a registered social worker in terms of the Social Services Professions Act (Act No. 110 of 1978), has been employed in and has been a volunteer for 30 years in the disability field. Practical experience, as well as knowledge and insights gained from the literature study, attendance at several conferences and networking with professionals and organisations serving persons with intellectual disability, provide a theoretical framework for the research. The research supervisor, being well versed in the qualitative research method, provides invaluable guidelines regarding ethical and technical aspects. All possible steps will be taken to acknowledge authorship of quotations and consulted resources, thus avoiding plagiarism.

1.8.2 Society

The researcher's responsibility towards society involves identifying and consulting with all the stakeholders in the planning stage of the research, but is also obligated to disseminate research results in a free and open manner (Bickman & Rog, 1998:128; Mouton 2005:239). Findings will be submitted to the participants, organisations supporting persons with intellectual disability and the scientific community. As the researcher has undertaken the study with the aid of a bursary, she is accountable to the funding body, which is the Department of Labour in co-operation with the National Research Foundation (NRF).

1.8.3 The subjects of science

Subjects have the right to participate or refuse participation, the right to informed consent (full disclosure) and the right to anonymity. The researcher will solicit participants' co-operation in the initial stages of the research without promising any benefits or using threats. The aims and process of the research will be explained in an "ongoing two-way communication process" (Bickman & Rog, 1998:130). Participants will be supplied with the interview guide and their written consent will

be obtained by means of a consent form which they will be asked to complete during the interview in a friendly, respectful way, attending to their concerns or questions. Consent to recorded interviews will also be obtained. Debriefing after the interviews is advisable to gain insight on their perceptions of the research, to ask questions and express reactions. The researcher does not deem it necessary to obtain consent from the employees with intellectual disability, as they will not be interviewed and no personal details will be necessary for the study. Employers will divulge job-related information only.

1.8.4 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

Participants' right to privacy will be explained, as well as measures that will be taken to keep biographical data and raw data confidential. Identifying data will be stored in a safe place to prohibit access by unauthorised persons and the researcher will reassure participants that information gathered, will not be used in any way which might jeopardise either themselves or their companies. Anonymity will be ensured by using pseudonyms and raw data will be available only to the researcher, an independent coder and the project supervisor.

1.9 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Key concepts, relevant to the study, need to be defined to ensure clarity and enhance validity.

TABLE 1.1: Clarification of Concepts

CONCEPT	DEFINITION
Employer	Any person/s who remunerate employees to conduct his/her/their business including an economic enterprise, contractor, government department or non-governmental organisation (Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998). 'Employer' may also mean a senior managerial employee or a person in a supervisory capacity for the purposes of this study.
Senior managerial employee	"[An] employee who has the authority to hire, discipline and dismiss employees and to represent the employer internally and externally" (Basic Conditions of Employment Act No. 75 of 1997 (1)). The word 'supervisor' or 'human resource manager' will have the same meaning in this study.
Attitude	Attitudes affect how we think about other people and act toward them, and though attitudes are not something one can touch, they do have implications that are noticeable and important (Bardon, Siperstein, Parker and Corbin, 2004:17).
Experience	Active participation in events or activities, leading to the accumulation of knowledge or skill (The American Heritage Dictionary, 2000).
Employee	(a) any person, excluding an independent contractor, who works for another person or for the State and who receives, or is entitled to receive, any remuneration; and (b) any other person who, in any manner, assists in carrying on or conducting the business of an employer, and 'employed' and 'employment' have a corresponding meaning (Basic Conditions of Employment Act no. 75 of 1997 (1)). For the purpose of the study, the employer should be employed with the current employer for at least six (6) months.
Disability	"A disability is a condition caused by an accident, trauma, genetics or a disease which may limit a person's mobility, hearing, vision, speech, intellectual or emotional functioning. Some people with disabilities have one or more disabilities" (Department of Labour Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of People with Disabilities, 2004).
Intellectual disability	"Intellectual disability is a disability characterised by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. Intellectual disability originates before age 18." The term mental retardation is still used in some medically orientated contexts [sic] and in America. However, the term "intellectual disability" is more commonly used in South Africa. The other terminologies for this condition are "mentally handicapped", "mentally/intellectually challenged" or "learning impaired" (South African Federation for Mental Health (http://www.safmh.org.za/glossary.htm)).
Medical model of disability	"The medical model focuses on the diagnosis and the curing of disability, with disability placed as the centre of the problem" (Department of Labour Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of People with Disabilities, 2004).
Social model of disability	"The social model expresses the view that the disability is not the problem, but rather the negative attitudes of able-bodied people" (Department of Labour Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of People with Disabilities, 2004).
Supported employment	The employment of individuals with disabilities, especially intellectual disability, in real jobs in regular settings where training and other supports are provided on an ongoing basis (Lynch, 2002:225-226).

1.10 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the researcher outlined the international and national context of disability. References were made to relevant documents and legislation regarding the rights, dignity and inclusion of persons with disability in all spheres of life. In addition, the paradigm shift from the medical to the social model of disability, especially with reference to persons with intellectual disability, was noted.

Having identified a lack of literature on the employment of persons with intellectual disability in South Africa and indicating that research findings show that employers' attitudes play a major role in their low employment rate, the researcher formulated the research goal, which is to engage with employers of persons with intellectual disability to gain insight into their direct experiences. Keeping the research objectives in mind, the choice of a qualitative research approach with an explorative, descriptive, contextual design was described and motivated and the research methodology, data analysis and data verification were outlined. Ethical considerations relevant to the study were described, after which the key concepts were defined. In the following chapter, Chapter 2, the researcher will describe how the research methodology was applied in order to reach the research goal and objectives.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

"The common perception is that people with an intellectual disability cannot function in society, let alone acquire and retain employment." (Sharon Bard of Employ Ability Vulindlela, The Star, 8 March 2006).

The majority of these people remain unemployed, even though intellectual disability is included within the broad definition of disability in the Employment Equity Act (Act No. 55 of 1998), as well as in supporting documents such as the Code of Good Practice (Department of Labour, 2000) and the Technical Assistance Guidelines (Department of Labour, 2004).

In a South African study conducted for the Special Olympics (an international sports organisation for persons with intellectual disability) by Bardon, Siperstein, Parker & Corbin (2004:1, 9), a number of important findings were reported, which are pertinent to the current study and which are subsequently summarised. The report stated that public attitudes towards persons with intellectual disability influence the way services and policies are implemented to support these people. Public attitudes and expectations also determine the degree to which people with intellectual disability are permitted and able to work and live with their non-disabled peers. The majority of the South African public underestimate the ability of persons with intellectual disability to execute daily living skills and they believe that these people should be excluded from the rest of society i.e. they should live with, and be cared for, by their families and work in sheltered workshops.

No scientific studies concerning employers' attitudes and experiences regarding employees with intellectual disability in South Africa could be located, but Hernandez (2000:13) reviewed numerous studies from the United States of

America between 1987 and 1999 and summarised the findings. Some of the significant findings were that:

- Employers declared positive attitudes towards employees with disabilities, but they were less positive when more specific attitudes were assessed.
- Although employers were supportive of the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990), similar to the South African Employment Equity Act (Act No. 55 of 1998), specific employment provisions raised misgivings.
- The willingness to hire is positively influenced by previous work contact with persons with disabilities, while preference is still shown for persons with physical disabilities over persons with intellectual or psychiatric disabilities.
- It is unclear to what extent employers' attitudes toward employees with disabilities and their rights stem from personal experience, a lack of information or from myths and stereotypes.
- Lastly, a new contribution to the body of scientific knowledge is that employers are quite positive about workers who were placed by "vocational, employment, and supported employment programs".

Knowledge about the source of employers' attitudes is important in order to understand and develop effective strategies to enhance awareness and hands-on experience towards change. It can thus be deduced that a study of employers' attitudes and experiences with employees with intellectual disability in South Africa is important for the purposes of policy-making and implementation, awareness campaigns and for professionals who are involved with the training, job placement and support of persons with intellectual disability. The goal of the current study is thus to give employers who currently employ persons with intellectual disability, ample opportunity to relate their attitudes towards and experiences with these employees.

2.2 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

2.2.1 Goal

The goal of the study is: to engage with employers of persons with intellectual disability to gain insight into their direct experiences.

In order to accomplish this goal, four objectives are formulated, as discussed in the next section.

2.2.2 Objectives

Expanding on the broad research goal, the objectives for this research are the following:

- To explore and describe employers' attitudes and experiences regarding employees with intellectual disability;
- To analyse and interpret the data by reducing them to themes and sub-themes;
- To verify the exploratory descriptive data by reviewing the existing literature and research relating to employers of persons with intellectual disability;
- To compile a comprehensive research report based on the findings, including recommendations.

After the research goal and objectives were formulated, a suitable research approach was chosen which would enable the researcher to achieve the goal and objectives.

2.3 RESEARCH APPROACH AND RESEARCH DESIGN

2.3.1 Research Approach

The researcher chose to use a qualitative research approach in order to answer the research question: What are employers' attitudes and experiences regarding the employment of persons with intellectual disability?

The researcher agrees with Merriam (2002:4) and Holloway & Wheeler (1998:10) that individuals construct meanings socially in interaction with reality or their world, which is in contrast to the positivist, quantitative view that reality is a fixed, measurable phenomenon. Reality may be constructed and interpreted in multiple ways and is ever-changing. The qualitative researcher is interested in learning about the interpretations and meanings individuals give to their reality and how it is experienced at a specific point in time and within a specific context – thus, the researcher should be context sensitive. As the researcher intended to gain an in-depth understanding of how the participants viewed their world and their thoughts and attitudes about these, the interpretive qualitative research approach was well suited to the research goal and objectives.

The researcher served as the primary instrument for collecting and analysing data, enabling her to be responsive and adaptive. Data were gathered to build inductively towards the theory from observations and “intuitive understandings” gained from experience in the field. There was a relationship between the researcher and the participants based on their equality as human beings. Findings were in the form of, *inter alia*, themes and categories and dense descriptions in the words of the participants were used, instead of numbers. The theoretical framework of the research was based on the data rather than predetermined by the researcher (Merriam, 2002:4; Holloway & Wheeler, 1998:10).

Having identified and stated the research question, goal and objectives and the research methodology of the study, the researcher decided upon the research design. The research design would enable the researcher to accomplish the purpose of the study and to complete the study within the available resources. The research design also assisted the researcher to clarify the rationale for adopting certain procedures and techniques and to meet the tests for trustworthiness. The research design provided a strategic framework within which multiple decisions were made concerning data collection and analysis to ensure that the research report provided an answer to the initial research question, which was:

“What are employers’ attitudes and experiences regarding the employment of persons with intellectual disability?” (Durrheim in Terre Blanche, Durrheim &

Painter, 2006:34; D'Cruz & Jones, 2004:83).

2.3.2 Research Design

The researcher decided on an exploratory, descriptive, contextual research design, which is changeable, non-sequential and based on pragmatic considerations - not defined purely in technical terms (Durrheim in Terre Blanche *et al.*, (2006:35, 36). The researcher is of the opinion that, when the essential characteristics of the qualitative research were matched with the research question of this study, this design was most appropriate for exploring and describing employers' attitudes and experiences regarding employees with intellectual disability within the context of the workplace.

2.3.2.1 Exploratory Research Design

Durrheim in Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006:43-44) and Fouché & De Vos in De Vos *et al.* (2005:107) postulate that exploratory studies are used to undertake preliminary investigations into relatively unknown areas of research to develop an initial understanding of a situation, phenomenon, community or person. Exploratory studies are open, flexible and inductive, as they attempt to look for new insights into phenomena. Details should be provided about the planned method of collecting information and where this information may be found. The details concerning the collection of data in this study will be discussed in (par. 2.4). The exploratory design suited the current study as the researcher wished to explore employers' attitudes and experiences of employees with intellectual disability in South Africa. Ample research has been done in other countries, but with the exception of one article concerning general attitudes about persons with intellectual disability in South Africa (Bardon *et al.*, 2004), only very limited literature could be traced concerning the South African context. Job placement in the open labour market of persons with intellectual disability is still relatively new in South Africa and attitudes and experiences of employers in other, mainly developed countries, need not necessarily be relevant to the South African context.

2.3.2.2 Descriptive Research Design

The research design was descriptive in the sense that the researcher attempted to gain an understanding and formulate extensive and exhaustive descriptions and explanations about employers' attitudes towards and experiences of their employees with intellectual disability, within their context (Holloway & Wheeler, 1998:170; Durrheim in Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006:44). The researcher, according to Sim and Wright, did not manipulate or interfere with the natural state of the variables of interest (D'Cruz & Jones, 2004:93).

2.3.2.3 Contextual Research Design

Holloway & Wheeler (1998:8) state that in qualitative research the "experiences of people are essentially context-bound; that is, they cannot be free from time and location, or the mind of the human actor". Researchers should realise that complete objectivity and neutrality are impossible and that the values and interests of the researcher and participants become part of the research process. The researcher cannot be separated from the phenomenon under study. As the researcher was the main research instrument in this study, reflexivity was important. The researcher's own position in the setting and situation was taken into account. The researcher is a social worker whose clients are persons with intellectual disability and she is involved in the job placement of these clients. Her experience was that she had to be aware of her own professional interests which could influence her questions while interviewing the participants. Nevertheless, her experience with persons with intellectual disability in job settings also enabled her to comprehend the attitudes and experiences of the participants within the context of their workplaces.

After the research approach and research design were decided upon, the following step, namely data collection, could commence.

2.4 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

As was stated in Chapter 1 (par. 1.5.3), Creswell's interrelated activities for data collection would be followed in this study (Creswell, 1998:109). Thus, the proposal for the study was submitted to the research committee of the Huguenot College,

Wellington, for their approval, after which the study commenced. Subsequently, the “site or people” which were the boundaries for the population, were determined, a purposeful sample was drawn and access to and rapport with participants were established.

2.4.1 Population

The researcher followed Berg’s guidelines for choosing a population from which data might be collected (Berg, 2004:32). The author suggested that the location should be accessible, the target population should be readily available, the focus, people and interactions which form part of the research question should be available and the research should be able to be conducted effectively by an individual during the data collection phase. The researcher identified the population of the study by setting boundaries between those who would and who would not be included in the study (Holloway & Wheeler, 1998:122). In order to accomplish the research goals of this study, the population consisted of all employers in South Africa who employ persons with intellectual disability. As it was impossible to study the whole population, steps had to be taken to draw a sample from this population.

2.4.2 Sampling

Henning (2004:72) emphasises that sampling is a vital step in any research as it forms part of delineating the inquiry. A sample is a smaller population used to make inferences about a larger population. In quantitative research, probability sampling is used as it is believed that a sample selected restrictively within predetermined parameters, will mathematically represent subgroups of a larger population and inferences may be made through statistical methods. In contrast, qualitative research uses non-probability samples where the members of the sample share certain characteristics as determined by the population, but they also have personal knowledge about and act as “spokespersons for the topic of inquiry” (Henning, 2004:72; Berg, 2004:34; Holloway & Wheeler, 1998:122).

For this study, the researcher used purposive and snowball sampling, together with the use of so-called ‘gatekeepers’. Purposive or judgemental sampling (Berg, 2004:36) demanded that the researcher apply her expertise to select subjects who represent the group to be studied. Snowball sampling, meaning that the

researcher first identified several people with relevant characteristics and then asked them for the names of other people with similar attributes, was also utilised (Berg, 2004:36).

Participants were not representative of a population and the findings from the research can thus not be generalised, although readers should be able to extract those elements from the findings which may be transferable or extended to other settings (Kelly in Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006:291; Henning, 2004:72).

The researcher followed the guidelines provided by Kelly in Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006:290) for determining the sample size:

- the researcher took into account financial and time constraints;
- being an exploratory study, the researcher “called it a day” when the data were sufficient to identify the salient issues for further study; and
- data saturation occurred, i.e. when further information became redundant or repetitive.

As stated in Chapter 1 (par. 1.5.3.3), several criteria were determined for the purposive sample which was applied in this study. The researcher’s rationale for setting these criteria, as well as how the sample was drawn will thus be addressed.

The researcher, being employed at a Mental Health Society, networked with colleagues and friends in the disability and mental health fields, including the South African Federation for Mental Health (SAFMH) and Down Syndrome South Africa (DSSA), to locate employers who had employees with intellectual disability in their service. Eventually, three (3) organisations that train and find employment for their clients with intellectual disability, acted as gatekeepers and arranged eleven (11) of the interviews. Creswell cites Hammersley & Atkinson in describing a “gatekeeper” as a person who is the initial contact and who can lead the researcher to informants (Creswell, 1998:117). One participant was located through the snowballing method as another participant told the researcher about her and the 13th participant was known to the researcher prior to the study. The gatekeepers provided the researcher with background information about the employees with intellectual disability, which could be verified and further expanded

during interviews. They also, in some cases, assisted the researcher with transport, obtaining participants' consent and supplying them with background information about the study, which the researcher provided in writing.

One of the criteria was that the employee with the intellectual disability had to be employed for at least six (6) months, to ensure that the employer (participant) had had sufficient experience of working with the employee. As this criterion was made known to gatekeepers, the researcher assumed that interviewees would have employees in their service for more than six (6) months. In eleven (11) of the interviews, this was the case. However, in one case, the employer did not employ a person with intellectual disability, as she usually assisted the gatekeeper organisation in accommodating employees on a voluntary basis in order to prepare them for the open labour market. In another case, the employer had two (2) employees in her service for longer than 6 months, but they worked there on a voluntary basis and their contracts were signed only a month prior to the interview. Thus, these two (2) participants had to be excluded from the study.

Another criterion was that employers had to work in South African locations around Kimberley, Cape Town and/or Johannesburg, as organisations in these areas were known to be involved in job placement of persons with intellectual disability. These locations could be easily reached via public transport by the researcher. All participants came from the areas stated above – seven (7) came from the Cape Town area, five (5) from suburbs in Johannesburg and one from Kimberley. Eventually, one of the participants in the Cape Town area was excluded, as the researcher, in collaboration with the independent coder, decided that data saturation had occurred. The attitudes and experiences related by the specific participant were already expressed fully by the remaining ten (10) participants.

As the researcher is proficient in Afrikaans and English, employers had to be either Afrikaans or English speaking to ensure sound communication. Although the researcher would have preferred to include participants from all the language groups in South Africa, it would have been impractical in the case of a study with limited scope and within the time and financial constraints. The researcher thus conducted three (3) interviews in Afrikaans and seven (7) in English, depending on the language preference of the participants.

2.4.3 Preparation of Participants

In accordance with Activity 2 in Creswell's model of data collection (par. 1.5.3), rapport was established with participants. After the researcher had received contact details about prospective participants from the gatekeepers, telephone interviews were conducted with participants as the majority of them were located far from the researcher. The researcher introduced herself, gave a short explanation of the research goal, objectives and process and it was ascertained that participants were willing to take part in the study. Appointments were made and participants were briefed about informed consent, their anonymity and the necessity for recording the interviews. In accordance with guidelines by D'Cruz & Jones (2004:110), participants were informed that the initial telephonic contact would be followed by either E-mail or a letter, explaining the following in more detail:

- ***Informed consent.*** The consent form, outlining the fact that the researcher was a student enrolled for a master's degree in Social Work, her contact details and the purpose of the study, were included. The participant was informed that the consent form would be signed during the interview, thus confirming his/her willingness to participate.
- ***Measures for the protection of their privacy*** would be taken, such as the use of pseudonyms and the omission of the name of their workplace, the location and identifying details of the gatekeepers, as well as the details of the employees with intellectual disability.
- ***Confidentiality*** which would entail that only the researcher and supervisor would be aware of any identifying details and that these details would be stored in a safe, separate from the transcripts of the interviews.
- ***The necessity of a private and quiet venue*** as the interview would be recorded. The participant was asked to arrange the venue as the researcher would conduct the interviews at his/her workplace (Kelly in Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006:298).
- ***The time needed for the interview*** should be about 45 to 90 minutes. According to Bell's guidelines in D'Cruz & Jones (2004:124), the researcher would break faith with participants should interviews last longer than the time agreed upon. Thus the researcher made provision for sufficient time.

- **The interview guide** was included and it was explained that it would be used as a guideline for the interview. The researcher was of the opinion that participants would thus have an indication of the information that would be needed. The researcher found that in most cases, this was a prudent measure, as participants were prepared and had thought through their attitudes and experiences. However, in perhaps one or two cases the researcher gathered that participants, especially in the first phases of interviews, gave information they thought the researcher desired or would appreciate – the preferred response.

D’Cruz & Jones (2004:123), after discussing Bell’s guidelines for gaining access emphasised that “negotiating, maintaining and terminating access are both courteous and proper ways of establishing research credibility”. As will be indicated in the next section, the preparation of participants was concluded at the beginning of the research interviews. Having drawn the sample and having prepared the participants, the researcher proceeded with collecting the data by means of semi-structured interviews – Activity 4 in Creswell’s model (par. 1.5.3).

2.4.4 Data Collection through Semi-Structured Interviews

Kelly, in Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006:287, 297) expresses the view that qualitative researchers strive to make sense of feelings, experiences, social situations or phenomena as they happen in the real world. These should thus not be studied in artificially created situations, but in their natural setting or context. Thus, the researcher should become part of the context without disturbing it unduly, by entering the setting carefully and by engaging participants with empathy and openness, enabling them to express themselves authentically. In order to understand how people think and feel the qualitative researcher decides upon the strategy for collecting data by determining which source of data will yield the appropriate information for answering the research question. Data sources may include documentary material, participant observation or interviews with groups and/or individuals. One-to-one interviews are currently the most utilised means of collecting data (Holloway & Wheeler, 1998:80; Merriam, 2002:11).

The researcher, in agreement with Berg’s definition of the research interview as a conversation with the purpose of gathering information, was of the opinion that

individual interviews with participants would be most suitable for the study (Berg, 2004:75). Shaw and Gould's (2001:5) warning was heeded against interviews being purely anecdotal, but Holloway & Wheeler (1998:80) are of the opinion that the reality of the participant could be presented if the researcher applied "high standards and rigor to research". The aspect of rigor and data verification is dealt with in (par. 2.7) of this chapter.

Although interviews in qualitative research are usually unstructured or semi-structured, Scourfield in Shaw & Gould (2001:63,64) is of the opinion that the exchange is formal in the sense that the time of the interview is arranged and the discussion is tape recorded and transcribed, verbatim. Holloway & Wheeler (1998:80) suggest that the researcher should attempt to find a balance between consistency and flexibility and participants' unique stories of their experiences are not neglected in the quest for common patterns. Holloway & Wheeler (1998:82) and Merriam (2002: 12) further advise that the researcher keep control of the interview in order to answer the research question, even though the emphasis is on exploring participants' perspectives.

The researcher, having considered the above-mentioned opinions and taking into account some applicable guidelines, decided upon semi-structured interviews, based on an interview guide, as the most suitable means for collecting the data for this study. Questions addressing the salient issues or topics pertaining to the research question and those for obtaining corresponding data from participants were included in the interview guide. These questions were formulated according to the following guidelines:

- Questions concerning "behaviours, opinions, feelings, knowledge, sensory data [sic,] and demographics" were the kinds of question which were asked in a semi-structured interview (Patton, 1990:293). Any kind of question the researcher needed to ask was subsumed in one of these categories.
- The sequence in which questions were asked depended on the responses of each participant and the interview process.
- Questions were rephrased or broken up into more questions, depending on the understanding and responses of participants.

- The researcher made decisions as to the interview techniques most suitable for herself and the participant. Interviewing techniques used by the researcher will be described in (par. 2.4.9.3.).

2.4.5 Pilot Study

The New Dictionary of Social Work (1995:45) defines a pilot study as “the process whereby the research design for a prospective survey is tested”. Pilot studies are not always used in qualitative research as the research is developmental, but it is especially useful for novice researchers in making sure that questions are suitable to elicit the desired data and that they are asked in the right way (Holloway & Wheeler, 1998:80; Kelly in Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006:298). In addition to the guidelines in the previous section, when preparing the interview guide, care was taken to prevent leading questions, to use clear language and to avoid confusing, double-barrelled questions.

The researcher conducted one pilot interview at a solicitors' firm in Kimberley, her home town, to familiarise herself with the practicalities of the interview, to try out interview techniques and transcription and to rephrase some of the questions she proposed to use. The data from the pilot study, although meaningful in many ways, were not used in the final data analysis. However, some indication was given of the themes that might develop during subsequent interviews.

2.4.6 Interview Guide

The questions that were finally used in the interview guide are listed in Chapter 1 (par. 1.3.5.4). The researcher changed the sequence in which questions were asked, sometimes combining questions and sometimes breaking them up according to the amount of information participants volunteered. The researcher also adjusted her language according to the language used by participants, meaning that more academic language could be used in some cases, in others, simpler terms had to be used to prevent confusion and in further cases, when participants used both English and Afrikaans, she adapted her language accordingly. She kept the region from where participants came, as well as their cultural backgrounds, in mind, as regional language and cultural differences between ethnic groups in South Africa influence the use and meaning of some terms. This strategy concurs with Berg (2004:113) who advises that the

researcher should make sure that he/she understands the culture of the participants, that certain questions may create dilemmas for certain cultural groups and that the language and contents of the questions are adapted accordingly.

2.4.7 Role of the Researcher

D'Cruz & Jones (2004:32) advise that the researcher in the quest for objectivity, should state her own assumptions and interest in the research and acknowledge the emotional aspects thereof, as research is not a set of neutral techniques which can be applied in every context. The researcher's awareness of her own research process, experiences, personal values and affiliations, also creates opportunities for flexibility in addressing problems that might arise within a specific context.

As the researcher has worked with clients with intellectual disability and assisted them in gaining employment in the open labour market, she was aware of the danger of pursuing her own interests in gaining knowledge not necessarily pertinent to the research question. She also had to refrain from giving advice when employers expressed some difficulties and challenges they had experienced with the employees under scrutiny.

Another factor that had to be taken into account was the fact that the researcher is blind. She decided to advise participants about the fact during the first contact, in order to prepare them and to ascertain if they would be comfortable with also accommodating her guide dog. The researcher experienced that participants acted very naturally in spite of the researcher's disability and that some of them even provided help with, for instance, transport. They managed to focus on the research and not on the researcher. The researcher realised, when transcribing the interviews, that she tended to provide more verbal cues than might have been necessary, as she cannot see all nonverbal cues and is naturally more sound oriented. In some cases, this tendency might have had some influence on the natural flow of the interviews.

2.4.8 Recording of data

As stated in Chapter 1 (par. 1.5.3) of this document, data were recorded as indicated in Activity 5 of Creswell's model. The researcher refrained from touching the small digital recorder after having switched it on. In one case, a participant

asked the researcher to switch it off as he wanted to express views he did not wish to be recorded; however, later on in the interview he did express those views. Another participant needed some time to think, so the recorder was paused. Data were stored as described in (par. 1.5.3.5) of this document.

2.4.9 Interviewing

As the researcher is the research instrument, it is up to him/her to create an interaction that allows for a safe atmosphere in which the participant can talk freely about his/her feelings and experiences, in contrast to only a polite conversation in which ideas are exchanged. The participant's lived meanings are immediately communicated by words, but also non-verbally by gestures, expressions and in the way the voice is used (Kvale, 1996:125). Kvale (1996:127); Henning (2004:67, 75) and Kelly in Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006:299) proceed by giving directions for setting the stage for the interview. The interaction enables participants to express their views about their experiences and worlds in words. This two-way communication entails that not only the researcher asks questions, but that participants' questions and manner of returning comments, may reveal rich data showing what they regard as burning issues, even though they should be kept within the boundaries of the research question. The three stages in the interview process are discussed according to the above-mentioned authors' guidelines.

2.4.9.1 Starting the Interview

At the start of the interview, the researcher sets the scene by briefing participants about the research topic and the purpose of the interview as part of the research, by explaining the use of the tape recorder and by allowing participants to ask questions concerning the interview. Although short, this phase of the interview is decisive and allows the researcher and participants to become acquainted and to establish trust. As Berg (2004:110) suggests, a short general discussion, small talk or some non-threatening questions, help to set participants at ease. An example is the following:

“At the beginning, I'd like to let you quickly tell me what the place is that we are at, what your job is more or less and the details as to the person with intellectual disability in your service ... what he or she is doing.”

2.4.9.2 The Interview

In accordance with Kelly's advice (in Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006:199), the researcher knew the interview guide; the interview did not become a question and answer session in which participants gave monosyllabic answers to questions and where the participants were allowed to become co-inquirers. The techniques the researcher used in order to accomplish good rapport, defined by Patton (1990:317), were the "ability to convey empathy and understanding without judgment" between her and the participants. They are discussed more fully in (par. 2.4.9.3). The researcher dressed appropriately for the setting and subject of the interview and tried to ensure a comfortable setting for the interview.

As the goal of the current study was to engage with employers of persons with intellectual disability to gain insight into their direct experiences, the researcher decided to interview the participants within the setting of their workplace which was well-known to them, where they probably felt comfortable and where they could relate their feelings and experiences within their context. As most participants were professionals or in some kind of business, the researcher dressed neatly and formally in order to show respect.

Two of the participants elected to have the interviews at their homes. In one case, the participant was a teacher who could not leave her pre-school learners without supervision during work hours and the other participant was of the opinion that her work circumstances did not allow sufficient time, privacy and a quiet environment. The other eight (8) interviews were conducted in offices situated within the firms, pre-school centres, hospitals and industries where employers worked. There were disturbances caused by other staff entering to ask something, background noise caused by an air-conditioner, building operations or the work itself, telephones ringing and in the case of the home interviews, the participant's child or a visitor needing attention. The researcher employed several of the interviewing techniques, which are discussed in (par. 2.4.9.3), to overcome these challenges.

It should also be noted that two participants elected to include a colleague in the interview; therefore, the researcher had to adjust to the situation of a joint interview. Participants sometimes interrupted each other or changed the subject to relate their experiences, but usually they complemented each other by way of

reminders or elaborations on details. In two cases, the job coach who trained the employees with intellectual disability was present at the interviews as he represented one of the gatekeeper organisations and transported the researcher to the locations. He was very interested in the interviews, but was not intrusive and spoke only when he was directly addressed or to clarify something about which either the researcher or participant had asked. The varying settings and the fact that more than one participant sometimes took part in the interview, contributed towards rich and varied data.

2.4.9.3 Interviewing techniques

As stated in previous paragraphs, the researcher used a repertoire of strategies and techniques to create detailed interviews and elicit deeper feelings and meanings. As Greeff in de Vos et al. (2005:288) and Kelly in Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006:199) suggest, the participant should do 90% of the talking and the researcher should “listen more and talk less”. During the interviews the researcher used questions, active listening, prompting, clarification, exploration, reflective summary and silences, which are discussed and illustrated with examples.

(a) Questions

Henning (2004:75-76; Kelly in Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006:299, 301) and Greeff in De Vos *et al.* (2005:288) have several suggestions regarding the use of questions during an interview. Questions should preferably be short, easy to understand and free of jargon. Open-ended questions which do not elicit only “yes” or “no” replies are advisable, whereas leading questions or questions which predetermine responses, should be avoided. Participants may find it less threatening if questions are sequenced from the general to the specific and from questions concerning their experiences, before questions about their behaviour and feelings. The researcher should avoid asking too many questions or interrupting a participant because he/she thinks of a good question, or rushing the participant with another question when he/she is pausing to think. Questions starting with “Why” should be avoided, as people are often unsure of the direct reasons for their actions. They can answer more easily if a less direct question is asked, such as 'tell me about the day when the incident happened' to enable them explore

motivations. Listening to someone's story can often provide more information than when asking direct questions.

These guidelines were kept in mind when the questions in the interview guide (par. 1.5.3.5) were compiled. Questions were simple, open-ended, moved from general attitudes towards experiences and did not include academic jargon. An example follows:

“What would you say your attitude is towards people with disabilities?”

(b) Active Listening

Kvale (1996:133); Holloway & Wheeler (2002:85); Seden (2005:26) and Berg (2004:111) advise that the researcher listen attentively and actively during the whole interview. Active listening is demonstrated by appropriate non-verbal cues such as making eye contact, leaning forward, laughing, looking sad and nodding. By giving his/her undivided attention without unnecessary interruptions and remembering what has been said, the researcher shows interest, respect and understanding for what the participant says, while keeping the research question in mind. The researcher should listen for unusual terms, strong intonations or other clues which may signal a new or hidden, perhaps complex topic important to the participant. The participant, in the following example, elaborated after the researcher showed her interest verbally and non-verbally by laughing with her.

Participant: And then, as to coming into my department, it was just a case of he's not coping in the department according to the department [the Admin Department] so they thought Mrs. X's department was a good department for him [laughs].

Researcher: What exactly is your department? [smiling]

Participant: My department is, is the cleaning of the hospital and the laundry and then mmm ... stores and stock which is the cleaning equipment and cleaning products and then the ordering of all the linen and issuing of linen and ... well, that's it, more or less [voice drops]

(c) Prompting

A researcher can create a more open and less defensive attitude in participants by being curious and persistent, prompting them to elaborate on what they have just said or through the repetition of his/her most meaningful last words. In addition, they may be led into discussing an issue by nodding or using verbal cues such as “uh-huh” or “Mmm”. Participants are thus assured that the researcher is listening and are encouraged to keep talking (Kelly in Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006:301; Kvale, 1996:133). Patton (1990:325) warns against over enthusiastic nodding from which the participant may deduce that the researcher approves of what he/she is saying or that the researcher already understands the content of his/her statements. The following excerpts illustrate the use of a short verbal prompt to assure the participant that the researcher is listening and that he/she should elaborate:

Participant: And in a lot of cases he does a better job than they do.

Researcher: I'd love to hear more about that.

(d) Clarification

Questions may be asked when the researcher does not understand an answer and needs clarification or when he/she wants the participant to expand on what he/she was saying. Clarification may also be necessary in the case where a participant makes an ambiguous statement, or a statement which does not follow logically from what has been previously said. Clarifying questions should be asked so as to convey to the participant that the failure to understand is the researcher's fault and not a failure of the participant (Patton, 1990:326). The following excerpt from an interview illustrates a clarifying question where the participant used jargon the researcher did not understand:

Participant: ... en is deur die voorsitter van onse Exco-team ingelig dat, dit is die situasie en en dit het eintlik baie goed afgeloop.

Researcher: Help my gou ... EXCO –team?

Participant: EXCO-team meen onse, onse hoë vlak van management.

(e) Exploring (probing)

Holloway & Wheeler (1998:84-85) concur with, and quote Seidman who prefers using the term “explore” instead of “probe” as the latter term accentuates the researcher’s perceived position of power. Excessively probing questions may cause the participant to feel intruded upon and threatened, diminishing the likelihood that he/she will be willing to explore a situation further. However, researchers may use probing questions in search of meanings and motivations, to deepen the response to a question, or for following up on certain points that participants have made to increase the richness of the data (Kelly in Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006:301; Patton, 1990:324). Kvale (1996:139) suggests probing questions such as “Can you tell me more?”, “Could you say something more about that?” or “What Happened?” Greeff in De Vos *et al.* (2005:190) adds some interesting methods of probing such as:

- Contradicting the participant’s opinion to arouse further comments;
- Linking the participant’s comments with the information the researcher needs to know;
- Faking puzzlement to evoke more elaboration;
- Challenging the participant’s claims forcing him/her to prove them;
- Encouraging through compliments, inciting the participant to continue.

The following is an example of exploration:

Participant: He's got a very, very quick temper. And when he loses his temper, he tends to swear a hell of a lot. He's got a very dirty mouth. And then I have to caution him. And I just calm him down and say, "E, just relax, what's the problem?" And then it's sorted out, you know.

Researcher: And he listens to you ...?

Participant: Yes. No he does. The last thing I want to see is him fight...

(f) Reflective Summarising

More talk may be encouraged if the researcher reflects upon and summarises the last statements made by the participant. The researcher may also deem it necessary to summarise part of the conversation to give the participant a bigger

picture of the interview at a certain point and to check if the researcher's understanding of the content agrees with that of the participant. The participant is thereby given the opportunity to make clarifications, corrections or additions to that part of the interview. A summary may also announce to the participant that the researcher is ready to bring closure to that part of the interview, making sure that no additional comments by the participant are cut off (Henning, 2004:75; Holloway & Wheeler, 1998:87; Patton, 1990:322). The following is an example:

Researcher: So your motivation was that ... that your wife has the company and she sort of motivated you and you used ... tried to use the opportunity?

Participant: Well, I think the motivation was a bit more than that. We all

(g) Silence

Silences should be tolerated to allow participants to be thoughtful or just to have some "time out" (Henning, 2004:75). Berg (2004:109) states that people easily feel uncomfortable when silences occur, so they will either repeat their last answer, elaborate on what they were saying or state that they have nothing more to add. The following is an example:

Researcher: OK. Anything else you think we didn't cover you'd like to mention?

Participant: [long silence, then smiles]. I think the other part is that in some respects you have to treat that person like he's different, but on other aspects they need to understand that if there are policies

2.4.9.4 Closing the interview

As Kelly in Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006:300) suggests, the interviews lasted from about 30 to 90 minutes as participants mostly gave up their work time to be interviewed. Interruptions also took time and people usually find it difficult to concentrate for longer than 90 minutes. The researcher had to avoid getting caught up in details not pertinent to the study and subsequently run out of time. Participants were asked towards the end of the interview if there was anything they wanted to add or ask. The researcher then summed up and thanked him/her for his/her contribution, stating that the results of the study would be made available to him/her, should he/she be interested (Henning, 2004:76; Berg,

2004:111). As Kelly in Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006:300) suggests, participants occasionally added some valuable information after the conclusion of the interview and the researcher then asked their permission to switch on the recorder again to record the information. They usually complied. Otherwise, the researcher talked into the tape recorder later on to record these contributions, as well as her observations about the interview. All participants received an e-mail or letter, if necessary by way of the gatekeepers, to thank them for their participation. An example of the conclusion of an interview follows:

Researcher: OK. Anything else you think we didn't cover you'd like to mention? (The participant asks the researcher again exactly what her topic is; she switches off the recorder to explain. He reacts to that and the recorder is switched on again.)

Participant: You know, you don't want to go and read a book before you employ someone.

2.4.10 Field Notes

Fontana & Frey in Denzin and Lincoln (1998:368) agree with Lofland who advises that researchers should take field notes regularly and promptly; that this activity should be carried out as inconspicuously as possible and that researchers should analyse their field notes regularly. The researcher used the digital recorder immediately after interviews for capturing her sensory observations and details about the settings, the participants, how they reacted and other relevant information (Henning, 2004:77). This was usually done while travelling to the next venue as the researcher had to schedule more than one interview per day because of time and travelling cost constraints and the fact that the venues were far apart. Later, these notes were incorporated into the transcriptions by way of comments in brackets and were thus used during the data analysis.

In summary, Patton (1990:371) says that the “process of data collection is not an end in itself. The culminating activities of qualitative inquiry are analysis, interpretation, and the presentation of findings”. Thus, the method of data analysis, following data collection, will be described in the following section.

2.5 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

In quantitative research, data analysis and data interpretation are generally two separate steps in which numerical data are mathematically manipulated and statistically analysed, after which the results of those manipulations and analyses are interpreted with respect to the research questions and hypotheses. Conversely, in qualitative research “data analysis and interpretation are closely interwoven, and both are often enmeshed with data collection as well” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:150).

Qualitative data analysis is a process which demands creativity, intellectual discipline, analytical rigour and hard work. There is no right way when qualitative data are organised, analysed and interpreted, because individual researchers differ in the way they manage this process (Patton, 1990:381).

Patton (1990:171-172) and Tutty, Rothery & Grinnell (1996:97) advise that in order to meet the challenge of making sense of and reducing the volume of data, researchers should establish a plan on how to analyse the qualitative data. Creswell (1994:154) corroborates this and states that a researcher should identify the coding procedure to be used so as to reduce the information to themes or categories.

As to the question of when to commence with data analysis, two possibilities exist. Either the researcher transcribes and analyses the interviews immediately after the data were collected, or the process of data analysis commences upon completion of the entire interviewing process or when the collected data tend to become saturated (Tutty *et al.*, 1996:97). In this study, the researcher elected to use the second option, as interviews were conducted within one week and there was no time for transcribing or analysing the interviews immediately.

The researcher followed Henning’s advice (2004:76) by transcribing the interviews herself, as working closely with the data assisted in the analysis. In addition, as the researcher conducted the interview, she had a clear idea of what some of the indistinct speech was about and what the implication of the tone of voice might be. The researcher transcribed the ten (10) interviews in bulk on a word processor by playing the MP3 files on an electronic device with search and replay capabilities.

Non-verbal cues such as pauses, silences, laughter, emphasis, prompts and interruptions were indicated in brackets, as well as observations from field notes. Each interview was given a letter from the alphabet and each line was numbered, which made later referencing much easier. For example: B121.

In addition, adhering to a suggestion by Patton (1990:380, 381), a master copy of each transcribed interview was stored for safekeeping on two computers; one complete copy was used throughout the analysis, a second copy used for inserting comments and a third for cutting and pasting. A clean copy was sent to the independent coder for his use. As Patton (1990:381) indicates: "A great deal of the work of qualitative analysis involves the creative cutting and pasting of the data, even if done on a computer, rather than by hand."

The researcher used the 8 steps of Tesch (1990) in Creswell (2003:192) in order to follow a systematic process of data analysis. These steps were the following:

1. The researcher attempted to get a sense of the whole by first listening to and then reading all the interview transcriptions carefully and jotting down some preliminary ideas.
2. The most interesting and detailed transcript was picked to be read. The researcher made notes by using the 'comments' option on the word processor, trying to discover what it was about. The information was not as important at this stage, was the underlying meaning.
3. After the researcher had read and commented on several transcriptions, a list of all the topics was made. Similar topics were clustered together and arranged into files on the computer that were arrayed as "major topics, unique topics, and leftovers". This list was subsequently used with the data.
4. The topics were arranged as codes and were typed next to the appropriate segments of the text. This preliminary organising scheme was used to see whether new categories and codes emerged.
5. The researcher formulated the most descriptive wording for the topics and divided them into categories. She then reduced the total list of categories by grouping together related topics.
6. A final decision was then made on the abbreviation for each category and codes were alphabetised.

7. Data material belonging to each category was assembled in one place. A separate document was created for each theme and relevant data were cut and pasted into it on the computer. Then a preliminary analysis was performed.
8. In some cases existing data were recoded.

Following these steps ensured that the data analysis occurred in a comprehensive and systematic manner.

Patton (1990:42) advises using two or more independent coders to make sure that naturally arising categories are used rather than those a particular researcher may hope to find, regardless of whether the categories really exist. The outcome of this process, if correctly executed, "is a precise, reliable, and reproducible coding system". Contrary to Patton's recommendation concerning an external coder, Henning (2004:106) contends that a coder who has not participated in the research, would have to be briefed extraordinarily thoroughly about the theory and context of the research and become acquainted with the researcher before being capable of coding even one set of data. The author continues by stating that if external coding is to be used, it should be done by either a co-researcher or even a participant. The notion of "independence" stems from "naive realism" and positivism where interrater reliability is important.

The researcher made use of an independent coder with thorough training and experience in both social work and research methodology, although he did not have extensive experience of intellectual disability. Nevertheless, the researcher found that during the consensus discussions about themes and categories, the researcher gained more clarity, precisely by having to explain some of the theory and context which contributed to a number of initial differences between her and the coder. After the consensus discussions, the researcher and the independent coder agreed upon seven (7) themes, of which most had further sub-themes and categories. These were further refined by means of a consensus discussion between the researcher and the supervisor, who had been involved in the project since the initial stages.

During the whole process of data analysis, the findings were controlled and contrasted with existing literature, which will be elaborated upon in the next section.

2.6 LITERATURE CONTROL

As was stated in one of the objectives of the research, the researcher intended to verify the exploratory and descriptive data by reviewing the literature and existing research relating to the employment of persons with intellectual disability. Various authors emphasise the importance and utilisation of existing literature as an integral part of the research process. Mouton (2005:87) states that the literature review could be labelled a “scholarship review” as the researcher becomes familiar with the most recent and relevant body of knowledge, as well as the appropriate vocabulary. The purpose is to avoid duplication, to become aware of how others approached the research question, the theories, important definitions and concepts, empirical findings and the data collection techniques. The literature review provides a framework for the study which is guided by the research question. However, the reverse also applies, meaning that one gains clarity, a new perspective and establishes the context of the topic by reading extensively, which may lead to the adjustment of the research problem. Other researchers also serve as a source of new search strategies or link the researcher to new resources or contacts (Mouton, 2005:87, 95; Hart, 2006:27-28; Merriam, 2002:22).

Delpont and Fouché in De Vos *et al.* (2005:265); D’Cruz & Jones (2004:166) and Holloway & Wheeler (1998:31) agree that, in qualitative research, a conceptual framework prior to the study is necessary to link the study to other research and ideas about the topic, but the social theory, literature review and search is ongoing. Throughout the study the researcher compared and contrasted her own themes and subthemes with the findings of other studies to describe, understand, explain and theorise about the participants’ experiences and their application to social work practice. In the current study the researcher decided upon the research approach design and methodology after reviewing relevant literature, but after the data collection was completed, relevant research findings from other studies were used as the literature control for her own themes and sub-themes.

2.7 METHOD OF DATA VERIFICATION

Creswell (1998:201-202) states that data verification is a distinct strength of qualitative research, as the time spent in the field, closeness to participants and detailed description, all contribute to the value of the study. Data verification emphasises qualitative research as a distinct, legitimate mode of inquiry.

Krefting (1991:215) quotes Leininger's definition of validity in qualitative research as "gaining knowledge and understanding of the nature (i.e., the meaning, attributes, and characteristics) of the phenomenon under study". This definition is contrasted to the quantitative definition of validity, which refers to the degree to which the measuring instrument is suitable to measure what it is supposed to measure. Krefting (1991:215-219) continues by presenting a model based on Guba's (1985) work for determining trustworthiness in both qualitative and quantitative research. Four aspects of trustworthiness are identified, namely, truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality.

These aspects are described comprehensively with relevance to the present research pertaining to employers' attitudes and experiences regarding employees with intellectual disability in Chapter 1 (par. 1.7). The researcher made sure that the data were verified according to the guidelines.

2.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations, which the researcher applied to this study, were clearly expanded on in Chapter 1 (par. 1.8). The practice of science (professional ethics), society, the subjects of science and privacy, anonymity and confidentiality were considered. Suffice it to say that these considerations were taken into account especially when the sample for the study was drawn and participants were prepared (refer to par. 2.3.4).

2.9 CONCLUSION

Various authors describe the benefits to persons with intellectual disability when they are employed and when appreciation is shown by colleagues for their contribution in the labour market. These benefits include the development of a work identity, expansion of vocational skills, as well as the improvement of self-confidence, dignity and social competence. The benefits from gainful employment enable the person with intellectual disability to become more independent from the family. Furthermore, families gain by seeing their member in a competent role in the labour market. The employer gains a good worker and may receive support for training and maintaining the individual. In other words, inclusion has social and cultural gains which cannot be secured effectively only by the creation of legal rights and opportunities (Dixon & Reddacliffe, 2001:193; Wehman, Revell & Brooke, 2003:168).

In order to accomplish the research goal, which was to engage with employers of persons with intellectual disability to gain insight into their direct experiences, the researcher elected to use an interpretive, qualitative research approach. In Chapter 2 the researcher described how the research approach, research design, method of data collection, data analysis, data verification, literature control and ethical considerations were utilised to accomplish the research goal. Employers' attitudes play a vital role in the number of persons with intellectual disability who are employed. Employers' experiences may serve to assist other employers and professionals who support and train persons with intellectual disability, thereby reaping the benefits of the employment of more of these clients. Thus, the findings of this study concerning employers' attitudes and experiences regarding the employment of persons with intellectual disability, together with the literature control, are reported in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND LITERATURE CONTROL

3.1 INTRODUCTION

At the commencement of this study, the following research goal was formulated: “To engage with employers of persons with intellectual disability to gain insight into their direct experiences. The researcher’s motivation for selecting a qualitative research approach with an explorative, descriptive and contextual design and the utilisation thereof to realise the research goal, were accounted for in Chapter 2. The method of data collection through semi-structured interviews, the population and sample, data analysis, data verification and ethical considerations relevant to this study, were described.

In this chapter, the relevant demographic data of the participants are firstly presented and discussed. Subsequently, the researcher has followed the common practice in qualitative research of presenting sufficient data, in the form of participants’ remarks, to “adequately and convincingly support the findings of the study” (Merriam, 2002:21). The data are described according to themes and sub-themes which were agreed upon after consensus discussions with an independent coder and the study supervisor. The findings are compared and contrasted with the existing literature, which is the literary control (Creswell, 1998:154).

Firstly, the demographic data of the ten (10) research participants are thus presented in Table 3.1 and are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

3.2 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF PARTICIPANTS

Initially, and to realise the research goal, thirteen (13) semi-structured interviews were conducted with employers/supervisors who have employed persons with intellectual disability. When the criteria for the sample were stipulated, it was

stated that participants should have employed persons with intellectual disability for a period of six months or longer.

All employees with intellectual disability were placed in their jobs by organisations who either had a residential facility for persons with intellectual disability, or whose services were directed towards job training and placement of these persons. No employers who employed persons with intellectual disability of their own accord, without involving a specialised organisation, were included in this study (refer to limitations par. 4.4). In this chapter, these organisations will only be referred to as [organisation] and the employee/s with intellectual disability will be referred to as "E". When interviews were conducted, the researcher ascertained from employers how long the relevant employee(s) was employed. As indicated in Chapter Two (par. 2.3.2.2), only ten (10) of the interviews were eventually transcribed and utilised for data analysis, as two (2) participants did not comply with the sample criteria because of a misunderstanding by the gatekeeper. One (1) interview was discarded, as data saturation occurred. The ten (10) participants' data are presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Demographic Data of the research participants

TYPE OF WORKPLACE	EMPLOYEE/S JOB TITLE	PARTICIPANTS' RELATIONSHIP TO EMPLOYEES	JOB TITLE OF PARTICIPANT	GENDER OF PARTICIPANTS	LANGUAGE OF PARTICIPANTS	ETHNIC GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS
Accountants Firm	Messenger	Supervisor	Practice Manager	F	Afrikaans	White
Nursery School	Teacher's assistant	Supervisor	Teacher	F	Afrikaans	White
Hospital	Store assistant	Supervisor	Executive Housekeeper	F	English	White
Nursery school	Cleaner	Employer	Principal	F	English	Coloured
Nursery school	Caretaker	Employer	Principal	F	English	Coloured
Solicitors firm	Receptionist	Employer	Attorney	M	English	White
Computer Warehouse	Warehouse assistant	Supervisor	Manager	M	English	White
Hospital	Porters (3)	Supervisor	Assistant Reception Manager	M	English	Coloured
Hospital	Porters (4)	Supervisor	Reception Manager	F	Afrikaans	White
Catering Firm	Kitchen assistant	Employer	Manager/ Owner	M	English	White

3.2.1 Location of Participants

As was stated in the sample criteria (par. 1.5.3.3), participants were located in the vicinity of Kimberley, Cape Town and Johannesburg. The researcher preferred not to indicate the location of each participant in Table 3.1, as this information could identify them, thus putting their privacy in jeopardy. The participants who employed persons with intellectual disability, represented a variety of workplaces which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

3.2.2 Workplace of Participants

The types and sizes of the workplaces of participants varied considerably, as shown in Table 3.1. The three hospitals were the largest and employed more than 100 employees each. Of the employees who were employed at the hospitals, seven (7) were porters and one (1) was employed as a store assistant. The person with intellectual disability who was employed at the computer warehouse, where about seventy (70) employees worked, was a warehouse assistant. The catering firm, employing approximately forty (40) employees, employed a kitchen assistant. The three nursery schools and the accounting and solicitors' firms were small workplaces, employing fewer than 20 employees each. The persons with intellectual disability were employed at the nursery schools as a class assistant, cleaner and caretaker respectively, as a receptionist at the solicitors' firm and as a messenger at the accounting firm.

Rimmerman (1998:253), in a study of Israeli employers, found that the type of corporation (industrial versus non-industrial), was not related to executives' attitudes towards employment of persons with intellectual disability. Corporate executives who had larger numbers of employees and larger annual sales had favourable attitudes, compared to employers of smaller sized businesses. Morgan and Alexander (2005:46) confirmed that in concurrence with findings by Nietupski, Hamre-Nietupski, Vanderhart and Fishback (1996), larger firms had more positive attitudes towards hiring persons with disabilities. However, technical industries presented better prospective job opportunities. Although the sample in this study was small, the size and character of the workplace did not seem to be determining factors as far as employers' attitudes towards the employment of persons with intellectual disability were concerned. However, it will be noted in Sub-theme 2.1,

that larger places of employment, specifically the hospitals, were *inter alia* influenced by the stipulations of the Employment Equity Act (Act No. 55 of 1998) in their decision to employ persons with intellectual disability.

Having described the workplaces of participants, their job titles and their relationship to the employees with intellectual disability will be discussed in the following two sections.

3.2.3 Job Title of Participants

The employers or supervisors (refer to the definition par. 1.9) represented a variety of positions i.e. a business manager/owner, four (4) managers/assistant managers, an attorney, two (2) principals of nursery schools, a nursery school teacher and an executive housekeeper. Although their seniority in their workplaces varied considerably, the criterion of being the direct employer or supervisor of the employee/s with intellectual disability was met.

3.2.4 Participants' Relationship to Employees

As was stated in the clarification of concepts for this study in (par. 1.9), employers, as well as direct supervisors, were included in the study. At six (6) of the workplaces, the participants were the employees' direct supervisors and at four (4), they were the employers. From the interviews, it was clear that they had continual contact with the employees and were thus in the ideal position to relate their attitudes and experiences regarding the employment of the persons with intellectual disability.

In the following three sections, the gender, language and ethnic groups of the participants will be elaborated on, thus concluding the discussion of the participants' demographic data.

3.2.5 Gender of Participants

Rimmerman (1998:253) found that the gender of executives at the companies under scrutiny had no impact on their attitudes towards the employability of persons with intellectual disability. In the present study, the employers/supervisors were female at six (6) of the workplaces, whereas they were male at four (4) of

them. The researcher was unable to make any inferences concerning the significance of the gender of participants as far as their attitudes towards the employment of persons with intellectual disability were concerned.

3.2.6 Language of Participants

One of the criteria for participants' inclusion in the sample was that they should be either Afrikaans or English speaking. The language participants spoke was Afrikaans at three (3) of the workplaces and English at seven (7) of them. Some participants used both languages interchangeably, or they used jargon in another language. This phenomenon was evident in participants from certain cultural backgrounds and in Afrikaans-speaking participants who worked in an English environment. As the researcher is proficient in both languages, this ensured that she could communicate easily with participants and they could express themselves in the language with which they felt most comfortable. Although the researcher would have preferred to include participants from more language groups, the limited scope of the present study did not allow for this provision (refer to limitations par. 4.4).

3.2.7 Ethnic Group of Participants

Although the researcher did not specify the ethnic group of participants as one of the criteria for the sample, it may be noted that in seven (7) of the interviews, participants were white and in three (3) they were coloured. The researcher initially contacted an organisation working in the Asian and black communities, but unfortunately the particular organisation did not co-operate as promised in finding suitable participants. Participants from all ethnic groups probably would have provided richer data for analysis. This limitation is noted in (par. 4.4).

3.3 DISCUSSION OF THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

Reporting on the research findings, the researcher presents quotations from the interviews to show some of the data from which the results emerged. The content of the quotations guides the reader towards the results inferred from the data and establishes the credibility of the themes, by ensuring that the illustrative quotations

reflect the participants' meanings and feelings. The researcher's interpretations and analysis are integrated with the literature, which serves as evidence of the themes or categories (Holloway & Wheeler, 1998:274). In addition, Patton (1990:382-383) recommends that two persons code the data independently. Through the subsequent comparison and discussion, important insights may emerge.

The data from the semi-structured interviews with participants in this study, the processes of data analysis by the researcher and the independent coder, as well as the consequent consensus discussion, resulted in the themes and sub-themes presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Themes and Sub-themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
THEME 1: EMPLOYERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS DISABILITY PRIOR TO EMPLOYING A PERSON WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY	<p>Sub-theme 1.1: Employers' knowledge about disability prior to employing a person with intellectual disability</p> <p>Sub-theme 1.2: Employers' attitudes towards intellectual disability prior to employing a person with intellectual disability</p>
THEME 2: EMPLOYERS' MOTIVATION FOR EMPLOYING A PERSON WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY	<p>Sub-theme 2.1: Employers' motivation is compliant with the stipulations in the Employment Equity Act regarding the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market</p> <p>Sub-theme 2.2: Employers' motivation is a response to lobbying by organisations and individuals who provide services to clients with intellectual disability</p> <p>Sub-theme 2.3: Employers' motivation is a response to their sense of social responsibility</p> <p>Sub-theme 2.4: Employers' motivation is the result of positive prior experiences with employees with intellectual disability</p>
THEME 3: EMPLOYERS' POSITIVE EXPERIENCES REGARDING THE EMPLOYMENT OF A PERSON WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY	<p>Sub-theme 3.1: Employers' positive experiences regarding the work ethic of employees with intellectual disability</p> <p>Sub-theme 3.2: Employers' positive experiences regarding the contribution to the workplace of the employee with intellectual disability</p> <p>Sub-theme 3.3: Employers' positive experiences regarding the impact of the employee with intellectual disability on colleagues and clients</p>
THEME 4: EMPLOYERS' EXPERIENCES OF THE CHALLENGES REGARDING EMPLOYING A PERSON WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY	<p>Sub-theme 4.1: Employers' experiences of the challenges regarding the limited conceptual skills of employees with intellectual disability</p> <p>Sub-theme 4.2: Employers' experiences of the challenges regarding the limited social skills of employees with intellectual disability</p> <p>Sub-theme 4.3: Employers' experiences of the challenges regarding the limited practical skills of employees with intellectual disability</p> <p>Sub-theme 4.4: Employers' experiences regarding the challenge of interference by parents of employees with intellectual disability</p>
THEME 5: EMPLOYERS' EXPERIENCES OF THEIR ROLE REGARDING THE EMPLOYEE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY	<p>Sub-theme 5.1: Employers' experiences of their role regarding the job orientation of the employee with intellectual disability</p> <p>Sub-theme 5.2: Employers' experiences of their role as mentor, providing on-the-job-training with the required job accommodations</p> <p>Sub-theme 5.3: Employers' experiences of their role as counsellor to employees with intellectual disability</p> <p>Sub-theme 5.4: Employers' experiences of their role as advocate for the employee with intellectual disability</p>

In the following sections of this report, each of the main themes and accompanying sub-themes will be presented and underscored by direct quotations from the transcripts of the interviews. The identified themes and sub-themes, categories and the complementing story lines from the transcripts will be compared and contrasted with the available literature, i.e. a literature control will be undertaken (Creswell, 1998:154).

3.4 THEME 1: EMPLOYERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS DISABILITY PRIOR TO EMPLOYING A PERSON WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

THEME 1	Sub-theme 1.1
Employers' attitudes towards disability prior to employing a person with intellectual disability	Employers' knowledge of disability prior to employing a person with intellectual disability
	Sub-theme 1.2
	Employers' attitudes towards intellectual disability prior to employing a person with intellectual disability

As was stated in the research goal, the researcher intended to engage with employers of persons with intellectual disability to gain insight into their direct experiences. The following two sub-themes, including the quotations from participants, will present the employers' knowledge of disability and their concurrent attitudes towards the employment of persons with intellectual disability. Thus, the first sub-theme is devoted to participants' knowledge about disability prior to employing a person with intellectual disability.

3.4.1 Sub-Theme 1.1: Employers' Knowledge about Disability prior to Employing a Person with Intellectual Disability

The White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy [INDS] (1997:39) states that with regard to disability, "one may move from a position of total ignorance to preliminary awareness of disability within the community and, from there, to an attitude of concern. This concern may, however, be expressed within a paternalistic and patronising framework (the Medical Model)".

Bardon *et al.* (2004:17), in a study pertaining to the Special Olympics, report some significant findings concerning attitudes towards persons with intellectual disability

in South Africa. While the majority of the public in South Africa indicate that they know someone with intellectual disability, the quality of the contact, or the level of impairment of the person they encountered, is unknown. The public underestimates what people with intellectual disability can achieve; thus, it may be assumed that their exposure has been primarily to people with moderate to severe impairment, according to this study. The INDS (1997:19), in addition, asserts that apart from exposure to persons with intellectual disability, the media's portrayal of people with intellectual disability may also contribute to the public's perceptions and knowledge. Culture is another factor which influences people's relationships with persons with disabilities and the view that they are different or "outsiders".

Some of the participants in this study acknowledged their relative ignorance, or their preliminary level of knowledge concerning persons with intellectual disability, before they decided to employ such a person. The first participant's mother became blind and the next participant previously taught at a school where they had only minimal contact with children with disabilities. However, neither of the participants knew a person with intellectual disability.

"Nee, ek het nie, behalwe vir my ma wat nou blind is, oor verstandelik [gestremdes kennis gehad] nie."

"Ek het skoolgehou vir lank, so ons het kontak gehad met ander skole wat kinders het wat gestrem is, maar ons het hul nie regtig van naby geken nie."

One participant admitted that her lack of knowledge caused her to be apprehensive about persons with intellectual disability before she employed such a person.

"Vir verstandelik gestremdes was ek nogal bang en skrikkerig. Ek dink dit spruit nou maar uit onkunde uit."

Two participants at least knew persons with disability in their communities and gained some knowledge about learners with "special needs" or intellectual disability by way of their training as teachers. However, they had no knowledge of adults with intellectual disability, or their inclusion in the workplace.

“No, not really ...not in a work situation, but at least, in the home situation and in the community, like with learning disabilities. And I think also in our course, [name of the course] we also deal with that barrier to learning, especially where the younger child is concerned.”

“Ek het remediërende onderwys ook geleer en my skoonma het by [school for learners with intellectual disability] gewerk. Ek het in [city where school is] gestudeer, so ons het baie met hulle [learners with disability] in aanraking gekom. Sy het ons altyd vertel van hierdie kinders in haar klas - voorberei ... daarvoor. Ek het met gestremde kinders te doen gehad, [maar] ek het nooit met gestremde volwassenes, ...'n verstandelik gestremde volwassene, te doen gehad nie.”

The following participant seemed to be more advanced in her general knowledge of persons with disability and specifically, persons with intellectual disability. Her knowledge was gained through her friendship with and being related to persons with disabilities.

“Well, as far as E is concerned, I've already known him a good number of years since he was small. I was familiar with E's intellectual disabilities. I [also] had an aunt with a disability. I grew up quite close to her, so that wasn't something really new to me.”

Having a brother with Down's Syndrome, caused one participant to view intellectual disability as something that is “normal” and it is not “strange”.

“My brother is a mongoloid [person with Down's Syndrome]. He is mentally very bad. We were 8 children in the family, and my mother had delivered twins when she was 42. And he was the one that became a mongoloid. When you grow up with something, it's just normal to you... It's not strange.”

Given their varying levels of knowledge about disability and specifically, intellectual disability, employers' resultant attitudes towards disability and towards hiring employees with intellectual disability, will be discussed in the next sub-theme.

3.4.2 Sub-Theme 1.2: Employers' Attitudes towards Intellectual Disability prior to Employing a Person with Intellectual Disability

As the concept "*attitude*" is central to the discussion of this theme, the definition of this concept is provided for clarification. Attitudes affect how we think about other people and act towards them, and though attitudes are not something one can touch, they do have implications that are noticeable and important (Bardon *et al.*, 2004:1). Hernandez (2000:2), in a literature study concerning employers' attitudes, elaborates by stating that historically, attitudes have been defined in terms of "evaluation, affect, cognition, and behavio[u]ral predisposition". The author distinguishes between *global attitudes*, which were "evaluative responses" about general issues without having to state intentions or planned actions, on the one hand and on the other, *specific attitudes* with a narrow scope, indicating intentions, such as a willingness to employ people with disabilities. An interesting observation was made that global attitudes tended to be more positive than specific attitudes.

Although numerous studies have investigated the variables which may have an impact upon employers' attitudes towards persons with disabilities in their organisations, the results have generally been inconsistent. Employers had unfounded concerns about employees with disabilities in areas such as productivity, absenteeism, turnover, and interpersonal situations (Unger, 2002:7). Yet Hernandez (2000:2) asserts that employers continue to express predominately positive attitudes toward employees with disabilities. Positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities have become socially more acceptable, indicating a step forward from previous pity, sympathy and a lack of acknowledgement concerning their capacity for productivity. The INDS, (1997:39), underscores this viewpoint by stating that the last transitional stage in the process of moving away from the medical to the social model, may be the development of a sense of justice; of seeing people with disabilities as citizens with equal rights.

The following quotations by the participants echo a few positive attitudes towards persons with disability, which concur with the above-mentioned findings.

“In die algemeen, dink ek, was ek nogal simpatiek gewees.”

“My attitude is one of I'm comfortable with it ... but I'm not really prepared to facilitate them [people with disabilities] into doing nothing. I'd like them to reach their capacity - to be able to be sufficient. I think that sometimes the "undisabled" people have enabled disabled people to become more disabled than they need to be, and that's not to anybody's advantage.”

“We [employers] mustn't look at them like as if they are cheap labour. They are doing us a service; we need to appreciate them for the persons who they are. Focus on the person, and not on the person's disability.”

In contrast to the positive attitudes shown in the above-mentioned quotations, the association between a lack of knowledge and the resultant negative attitude towards persons with intellectual disability, as discussed in Sub-theme 1.1, comes to the fore in the following participant's statement. She acknowledges her lack of knowledge concerning the management of an employee with intellectual disability, as well as her fear and uncertainty prior to employing such a person.

“En ek was bang vir die situasie - dat dit nie gaan werk nie en dat ons nie gaan weet wat om met haar te doen nie ... en hoe om haar te hanteer nie.”

Regarding her attitude towards adults with intellectual disability, one participant indicated her ambivalence towards them by acknowledging that by visiting the centre where they reside may still upset her.

“Hulle [children with disabilities] was nie vir my 'n bedreiging nie. Ek dink as ek {name of centre where adults with intellectual disability stay} gaan besoek, sal dit my dalk nog ... ontstel.”

The participants' conflicting attitudes of not feeling threatened by persons with disabilities on the one hand, and their fear and uncertainty out of ignorance, on the other, are confirmed by Hernandez, (2000:2). This author states that “it is unclear to what extent employer attitudes toward employees with disabilities come from personal experience, lack of information, or from myths and stereotypes.”

As to employers' attitudes regarding specifically the employment of persons with intellectual disability, Unger (2002:10) notes results from various studies which indicate that employers are less concerned about employing persons with physical disabilities than employing persons with mental or emotional disabilities. In addition, she quotes a study by Olson, Cioffi, Yovanoff and Mank (2000), who found that 79% of the employers in their study were of the opinion that the amount of training and supervision employees with mental retardation (intellectual disability) needed, was greater than that for their non-disabled colleagues. The following story line indicates some scepticism towards the appointment of an employee with intellectual disability in the workplace.

"When [organisation] approached me about three years ago, I was immensely sceptical because we've got a big operation here. It's very stress ... demanding."

Another participant was more positive and expressed an attitude towards the employee with intellectual disability as not being "special".

"We try not to view her as a person with learning disabilities and to treat her that way. We don't want to let her feel that ... she's different to us in any way. We're very sensitive and considerate of her limitations and her needs, but we don't concentrate on that. To wrap her in cotton wool and to seem start picking her up, that's just going to make her think that she's special and behave like she's special."

The following participant stated that people with intellectual disability should be given employment opportunities in the open labour market, also demonstrating a positive attitude after having already employed three people with intellectual disability. This view concurs with the findings by Bardon *et al.* (2004:20), who finds that, while negative employer attitudes may lead to a reduction in the number of people with intellectual disability being hired, once contact is established between employers and individuals, such attitudinal barriers can be overcome. The participant indicated his positive attitude as follows:

“...you also have to give people opportunities in life where you make them part of the normal routine things ...”

Though the following participant feared that she would have to give the employees with intellectual disability more time and attention, she saw their employment in a positive light.

“... en mens het half die vrees om iemand in diens te neem wat meer van jou aandag of tyd gaan nodig hê. Maar die "spin off" is soveel meer werd as daai "initial" klein bietjie ekstra wat jy daar moet insit.”

Concluding this theme, it may be stated that participants admitted to having varying levels of knowledge about disability, including intellectual disability. Their attitudes towards disability, intellectual disability and the employment of these people seemed to be linked to their level of knowledge. Employers' attitudes ranged from fear, uncertainty, ambivalence and scepticism, to more positive attitudes, such as not treating the person with intellectual disability as “special”; a willingness to give persons with intellectual disability opportunities to work and a willingness to overcome pre-conceived misgivings about extra training and time needed in exchange for a positive experience. Given the spectrum of attitudes, varying from fear, uncertainty and scepticism to a willingness to accept and include persons with intellectual disability in the workplace, the factors which motivated employers to employ persons with intellectual disability, will be discussed in the next theme.

3.5 THEME 2: EMPLOYERS' MOTIVATION FOR EMPLOYING A PERSON WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

<p style="text-align: center;">THEME 2</p> <p>Employers' motivation for employing a person with intellectual disability.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sub-theme 2.1</p> <p>Employers' motivation to employ persons with intellectual disability in the open labour market is compliant with the stipulations in the Employment Equity Act.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sub-theme 2.2</p> <p>Employers' motivation to employ persons with intellectual disability is a response to lobbying by organisations and individuals who provide services to such clients</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sub-theme 2.3</p> <p>Employers' motivation to employ persons with intellectual disability is a response to their sense of community responsibility</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sub-theme 2.4</p> <p>Employers' motivation to employ persons with intellectual disability is the result of positive prior experiences with such employees</p>
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Brevis, Ngambi, Vrba and Naicker in Smit & Cronje, (2002:344) define motivation as that which "drives people to behave in certain ways". The authors elaborate by noting that people are not always aware of what motivates them and that they behave in ways that seem right under the circumstances. Bonde's finding that "people are motivated to do what is in their best interest", is also quoted.

From the participants' responses, employers' motivations for employing a person with intellectual disability may be divided into four sub-themes. Two motivations (sub-themes 2.1 and 2.2), namely compliance with the Employment Equity Act and in response to lobbying from organisations working with persons with intellectual disability, seem to concur with Bond's finding, as they originate from external sources and may, Therefore, create some pressure on employers. In contrast, the motivations in sub-themes 2.3 and 2.4 appear to be situated within the employer's person, demonstrating a sense of community responsibility and of positive

experiences with such employees. These latter two motivations seem to be more altruistic than the former two sub-themes which may arise from the employer's own best interest.

3.5.1 Sub-Theme 2.1: Employers' Motivation to Employ Persons with Intellectual Disability in the Open Labour Market is Compliant with the Stipulations in the Employment Equity Act

The Employment Equity Act (Act No. 55 of 1998) stipulates that so-called designated employers (municipalities, employers who have more than 50 employees and those having a larger turnover than that specified by the Act) should implement affirmative action measures. These measures include identification and removal of employment barriers such as unfair discrimination. Diversity, based on the principles of "equal dignity and respect of all people", should be enhanced. Reasonable accommodations for "designated groups", including persons with disabilities, should be made. The objective is to ensure equal opportunities and equity in the workplace.

Such designated employers may claim refunds from the Skills Development Levy paid to their SETA (Sector Education and Training Authority) if they have invested some of their resources on training people with disabilities (Silver and Koopman, 2000:62). One participant registered her dissatisfaction with the fact that, as their employee with intellectual disability worked under contract, no such benefits could be claimed, but it is evident that she would have made use of this opportunity should her company have been eligible.

"... omdat dit 'n kontrak met die diensorganisasie, met [organisation] is, is ons glad nie geregtig op enige voordele ... mens kan geld terugkry as jy 'n gestremde persoon in diens neem."

Two of the participants who work for the larger employers, made statements to the fact that they perceived the employers' motivation to employ the person with intellectual disability, as a strategy to comply with the stipulations in the Employment Equity Act. They said the following in this regard:

"The hospital was quite keen to comply with the equity of employing the different categories of people and because E fell into a disability category, I think that was to his advantage in being employed at that stage."

"...volgens die criteria van die Employment Equity Act moet sekere hoeveelheid ... mense met gestremdheid in die maatskappy werk. Toe't hulle dan met E gebeginne."

Thus, two hospitals which took part in the study, certainly acted in their own best interests by complying with the Employment Equity Act (Act No. 55 of 1998). In the next theme it will become evident that some employers were motivated by the lobbying of organisations or individuals providing services to persons with intellectual disability.

3.5.2 Sub-Theme 2.2: Employers' Motivation to Employ Persons with Intellectual Disability is a Response to Lobbying by Organisations and Individuals Providing Services to such Clients

In their article Rogan, Banks and Howard in Revell, Inge, Mank and Wehman (1999:202), describe how so-called job consultants, as common practice, use personal connections or contacts such as neighbours, board members, calls or drop-in visits to employers, often before vacancies are advertised, to secure employment for their clients with intellectual disability. Two participants clearly stated that this process was followed in their case. In the first case, a psychologist referred the client for employment, whereas in the second case, the participant's wife, who works at an organisation which trains persons with intellectual disability for employment, motivated him to employ one of her students.

"Sy was by 'n sielkundige hier op die dorp. Hy het haar uitgeplaas na van ons skole toe of gevra vir hulp. [This nursery school then decided to offer her a temporary job]. Haar werk het mettertyd al hoe meer geword. So sy het eers twee dae gewerk ... sy's nou vyf dae per week by ons."

"...my wife is at [organisation] so ... I've been quite sensitive to the whole thing [employment of persons with disabilities] for quite long. Well, when we moved

into this office, we needed a receptionist. We interviewed a number of students from [organisation] as potential receptionist ... “

In one interview, the participant mentioned the fact that they were in dire need of a porter at the hospital, but they could not find a suitable person. One of the staff members had a family member at [organisation] and referred the employer to this organisation. They found a suitable employee there and she explained it as follows:

“En toe't ons E [one of the clients of the organisation] ge-interview en hy's net hierdie bondeltjie plesier”

The following two themes will elaborate on employers' motivation for employing a person with intellectual disability where they acted on their sense of responsibility to the community, or on previous positive experiences with employees with intellectual disability. These motivations are in contrast to those discussed in the first two themes, in which motivations originated in external sources.

3.5.3 Sub-Theme 2.3: Employers' Motivation to Employ Persons with Intellectual Disability is a Response to their sense of Community Responsibility

Unger (2002:5), in a literature study, confirms this motivation by presenting the findings from various relevant studies showing that increasingly, employers recognise the significance of employing employees with disabilities in an effort to promote their image in the community (Nietupski, Hamre-Nietupski, Van der Hart, and Fishback, 1996; Olson *et al.*, 2000); strengthen their commitment to social responsibility (Pitt-Catsouphes and Butterworth, 1995); or to increase workforce diversity (Olson *et al.*, 2000).

The story line below indicates that this company, out of their sense of social responsibility, employed a person with intellectual disability.

“... ek dink dit het aanvanklik maar gegaan oor deernis ... dit was meer uit 'n gemeenskapshoek uit dat ons E ingevat het. Dat ons so kan hande vat met [organisation]... dat ons wou betrokke raak in die gemeenskap.”

The next sub-theme also indicates employers' internal motivation, originating in previous experience with employees with intellectual disability.

3.5.4 Sub-Theme 2.4: Employers' Motivation to Employ Persons with Intellectual Disability is the result of Positive Prior Experiences with such Employees

Morgan and Alexander (2005:46) state that, consistent with findings by Nietupski *et al.* (1995), experienced employers were more likely, and thus motivated, to hire again and they identified the advantages of employing persons with intellectual disability more frequently. Two participants confirmed this finding as follows:

“En toe ek nou die volgende portier verloor, toe dink ek ‘joe, ons het so ‘n ‘great’ tyd met E en toe gaan ons terug [organisation] toe en toe kry ons nog ‘n persoon met verstandelike gestremdheid.”

“E was omtrent ... drie, vier maande hier enne ... toe het ons nog twee permanente poste beskikbaar gehad. Die [organisation] het ons genader en gevra of ons nog twee gestremdes sou aanstel. ‘so we didn't have a problem ... we were quite happy with them.’ “Toe kom daar nog ‘n tydelike pos waarin E4 aangestel is.”

These statements confirmed several findings which showed that employers who had previous experience working with employees with disabilities, were more willing to hire a person with a disability (Unger, 2002:11).

Having described employers' attitudes and motivations prior to hiring employees with intellectual disability, their experiences with these employees will be focused on in the following three themes. These experiences were divided into three themes, namely, employers' positive experiences, the challenges they experienced regarding the employment of a person with intellectual disability, and lastly, their experiences as to their role towards these employees.

3.6 THEME 3: EMPLOYERS' POSITIVE EXPERIENCES REGARDING THE EMPLOYMENT OF A PERSON WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

<p>THEME 3</p> <p>Employers' positive experiences regarding the employment of a person with intellectual disability</p>	<p>Sub-theme 3.1</p> <p>Employers' positive experiences regarding the work ethic of employees with intellectual disability</p> <p>Sub-theme 3.2</p> <p>Employers' positive experiences regarding the contribution to the workplace of the employee with intellectual disability</p> <p>Sub-theme 3.3</p> <p>Employers' positive experiences regarding the impact of the employee with intellectual disability on colleagues and clients</p>
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Rogan *et al.* (1999:207), in their study of four organisations providing supported employment services in the USA, reported on the positive experiences managers, employers and supervisors had of their employees with intellectual disability. They listed several points, highlighting the following aspects:

- One employer was driven by the persuasion that opportunities should be given to less fortunate people, even though he had a rough time with his employee with intellectual disability.
- The employees demonstrated their work ethic by having to be reminded to stop working; they were described as “good workers” and their employment enabled the employer to give back to the community.
- The employees with intellectual disability had a positive impact on the work environment by bringing colleagues down to earth, having no hidden agendas, being concerned about everybody in the workplace and having pride in their work.

These positive experiences were shared by participants in the current research as their comments, divided into the three sub-themes, abundantly illustrate. Firstly, employees' work ethic is discussed.

3.6.1 Sub-Theme 3.1: Employers' Positive Experiences regarding the Work Ethic of Employees with Intellectual Disability

Based on the work of Cherrington, Colson and Eckerd, Quinn, Yankelovich and Immerwahr, Hill and Petty (1995:1) define work ethic as “a cultural norm that advocates being personally accountable and responsible for the work that one does and is based on a belief that work has intrinsic value”. Henderson, in a non-scientific article on the internet, elaborates by mentioning that work ethic represent positive attributes such as “responsibility, diligence, dedication, persistence, focus, caring, honesty, discipline [and] commitment” (http://www.springboardtraining.com/article_work_ethic.html).

A large number of statements were made by the participants wherein they commended the work ethic of the employees with intellectual disability, resulting in a positive experience of working with them.

“O, sy's [employee] baie [with stress] lojaal en baie getrou. Sy sal nie sommer van die werk af wegbly nie. Partykeer moet ons haar amper dwing om huis toe te gaan as sy siek is en raak sy baie emosioneel. As ek met haar daaroor praat, dan sal sy sê: ‘Nee, tannie, my werk is my werk. Ek gaan nie wegbly nie.’”

“Dis lekker om vir haar te vra om iets te doen. ‘Gaan gou bank toe.’ Dan sal sy sê: ‘Ja, tannie, enige tyd.’ ... Sy't 'n positiewe gees”

This employer pointed out the employee's loyalty, trustworthiness, positiveness and her unwillingness to stay away when she is ill. The following two quotations show that the employees worked well and that they had consequently been given more responsibility.

“...he loves to do his work and he does it ... very well. [Relating to his calibre of work, she stated:] “He's, he's a real clean worker.”

“E is a very, very responsible person...And I think he's also got the correct attitude say, towards everybody here in the building and to the working environment. He showed everybody that he ...is responsible. E is only working with us since September, but we have given him responsibility...”

One of the participants spoke about the positive experience he had had and how impressed he was when the employee with intellectual disability used her own initiative. Another firm's fax number was out of order and she called them to notify them about the fact, after finding out the number.

In the following comment, the one participant did not only state how well the employee with an intellectual disability was coping, but based on his work ethic, he was more efficient in his job than intellectually able persons.

“E is ...big and strong and he fits into the position where we've put him, where he's handling boxes and packing boxes and doing those kind of things. He now has two people working for him and he's kind of in a supervisor position, so he does very well.”

“...In a lot of cases he does a better job than they do [referring to colleagues] ...I mean he works harder. I never hear any complaints ... he has actually been a pleasure.”

One of the participants, who was responsible for four staff members with intellectual disability, was impressed with the employees' work ethic. They were passionate about their work, friendly and warm and she said she would approach the organisation again should vacancies arise. She said:

“Hulle straal daaroor [with reference to their work] en is 'passionate' oor wat hulle doen. Hulle is net ongelooflik. Hulle is net so vriendelik en, jy kan sien hulle het so “Ek dink hulle [referring to non-disabled colleagues] raak naderhand afgestomp ...dis nie meer vir hulle hierdie 'exciting' ding om te doen nie. So, ek het vir [organisation] gesê: ‘Van nou af, as ek personeel verloor, kom ek na julle toe. Kry vir my iemand, wat daai warmte in hom het””.

The next statement encapsulates the same participant's experience concerning the employees' eagerness to learn.

“Ek moet nogal sê, en dit was vir my dalk die grootste kultuurskok van alles... tussen hierdie vier ... hulle is meer geïnteresseerd om te leer. Hulle is by elke vergadering, elke ‘training session’ – of dit hulle werk is of nie. Want hulle wil weet wat aangaan. Ek wens half ek kan die ander (personeel) ‘infect’ met daai entoesiasme.”

At the end of the interview this participant made another statement pointing to her employees’ willingness to do anything, regardless of modifications or additions to their jobs. She verbalised it as follows:

“Ons het hulle so half rondgeskuif. Ek hoef glad nie te ge-‘adjust’ het vir hulle nie. Hulle het ingestap en die werk gedoen wat gedoen moet word. Ons het nou al take bygelas en ek het nie die geringste probleem nie. Daar’s niks wat hulle nie kan of wil doen nie. Hulle kan byhou en is vinnig. Twee weke terug was E die enigste een wat opgedaag het op die Saterdag en die Sondag. Hy’t hierdie hele hospitaal by homself ge-run. En dit is ‘phenominal’. Ek dink nie party van die gewone portiere sou dit baasgeraak het nie. Maar hy gaan eenvoudig en hy sê: ‘I’m very busy today, so you’ll need to wait for me, but I will come.’”

Two employers testified to the fact that the employees with intellectual disability never complain, even though they sometimes needed to be reminded about the sequence of their duties, or they had to perform unpleasant chores such as changing nappies.

“Then I’ll remind him; E, the children will have to get up there and they will have to come and do their work, so you need to first do that {clean their tables}. Sometimes I just verbalise it. But he, he doesn’t complain.”

“Ek het klein kindertjies, so sy moet doeke omruil en sulke goed, sy kla nooit {klem} nie”

The work ethic of the employees with intellectual disability seems to be very impressive, as experienced by their employers. They highlighted their loyalty, trustworthiness, positiveness, responsibility, initiative, passion for their work, eagerness to learn, zealously and the fact that they never complain. In addition

to their impressive work ethic, participants referred to their positive experiences regarding the contribution to the workplace of employees with intellectual disability.

3.6.2 Sub-Theme 3.2: Employers' Positive Experiences regarding the Contribution to the Workplace of Employees with Intellectual Disability

The following quotations underscore this sub-theme and the above-mentioned findings about employers' positive experiences (par. 3.6). The first participant emphasised the fact that the employee with intellectual disability brought another dimension to the office. She taught them to be thankful and to be patient. She gave love and she filled a certain place in the office, even though she sometimes needed to be reprimanded.

“Sy bring... 'n ander dimensie in die kantoor wat, ons andersins sou gemis het. Almal het geleer om bietjie meer geduld te hê. En sy gee soveel liefde. As ek na haar kyk, hoe dankbaar sy altyd is. Een ding wat sy vir ons leer is om dankbaar te wees vir wat ons het ... en hoe ons kinders lyk. Sy vul 'n groot leemte en waar sy foute maak, moet ons maar 'n bietjie aanpraat. Sy doen al haar dagwerkies. Nee, ons kan nie sonder haar nie. As iemand anders moet bank toe gaan, hou ons hom uit sy werk uit.”

The one participant not only highlighted the value of his employee with intellectual disability with the following utterance, but shared something about her relationship with her colleagues too:

“E started off in the beginning making sandwiches, fruit salad, fruit platters, snack trays... She's even started to bake scones, cream scones, cheese scones you know, every day is different. She copes very well... we tell her what to do, she even looks at the menu and she knows that the fruit platter goes there, the fruit salad has to go there – she's become very valuable in that sense... They [referring to other staff members] don't have problems chatting to her. Actually, we've got workers here from disadvantaged backgrounds and E is, is even more capable than many of the normal people we've got here...”

Another story line testifies to the fact that the employer viewed the employee as an asset and of great help; she treated her as "a piece of gold" even if a reprimand

was in order now and then. This participant also stated that they could have employed a domestic worker as a teacher's-aid to help with the children, but was of the view that she would not have been as good with the children as the employee with the intellectual disability.

"... my groot storie is dat ... ek kan nie 16 driejariges in my klas hanteer sonder haar nie. So ek hanteer haar soos 'n stukkie goud. Ek dink sy't respek vir my en ons verstaan mekaar. As sy iets verkeerd gedoen het, dan sê ek op 'n mooi manier vir haar. So ek het haar nog nooit kwaad gesien nie."

Another participant testified to the fact that the employees with intellectual disability were an asset in the workplace by being so friendly, by making patients feel important, even though they had lost part of their freedom and that they made a meaningful contribution.

"... hulle maak mense belangrik voel... anders as die ander personeel. [Names] sal twintig keer 'smile' en hulle is so vriendelik. Iemand wat nie in hierdie industrie werk nie, sal moeilik verstaan watter impak dit het. Dis 'massive!'... Dis baie maklik vir ons [referring to the hospital staff] om mense in die hospitaal naderhand soos in 'n tronk te behandel. Ons vat jou vryheid weg. Ons sê vir jou wat jy moet aantrek, wanneer jy moet slaap, wanneer jy moet eet. So, om iemand te hê wat jou soos 'n mens laat voel en vir jou vertel hoe lyk die weer buite, wat vir jou vra van jou kinders, is baie, baie groot."

Another participant had the following to say:

"I find it's good for our staff morale here [referring to having a person with intellectual disability on the payroll]. People enjoy her. I tend to come early into work in the morning and the office is dead quiet. And then about half-past-seven everyone starts to arrive and it's still quiet. Everyone says 'hello'. Then E tends to arrive at work about quarter-to-eight and suddenly everyone's laughing and having a joke and talking and having a good time."

Having documented employers' positive experiences with reference to their work ethic and the contribution to the workplace of their employees with intellectual

disability, the researcher will expand on their positive experiences concerning the employees' impact on clients and colleagues.

3.6.3: Sub-Theme 3.3: Employers' Positive Experiences regarding the Impact of the Employee with Intellectual Disability on Clients and Colleagues

One participant alerted the researcher, during the course of the interview, as to how fond the clients (the children attending the nursery school) were of the employee and the positive relationship she had with them. The following quotations from this interview serve to testify to this.

“En daar's 'n paar van hulle wat net agter E aanloop...”

Later in this interview she said:

“Die kinders is mal oor haar. Daar is klomp kinders wat absoluut nie omtrent skool toe kom as sy nie daar is nie.”

The employee described in the following excerpt, clearly shows his concern for the children in the crèche where he was working as caretaker.

“And it was cold and E couldn't understand how this parent could come, half past five, and collect the child. The only child... and it is getting cold and dark... ‘Now when is the parent coming?’ And he was very concerned over the child. Then [smile] he decided he's gonna take a photo of the parent using his cell phone.”

The next two statements testify to the employees' relationship to and acceptance by their colleagues.

“I think E's got a pleasant attitude and there's none of the staff who really have a problem with him.”

“The whole office comes to the staff lunch once a month ... It's a chance for staff to just sit and talk and, as far as E goes, she's got friends in the office. She also has people she doesn't like. She's very vocal to me about whom she doesn't like and why, but that's normal.”

The following employer was very positive about the sensitivity and concern displayed for the patients by the employees with intellectual disability, who worked as porters.

“... ek moet sê, hulle is nogal verskriklik sensitief en ‘concerned’ teenoor die pasiënte.”

In conclusion, Unger (2002:5) states that employers prefer reliable, dedicated employees, perhaps with unintended benefits included, sacrificing some productivity so that extra training and supervision could be provided, if needed. However, in the next theme it will become clear that, in spite of the positive experiences, employers also referred to various challenging experiences with the employees with intellectual disability.

3.7 THEME 4: EMPLOYERS’ EXPERIENCES OF CHALLENGES REGARDING THE EMPLOYMENT OF A PERSON WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

<p style="text-align: center;">THEME 4</p> <p>Employers’ experiences of the challenges regarding employing a person with intellectual disability</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sub-theme 4.1</p> <p>Employers’ experiences of the challenges regarding the limited conceptual skills of employees with intellectual disability</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sub-theme 4.2</p> <p>Employers’ experiences of the challenges regarding the limited social skills of employees with intellectual disability</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sub-theme 4.3</p> <p>Employers’ experiences of the challenges regarding the limited practical skills of employees with intellectual disability</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sub-theme 4.4</p> <p>Employers’ experiences regarding the challenge of interference by parents of employees with intellectual disability.</p>
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Intellectual disability is "a disability characterised by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual,

social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before age 18" (South African Federation for Mental Health (<http://www.safmh.org.za/glossary.htm>).

The AAMR (2002:40), based on findings by Neisser, Boodoo, Bouchard, & Boykin, proceeds by explaining that "*intelligence*" is a general mental capability and not only a narrow academic skill. Individuals differ in their ability to understand complex ideas, to adapt effectively to their environments, to learn from experience, to engage in various forms of reasoning and to overcome obstacles by thinking and communicating. *Adaptive behavio[ur]* is "the collection of conceptual, social, and practical skills which have been learned by people in order to function in their everyday lives" (AAMR, 2002:41).

Because of the limitations in personal competence and the limitations in dealing with the "demands of a complex world", persons with intellectual disability, contrary to most other people in society, have an on-going need for varying types and intensities of support (Thompson, McGrew and Bruininks, 2002:23, 26).

The employers' experiences of the challenges they face regarding the employment of persons with intellectual disability, are described in the following four (4) sub-themes. The first three (3) sub-themes have been organised in accordance with the employees' adaptive behaviour as demonstrated by their limitations in conceptual, social and practical skills. The last sub-theme describes employers' experiences of challenges regarding family interference in the workplace. In the last theme, theme 5, in which employers relate their experiences regarding their role towards the employees with intellectual disability, the employees' need for on-going support, is emphasised.

3.7.1 Sub-theme 4.1: Employers' Experiences of the Challenges regarding Employees' Limited Conceptual Skills

Conceptual intelligence refers to abstract intellectual abilities which are needed to understand symbolic processes and to master academic and analytical tasks. Limitations in conceptual skills include limitations in receptive and expressive language, reading and writing, mathematics, money concepts and self-direction (Thompson *et al.*, 2002:30; AAMR, 2002:42).

The following story lines give an indication of the challenges employers faced in the workplace due to conceptual skill deficits. Employees' language limitations often presented considerable challenges when they communicated inadequately, volunteered insufficient information, or misinterpreted instructions.

"I've found that speaking to him is most difficult. I've also tried to say to him that none of us can remember everything, and that myself and the supervisors write everything down. If I'm going off to meetings, it's difficult to give him just one instruction, because it will keep him busy for only 10 minutes. I think he doesn't want to do that [write down his duties]. He wants to sort of show himself capable ..."

"We'll return and E's gone. Then I realise he's gone to lunch ... he's so quiet."

Employers also related their experiences of the challenges regarding employees' deficits in reading and writing skills and explained the impact on the employee's work. A participant spoke about how the receptionist's deficits in recording clear, detailed messages, caused considerable frustration.

"I think she'd have a great difficulty writing a long message quickly. She normally simply fills out a small message slip the size of the palm of your hand. There have been occasions where she has misrecorded a person's name or their number, or forgotten to record a telephone number... And that sometimes created a difficulty. We cannot return a call and we have no idea if it's important or not."

Another employer described the employee's difficulty with alphabetising and organising.

"Jy kan ook nie vir haar vra om 'n klomp opgawes in alfabetiese volgorde te sit nie. Sy kan dit doen, maar dit raak gou te veel vir haar. Sy kan nie eers 'n bietjie doen en die ander eenkant sit nie. Sy gee gou moed op en dan sal sy verkeerde goed insit."

Conceptual limitations pertaining to self-direction were also evident in a lack of urgency, a lack of judgement as to priorities and a problem with punctuality.

“One [issue] was ... just a general lack of urgency. I always try and do that [give clear instructions]: ‘E, here's a fax, here's the number, and I want you to fax it to this number please’. And then you go off and you do something and you come back and it hasn't been sent yet. ‘E, why isn't it gone yet?’ ‘I don't know. I'm getting to it. I'll do it just now.’”

“...When she experiences a difficulty and feels that she can't do something, to immediately come and say: ‘This is the problem I'm having.’ We can help her. We don't like problems to compound where, the longer it takes for her to fix the problem, or for us to help her fix the problem, the worse things get.”

The following quotation highlights a lack of judgement and a lack of skill in prioritising.

“When she first started ... obviously we recognise that the phone doesn't ring and faxes don't come through all day. We used to let her read the newspaper and I encouraged her to tell me what the Pound-Rand exchange rate was, little things like that. At first, she performed her functions very well, and then came the reading... And then started to come more mistakes ... So we took the view that, if that's the case, no reading at reception. ...Because that's just too hard to explain to her: “You can read, but the moment the phone rings, put it down”. She'll finish reading the paragraph and then answer the phone. Or open the door for someone who's been waiting there for a moment or two.”

A lack of punctuality, which represents another conceptual skill deficit, was expressed as being a challenge by one employer.

“He tends to come a little bit late, but we make a point of mentioning it to him, then it doesn't get any worse. But if we let it slide, it would have become a problem.”

Several examples were provided concerning the challenges employers had to face because of the lack of conceptual skills characterised by inadequate communication, limited reading and writing skills, a lack of urgency and

punctuality. In the following sub-theme, the challenges experienced by employers regarding the second component of adaptive behaviour, namely social skills, are discussed.

3.7.2 Sub-theme 4.2: Employers' Experiences of Challenges regarding Employees' Limited Social Skills

Greenspan, in Thompson *et al.* (2002:31), defines social intelligence as 'a person's ability to understand and to deal effectively with social and interpersonal objects and events.' Persons with intellectual disability often have limitations in social skills, such as forming and maintaining meaningful interpersonal relationships, participating in group activities and developing self-esteem. They are often eager to please, naive, have difficulty in following rules, obeying laws and avoiding victimisation. They have difficulty in taking responsibility, being sensitive and showing insight (AAMR 2002:42; Thompson, *et al.*, 2002:31). Dixon & Reddacliffe (2006:2) elaborate by saying that the ability to accept criticism from a supervisor, to interact with co-workers and ringing if you are going to be late or if you are ill, are some of the important social skills needed for successful placement and job maintenance.

Although employers reported some positive social skills as was indicated in Theme 3, they also experienced challenges due to the implications of social skill deficits in the workplace. These are, for instance, valuable work time wasted by the employee sharing all her stories and not knowing when to stop, an inclination to exaggerate matters, a lack of tact and a tendency to take over, a disregard for other people's privacy and being too eager to please.

One participant explained that the employee's need to share her stories with anyone who seemed to be willing to listen, was experienced as a challenge. It became emotionally taxing, it wasted valuable work time and they had to learn to curb this behaviour.

"Sy vat nogal 'n emosionele tol by almal. Sy kry spesifiek iemand, en dan sal sy nou vir 'n maand vir die ou al haar stories vertel. En dan is dit nogal vir daardie persoon 'n groot emosionele las. Sy vat jou werkstyd. En sy besef dit nie...en om dit kort te knip [is vir ons moeilik]."

An employee who was a teacher's assistant at a nursery school, had an inclination to exaggerate matters, had a lack of tact and a tendency to take over. This behaviour was also viewed as a challenging experience.

“Sy gesels vreeslik lekker met die ouers, maar sy't nie daai takt... Sy kan 'n bietjie oordryf en stories maak en ... so aan.”

“...sy besluit partykeer sommer om iets te doen... wat glad nie deel is van die dag se program nie. Sy sal sommer een van die groter klassies se kinders gaan haal om in ons klas te kom verf, want sy wil eintlik die ander juffrou help. Maar dit ontwrig die hele dag.”

Employees' disregard for patients' privacy is experienced as a challenge as noted by the participant who was responsible for the porters (with intellectual disability), employed in the hospital where she was working. She noted this experience as follows:

“daai idee van ‘my privatheid’, [referring to patients’ privacy] dat ‘jy kan nie inkom nie’ ... is nie iets wat natuurlik vir hulle is nie. Die privatheid, en ‘dignity’ van pasiënte het hulle half nie verstaan nie. Maar dit het ons met ‘job coaching’ en so aan rêrig uitgesorteer.”

The following story line indicates the employer's experience of the employee speaking too softly at work, which is indicative of a lack of social skill.

“You know, he is a bit slow... we must have a little patience with him, and... he will sometimes move amongst the children and because he speaks so soft, it's as if the children don't really notice. So we say: E, just raise your voice, then they will hear you.”

Lastly, the following quotation testifies to the person with intellectual disability being manipulated, as he was eager to please others.

“I find that if I said to him: ‘look, don't issue a particular thing or don't issue more than 50 of a particular thing’ ... he likes to please people, so he'll sneak to them if they say ‘E, please give me such and such’, then he'll give it to them even if he knows there's a restriction on it.”

Having discussed employees' limited conceptual and social skills and how employers experienced these as challenges in the workplace, attention will be directed to the third aspect of adaptive behaviour which presented challenges to employers - which is limited practical skills.

3.7.3 Sub-theme 4.3: Employers' Experiences of Challenges regarding Employees' Limited Practical Skills

Practical intelligence has been described by Greenspan in Thompson *et al.* (2002:31) as "the ability to deal with the physical and mechanical aspects of life". The AAMR (2002:42) lists practical skills such as eating, toileting, dressing, mobility and leisure activities under practical skills. Instrumental living skills such as preparing meals, household tasks and telephone use, occupational skills and keeping a safe environment are also included. A few quotations by participants indicate how the lack of practical skills had an impact on the workplace.

One participant mentioned that the employee's lack of personal grooming is not a serious issue, but they sometimes had to guide her in this aspect of her life. He said:

"There's the odd day when her hair's a bit ruffled, but she walks to work and it, it's windy..., then I just say to E: 'Your hair looks just a bit scruffy, won't you just go and give it a brush?' And she does it with the greatest pleasure."

An employee's clumsiness and untidiness in preparing tea for clients were experienced as a challenge and caused some embarrassment; thus, that they had to relieve her of that duty. The participant explained that the employee could not see when the sugar spoon was dirty and she would count the cups repeatedly, forgetting what clients had ordered.

"Sy loop vreeslik vinnig en dan sit sy die skinkbord neer en dan 'splash' alles oor die hele skinkbord. Dan voel hy [the boss] baie verleë en moet hy nou eers vir die kliënte verduidelik. Dit stres vir haar, al hou sy daarvan."

The last challenge employers experienced, is not linked to the limited adaptive skills of employees, but rather to their families. Family involvement and support is

of vital importance for vocational success of persons with intellectual disability, but in some cases their involvement may take the form of interference.

3.7.4 Sub-theme 4.4: Employers' Experiences of Challenges regarding Interference by Parents in the Workplace

In an article describing a study about family contributions towards the vocational lives of young adults with intellectual disability, Dixon and Reddacliffe (2001:194, 200) write that the benefits gained from being employed, enable the person with intellectual disability to become more independent from the family. Families gain by seeing their member in a competent role in the labour market. However, parents are frequently ambivalent about the amount of independence they should encourage on the one hand, and their perceived need to protect the young adult from exploitation and failure in the workplace, on the other. Thus, they often initiate contact with an employer or the employment agency when difficulties occur.

The one participant related his experience of a parent challenging him after his disallowing the employee to read at work, because of her increasing mistakes. The mother was of the opinion that if the employee had been less bored, she would have worked better.

“My biggest hurdle and obstacle to treating her in a normal manner, as best as we can, in the workplace, has actually been her own parents - weird as that may sound. [After explaining about the reading, he told the mother:] ‘Look, we would actually be doing your daughter no favours if we let her sit at reception and read, because, if she leaves here and goes to work at another firm, they're not gonna allow her to do that.’”

Later on in the interview, the participant referred to another incident where the employee's mother interfered because the employee wanted him to phone a colleague to come and fetch her for work, but he had to refuse. He spoke about this as follows.

“And that's ...where her mother took umbrage at that, and phones me because as now I'm being so unfair and it's not right. I can certainly understand why her

mum is so protective. Sure, if I had a child with a similar disability, I would be extremely protective, even once they were adults working at places. I would make sure that no-one messes with my daughter unfairly. But we do have to explain to her what the situation is at the office too. It's a normal job scenario. That's what we're trying to teach her."

Another participant highlighted the mother's desire to keep control, while the employee with intellectual disability could actually function quite independently.

"Die enetjie se ma maak ons partymaal heelmal gek. Sy wil heeltemal beheer hou oor hom, maar hy kan regtig nogal 'independently' funksioneer as hy moet."

In the following quotation the participant related her dilemma concerning the granting of Christmas leave to the employee with intellectual disability on the parents' demand. The department's policy was that staff should take turns in taking Christmas leave.

"Leave has become a bit of an issue ... the family get involved and... the phone calls and the letters and the visits from the parents then happen at home and at work and at the weekend and that, to me, become very ... difficult."

It seems that employers perceived a fine line between parents being helpful and protective towards the employee with intellectual disability and being meddlesome and unreasonable.

Having reported on both the positive and challenging experiences employers related during the research interviews, attention may finally focus on how they experienced their role as it related to the employee with intellectual disability.

3.8 THEME 5: EMPLOYERS EXPERIENCES OF THEIR ROLE REGARDING THE EMPLOYEE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

<p>THEME 5</p> <p>Employers' experiences of their role regarding the employee with intellectual disability</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sub-theme 5.1</p> <p>Employers' experiences of their role regarding the job orientation of the employee with intellectual disability</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sub-theme 5.2</p> <p>Employers' experiences of their role as mentor, providing on-the-job-training with the required job accommodations</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sub-theme 5.3</p> <p>Employers' experiences of their role as counsellor to employees with intellectual disability</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sub-theme 5.4</p> <p>Employers' experiences of their role as advocate for the employee with intellectual disability</p>
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3.8.1 Sub-Theme 5.1: Employers' Experiences of Their Role regarding the Job Orientation of the Employee with Intellectual Disability

Socialisation, as referred to in Human Resource Management, is the process through which a new employee learns the attitudes, standards, values, and behaviour patterns expected by the organisation. Orientation, which forms part of the socialisation process, refers to employees becoming adapted to their new organisation and work responsibilities. New employees are informed about what is expected of them in the job and helped to cope with the stress of transition. Colleagues orientate new employees in an informal and unplanned way, and often inaccurate or misleading information may be conveyed. The formal orientation given by the organisation, therefore, is of the utmost importance (Schultz, 2004:251; De Cenzo and Robbins, 2002:208).

Starting a job can be a nerve-racking experience for any new employee. For many people with intellectual disability, given their difficulties with learning, the employer will often find it necessary to provide extra, individualised training, assistance and support during the orientation phase. This will vary depending on the employee, the severity of the disability, the complexity of the job and the nature of the workplace. The orientation phase should be based on the following 3 principles:

- 1) Orientation should accommodate the needs of employees who have disabilities.
- 2) Orientation should provide the employee with enough information to understand what is expected and how the tasks must be performed.
- 3) Orientation should assist in creating a positive attitude towards the employee through disability sensitisation training for colleagues (Technical Assistance Guidelines, 2003:36-37); Code of Good Practice, (2000:9); Australian Government JobAccess Website
[\(http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/JOAC/ServiceProviders/Assisting_job_seekers/Supporting_jobseekers_with_different_types_of_disability/Learning_intellectual_and_autism_disability/How_to_support_intellectu.htm#content.](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/JOAC/ServiceProviders/Assisting_job_seekers/Supporting_jobseekers_with_different_types_of_disability/Learning_intellectual_and_autism_disability/How_to_support_intellectu.htm#content)

The Australian Government Job Access website, quoted in the previous paragraph, expands on the first principle of accommodating individual needs by advising employers to be flexible and to treat each person with intellectual disability individually. The orientation phase should be tailored to “individual needs and capacities and focus clearly on each person’s goals and abilities. This should also entail reassessing and adapting plans and support”
[\(http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/JOAC/ServiceProviders/Assisting_job_seekers/Supporting_jobseekers_with_different_types_of_disability/Learning_intellectual_and_autism_disability/How_to_support_intellectu.htm#content.](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/JOAC/ServiceProviders/Assisting_job_seekers/Supporting_jobseekers_with_different_types_of_disability/Learning_intellectual_and_autism_disability/How_to_support_intellectu.htm#content)

Some of the participants emphasised the importance of knowing the needs of the person with intellectual disability and his/her capacities and skills to ensure that the person will be able to cope with the job requirements. This sentiment is echoed by the TAG (2004:29), where it is stated that the initial job interview should focus on the applicant’s ability to perform the essential job functions, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability. Applicants should be asked how they would

perform the essential functions and whether accommodation would be required. Other authors also advise that in order to make a good job-employee match, the person's social preferences, interests and skills should be taken into account when a job is sought. Even the integration opportunities with colleagues at the job site, contribute towards the compatibility of the employee and the job (Wehman, 2003:138; Rogan *et al.*, 1999:202). The following quotations from participants' interview transcripts indicate their understanding of the principle of individuality and of ensuring a good "job-fit".

"Make sure that, that the person fits in the right place. Don't put them somewhere where they're not gonna cope... I certainly think it would help if you knew that [referring to the employee's type of disability and skills] up front and then you could have a better idea where to place the person."

"Jy moet kennis hê oor die persoon wat gestrem is en definitief meer inligting oor hoe om met so 'n persoon te werk."

"I think if the person has the skills ... we then need to look at what it is that the person can bring to the organisation. And ...of course, all of us are different ..."

"Ek dink mens moet versigtig wees en half eers die kat uit die boom uit kyk en die persoon opsom."

"Vir seker moet jy weet wat sy vermoëns en sy tekortkominge is ..."

"Met E moes [ons] stadiger stappe vat [referring to the process of job orientation] as wat ons met enige ander vat. Ek het baie gekommunikeer met hulle en dadelik hulle agtergronde probeer kry. Wat is hulle se 'likes', wat is hulle se 'dislikes'. 'So you need to get into their frame of mind.'"

After making sure that the employee's needs, capacity and skills have been considered, the employer proceeds towards orientation. The new employee who has an intellectual disability might require that certain concepts be simplified or repeated. Adhering to the second principle stated above, important initial information needs to be given, for which the Australian Government JobAccess Website

(http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/JOAC/ServiceProviders/Assisting_job_seekers/Supporting_jobseekers_with_different_types_of_disability/Learning_intellectual_and_a_utism_disability/How_to_support_intellectu.htm#content and the TAG (2004:36), provide some guidelines.

- Inform the people who need to know about the appointment and arrange for someone to meet the new employee.
- Develop an informal buddy system where a colleague keeps an eye on the employee's progress and assists, when required, with learning new tasks and dealing with work-related problems.
- Ensure that the training material is accessible, after consulting with the employee or an external organisation which assists the employee.
- Give an overview of the organisation.
- Give an overview of policies, procedures, rules and safety regulations.
- Explain compensation and fringe benefits.
- Attend to labour relations.
- Acquaint the employee with the physical layout of the workplace and facilities.
- Introduce the employee to the functions of the department/section and explain, or demonstrate the employee's tasks and responsibilities.
- Introduce the new employee to colleagues.
- Explain the work ethic and culture with a view to facilitating social competence and inclusion, including customs concerning breaks, celebrations and pace of work, acceptable dress or grooming, power relationships, cliques and sub-groups and humour.
- Provide adaptations such as simple, repetitive instructions.

Several of the participants described their role in orientating the employees with intellectual disability to their organisation. The following participant explained that employees first attended the general hospital orientation, after which she used the "buddy system" and the assessment of learning after initial orientation.

"Ons doen 'n algemene hospitaal oriëntasie. Dan kom die werknemer na jou departement toe waar een van die redelik senior mense of iemand wat op

hoogte is van die werk , as 'buddy' optree. Dan het ons so na 'n week 'n 'skills assessment'."

One employee started out as a volunteer at his workplace and was later permanently employed as a cleaner/caretaker. His employer orientated him regarding his job and duties when he was officially appointed by explaining to him:

"... what will be expected from you... your teatime and your lunchtime. When it came to employing him, it came as like it was the very first day when he started out here."

The following participant stressed the importance of making employees feel included by stating:

"... Toe hulle begin het hierso, het ons vir hulle gesê: 'Julle is nie geklassifiseer as 'abnormaal' of as enige ander mens nie. Jy is 'part of the team', jy's deel van ons."

Having addressed the first two principles for comprehensive and effective orientation of the employee with intellectual disability, the employer's role regarding the last principle of orientation, pro-active education and sensitisation about disability, is discussed.

The TAG (2004:36) claims that very few people have had the opportunity to work with people with disabilities. Therefore, they might perceive the new colleague with a disability as being different. Thus, it is essential that the new employment relationship deals with prejudices and stereotypes which might exist. Sensitisation training is an opportunity to guarantee that employers and colleagues are given the skills to succeed in this new relationship, which must be based on mutual "respect, understanding and trust". The U S Department of Labor (www.dol.gov/odep [Accessed: 11 November. 2007]), in their guidelines, advises employers to also include employees with disabilities in both formal work groups and informal gatherings as these provide opportunities for social interaction. People with disabilities enjoy the same types of social and recreational activities as employees without disabilities.

Participants, in most cases, involved the services of an external specialised placement organisation to assist with sensitisation when a new employee with an intellectual disability was appointed. This participant, *inter alia*, described how, at first she could not understand exactly what the implications of the disability of the employee were. She learnt, for instance, that the employee first had to visualise a route when he/she had to go, for instance, to a ward. She also shared a tip she learnt about how to react when she became angry with him/her.

“En ek kon eers nie mooi verstaan wat is die ‘disability’ nie.... As ons nou 'n nuwe persoon aanstel, kom hulle {organisation} en oriënteer die staff wat saam met daai persoon gaan werk.”

“mens raak mos maar bietjie ‘uptight’ en dan gil jy vir iemand. Maar as jy vir hulle gil, ‘it’s shut down’. So, hulle [organisation] maak jou bewus van die ‘slaggate waarin jy kan val en hoe jy dit moet hanteer. As jy kwaad is, dan moet jy sê: ‘I’m angry, I will speak to you when I’m not angry.’”

The following participant used the interesting procedure of including the employees with intellectual disability in the sensitisation and staff discussions.

“Toe E aangestel is, het hulle [organisation] iemand uitgestuur om net vir ons te ‘brief’ oor die gestremdheid van hulle en so aan. So basies die moets en die moenies. Ons het saam met E-hulle voor die staff gepraat en vir hulle gesê wat moet gedoen word en moet nie gedoen word nie.”

This participant also briefed the researcher about the content of the sensitisation training provided by the organisation, explaining that one should not feel sorry for employees with disabilities and should motivate them through praise.

“...want as jy hom bejammer, dan gaan hy ‘advantage’ vat, ‘and then he will always use that against you.’ Dan het hulle altyd gesê: ‘What will mostly motivate them is, tell them they’ve done a good job’, or if he’s stuffed up, say: ‘You know, you’ve done it like this, but I want you to do it like this’. Then he’s gonna start bettering on that, then... it, it works. It’s to ... give them more confidence, not to break them off.”

This participant, however, displayed ambivalence about the role of the specialised organisation which placed the employees and sensitised staff in the beginning. He was of the opinion that once placed, employees should take their guidance from him, their supervisor, and that the organisation should be contacted only when he deemed it necessary.

“So dis hoekom die rede... hoekom ... dis nie dat ek hulle [organisation] totaal uitgesluit het nie, ek het 'n maandelikse report.”

The orientation of employees, based on individualisation, provision of adequate knowledge about the organisation and the employee's job, as well as proper sensitisation, was the first role in which employers saw themselves. Their experiences of their role regarding on-the-job training to the employee with an intellectual disability, utilising job accommodations, will be discussed in the following sub-theme.

3.8.2 Sub-theme 5.2: Employers Experiences of their Role regarding On-the-job-training to the Employee with Intellectual Disability

Following the orientation of employees, De Cenzo and Robbins (2002:215) suggest that training be undertaken, which they define as a learning experience seeking “a relatively permanent change in an individual that will improve the ability to perform on the job”. The training can change employees' knowledge, how they work, their attitudes toward their work, or their interaction with their colleagues or supervisors.

Once employees with intellectual disability have commenced work and have been given the necessary initial training and orientation, their chances of maintaining this employment may be increased by the provision of ongoing support. Ongoing support may include assistance with work-related problems, expansion of duties, on-going training and needed job accommodations. The amount of training required will depend on the job, the organisation's needs and the skills and the experience of the individual. When contemplating effective accommodations for on-the-job training for employees with intellectual disability, it should be remembered that every person is unique; with his/her own capabilities, limitations and learning styles

http://www.employersnetworkondisability.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=70&Itemid=16;

http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/JOAC/ServiceProviders/Assisting_job_seekers/Supporting_jobseekers_with_different_types_of_disability/Learning_intellectual_and_autism_disability/How_to_support_intellectu.htm#content.

Reasonable job accommodation means "... any modification or adjustment to a job, employment practice or work environment that enables a qualified individual with a disability to participate in and enjoy equal employment opportunity" (Employment Equity Act, No. 55, 1998). Guidelines as to accommodations, either in training, or to the job itself, for employees with intellectual disability, were suggested in several documents, listed below according to countries.

Australia – Australian Government JobAccess
http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/JOAC/ServiceProviders/Assisting_job_seekers/Supporting_jobseekers_with_different_types_of_disability/Learning_intellectual_and_autism_disability/How_to_support_intellectu.htm#content;

Canada - Connect employment
http://www.connectemployment.ca/what_you_should_know.htm#LongTermSupport;

South Africa - Department of Labour Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of People with Disabilities (TAG: 2004:37-38);

The United States Equal Opportunity Commission (2004)
http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/intellectual_disabilities.html.

The guidelines are the following:

- Give clear instructions.
- Don't flood the person with a lot of new information at once - give one instruction at a time.
- Avoid difficult language or complex directions.
- Give instructions at a slower pace.
- Give the employee additional time to finish the training.
- Modify training methods; for example, replace printed material and classroom training by allowing the employee to learn through

observation, demonstrations, role-play and breaking a complex job down into small steps.

- Use charts, pictures, or colours.
- Provide assistive devices such as detailed schedules or a tape recorder to record directions as a reminder of steps in a task.
- Concentrate first on quality rather than quantity, ensuring that a person is undertaking the task correctly before focusing on speed or productivity.
- Make it clear that it is in order to ask questions when unsure about a task or what to do next, though also encourage and praise initiative.
- Be aware that most people with intellectual disability do need to operate within set structures and routines to be effective and that they do not respond well to constant change or variety.
- Provide additional training if there are any on-the-job changes.
- Be open to different ways of completing tasks as long as the end result is the same.
- Give lots of positive feedback though never neglect to correct mistakes, unacceptable behaviours or unsafe working methods and stress why this is important.
- Avoid immediate job rotation or introducing too much variety from the first day, but remember that many people with intellectual disability will be able to learn more skills. It often helps the learning process (repetition being the key) if they can master one, two or a few tasks before moving on to learn new duties.
- Change work schedules to prevent exhaustion, to improve socialisation with colleagues, or to accommodate needs for counselling or medical appointments.
- Allow for a job coach to help the employee learn to do the job, to monitor performance on an ongoing basis, help determine appropriate accommodations and promote healthy working relationships among colleagues.
- Help develop a healthy working relationship between management and the employee by encouraging appropriate social interaction and maintaining open communications.

In the following quotations from participants, it becomes clear that employers provided several of these accommodations where the on-the-job-training, as well as the job itself, are concerned. The first participant refers to the fact that they adjusted the length of training to the employee's level of comprehension.

“Dan het ons hulle, stadig maar seker, deur die proses gevat... ‘instead’ dat ons hierdie mense [persons with intellectual disability] twee weke ‘training’ gee, dan sê, gee ons vir hulle ‘n maand en ‘n maand-en-‘n-half ‘training’. En sit ons nie soveel ‘pressure’ op hulle soos ons op die ander staff gaan sit nie. ‘But yet, they still need to do the task what the others do.’ So, lateraan gee ons hom een task, dan kommit na twee toe en tot na drie toe – dat hy nou moet beginne identifiseer watter is prioriteit.”

In the following two excerpts, a nursery school teacher and a lawyer respectively, related that on-the-job training included improving their employees' communication skills. One employee had to learn to speak softer and to kneel down when speaking to children, while the other employee, a receptionist, had to learn to speak with a smile in the voice.

“... die kinders wat bang was om skool toe te kom omdat sy so ‘n harde stem het...en sy is ‘n groot mens [referring to her posture]. So leer ons haar nou maar om af te buk na die kinders en bietjie stadiger te praat en sagter te praat. So, ons moet maar...daar is sekere goed wat ons haar moet leer.”

“Every now and again I just phone the reception number, and when she answers the phone with a smile on her face or smile in her voice, I say: ‘Good, E, you've got a smile in your voice’. Or, if she answers it ‘robotically’, I'll say to her: ‘Hey, where's the smile?’ Because that is the voice clients hear.”

With reference to on-the-job-training or adding on to the employee's repertoire of duties, two participants described their approach, clearly showing that they took the employee's level of functioning into account.

“[Mens moet] met min opdragte begin en alles mooi verduidelik... “

“...if you want her to do a new ... to add a new function to her job, you need to do it slowly and explain to her meticulously what it is you want. And then let her

do it herself, let her make the mistake, let her ... then show her what the mistake is and build it up. You can't just bang it on to her and expect her to know how to do it."

The following story line testifies to the fact that, although the employer spent a lot of time training the employee, he also utilised a specialised organisation to assist with on-the-job-training when he found the employee was sending a 100-page fax upside down.

"... I was very upset at that. As much as I help E all the time and deal with issues and stuff, I can't stand there every day and watch her all day. Certain things I need to trust are being done correctly. So there we called in [organisation] and they came with the job coaching, sat with her for an hour, two hours, and just went through her job description with her and made sure that she understands what to do, how, where and when."

He continued by stating what a support system the organisation is.

[They are important] ... the reason being that, you know, not everyone is as sensitive and knowledgeable about what a person like E's needs and requirements are. So you don't always quite know how to deal with them. With a normal employee it's easy enough. You can phone them and you crap on them and it's done with. But there's no point in shouting at E. It's gonna make the situation worse. So you need to shout at her without shouting at her. You need to make her understand that she's in trouble without putting her down."

As shown in one of the above excerpts, good supervision seemed to be important in the training process. One employer experienced a problem with this as she often had to be out of the office.

"But with most of my staff when they've fouled up I say 'Look, ask a 101 questions; rather ask questions than make a mistake'. The difference with E is that he probably doesn't want to appear stupid, so he doesn't ask the questions. Yeah. So I think that he probably needs more supervision than ... he's getting."

One participant referred to the fact that they provided “refresher courses” on an annual basis to all the staff, but that they had to adjust the training to provide for the lack of some social skills the employees with intellectual disability had.

“...ons doen jaarliks ... ‘refresher’ opleiding. En een van die goed wat ons doen is kliëntediens. Want ek dink selfs met die beste ‘attitude’, partykeer moet jy net bietjie gelei word in wat jy kan doen en wat jy nie kan doen nie. En daai tipe van goeters moes ons aanpas [in view of the employees with intellectual disability]. Jy weet: ‘jy mag nie in die kamer ingaan as die deur toe is nie. Jy moet altyd eers klop. Jy mag nie daar staan terwyl die dokter al besig is om ‘n pasiënt te ondersoek nie. Jy moet uitgaan en wag. En as jy ingaan, moet jy sê: ‘Can I come in? I am so-and-so. This is what I’m doing.’ ... Waar jy half aanvaar mense gaan weet: “Klim in die rolstoel, kom ons gaan” So dit was maar basies meer om vir hulle die insig te gee hoekom ons dinge op ‘n sekere manier doen.”

Referring to job accommodations, a participant stated that she used simple language, more elaborate explanations, graphs and colour coding when administrative matters were discussed.

“Toe ek byvoorbeeld almal se skedules moes aanpas, het dit my baie lank gevat om dit aan hulle te verduidelik. Hulle was bang hulle gaan ander ure werk en hul salarisse word geaffekteer. Goed wat jy half net aanvaar mense gaan verstaan, veral as dit bietjie tegnies raak ... is vir hulle moeilik. Ek vind dit werk as ek inligting op skrif sit, ‘n grafiek trek of ‘n skedule opstel en dit vir hulle gee om huis toe te vat. My manier om ‘n ding te verduidelik, is dalk nie altyd op hulle vlak nie. As ons ‘n groot verandering het, vind ek dat die, [organisation] my lewenslyn is. Dit vat dus soms ‘n bietjie langer om iets aan hulle te verduidelik en seker te maak dat hulle verstaan. Voorheen sou ek maklik ‘n Excel ‘worksheet’ opplak met die nuwe ‘lunch’-tye. Nou kan ek dit nie meer doen nie. Ek moet E1 in rooi doen, groen in E2 en blou vir E3. ‘n Mens moet visualiseer wat hulle wil sien en dit so aanbied.”

From this story line it also becomes clear that the employer used the help of a service organisation and the parents as “support systems” to assist with explanations to employees with intellectual disability.

Another job accommodation an employer used was to grant the employee more frequent holidays because she tired easily and to vary her work tasks in order to boost and motivate her.

“Sy het egter moeg geraak, net soos kinders is. Ons het maar vir haar die skoolvakansies gegee. Sy raak maklik moeg en dan sal sy nie dadelik, wanneer jy vir haar 'n opdrag gee, haar take uitvoer nie. Dan moet jy haar maar 'n bietjie 'boost' en 'n nuwe werkkaart vir haar opstel en ander opdragte gee soos om die telefoon te beantwoord ...dan is sy nou weer van vooraf gemotiveerd om haar beste te gee.”

Over and above the employers' role providing orientation and on-the-job training, keeping relevant accommodations in mind, participants acted as counsellors in the sense of providing support and encouragement.

3.8.3 Sub-theme 5.3: Employers' Experience of their Role as Counsellor to Employees with Intellectual Disability

De Cenzo and Robbins (2002:221) state that managers have to accept the role as coach or counsellor, however uncomfortable they may find it. Managers, through training and practice, should develop attitudes and skills to support and encourage employees, listen to them, empower them, provide and solicit accurate and timely feedback, stimulate and provoke conversation about new ideas and improvements, as well as their role, responsibilities, and expectations.

The following participants indicated that they had empathy towards the employees with an intellectual disability, as well as a lot of patience. However, they were also willing to challenge the employees to do their best and to learn new skills.

“So basically, the first thing is to learn to understand how they think and how they feel. Put yourself in their shoes. If you have the patience, you can conquer anything.”

“...kyk uit die gestremde persoon se oogpunt uit ... nie uit 'n produktiwiteits oogpunt nie ...en pas dit maar daarby aan. Mens moet ook probeer om haar bloot te stel vir haar eie beswil. Ons het haar geleer om aankopies te gaan

doen. Party goed kan sy doen en party kan sy glad nie doen nie. Moenie so niks verwag dat jy die persoon niks leer nie.”

“...be patient, be friendly, but not too friendly. Remember boundaries, and yes, also remember that you're helping them to be employable in the open labour market. And to achieve that, you won't be helping them if you wrap them in cotton wool and let them do things that a normal employee wouldn't be allowed to do.”

In the following excerpt, the one participant pointed to the fact that his colleague [P] supported and fulfilled the role of counsellor to their employee with intellectual disability.

“There has been a lot of counselling with her. P is particularly astute at picking up these problems and speaking with her quickly when they arise, and giving her the necessary instructions or help after listening to what she has to say ... considering her difficulties, and giving her instructions to fix problems so they don't arise again, and generally it's quite successful.”

The following employer needed to fulfil the role of counsellor to the employee with intellectual disability in that he had to calm him down and support him.

“There are times when I have to pull him aside and have a chat to him. He's got a very, very quick temper. And when he loses his temper, he tends to swear a hell of a lot. And then I have to caution him. And I just calm him down and say: ‘E just relax. What's the problem?’ And then it's sorted out...”

This quotation by a participant indicates how she fulfilled the role as counsellor concerning matters not strictly related to the employee's work. She provided guidance to the employee under her supervision about his financial matters and about how to open a savings account.

“I help him in many ways. Like this thing we did for him now about his money [Referring to opening a savings account]. Any way, he came with his ID and he came with his little Lewis paper [account at a furniture store]... I also talked to him about his Lewis paper. ... He did open his account and we put some

money in and then I asked him: 'Would you like to put in a hundred rand of your money?'"

This participant continued by relating how she guided him by her example in other respects, as indicated in the following few short excerpts:

"The minute when you come into the crèche, you start doing your work. You first go to the toilets and open the windows ...In any workplace, if you come in the morning, you cannot start with a cup of tea."

"... 'You shouldn't drink such a lot of sugar. It's not healthy for you.' And then I made me a cup of tea and I said: 'E, just look how much sugar I take. I take one-and-a-half or two sometimes....'"

"'E, it's half-past-ten, you can have your tea now.' And then sometimes he will work right through and we forget to go and have tea. Then later at lunchtime he comes to me and asks me can he have his tea now because he didn't have his tea yet. So I said: 'E, the next thing I'll do, I'll teach you the time.'"

This excerpt from another transcript also points to the fact that the employer was acting as a counsellor to the employee in that he confided in her about family matters and she provided him with advice.

"But only the afternoon he came, and he told me: 'You know, miss, why I was so unhappy. It was not that I was cross or angry with anybody, but it was something that happened at home.' And I told him: 'You know, you must also realise how we feel, because we don't know, we wasn't sure what was wrong....'"

"But he'll come to me and then, he'll complain about his mummy and then I'll say: 'You know, us mummies, we are very protective over our children. Even if they are married, we still want to protect them.' 'Why must she tell me that I must hurry up... the bus is going to leave at eight o' clock and I am going to be late? If I'm going to be late, it's of my own doing.' ... So we try to let him know that we are listening to his complaints, but also not putting his mother in a bad light. We must be very careful."

Employers' accounts of their experiences indicate that they need considerable skill and patience in counselling their employees with intellectual disability; even concerning family matters and issues not directly connected to the workplace. Referring to the above-mentioned quotation by De Cenzo and Robbins at the beginning of this sub-theme, employers who fulfil the role of counsellor, also empower employees, stimulate change and further career development. This sentiment is echoed in the Code of Good Practice (2000:9) where it is stated that "employees with disabilities should be consulted so as to develop specific career advancement programmes which are responsive to their need and circumstances. Assistance with re-training and expansion of duties, are also included."

One participant said that they had four employees with intellectual disability in their service. They all started out as porters in the hospital, but the one displayed good personal skills which the employer wanted to develop, so that she could move up the ladder a bit. Another participant gave her employee more responsibility, whereas a third participant stressed his and his colleagues' high expectations of their employee.

"Ons kyk na haar 'development plan'. Ons kyk of ons haar 'front line' kan maak."

"We have given him responsibility. He has got, like the key of this building and he can unlock this building in the morning and he can lock up this building in the afternoon when we leave. We've got an alarm system and he knows the code."

"And that's what we constantly have to remind her. And we say to her all the time: 'E, we don't want you to be just our receptionist. We want you to be the best receptionist in [name of town].'"

Yeah, she must know we have high expectations of her. But it's a matter of expectation, not a matter of judgement or ...or of criticism."

Finally, attention will be focused on employers' experience of their role as advocate. This role complements the other three roles of orientating, training and counselling employees with intellectual disability.

3.8.4 Sub-theme 5.4: Employers' Experiences of their Role of Advocate for Employees with Intellectual Disability

Employers related that they performed an advocacy role, meaning that they took action in supporting the needs and rights of the employee with intellectual disability (<http://www.bereal.com.au/glossary.htm>). This role is in agreement with the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. This convention (2007:Article 8), *inter alia*, emphasises the importance of respecting the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, combating stereotypes and prejudices and promoting awareness of the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities (<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/convtexte.htm>).

This advocacy role is highlighted in the following story lines as related by employers.

“There have been occasions when clients of mine have made comments about the receptionist ... And without them knowing that she does have limited capacity to deal with them sometimes. In those instances I have immediately responded by saying: ‘Please understand, we’re providing an employment opportunity to someone who has learning disabilities... and she can generally take care of her responsibilities quite well, but if you want to get difficult with her and start arguing about where I am and when I’ll be back, she might not be able to help you like you think she should.’ Everybody has been quite understanding when I have mentioned that.”

Linking with the role of sensitising clients to the employee with intellectual disability is the advocacy role of protecting and covering for him/her when making mistakes involving customers and when outsiders treat him/her unfairly. This role responsibility is emphasised in the following story lines:

“E’s like a little kid. When it comes to her level of attention, we might say we are prepared to take responsibility for mistakes she makes. Because, essentially, the buck stops with us, not with her. We, I’ve never criticised her to others. Never! She never has any reason to think that we criticise her to others or that there is a general ... sort of a low opinion held of her, because it’s just not true. On the contrary, she knows that we’ll gang up for her.” [They explained this

comment by relating how they took another office's tea girl to task for making derogatory remarks about the employee with intellectual disability and how they convinced her to apologise].

One participant in the current study stated that he did not want to read a book before employing a person with intellectual disability, but on the other hand, employers did express the need for explicit guidelines and proper awareness-raising and sensitisation.

"You know, you don't want to go and read a book before you employ someone. There need to be some other way of sensitising employers on a more sort of mass market kind of level. We do far too little to sensitise people and to "sell" our people [referring to people with intellectual disability]. And I think most employers have recently become a little more sensitised to employing disabled people. But, they've focussed, whether for their own convenience, or because of the nature of the sensitisation, on people with physical disabilities. What about the people with mental disabilities? And there are plenty of them quite capable of performing all sorts of jobs. But ... employers just see obstacles. You can't just... even the lower functioning ones... just give them a job like take these oranges and put them into this box. They need something a little more than that ... something to strive to. We all need that in life."

3.9 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, some findings of a study by Gamble (2004:13) summarise the attitudes and experiences of employers who participated in this study with regard to their employees with intellectual disability.

- Employers typically get involved with supported employment because of awareness resulting from having a family member or friend with an intellectual disability, experience working with people who have intellectual disabilities or awareness of other employers who are involved with supported employment.
- Employers see the benefits of supported employment as hiring someone with an incredible work ethic who is a role model to others, and freeing up

other staff for other duties, as the right thing to do, as good for the corporate image, and an important positive morale builder within their workplace.

- Challenges for the employer relate to finding the right combination of job tasks in a supportive environment with good training as well as on-going re-direction and establishing a relationship with both the employee and the job coach.
- Employers who are currently involved with supported employment feel strongly that they could assist with the recruitment of other employers for new supported employment positions.

The following quotation, in the researcher's view, expresses the overall impression the participants created through what they have shared.

*“People with intellectual disabilities want acceptance, not pity;
Understanding not condescension;
Respect not sadness;
Opportunity, not charity.”*

(Timothy Shriver, President and CEO Special Olympics in Siperstein, Norins, Corbin and Schriver, 2003:2).http://www.specialolympics.org/Special+Olympics+Public+Website/English/Initiatives/Research/Attitude_Research/Multinational+Study.htm.

In the last chapter, Chapter 4, the previous three chapters will be summarised, after which the limitations will be outlined, conclusions drawn and recommendations made.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3, the findings of study supported by the the exploratory and descriptive data in the form of quotations gained from semi-structured interviews with the ten (10) participants, were reported on. The study was conducted with the goal of answering the research question which was: "What are employers' attitudes and experiences regarding the employment of persons with intellectual disability?" The data were analysed and interpreted according to five (5) themes and sub-themes. A literature control was conducted by reviewing existing literature and research relating to employers of persons with intellectual disability in order to verify or contradict the findings of this study.

In this final chapter of the research report, a summary of the first three chapters is provided to remind the reader of the goal and objectives of this study and to indicate how the researcher implemented a qualitative research approach, culminating in the findings. The conclusions arrived at, will be discussed; limitations of the study will be presented and finally, recommendations will be made.

4.2 SUMMARY

In Chapter 1, the researcher provided background information to support her choice of the research goal, namely "to engage with employers of persons with intellectual disability to gain insight into their direct experiences". In addition, the following objectives were envisaged:

- To explore and describe employers' attitudes and experiences regarding employees with intellectual disability;

- To analyse and interpret the data by reducing them to themes and sub-themes;
- To verify the exploratory descriptive data by reviewing existing literature and research relating to employers of persons with intellectual disability;
- To compile a comprehensive research report based on the findings, including recommendations.

In order to realise the research goal and objectives, the researcher used a qualitative approach with an explorative, descriptive and contextual design. As the researcher intended to gain an in-depth understanding of how the participants viewed their world and their thoughts, feelings, perceptions and interpretations about these, the qualitative research approach was well-suited to the research goal and objectives.

The qualitative approach is suitable for the exploration and description of the different realities constructed by individuals within their contexts (employers' attitudes and experiences regarding the employment of persons with intellectual disability). This study was holistic and the researcher found that the focus, variables and interpretations developed and changed throughout the research. The researcher, being the "measuring tool", interacted with participants identified by purposive and snowball sampling, through semi-structured interviews and observations. A flexible strategy for problem formulation and data collection was necessary, as variables could not be identified at the outset of the research. As data were textual, inductive reasoning was used to define themes and categories to draw inferences about employers' attitudes and experiences regarding the employment of persons with intellectual disability. Participants' (employers') experiences were constructed into a narrative report capturing their attitudes and experiences in their "own language". Findings were correlated with the literature concerning human resource management, the employment of persons with disabilities and specific aspects concerning intellectual disability. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations were made (Fouché & Delport in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:73; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:96-97, 106-107 and Creswell, 1998:55).

This approach is in contrast to the quantitative approach where the basic assumption is that there is an objective reality which can be measured. The research question is predictive with a cause-effect relationship between variables (the hypothesis). The study is focused and conducted within structured guidelines. Predefined concepts, variables and hypotheses are used, relatively large and random samples are drawn and measurement instruments are standardised to produce numerical data. The scientific method implies that the research is, for the most part, impersonal, context-free and replicable. Norms and averages are statistically calculated from the data (Fouché & Delport in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:73; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:96-97, 106-107 and Creswell, 1998:55).

An exploratory design, used to undertake preliminary investigations into relatively unknown areas of research to develop an initial understanding of a situation, phenomenon, community or person, enabled the researcher to explore employers' attitudes and experiences of employees with intellectual disability in South Africa (Durrheim in Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006:43-44; Fouché & De Vos in De Vos *et al.*, 2005:107). Although ample research has been done in other countries, only very limited literature could be traced concerning the South African context, as confirmed by Watermeyer *et al.* (2006:3) who stated that "a distinctly South African Disability Studies literature is yet to emerge and develop". Job placement in the open labour market of persons with intellectual disability is still relatively new in South Africa and attitudes and experiences of employers in other, mainly developed countries, need not necessarily be relevant to the South African context.

The descriptive design was utilised to gain an understanding and to formulate extensive descriptions and explanations about employers' attitudes towards and experiences of their employees with intellectual disability, within their context, which is their working environment (Durrheim in Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006:44). The values and interests of the researcher and participants form part of the qualitative research process, making objectivity and neutrality impossible. As the researcher was the research instrument in this study, reflexivity was important. The contextual design ensured that the researcher remained aware of her own position with reference to the phenomenon and setting being studied (Holloway & Wheeler, 1998:8).

The research approach and research design, as well as an extensive literature search, provided the researcher with the theoretic framework within which the research goal and objectives could be realised. Attention was also given to ethical considerations which were appropriate for this study.

In Chapter 2, the researcher described how the above-mentioned research approach and research design were utilised in pursuit of the research goal and objectives. The population, purposive and snowball sampling methods, the pilot study and the development of the interview guide were described. The method of data collection through semi-structured interviews, as well as interviewing techniques, were explained. The researcher then proceeded to describe the systematic process of data analysis which was followed according to the 8 steps of Tesch (1990) in Creswell (2003:192), the consensus discussions with the independent coder and supervisor and the literature control. Data verification was described according to the four aspects of trustworthiness described by Guba (1985) in Krefting (1991:215-219). Chapter 2 was concluded by referring to the ethical considerations which were kept in mind while performing all these activities.

The findings arrived at after collecting the data by means of semi-structured interviews with ten (10) participants, were fully discussed in Chapter 3. First, the demographic data of participants were outlined in comparison with research findings reported in the literature. The data were reported upon extensively, according to five (5) themes, with sub-themes, constantly comparing and contrasting these findings to existing research as described in the literature, which is the literature control. Thus, the conclusions the researcher arrived at, will be presented in the next section.

4.3 CONCLUSIONS

A general conclusion was drawn regarding the research approach, research design and method of data collection, as described in Chapters 1 and 2. In addition, conclusions pertaining to the findings as described in Chapter 3 will be discussed.

4.3.1 Research Methodology

The qualitative research approach, an explorative, descriptive and contextual research design and research methodology, consisting of purposive and snowball sampling and data collection by means of semi-structured interviews, enabled the researcher to explore and describe employers' attitudes and experiences regarding the employment of persons with intellectual disability within the context of their workplaces in a few South African locations. In addition, the researcher was able to analyse and interpret the explorative, descriptive data according to themes and sub-themes. The data were verified by comparing and contrasting them to existing literature and research regarding the employment of persons with intellectual disability. Finally, a comprehensive research report could be compiled in which the findings and recommendations were presented. Thus, the researcher was able to accomplish the research goal and objectives for this study. The research findings may be disseminated to the participants and organisations supporting persons with intellectual disability to be utilised as guidelines for employers who already employ persons with intellectual disability, or to employers intending to employ such persons. This recommendation will be further discussed in the last section of this chapter.

4.3.2 Employers' Attitudes towards Disability prior to Employing a Person with Intellectual Disability

In concurrence with the White Paper on an Integrated National Strategy on Disability (1997:39), participants expressed varying levels of knowledge about disability. Some participants displayed relative ignorance or only rudimentary knowledge about disability in general, whereas others were more aware of disability issues through their training, or by living close to people with disabilities in their communities. A minority of participants had some knowledge about persons with intellectual disability, as they either had such a person in their circle of friends, a family member who was employed at an organisation supporting persons with intellectual disability, or they were related to a person with intellectual disability. However, all participants indicated that they had virtually no knowledge about the employment of persons with intellectual disability prior to employing such a person. It was found that participants' knowledge and awareness of disability, was closely linked to their attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

Participants generally showed sympathy towards persons with disabilities, expressed a desire to enable them to realise their potential and to view the person as being more important than the disability. However, when their attitudes regarding persons with intellectual disability became evident, a few employers acknowledged fear, uncertainty, ambivalence and scepticism. More positive attitudes included not treating the person with intellectual disability as “special”, a willingness to give persons with intellectual disability opportunities to work and a willingness to overcome pre-conceived misgivings about extra training, time and attention needed. Attitudes towards persons with intellectual disability seem to be linked to either employers’ personal experience (or lack thereof), lack of information or to myths and stereotypes.

4.3.3 Employers’ Motivation for Employing a Person with Intellectual Disability

Employers displayed divergent motives for employing persons with intellectual disability. Two of the motives seemed to originate in external sources, while another two originated within the employer as a person.

Firstly, two of the employers from larger establishments acknowledged that they employed persons with intellectual disability in order to comply with the stipulations in the Employment Equity Act (Act no. 55 of 1998) regarding disability, whereas another employer expressed regret that, because their employee was employed on a contract basis, the company was not eligible for any disability benefits.

In addition, employers indicated that they had responded to lobbying by others when they employed persons with intellectual disability. The lobbying was done either by professionals who acted on behalf of the client with intellectual disability, a colleague, or a specialised organisation that trains and assists persons with intellectual disability to find employment.

Lastly, one employer indicated that the employment of a person with intellectual disability occurred due to the company’s sense of responsibility towards the community, whereas two other employers had positive experiences with other

employees with intellectual disability and thus decided to employ more of such persons.

4.3.4 Employers' positive experiences regarding the employment of persons with intellectual disability

The work ethic of the employees with intellectual disability, as experienced by their employers, proved to be very impressive. Employers highlighted the employees' loyalty, trustworthiness, positiveness, responsibility, initiative, passion for their work, eagerness to learn, zealousness and the fact that they never complain. In some cases, employers even experienced that the employees with intellectual disability displayed superior work ethics in comparison with their non-disabled colleagues.

Moreover, participants referred to their positive experiences regarding the contribution of the employees with intellectual disability to the workplace. They certainly fulfilled a need in the workplace; they were viewed as an asset and even as "a piece of gold" bringing another dimension to the office and teaching colleagues to be thankful and patient.

Employers lastly related their positive experiences as to the employees' influence on colleagues and clients. Colleagues accepted these employees to a large extent; the patients in the hospitals where they worked as porters, experienced them as warm, caring and sensitive and even small children at a nursery school did not want to go to school if the employee was absent.

4.3.5 Employers' Experiences of the Challenges relating to the Employment of Persons with Intellectual Disability

Intellectual disability is "a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before age 18" (South African Federation for Mental Health (<http://www.safmh.org.za/glossary.htm>; AAMR, 2002:1).

The employers' experiences of three challenges they faced with regard to the employment of persons with intellectual disability, were accordant with the

employees' limitations in adaptive behaviour (as indicated in the definition above). Employees demonstrated limitations in their conceptual, social and practical skills.

Employers' experiences of challenges regarding employees' limited conceptual skills became evident in employees' inadequate communication skills, including volunteering insufficient information and struggling to understand instructions. Limited reading and writing skills were demonstrated by inaccurate or incomplete telephone messages and problems with alphabetising and organising. A lack of urgency, prioritising and problems with punctuality were also reported.

Employers' experiences as to employees' limitations in social skills were demonstrated by their wasting of time telling stories repeatedly without knowing when to stop, exaggerating issues, tactlessness and an inclination to take over, a disregard for other people's privacy and being too eager to please.

As far as limitations in practical skills were concerned, employers experienced challenges around employees' personal grooming and, for instance, clumsiness and untidiness when serving tea to clients.

The final challenge experienced by employers was the interference, unreasonable demands and overprotection displayed by family members of employees with intellectual disability.

4.3.6 Employers' Experiences of their Role regarding Employees with Intellectual Disability

Employers regarded job orientation for employees with intellectual disability as being of equal importance as that of all newly appointed employees, but they emphasised that the training had to be adjusted in several ways. Although employees with intellectual disability were viewed as "part of the team", their individual capacity and skills had to be taken to account. Orientation was, *inter alia*, improved by appointing a "buddy" who could demonstrate the job tasks to be learnt. The period of training, in some cases, was extended according to the learning capacity of the employee with intellectual disability. Another important component of orientation employers mentioned was education and the

sensitisation of colleagues. Sensitisation was directed towards the development of knowledge and understanding of intellectual disability, as well as an awareness of the support and accommodations that might be needed. The specialised organisations working with persons with intellectual disability and who placed these persons in their jobs, played an active role in this respect and the employee/s with intellectual disability were often included in the sensitisation process.

With regard to on-the-job training, employers played an important role in the provision of modifications or accommodations. They implemented steps such as extending the training over a longer period, presenting refresher courses and providing sufficient supervision. In addition, training was modified to include certain social skills these employees did not learn naturally, such as speaking softer towards children, speaking with a smile in the voice when answering a phone, or respecting people's privacy. Employers implemented accommodations such as patiently teaching employees new skills step-by-step, by using simple language and providing elaborate explanations. Visual aids such as graphs and colour cues assisted in clarifying certain administrative arrangements. Specialised organisations or relatives were involved in assisting with explanations, whereas work schedules or tasks were adjusted or extra holidays were granted to improve motivation.

In addition to their roles as providers of job orientation and on-the-job training, employers saw themselves in the role of counsellor. They fulfilled the demands of this role by being empathetic, giving encouragement and support, being patient, setting boundaries when necessary and challenging employees to develop new skills and accept more responsibility. Their counselling role often extended to aspects not strictly related to the workplace, such as assistance with financial matters, guidance about setting priorities and assistance with family relationships. Emotional support and guidance were also given when an employee became upset and tended to be verbally aggressive.

Lastly, employers saw themselves in an advocacy role, sensitising clients towards employees with intellectual disability, but also accepting responsibility for their mistakes.

The researcher was favourably impressed with employers' empathetic and accommodating attitudes towards the employees with intellectual disability and their willingness and determination to give them the opportunity to work and develop, even though it demanded considerable effort, patience, creativity and time.

4.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The researcher is aware of several limitations which may have had an impact on the research and which should be taken into account when findings are interpreted.

- Purposive and snowball sampling methods were used for this research, meaning that the sample was not chosen as representative of the population of all employers who employ persons with intellectual disability. The study had a limited scope and thus the sample consisted of only ten (10) participants.
- Participants came from either white or coloured ethnic groups – consequently, not all the ethnic groups in South Africa were represented in the sample.
- As the researcher was fluent in only Afrikaans and English, other language groups were excluded from the study.
- Due to time and financial constraints, only employers in the vicinity of Kimberley, Cape Town and Johannesburg were included in the sample. Thus, participants did not represent all the communities in South Africa and rural areas especially were not represented.
- The researcher made use of “gatekeepers” in the form of organisations that support clients with intellectual disability. Thus, no employers who were not lobbied or supported by such organisations were included in the sample.
- As the researcher had to travel far to locate participants, the interviews had to be conducted in a short time span, leaving insufficient time to reflect and learn from mistakes.
- The researcher is blind, which might have had an impact on the way interviews were conducted. Participants were notified and prepared

beforehand, but the researcher is aware of the fact that certain non-verbal cues might have gone unnoticed. She also discovered a tendency to give unnecessary verbal feedback, as audio feedback, to the researcher, plays a more important role than visual cues. In some cases, this tendency might have influenced the natural flow of the semi-structured interviews.

4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. As indicated in the previous section, this study had a limited scope and thus the sample was small and was not representative of all the ethnic and language groups in South Africa. Furthermore, no attention was given to employers in rural areas or to employers who employed persons with intellectual disability without intervention by a specialised organisation working with such persons. It is recommended that further research is conducted to confirm, expand upon or contradict the findings of this study, especially with a more representative sample of employers who employ persons with intellectual disability. The researcher is aware of at least four South African universities, having departments which focus on various aspects of disability and which may involve students in such research.
2. In addition, the researcher intends to brief the South African Federation for Mental Health about the research as the Federation, through its affiliates who are involved with clients with intellectual disability, is able to promote further research into the employment of persons with intellectual disability.
3. The South African Federation for Mental Health, having organisations for professional persons such as psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists and educators as affiliates, may assist in linking training institutions (as mentioned above) and organisations already working in the field. Such organisations include schools for learners with intellectual disability, residential facilities and sheltered workshops; so-called training workshops for persons with intellectual disability, the Disability Action Research Team (DART) and organisations for persons with disabilities such as Disabled People South Africa (DPSA) and Down Syndrome South Africa (DSSA). Existing scientific knowledge and experience may thus be shared through, for instance, conferences, expanding current databases of such role players and through newsletters. Gaps in the literature, especially pertaining

to the training of persons with intellectual disability, so-called job coaches and job placement of persons with intellectual disability, should be identified.

4. The model of supported employment has been researched and utilised in various countries, but it became clear from the literature that it is not defined and implemented consistently in the different contexts (Pirttimaaa and Saloviitab, 2002:302). One of the gatekeeper organisations admitted to have undergone on-line training for job coaches by a university in the United States, but they found that not all aspects could be applied directly within the South African context. The findings of this study showed that employers valued the contribution of specialised organisations and job coaches. Thus, it is of the utmost importance that the supported employment model, the training of job coaches and the way in which this model should be adapted for South African circumstances, should be researched. The organisations who already undertake supported employment, together with the universities who are already involved with disability studies, should collaborate to devise suitable job coach training for South African conditions. The knowledge gained through this study and the experiences of these specialised organisations may make a valuable contribution towards such training.
5. As the employment of persons with intellectual disability covers the fields of several disciplines such as education, skills training, life skills, economics, social development, job coaching and others, a multi-disciplinary approach is advisable. In order to stimulate ideas and promote further research, the researcher plans to disseminate the findings of this study to the training institutions and organisations discussed above.
 - Insights gained from the literature reviewed, as well as from participants' experiences, should be assembled into guidelines for current and prospective employers of persons with intellectual disability. Such guidelines should be presented in a concise, clear manner, as employers may not be interested in reading extensive instructions and theory. They are usually mainly interested in promoting their company and production. The researcher is already working on such guidelines in collaboration with the National Council for Persons with Physical disabilities and she plans to also

collaborate with the South African Federation for Mental Health, Down Syndrome South Africa, certain universities and the specialised organisations which assisted with this research. The researcher works as a social worker for an organisation which has started placing persons with intellectual disability in the open labour market and her experience, together with that of the organisations which assisted her with finding participants, will contribute to compiling guidelines. Firstly, guidelines are appropriate for sensitisation programmes at workplaces which plan to, or have employed persons with intellectual disability. Guidelines, in particular, which may be drawn from the challenges experienced by employers who took part in this research, will be suitable for this purpose. In addition, guidelines may be compiled to assist current and future employers with practical issues as indicated in Chapter 3 of this study.

6. The researcher recommends that the guidelines and employers' experiences be presented especially to sheltered workshops all over South Africa which currently work with clients with intellectual disability and who do not yet place these persons in the open labour market. The researcher plans to disseminate the findings of this study to these sheltered workshops and to obtain assistance for such a project from the South African Federation for Mental Health.
7. There are still insufficient support systems in many communities and probably not all persons with intellectual disability will be able to find suitable employment. The researcher thus recommends that the knowledge gained through this study, together with the experience of specialised organisations already involved in the placement of persons with intellectual disability in the open labour market, are used in sensitisation and awareness campaigns to motivate employers to provide more opportunities for the employment of persons with intellectual disability. Employers who have had positive experiences and who have found solutions for some of the challenges they have faced, will be an asset to such campaigns. Information may directed

especially towards employers who do not yet employ such employees and also, for instance, the Department of Labour. Information may be disseminated through the media, by personal visits, by addressing meetings and through campaigns undertaken by the South African Federation for Mental Health on, for instance, national and international days dedicated to mental health and intellectual disability.

8. The researcher recommends that urgent attention should be given by tertiary training institutions to the inclusion of at least a module concerning disability matters, including intellectual disability, in the training of especially social workers. There is still considerable ignorance and a number of misconceptions regarding the contribution persons with disabilities, including intellectual disability, can make to the workplace and to society in general. Such a module should focus on the various disabilities, the challenges and risks, myths and misconceptions, needed accommodations, assistive devices and especially, the contribution these people can make to society in general and specifically, to the open labour market. It would be especially advantageous to consult with persons with disabilities and to involve those persons when presenting such short courses or modules.
9. Officials in government departments such as the departments of Labour and Social Development often have insufficient knowledge about disability. Thus the policies regarding accessibility, accommodation, inclusion and employment of persons with intellectual disability in particular, are not enforced. Some of the participants in this study recommended that more attention should be given by these departments, through, for instance, providing financial rewards or support to employers who employ persons with disabilities, instead of enforcing a quota system. Because of these policies, employers usually focus on persons with physical disabilities as it is often easier to provide the accommodations; whereas smaller companies, who are not so-called “designated employers” according to the Employment Equity Act (Act No. 55 of 1998), are not under any obligation and thus do not easily attend to the employment of persons with disabilities. However, in this study such employers were actually quite willing to make the effort to accommodate especially persons with intellectual disability in their company.

10. The challenges employers faced concerning family interference and over-protection, are an indication that organisations which support persons with intellectual disability, should direct more attention towards motivating, supporting and guiding family members concerning their role in the employment and support of the person with intellectual disability. Organisations should be made aware of this dilemma by, for instance, including such matters in the training of professionals as indicated in the above-mentioned paragraphs.
11. The challenges employers faced regarding limited conceptual, social and practical skills of employees with intellectual disability, is an indication that sensitisation programmes undertaken by organisations working with persons with intellectual disability, should be directed towards understanding the reasons for this lack of adaptive behaviour in persons with intellectual disability, as well as providing proper guidance towards addressing these issues. Educators and organisations which prepare and train persons with intellectual disability for the open labour market should provide training in the necessary conceptual, social and practical skills which are needed for adjustment in the open labour market.

4.6 CONCLUSION

The researcher is of the opinion that the research goal and objectives, as set out at the initial stages of this study, were realised by means of the qualitative research that was undertaken. In spite of the limited scope of the study and the limitations as indicated in this chapter, the researcher was able to explore and describe the employers' attitudes and experiences regarding the employment of persons with intellectual disability within the South African context. Recommendations as to the further utilisation and dissemination of the findings have been made. The researcher is of the opinion that, given the necessary support, training and motivation through sensitisation and awareness, many employers could be involved in the employment of persons with intellectual disability. The employment of such persons will enhance their productivity, human dignity and independence and many colleagues and clients may benefit from their special contribution to the workplace.

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