

**EMBODYING VIRTUE IN EMPLOYMENT: EXPLORING THE  
EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE WITH  
DISABILITIES**

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degree of**

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## PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

I declare that *Embodying Virtue in Employment: Exploring the Employment Experiences of People with Disabilities* is my own work, except where indicated, and that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any university.

.....

Armand Bam

January 2018

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

“ho kurios mo kai ho theos mou”

“My Lord and my God” – John 20:28

This thesis is dedicated to my father, Philip, and mother, Magdelene. Thank you for your love, care and constant encouragement. Daddy, I continue to admire your selfless dedication to your community, and to improving the lives of blind and visually impaired people. Mommy, you are a true woman of God from whom I continue to draw strength. I trust that I have made you both proud.

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## ABSTRACT

Research on the employment experiences of people with disabilities (PWD), on a global level, is limited. While South Africa has a well-defined legislative framework that has been determined in consultation with disabled people's organisations, compliance with legislation appears to have failed to ensure that employment targets are met, or rather, it has overlooked the underemployment of PWD. As a response to the challenges, this study explored the employment experiences of PWD.

A qualitative, explorative, multiple case study approach was employed. Twelve participants were selected using a purposive technique. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data and provided insight into how PWD viewed their world. The interviews were supplemented through document analyses, and various modes of observation provided additional insight into each of the cases.

The process of analysing the interview data followed an inductive approach during which three broad themes were identified. *Factors influencing Employment* elaborated on the participants' pre-employment experiences of gaining access to employment, which were shown to be impacted by various environmental barriers. *Early Experiences of Inclusion at the Workplace* established that induction and orientation processes were opportunities for educating co-workers about disability. However, the disclosure of disability did not guarantee improved employment experiences for the research participants. Feeling part of a team promoted early experiences of acceptance. *Accommodation in the Workplace* determined that PWD's accommodation requests were often evaluated and considered in terms of the costs to employers, and primarily focused on technology to improve their productivity. The need for personal assistance for the PWD in the study was found to be unavoidable.

A conceptual model is presented as an alternative framework. It offers insight into how to improve disabled individuals' employment experiences to organisations and their management, and people with disabilities themselves. The model suggests that organisations operating from within a virtue framework can facilitate equal opportunities for employees. Organisations are to be more competitive, innovative and creative, and improve their sustainability. The experiences of PWD could be improved through establishing working communities within organisations as these distribute decision-making. The climate for organisational inclusion could also be improved by the working community's ability to redefine work and equip PWD

appropriately, thereby promoting organisational citizenship, with benefits to both the organisation and individual.

Keywords: Disability, disabled people, employment, virtue, diversity, legislation, compliance

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ADA</b>	Americans with Disabilities Act
<b>BCODP</b>	British Council of Organisations of Disabled People
<b>BBBEE</b>	Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment
<b>CEE</b>	Commission for Employment Equity
<b>CRPD</b>	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>DDA</b>	Disability Discrimination Act
<b>EE</b>	Employment Equity
<b>EEA</b>	Employment Equity Act
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>INDS</b>	Integrated National Disability Strategy
<b>OSDP</b>	Office on the Status of Disabled People
<b>PWD</b>	People with Disabilities
<b>PEPUDA</b>	Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act
<b>RDP</b>	Reconstruction and Development Programme
<b>SASSA</b>	South African Social Security Agency
<b>SDA</b>	Skills Development Act
<b>SDL</b>	Skills Development Levy
<b>StatsSA</b>	Statistics South Africa
<b>TAG</b>	Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of People with Disabilities
<b>UD</b>	Universal Design
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UPIAS</b>	The Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the topic of the study is introduced and the background to the research is provided. A review of global advancements in the employment of people with disabilities (PWD), a comprehensive insight into South African legislation impacting PWD, and the challenges organisations face with the implementation of and compliance with South African legislation are presented as part of the background. The research purpose is described as an exploration of the employment experiences of PWD in organisations. The rationale and scholarly significance is also presented and the chapter concludes with an outline of the overall thesis.

#### **1.1. Background to the Research**

The research conducted through this study has been directed at gaining insight into the employment experiences of PWD in South Africa. The social and economic segregation that has stemmed from the barriers to participating in the open labour market has led to numerous reclamations, revisions and refinements of policies and models of disability (Crow, 2007; Dewsbury, Clarke, Randall, Rouncefield, & Sommerville, 2004; Finkelstein, 2002, 2005; Oliver, 1986; Scotch, 1988). South Africa's employment equity legislative framework has been ineffectual in addressing the employment of PWD meaningfully (Wiggett-Barnard & Swartz, 2012) and as employment rates decline, the call for alternate approaches and the inclusion of PWD in diverse organisations has gained traction (Jones, 2016; Markel & Barclay, 2009; Thanem, 2008).

#### **1.2. Review of Global Legislative Advances and the Employment of People with Disabilities**

Global legislation relating to employment has developed and advanced in response to the development of the human rights agenda and disability employment policies, as driven by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and United Nations (UN). The ILO has actively promoted equal opportunities for employment and training ("About the ILO", n.d.). The ILO, since the early 1920's, has directed its influence towards disabled adults and the need for appropriate compensation (ILO, 1925) through promoting same working conditions and introducing quotas of disabled employees

(ILO, 1944), developing policies affirming the right to employment for PWD (ILO, 1955), reinforcing the education of other members of society/ employers through the accommodation<sup>1</sup> of disabled employees and increasing opportunities for employment (ILO, 1975a,b,c), and more recently providing guidance on the appropriate portrayal and integration of PWD in the workplace as well as the developing of codes of good practice for managing disability in the workplace (ILO, 2001, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2014). Moreover, the UN has made noteworthy declarations, has formulated plans for action and has ratified conventions to ensure that all member states, as signatories, are compelled to work towards ensuring equal human rights of its citizens (United Nations, 1948, 1984, 1993, 2006). The South African disability and employment agenda has benefitted greatly with South Africa becoming one of the first signatories to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) with optional protocol.

Internationally, westernised countries, their policy developments and failings, have influenced global policy development, in contrast to emerging countries in Africa and the East that have shaped their approach to the employment of PWD according to the more dominant regions' policies. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 has its roots in the uprising of the civil rights movement in the United States of America (US) and has a strong anti-discrimination focus dedicated to ensuring the equal opportunities for PWD in the open labour market. The opportunity for increased employment levels of PWD in the US has become evident, provided barriers are removed (Chan & Rumrill, 2016; Schartz, Schartz, & Blanck, 2002). The ADA is a legal prescript that has entitled PWD to take legal action against employers when discrimination occurs. The effectiveness of the act has remained questionable as scholars, PWD and activists alike, recognise that the employment of PWD has declined as a possible consequence of the punitive nature of policies that offer employment protection (Acemoglu & Angrist, 1998; Burkhauser, Schmeiser, & Ii, 2012; Cook & Burke, 2002; Houtenville & Burkhauser, 2004; Schur, Shields, & Schriener, 2003). The American Disability Act has largely been interpreted in a medicalised manner, and provides the statutory recourse for discrimination based on medicalised interpretations of disability within the US (Areheart, 2008; F. S. Hall &

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<sup>1</sup> Accommodation refers to special arrangements or devices to assist with the functioning of PWD

E. L. Hall, 1994). The ADA and its protective ambit for PWD has been weakened as the Federal and U.S Supreme Court have tapered the definition of who qualifies as disabled or not (Houtenville & Burkhauser, 2004). Areheart's Goldilocks Dilemma has described the effects of medicalised interpretations of disability which predicate that many PWD are too disabled or not sufficiently disabled with a minority being "disabled just right" (Areheart, 2008, p. 209).

European policies, in comparison, have weighed in more towards being prescriptive, with quota appointments of PWD, where well-resourced governments influence employers through incentivised interventions (Thornton & Lunt, 1994; Torre & Fenger, 2014). Thornton and Lunt (1997) reviewed employment policies for PWD in 18 countries, examined the policies adopted by European countries, Australia, Canada and America, and illustrated the key differences between Western and European countries. European countries have focused largely on compelling employers to take on PWD through quotas, and provide preferential access and targeted employment equity. The adoption of the United Kingdom Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in 1995 has been the culmination of various anti-discrimination efforts that center on society's role in engendering opportunities for employment (Barnes, 2012; Finkelstein, 2007). Previously, the employment policy of the 1940s focused on quotas and overtime with little interest by government; the impact on paid employment for PWD was shown to be minimal. This scheme was eventually done away with and was replaced with the DDA and other labour market policy measures (Goldstone, 2002). The social movement of disabled activists and scholars wanting improved employment opportunities and rights within society has largely influenced the DDA. A major thrust of the social model has been the advancement of the socio-political and economic agenda of PWD within the UK (Barnes, 2000; Burchardt, 2004; Finkelstein, 2007). The DDA has considered prejudice and the reasonableness of discrimination within the workplace. It has addressed the employment process from recruitment, promotion, conditions of employment, upskilling and employment agreements (Barnes & Mercer, 2005; Jones, 2016). The DDA, in its application, therefore has not enforced quotas like other countries within Europe and offers little protection from direct discrimination, with the onus on the individual to prove discrimination (Barnes, 2000). The effectiveness of the social model of disability, however, has been questioned for its

lack of guidance offered to the disability movement in the UK, and for its lack of value in addressing the existing social inequities and oppression (Barnes, 2012).

Underlying the prominent policies of the American ADA, the British DDA<sup>2</sup>, and the Australian Disability Discrimination Act was the aim to legislate for increased opportunities for PWD in society. Yet, with all their good intent, the models developed and policies enacted have been called into question because they seemingly fail to succeed in meaningfully altering the employment experiences of PWD (Barnes, 2012; Batavia & Schriener, 2001; F. S. Hall & E. L. Hall, 1994; Heyman, Stokes, & Siperstein, 2016; Lindsay, Greve, Cabras, Ellison, & Kellett, 2015; McMahon & McMahon, 2016; Russell, 2002). The criticisms directed at legislations adopting an anti-discrimination stance have been apportioned to the resultant low employment rates (Lysaght, Ouellette-Kuntz, & Lin, 2012; Schmidt & Smith, 2007; Schur, 2003; Stuart, 2007), the focus on the supply side of labour (Barnes, 2000; Barnes & Mercer, 2005; Potts, 2005), the lack of proper action and implementation of laws (Sloane & MacKay, 1997), as well as the fragmentation that ignited within social movements where political activism has been neutered through negotiation (Finkelstein, 1996). It has become increasingly evident that the scope of policies has a narrow corridor of influence as the opportunities for employment of PWD globally are denied due to the social dynamics of business, exclusionary practices within the workplace and the negative attitudes within business and society (Andersson, Luthra, Hurtig, & Tideman, 2015; Barnes & Mercer, 2005; Cook & Burke, 2002; Lindsay, 2011; Lysaght et al., 2012; Rosenheck et al., 2006).

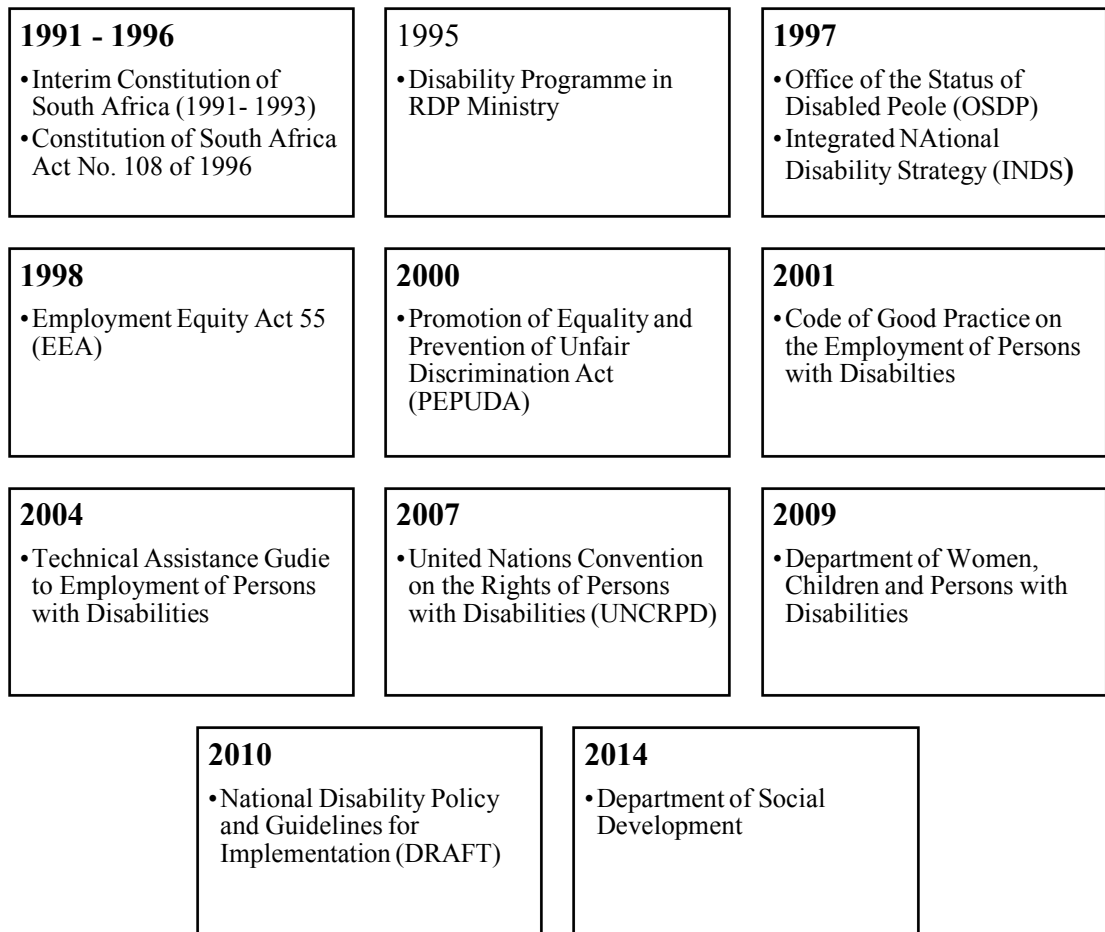
### **1.3. South African Legislative Road Map and Disability**

South Africa's radical struggle for civil rights by PWD between 1990 and 1994 ushered the South African government towards a strategy of integration and inclusion. Comparable to international prescripts, the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) (1997) was considered the South African government's vehicle for ensuring the full participation of PWD in the mainstream labour market and public service (Sing & Govender, 2006). However, South Africa has lacked a specific and enforceable act to support the policies affecting PWD

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<sup>2</sup> Subsequently repealed and replaced by the Equality Act (2010)

(Mitra, 2008). Figure 1 illustrates the development of legislation and policies relating to the employment of PWD in South Africa.



*Figure 1. The Development of Legislation and Location of Disability within Government*

Today, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa<sup>3</sup> (Act no 108 of 1996) is the supreme law of the land and assures all citizens equal rights and treatment. The Constitution is admired globally for its comprehensive approach to facilitating the ‘three generations<sup>4</sup>’ of rights, initially proposed by Karal Vasak (Kende, 2003). Chapter Two of the Constitution outlays the fundamental rights of all citizens, including when those rights might be limited. The Bill of Rights offers specific protection through Section 9 (3), an equality clause, to PWD. The drafting of the

<sup>3</sup> Interim Constitution written between 1991 and 1993 was facilitated through negotiations between various political parties leading up to the first non-racial general elections in 1994.

<sup>4</sup> First generation human rights are descriptive of political and civil rights and are considered negative rights. Second generation human rights relate to the state’s socio-economic obligations. Third generation human rights are considered aspirational or “green rights” as they include a broad range of ‘softer’ rights (Vasak, 1977).

Constitution has set in motion a legal and moral imperative to ensure equality intent on remedying the ills of the past, by elevating all citizens' rights to dignity (Sing, 2012). Beyond the basic rights, the Constitution has been instrumental in laying firm foundations for policies that ensure the rights of PWD to employment (McGregor, 1999). As the new democratic South Africa continued to take shape post 1994, The Ministry in the Office of the President was tasked with addressing the issues of PWD as part of the Reconstruction and Development Programme. The White Paper on Reconstruction and Development Notice No. 1954 of 1994 clearly articulated the role government, together with PWD, had in designing an holistic programme to improve their inclusion in society (Republic of South Africa, 1994).

Following the collaborative effort between government and PWD, the Office on the Status of Disabled People (OSDP) was launched in 1997 and by 1999, disability was rooted firmly within the Presidency. The OSDP advocated for disability issues to be addressed and included in all planning and ministries, solidifying the rights of PWD in the government machinery through promoting equal rights, establishing a disability policy framework and mainstreaming disability into sector legislation and policies (Matsebula, Schneider, & Watermeyer, 2006). The White Paper on INDS was adopted by the government in 1997. It advised public service departments and local government functionaries on their duties towards including PWD, through improving education, providing awareness programmes and ensuring capacity building of Disabled People's Organisations.

The passing of the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (EEA) signified another critical moment in acknowledging the rights of PWD. The EEA defines persons with disabilities as:

people who have a long-term or recurring physical or mental impairments, which substantially limits their prospect of entry or advancement in employment (Republic of South Africa, 1998, p. 10)

The EEA recognised disparities, in employment, occupation and income within the national labour market, that could not be redressed simply by repealing discriminatory laws because of the pronounced disadvantages that existed for certain PWD (Republic of South Africa, 1998).

The EEA interpretation of employment equity has been drawn largely from Canadian law as well as the US legislation on affirmative action (Horwitz & Jain, 2011; Thomas & Jain, 2004). The EEA's intent is to ensure diversity and equity in the

labour force and challenges employers to employ previously disadvantaged citizens including PWD (A. Thomas, 2002). It has governed the employment process, from recruitment to employment, by addressing the legislative requirements and compliance related markers of the EEA's non-discrimination and affirmative action provisions, labour profiling, policies and procedures and best practices for accommodating PWD (Ngwena, 2006).

The Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 (SDA) offers a framework for the improvement of the skills of the national workforce. It focuses on local and national strategies in the workplace to stimulate economic growth, employment expansion, educational opportunities and the betterment of social circumstances (Steyn, 2004). The Skills Development Levies Act (SDL) which requires employers to make a financial contribution to the National Skills Fund followed the SDA in 1999. The funds are to be allocated to job creation initiatives, the development of small businesses and benefit the youth, women, people from rural areas and persons with disabilities (Thabo Mbeki Development Trust for Disabled People, Disabled People South Africa, & Human Sciences Research Council, 2006).

The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 2000 (PEPUDA) was passed in 2000. PEPUDA was introduced to curb any unfair discrimination based on race, gender and disability. It promotes the accessibility to employment opportunities for all citizens and, in relation to PWD, states that:

Subject to section 6, no person may unfairly discriminate against any person on the ground of disability, including (a) denying or removing from any person who has a disability, any supporting or enabling facility necessary for their functioning in society; contravening the code of practice or regulations of the South African Bureau of Standards that govern environmental accessibility; failing to eliminate obstacles that unfairly limit or restrict persons with disabilities from enjoying equal opportunities or failing to take steps to reasonably accommodate the needs of such persons (Republic of South Africa, 2000, p. 8).

The Code of Good Practice: Key Aspects on the Employment of People with Disabilities (2002)<sup>5</sup> and the Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of

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<sup>5</sup> The terminology and definitions of The Code was subsequently reviewed to align with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) after South Africa became a signatory in 2007.

People with Disabilities (TAG) (2004) guides employers in promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment and coincides with the use of the EEA of 1998. The Code of Good Practice has taken its cue from the EEA definition and offers ways in which employers are to protect the rights of PWD and contribute to their advancement within the workplace (Sing & Govender, 2006). It stipulates employers' obligations and rights and the requirement to treat PWD fairly while facilitating equitable representation, as well as promoting ways to reduce disputes (Wiggett-Barnard & Swartz, 2012). The Code also expands on the definition of disability in the EEA and elaborates on the three qualifying criteria:

- (i) having a physical or mental impairment;
- (ii) which is long term or recurring; and
- (iii) which substantially limits their prospects of entry into, or advancement of employment (Republic of South Africa, 2002, p. 7).

TAG, developed in 2004, provides a methodical approach to implementing employment equity for various stakeholders (employers, trade unions, workers). TAG also offers guidance for disabled workers regarding access to employment opportunities (Dube, 2005).

From February 2001 to March 2005, the first of three National Skills Development strategies was implemented. Its was to identify the key areas to which SDL funding would be directed. The strategies were goal directed with measurable targets aimed at improving the quality and output of education and training on a national level. In March 2005, the Department of Labour launched the second strategy for the following five years to stimulate economic growth and employment creation, align skills development with growth strategies, accelerate Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) and Employment Equity (EE), monitor and evaluate delivery and advance a culture of life-long learning (Department of Labour, 2005). Other significant legislation, such as the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act 2000, the BBBEE Framework for Agriculture locally, and the 2007 signing of the United Nations CRPD have also played a role in advocating employment opportunities for PWD (Dube, 2005).

The overview above describes the legislative and policy context for South Africa and provides an opportunity to explore their impact on organisations. While EE and affirmative action policies have been well-constructed and their implementation aim

to align with existing laws and legislation, it may be argued that the employment of PWD requires employers to move diversity management initiatives beyond legal compliance. The revitalisation of discussions regarding organisational behaviour has ignited renewed debates on ethics in business and particularly, the resurgence of virtues in organisations. The discussion below highlights this further.

#### **1.4. The Resurgence of Virtues in Business**

Aristotle discussed the embeddedness of virtue in business (Bragues, 2006) and virtue being required of leaders who are excellent. The modern day resurgence of Aristotelian virtue ethics can be attributed to the philosopher, MacIntyre whose work has been instrumental in furthering inquiry into the behaviour of organisations (Beadle, 2013; Beadle & Moore, 2006; Beadle, Sison, & Fontrodona, 2015; Dobson, 1995; Fernando & Moore, 2014; Solomon, 2004; Whetstone, 2005) and ethical leadership (Flynn, 2007; Hackett & Wang, 2012; Knights & O’Leary, 2006; Marsh, 2013). MacIntyre’s work *After Virtue* has offered a broad historical critique of modernity and disapproval of the enlightenment project while propositioning neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics (Moore, 2012b; Sinnicks, 2014), of which the application to businesses is well documented (Beadle & Knight, 2012; Beadle & Moore, 2006; Dobson, 2013; Moore, 2002, 2005a, 2012b; Solomon, 1998). Although criticised for his views on modernity, his enmity towards capitalism and disdain for modern business, MacIntyre (2007) has been credited with being the authority on modern virtue ethics encouraging a return to virtues in business (Beadle & Moore, 2006; Dobson, 1997). He has described a practice as:

any coherent and complex form of socially established human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved are systematically extended. (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 187)

MacIntyre’s further distinction between practice and institution has paved the way for greater interrogation of the virtues in business and the evolution of modern business ethics discourse (Bernacchio & Couch, 2015; Meyer, 2015; Moore, 2002).

His scathing representation of the bureaucratic manager and management expertise, as the tool for the structuring of modern work and the central character in modern society, has highlighted the role that managers play in the erosion of virtues within business and communities (MacIntyre, 1984).

The education of ethical business leaders has gained prominence in recent times as a result of the global impacts of ethically flawed leadership (Alzola, 2015; Cameron, Bright, & Caza, 2004; Dobson, 1990, 2003; Moore, 2012a; Shanahan & Hyman, 2003) and coincides with the resurgence of both virtue ethics in the East (Hood, 2003; Lee & Park, 2008; Li, 2012; Mele, 2009; Slingerland, 2011) and the West (Audi, 2012; Boatright, 1995; Dyck & Kleysen, 2001; King, 2001; Kurzynski, 2012; Moore, 2005a; Solomon, 2004; Whetstone, 2005; Visentin, 2014). The moral component of ethical leadership has become critical for organisations where, if managers were to take the lead, they would determine the conditions under which others work, and thereby create a better opportunity for organisational success (Romar, 2002).

The link between corporate culture and organisational ethics has become evident and has traversed and been refined over an extensive period (Bright, Winn, & Kanov, 2014; Hartman, 1998; Rai, 2015; Vangen & Winchester, 2013). Organisational culture, a multi-faceted concept, has housed matters of ethics and values and has been the trusted blue print of shared assumptions that shape and transfer to new members, as ways of thought and action, as an organisation negotiates internal and external influences (Moore, 2005a). The values of the dominant individuals within organisations, as they decide on several of the shared assumptions, have influenced this blue print considerably (Moore, 2005a). Organisational culture has thus manifested as the corporation's character through its members expressed values. Moore (2005a) has contended that the failings of the more common values-based approach are embedded in the possibility that some values are more highly ranked, while others are based on context. Personal values might contradict business values where people feel they are to act a certain way, depending on where they are. The need for alignment between personal and business virtues has strengthened the case for virtue frameworks. Virtues have moved beyond values as dispositions; they allow people to live up to their values as exercised through an entire lifetime (Riggio, Zhu, Reina, & Maroosis, 2010). These enduring character traits, as Aristotle suggested

(NE 1104b 15-30), are something that we have or do not have, and allow us to excel within a particular community (Moore, 2005a; Sison & Ferrero, 2015).

### **1.5. Challenges for Organisations where Legislation and Policies Affect the Employment of People with Disabilities**

Many organisations have failed to display the virtues of responsibility and acceptance through their endeavours to employ PWD when they adopt policies to comply, without considering the responsibility they have towards their employees and the broader community (Solomon, 1998). Although legislation and policies has advocated for the inclusion of PWD, employers remain concerned with the bottom line when PWD are employed (Hernandez & McDonald, 2010). One of the key indicators of economic well-being for PWD is employment and, as such, all stakeholders have been concerned with the plateauing and declining numbers of employed PWD in specific sectors, considering South Africa's expansive and inclusive legislation.

The purpose of the EEA is to achieve equity in the workplace by:

- a) promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination; and
- b) implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups<sup>6</sup>, in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce (Republic of South Africa, 1998, p. 12).

Disability, as an employment equity consideration, has been given less attention than other stipulations of the EEA. Alexander (2006) affirmed in his lecture titled *Affirmative Action and the Perpetuation of Racial Identities in Post-Apartheid South Africa* "that as implemented, on balance, it is a policy that benefits mainly the rising black middle class and in effect deepens the inherited class inequality in our society" (Alexander, p. 3). Research evaluating the attitudes towards and experience of EE has established that disabled employees are often overlooked in various spaces within the workplace and are side-lined in EE processes due to prejudice (Jongens, 2006; Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010; A. Thomas, 2002).

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<sup>6</sup> black people, women and people with disabilities

Race, gender and PWD have been placed on organisations' agendas, but the full benefits are only to be realised if organisations shift their attention to beyond legislative and institutional compliance (Horwitz & Jain, 2011). Adherence to external policies and legislation remain vital, however, internal institutional policies have only assisted further with meeting specific employment targets (Maja, Mann, Sing, Steyn, & Naidoo, 2011). Good businesses are those that have "comprehensive policies and practices in place throughout its business enabling it to make decisions and conduct its operations in an ethical manner, meet legislative imperatives, consider the environment, communities and society" (Fig, 2005, p. 601). Although organisations might make the move to comply, in order to avoid related punitive fines, they might still struggle to alter their employees deeply held beliefs and attitudes about disability (Leonard & Grobler, 2006). To overcome some of the challenges organisations experience, organisational policies are to include identifying a disability champion, appointed from top management and accountable for disability equity in the business; creating a disability equity forum and capacitating the champion to fulfil his/her role effectively (Hernandez et al., 2008), proposing the business case for disability relating to improved financial performance of the business (Kulkarni & Gopakumar, 2014), developing pre-employment strategies and policies to recruit, place and retain PWD (Gröschl, 2007), understanding the disability landscape within the business and sourcing role models, communicating the way forward with all stakeholders (Gilbert, Stead, & Ivancevich, 1999) and finally, implementing and monitoring the change (Cox & Blake, 1991).

A. Thomas (2002) has suggested that businesses face both strategic and operational challenges when considering employment equity. She has explained that criticisms from business leaders include perceptions that there would be a decline in international investment and entrepreneurialism; a cost and resource burden would be placed on the legal system required to monitor and enforce legislation with the financial burden ultimately being placed on the taxpayer; and, some sectors would have a shortage of black<sup>7</sup> skills. Furthermore, skills shortages would drive the cost of black skills disincentivising investment; a lack of new employment opportunities would result in the relocation of employees from one employer to another, rather

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<sup>7</sup> By the same token, all members of designated groups – Hunt (1966), suggests the connection between racial and disability struggles as sharing the same roots although not to minimise the suffering of racially oppressed people

than creating new opportunities; the unpreparedness of business to implement the directives would have an indirect and opportunity cost, where the failings would be impacted upon by poor decision-making; reverse discrimination would emerge and affect employee loyalty; the expectations on those from designated groups would be unrealistic and lead to negative tension within organisations and a culture of entitlement might gradually occur where members of designated groups would be inclined to rely on others and limit creativity.

On assessing the impact on PWD, Thomas and Hlahla (2002) have argued that the EEA and supporting policies, that direct businesses to consider a targeted approach to meeting affirmative action appointments, are flawed. Numerical targeting is viewed as largely unhelpful in situations where there has been no monitoring and evaluation against targets. The lack of an integrated disability strategy has impacted directly on the meaningfulness of the employment experiences of PWD (Gida, Africa, & Ortlepp, 2007). Managers play a key role in ensuring that they transcend “achieving numerical targets as they were measured and rewarded for such achievement” to dispel the notion that they are only responding “to legislative imperatives with little commitment to the holistic formulation of employment equity strategies and related employee development practices”(A. Thomas, 2003 p. 19).

Thomas and Hlahla (2002) have concluded that the EEA has been ineffective in deterring organisations from accepting the punitive fines imposed when they fail to meet the minimum requirements. The long-term costs of ensuring the inclusion of PWD through reasonable accommodation has often been considered as more costly than the short-term fines received and limits the employment of PWD (Lengnick-Hall, Gaunt, & Kulkarni, 2008). It has become evident that the employment equity project requires a holistic approach to meet its purpose (A. Thomas, 2002). Numeric targeting has been useful but cannot operate in the absence of proper training and development practices, management guidance and competence transfer (Thomas & Jain, 2004).

The challenge to maintain standards to compete on a global stage faces all organisations that are legally required to address inequalities. Businesses and business leaders are important functionaries who are to consider “the ‘softer’ issues of people and organisational development” and are required to commit to EE, construct holistic HR practices and value diversity and inclusive settings (Thomas & Jain, 2004 p. 19). How an organisation behaves is ultimately a manifestation of its

members' values. As values are considered attributes which depend on a context, a return to virtues within business has been called for by many scholars (Arjoon, 2000; Dobson, 1995; Moore, 2005a; Solomon, 2004). In particular, an Aristotelian approach has resurged in business which promotes the ultimate achievement of 'happiness' through human connections (Arjoon, 2000; Audi, 2012; Boatright, 1995; Chun, 2005; King, 2001; Koehn, 1995; Mintz & Mintz, 1996; Moore, 2012b; Solomon, 1992). Virtuous behaviour ultimately reflects excellence in character where managers and organisations, projecting this excellence in character, behave in the right manner doing the right things at the appropriate time. (Robson, 2015). Virtue in organisations removes prejudice and challenges stereotypical representations that have caused conflict within the workplace, and improves the diversity of communitarian workplaces (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2013). In this regard, managers play a key role and are responsible for the employment of PWD. Managers are required to facilitate the development of a fully inclusive organisational culture that has not only been directed at compliance with law or fulfilling a marketing exercise (Brite, Nunes, & Souza, 2015; Ricco & Guerci, 2014).

## **1.6. Research Purpose**

The purpose of the study is to explore the employment experiences of PWD. The two key objectives are:

- to understand the experiences of PWD
- to propose a conceptual model as an alternative framework when exploring the experiences of PWD by addressing the following research questions:
  1. How do PWD experience the employment process?
  2. How do PWD acclimatise and acculturate in organisations?

## **1.7. Rationale and Scholarly Significance**

In the last few decades, the exclusion of PWD in employment in the UK and US has been at the heart of many academic inquiries undertaken within disability studies, rehabilitation studies, feminist studies, psychology and sociology that have largely focused on theorising disability's construction, definitions, personal reflections, and critiquing disability models (Ali, Schur, & Blanck, 2011; Chouinard, 2010; Finkelstein, 1993; Oliver & Barnes, 2006; Russell, 2002; Shakespeare, 1996; Swain

& French, 2000; Thomas, Gradwell, & Markham, 1997). Business and organisational management literature, in contrast, has focused on standards, reasonableness, cost-benefit analysis, pension payments, equity, diversity management, corporate social investment and legislation influencing the employment of PWD, in relation to meeting certain targets for compliance and increasing or limiting the businesses financial profits or losses (Benítez-Silva, 2010; Burkhauser et al., 2012; Giertz & Kubik, 2011; Korkeamäki & Kyyrä, 2010; Kreider & Pepper, 2007; Kruse & Hale, 2003; Lysaght et al., 2012; Zhang, 2006).

Although post-apartheid gains have ensured an income for PWD<sup>8</sup>, a significant decrease in the number of employed PWD has been recorded (Ferguson, 2014; Mitra, 2008). While businesses primarily have used local and international legislation and codes of good practice to direct their strategies for promoting equality and the eradication of unfair discrimination in the workplace (Chouinard, 2010; Dube, 2005; De George, 1987; Rispel, Sousa, & Molomo, 2008; Sing & Govender, 2006), they have failed to meaningfully embrace the moral (virtue based) and social justice imperative (Arjoon, 2000, 2009, 2010; Chouinard, 2010; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Jones, King, Nelson, Geller, & Bowes-Perry, 2013; Koehn, 1995, 1998; Moore, 2012b; Sethi, 2014) for employing PWD.

Empirical research has not focused much on the experiences of PWD despite labour legislation advances in South Africa (Gida et al., 2007; Jones, 2016). This study intends to explore and gain personal insights into the experiences of PWD, and intends to consider the implications for adopting alternate frameworks when employing PWD. Virtuous behaviour by corporate leaders and organisations has been shown to be beneficial for business, and understanding its impact on the employment of PWD could hopefully contribute to improving employment rates (Lysaght et al., 2012; Pope & Bamba, 2005). Globally, research on the application of virtue in business and the experiences of PWD has been limited (Barclay, Markel, & Yugo, 2012; Thanem, 2008). The researcher is unaware of any research, conducted locally, that addresses virtue theory and PWD.

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<sup>8</sup> South African disability grant increased from R820 in 2000 to a maximum of R1600 in 2017

The study expects to offer organisations, its leaders and PWD insight into an improved means of including PWD in the workplace to ensure better employment prospects and inclusionary practices. Furthermore, the research hopes to:

- Contribute to scholarly work related to disability by offering a clear overview and mapping of the legislation and models of disability affecting the employment of PWD in South Africa;
- Provide a local scholarly bridge between the areas of diversity, business ethics and disability in South Africa;
- Explore alternative frameworks for contextualising employment experiences of PWD.

Various sources were utilised in the study to gain a deeper understanding of the context and situation of PWD in South Africa, and it drew on literature from peer reviewed journals, reputable government and international agencies' internet-based sources, government gazettes and printers, employment policies of organisations and scholarly books.

## **1.8. Outline of Thesis**

The thesis is divided into 8 chapters detailed as follows:

### *Chapter 1: Introduction*

The chapter provides the research topic, background and context to the research. The purpose and objectives are also outlined along with the research questions. The chapter concludes with the introduction to the rationale and scholarly significance of the research.

### *Chapter 2: Disability and Employment*

The intersections between disability and employment are explored in this chapter. It highlights the right to employment and global trends affecting PWD. The chapter examines unemployment and underemployment of PWD and concludes with describing the barriers to gaining, maintaining and re-integrating into employment.

### *Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework*

The chapter outlines the conceptual framework that underpins the study. It introduces the common conceptions of disability - The Moral/ Religious Model, The Medical Model and The Social Model, with the backdrop of failing employment rates of PWD. The chapter introduces issues of disability in diversity and explores the

agenda in research and management practices. An exploration of the ethical underpinnings of diversity follows and the call for renewed approaches of addressing diversity is explained. The chapter introduces the resurgence of virtues in business and the application of virtue frameworks concluding with the basis of the conceptual framework.

#### *Chapter 4: Research Methodology*

The chapter details the approach, strategy and methods employed in the study. The merits of an exploratory multiple case study design within a qualitative framework are detailed. The chapter explains the methods utilised to select, collect and analyse data. The use of semi-structured interviews is discussed and the chapter concludes with an outline of the rigor, ethics and limitations of the study.

#### *Chapter 5: Case Introductions*

The chapter presents the description of 12 cases providing insight into the participants of the study.

#### *Chapter 6: Findings and Analysis*

The findings and analysis of the study are presented. The individual experiences of disability are documented and analysed culminating in three broad themes that are presented for discussion in relation to existing literature.

#### *Chapter 7: Discussion*

The chapter discusses the findings in relation to existing literature. The discussion is divided into three sections reflecting on the overall objective of the study. *Factors influencing access to employment and re-employment* considering the experiences of gaining access to employment, seeking employment and the barriers encountered while getting to work. The second section, *Inclusion at the Workplace*, unpacks the induction experiences, the disclosure of their disabilities and how PWD strive for 'normality'. *Accommodation in the Workplace* is the final section which addresses the experiences when requesting accommodation, types of accommodation and the organisational approaches encountered.

#### *Chapter 8: Conclusion*

The final chapter revisits the purpose of the study and addresses the research objectives and questions. The chapter then presents a conceptual model for reconstructing the employment experiences of PWD through a lens of virtue.

## CHAPTER 2

### DISABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT

The chapter consists of four sections that explore the intersections between disability and employment.

The first section, *The Right to Employment – Global and South African Trends*, explains the importance of paid employment in the lives of PWD and explores the global decline in the employment of PWD. The South African employment landscape is examined where, despite advanced policies, the employment rate of PWD in public service is low. The high unemployment rate has resulted in an increasing reliance on other social mechanisms.

The second section, *Disability and Unemployment*, discusses the global rise of unemployment of PWD. The positive effect employment has on the well-being of PWD is discussed and the section concludes with addressing the impact of the disability grant, as part of the South African social security system, on PWD.

The third section, *Underutilisation of Persons with Disabilities*, describes the impact underutilisation has on the lives of PWD, and the risks businesses assume through misplaced employment strategies. A matrix, illustrating the roles disability agencies and employers can assume to reduce the underutilisation of PWD, is presented. The section concludes with strategies PWD could assume to actively change the perception of employers.

The final section deals with the *Barriers to Gaining, Maintaining and Reintegrating* into workplace. It describes the effects of social exclusion and the interaction between people and the environment. The types of support available to PWD are explored and the importance of family is detailed in the seeking of and reintegration into employment. A discussion on employer attitudes, the role of managers and physical accessibility follows. The section concludes with the importance of good employer communication and networks to improve access to employment.

#### 2.1. The Right to Employment - Global and South African Trends

Work<sup>9</sup> has been conceptualised as a purposeful driven activity, aimed at improving intellectual and physical assets and the production of goods and services for the

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<sup>9</sup> Drawing on the UNCRPD conceptualisation of work and employment under Article 27

fulfilment of personal and social needs (Zhang, 2006). Closely related to this is how citizenship has been defined more recently, as behaviour that facilitates the maintenance and improvement of a social and psychological context in support of performance of tasks (Takeuchi, Bolino, & Lin, 2015). Paid employment has been considered a key indicator of success and financial stability, and a therapeutic means of improving wellness that impacts on social inclusion and the reduction of poverty. (Gore, Forrester-Jones, & Young, 2013; Griffin & Stein, 2015; Lindsay, 2011; Nye-Lengerman & Nord, 2016; Shaw & Gold, 2011; van Niekerk, 2009). PWD in employment has been a meaningful indicator of how well disabled people are integrated into society (Leiulsfrud, Ruoranan, Ostermann, & Reinhardt, 2016). PWD have the same rights to employment as abled people and the relationship between employment and citizenship has been well documented (Abberley, 1999; Barnes, 2002; Barnes & Mercer, 2005; Bates & Davis, 2004; Bazzoli et al., 1985; Berthoud, 2011; Kirsh et al., 2009; Lloyd & Waghorn, 2007; Lukyanova, Suarez-Balcazar, & Balcazar, 2015; Mulvany, 2000; Naeem, 2016; Priebe, Warner, Hubschmid, & Eckle, 1998). The misconception that PWD are reluctant to work (Lindsay, 2011) still surfaces despite the considerable body of knowledge indicating their willingness to seek and maintain employment (Chouinard, 2010; Gewurtz, Langan, & Shand, 2016; J. Hall & Parker, 2010; Lloyd & Waghorn, 2007; Mansour, 2009; McCarty, Burgess, & Keeffe, 1999; Miceli, Harvey, & Buckley, 2002; Stone & Colella, 1996; Young, 2010). Subsequently, international treaties have highlighted work as a fundamental human right which has been integrated into national legislation (Chan & Rumrill, 2016; Crowther, 2001; Morris, 2001; United Nations, 1948, 2006).

Over the past decade, the employment of PWD, has declined globally (Kalef, Barrera, & Heymann, 2014). In the United States the estimated employment rates for disabled and non-disabled people in 2005 were close to 38% and 78% respectively. The employment rate of working age, disabled adults had declined the previous year by 0.4%, in contrast to the increase of 0.2% in employment rates for non-disabled adults (Smith, 2007). In 2016, the Bureau of Labor Statistics released their report on the labour force characteristics and indicated the employment of disabled persons to be 17.5% and non-disabled people to be 65.0%. The unemployment rates for PWD were found to be double that of non-disabled people, while the employment in part-time work reflected a similar result at 32% and 18% respectively (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). In the UK, the employment rate for PWD was similar to the US.

The employment rate for PWD was an average of 3.1 percentage points lower than in 2008, whereas the employment rate for non-disabled people consistently exceeded that of PWD. The unemployment rate of PWD also exceeded that of non-disabled people. In addition, PWD were seen to be mostly employed in part-time jobs (Trades Union Congress, 2015).

South Africa has fared no better despite its highly-evolved policy development. The government's failure to ensure adequate employment opportunities has been attributed to its failure to implement Disability, Affirmative Action and EE policies appropriately (Burger & Jafta, 2006). The employment rates in South Africa are measured through the national household surveys conducted by Statistics South Africa (SSA) – the October Household Survey and the Labour Force Survey, a biannual survey introduced in 2000 (Casale & Muller, 2004). The October Household Survey indicated that the rate of disability for persons older than five years was 5.1% of the population in 2015, while the Census 2011 identified 7.4% of the population as disabled. Census 2011 pointed out that “eight in ten disabled people are unemployed” (StatsSA, 2011, p. 116) while the latest Labour Force Survey (2016) reported an increase in the number of unemployed persons by 239 000 which represented a 0.5% increase in the number of unemployed persons between the third quarter of 2015 and 2016 (StatsSA, 2016b). The percentage of social grant recipients also increased by 17.4% between 2003 and 2015 (StatsSA, 2016a).

It is disappointing to note that South Africa's public service has not promoted the employment opportunities of PWD. The initial consolidated report on Disability Equity in South Africa (2002) emphasised the poor diversity management practices and working environments within government departments, and called for a review of the recruitment and selection practices (Public Service Commission, 2002). The Commission for Employment Equity<sup>10</sup> (CEE) 2002 report stated that of the 797 750 employees in public service, only 2007 were disabled with national departments accounting for 1062 PWD, and provincial departments 945. Similarly, the Department of Labour's Commission on Employment Equity 2002/2003 report showed the combined employment statistics for PWD in government and the private sector to be at 1%. Various governmental reports, including the Audit Report for

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<sup>10</sup> Advises the Minister of Labour on the implementation of employment equity

Affirmative Action in 2006, highlighted the inappropriate selection and recruitment strategies employed at all levels of government, with only the Government and Communication Systems and the Department of Labour meeting the minimum 2% target in that period. More than a decade has passed since the 2002 CEE report, yet the poor representation of PWD in the state’s workforce remains. The 2015/2016 CEE report confirmed that the government had not made significant strides internally to increase the workforce of PWD across sectors and business type. The chairperson, in her forward of the 16<sup>th</sup> Commission for Employment Equity Annual Report 2015/2016 noted “the fact that there has been very little progress made in the representation of persons with disabilities. Progress within this group has been insignificant at all occupational levels” (Department of Labour, 2015, p. vii).

Table 1 (Department of Labour, 2015, p. 18) indicates the number of employees, including persons with disabilities, by Sector.

Sector	Total Workforce	Persons with Disabilities	Percentage of PWD	
			2015	2014
Agriculture	534 674	6 120	1.1%	1.4%
Mining	435 639	8 610	2.0%	0.9%
Manufacturing	890 026	11 605	1.3%	1.4%
Electricity	167 743	4 446	2.7%	1.7%
Construction	392 274	4 272	1.1%	1.0%
Retail	613 809	4 104	0.7%	0.7%
Wholesale	444 764	4 875	1.1%	1.6%
Catering	260 366	2 870	1.1%	1.6%
Transport	437 272	5 882	1.3%	1.6%
Finance	965 744	10 716	1.1%	0.9%
Community	1 944 829	19 825	1.0%	1.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7 087 140</b>	<b>83 325</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>

*Table 1. Number of Employees including Persons with Disabilities by Sector*

When evaluating the representation of persons with disabilities, per business type, it is evident that local government has made some progress. However, the number of persons with disabilities employed in state owned enterprises, national government and educational institutions has decreased.

Table 2 (Department of Labour, 2015, p.18) illustrates the number of employees including persons with disabilities by Business Type.

Business Types	Total Workforce	Persons with Disabilities	Percentage of PWD	
			2015	2014
National Government	182 167	2 285	1.3%	1.9%
Provincial Government	622 564	6 422	1.0%	0.8%
Local Government	177 196	3 281	1.9%	1.3%
Private Sector	5 383 582	63 830	1.2%	1.1%
Non-Profit Organisations	201 285	2 750	1.4%	1.3%
State-Owned Companies	187 294	3 636	1.9%	2.7%
Educational Institutions	333 052	1 121	0.3%	1.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7 087 140</b>	<b>83 325</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>

*Table 2. Number of Employees including Persons with Disabilities by Business Type*

For many PWD, the limited employment opportunities have compounded their state of poverty and level of social exclusion, ultimately constraining their ability to secure their financial wellbeing, (Gewurtz et al., 2016; Lindstrom, Doren, & Miesch, 2011; Nye-Lengerman & Nord, 2016). Although job creation projects in South Africa have assisted with short-term employment for non-disabled persons (Rispel, Molomo, & Dumela, 2008), the national unemployment rate of 27.1% remains excessively high (StatsSA, 2016b) with PWD livelihoods depending increasingly on social grants (Dube, 2005; Mitra, 2009; Sing, 2012).

## **2.2. Disability and Unemployment**

The rise in unemployment has been a global phenomenon. Thornton and Lunt (1997) found a steady increase in unemployment in Australia in the late 1980's and early 1990's. Olkin (2002), over a decade later, highlighted a similar situation in the US, where 66% of the general population of PWD remained unemployed (Olkin, 2002). Russell (2002) suggested that the situation in America persisted for over 40 years as

PWD were the last minority grouping to enter the workforce. The influence of social policies in the UK has also had a limited impact into the early 2000's as C. Barnes and Mercer (2005, p. 533) have explained "Around 60 percent of disabled people of working age are not in paid work, with unemployment rates three times higher than for their non-disabled counterparts". Unemployment has remained a major concern for PWD as it constrains their ability to afford their personal assistive devices and technology required to seek and secure employment which, in turn, creates a continuous and vicious cycle of involuntary exclusion from the workplace (Huang et al., 2016; Olkin, 2002).

The value of work for PWD extends further than financial security – it contributes positively to their social, civic and psychological well-being (Eklund & Sandlund, 2016; Schur, 2002). Being part of a working community provide all people with a true sense of *telos* (purpose) and membership to the *polis* (community) (Mintz & Mintz, 1996; Moore, 2005b; Solomon, 1992).

In South Africa, the debate about whether unemployment is voluntary or involuntary has been ongoing. What has remained consistent is the need to explain this phenomenon in a developing country like South Africa. Kingdon and Knight (2004), while exploring the nature of unemployment in South Africa, established that there was little support for the notion that unemployed people choose to be unemployed. Their findings have suggested that unemployed people are worse off and less satisfied with their quality of life, and that the increased rate in unemployment results from various barriers to entering informal employment. This has not been an uncommon phenomenon amongst other African countries (Naami, 2015). Kingdon and Knight (2004) have pointed out that unemployed people prefer to seek employment in the formal sector, which offers better wages, and therefore are reluctant to accept informal work which contributes to greater uncertainty in gaining employment. According to Ali et al. (2011), the high unemployment rate of PWD has not been attributable to an unwillingness to work, but related more to a reluctance to source work, as a result of low confidence in finding an appropriate job. When PWD have not been directly involved in mainstream employment, their livelihoods depend on various compensation programmes to avoid poverty and homelessness, including the State Disability Grant, Disability Insurance, Workman's Compensation and informal trading (Emmet, 2006; Mji, 2006; Seirlis & Swartz, 2006). While PWD have experienced barriers to employment and progression within

the work place, their dependence on state social grants is also linked to unemployment rates in South Africa (Goldblatt, 2009; Mitra, 2008). The government's shift early in the 2000's from a social welfare disposition to a developmental approach was credited with addressing poverty, but the shift also contributed to the unemployment of PWD. The Disability Grant fell under the Social Assistance Act of 1992 with the latest amendment to the Act made in 2004. The Minister for Social Development Dr Zola Skweyiya clarified the change:

The department has been systematically undergoing a transformation process. We have changed the paradigm within which we operate from welfarism to social development as reflected in our change of name. We seek to promote services and programmes that enable people to move out of poverty. (Budget Vote Speech to the National Assembly 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2001. Minister for Social Development, Dr Zola Skweyiya)

Although two million jobs were purported to have been created between 1995 and 2003, unemployment linked to the growth in the labour force as more women entered into the fray, also grew rapidly (Casale & Muller, 2004).

The Social Security Act of 2003 placed the responsibility of the disbursement of grants within the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA). The agency uses a means test to determine the eligibility of individuals based on their inability to secure a means of sustaining their livelihoods through service, employment or profession. The South African social assistance programme is one of the most expansive in Africa. It has become another conduit through which the government attempts to tackle poverty in a concrete manner. In his 2014 budget speech, Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan indicated the social assistance spend had increased from R75 billion in 2008/09 to R118 billion in 2013/2014, while the number of recipients had increased from 13.1 million in 2009 to 15.8 million in 2014 (Gordhan, 2014). The grants were projected to increase from the R118 billion in 2014 to R145 billion by 2016. The spend accounted for approximately 3% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and was in line with the increase in recipients having doubled to 15.8 million people in 2014. The following year saw a further increase in the number of social security dependents; the number of recipients of grants had increased to 16.4 million by December 2014. During his February 2016 budget speech Minister Gordhan again indicated an increased social security spend which would move from R129 billion in 2015/2016 to approximately R165 billion in 2018/2019 (Gordhan, 2016).

The rise in unemployment of PWD, in particular, might be attributed to various causes, but preliminary evidence presented by Mitra (2008) indicated that the rise of the disability grant programme was partly responsible for the incline during 1998-2006. To access the disability grant, an individual must meet the following requirements:

9. A person is, subject to section 5, eligible for a disability grant, if he or she- (a) has attained the prescribed age; and (6) is, owing to a physical or mental disability, unfit to obtain by virtue of any service, employment or profession the means needed to enable him or her to 40 provide for his or her maintenance (Republic of South Africa, 2004, p. 10).

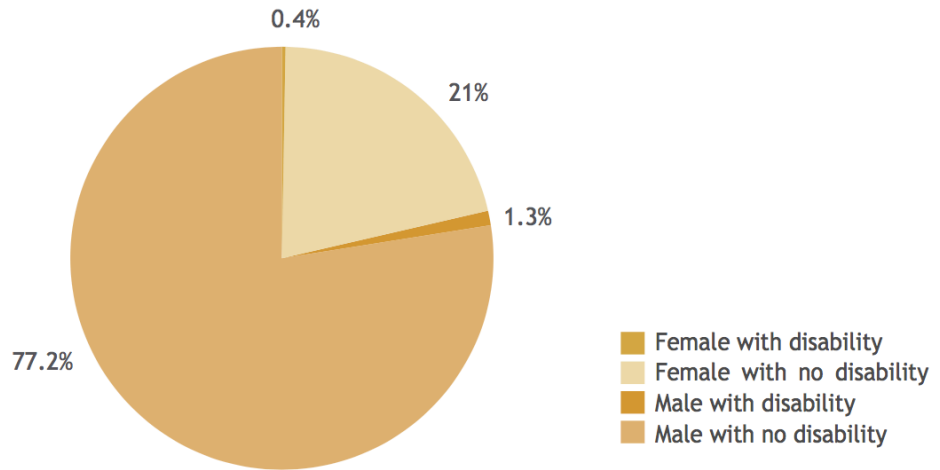
The SASSA monthly disability grant has offered some income to alleviate poverty, however, disability activists who promote the social model argue that the provision of skills and jobs would be more beneficial to reduce unemployment (Swartz & Schneider, 2006). Moreover activists and scholars have suggested that informal markets and entrepreneurial activities offer an ideal point of entry to the formal economy (Seirlis & Swartz, 2006) and appear to be the most viable means to reduce unemployment of PWD in an economy (Pagán, 2009). PWD face extraordinary barriers daily yet, extended periods of unemployment could also be accentuated by job requirements as well as social and environmental barriers (De Guimaraes, 2015; Sciulli, Menezes, & Vieira, 2012).

### **2.3. Underutilisation of Persons with Disabilities**

Career success for PWD has seldom followed the same upward trajectory as their non-disabled counterparts resulting in their skills and talents being overlooked and underutilised (Kulkarni & Scullion, 2015). If PWD were to effect self-determination to its fullest, they are to be provided with the opportunities and understanding of exercising their personal choices in all aspects of their lives, including employment (Molina & Demchak, 2016). It has become evident that the underutilisation of PWD within the workplace is widespread. Being overqualified for one's job could have a negative impact on one's self-esteem and could lead to an over-reliance on others to assist with tasks (Markel & Barclay, 2009; Shaw, Gold, & Wolffe, 2007). The aforementioned phenomenon has not only been limited to the open labour market, but has also been found within supported employment programmes (Cueto & Rodriguez,

2016; Stuart, 2007). The impasse of accessing accommodation has played a similar role in affecting unemployment and underemployment of PWD (Davis, 2006). In many instances, PWD have been perceived to be incapable of performing at a high level and subsequently are provided with jobs that are not necessarily socially and financially rewarding (Stuart, 2007). The jobs performed by PWD have generally been of a lower standing and present little challenge and opportunity to advance their careers, even though there has been evidence that disabled persons are as economically productive as their able bodied counterparts (Barnes, 1992).

PWD have remained marginalised and underutilised within the open labour market (Cueto & Rodriguez, 2016; Thomas & Hlahla, 2002). It is clear, based on various national surveys, that PWD have tended to be underrepresented in professional, top and middle management positions (Department of Labour, 2015). Businesses have appeared to lack the courage to implement the required changes (Solomon, 1992). The 14th CEE Annual Report highlighted key observations for the period 2003-2013, and indicated that the movement of representatives from designated groups had declined over the previous five years. Of the total 22 571 employees in top management recorded in 2013, only 347 were disabled. The increase over the 10-year period represented a shift of 1.8% up from the 247 top managers recorded in 2003. Furthermore, the representation at a senior management level had not increased at all and remained at 1.3% increasing from 647 in 2003 to 1070 in 2013. PWD formed 1.8% of professionally qualified persons in 2013 totalling 4521 persons, while at a skilled level, a decline of 0.6% to 1% was seen over the previous 10 years (Department of Labour, 2014). More recently, the 2016 CEE report reflected the continuation of the downward turn in the representation of PWD in key management positions. Overall the top management level showed a decrease to 1.7% in 2015 from the previous year's 2%. There was also a decrease at senior management level of 0.2% down from the 2014 high of 1.7% and at the skilled technical level, the representation remained stagnant. Figure 2 (Department of Labour, 2015, 21) illustrates the number of women with disabilities, who remain grossly underrepresented at top management levels, recorded at 0.4% compared to men at 1.3%.



*Figure 2. Disability Status at Top Management Level by Gender*

The shift away from statutory redress to meaningful employment is to be addressed resourcefully by business leaders in a spirited manner. Clearly defined career paths are essential to avoid the underutilisation of PWD in the workplace. Applying a virtue framework could reduce unemployment and prevent underutilisation by ensuring that the recruitment and selection of PWD is free of bias (Barclay et al., 2012). Kulkarni and Kote (2014) have proposed that one way of addressing the underutilisation of PWD is to leverage the services of disability training and placement agencies and vocational rehabilitation agencies that perform a valuable intermediary role in preparing PWD for work, which has been supported by other scholars who previously explored the job, training, counselling and placement functions that these agencies fulfil (Austin & Lee, 2014; Dutta, Gervev, Chan, Chou, & Ditchman, 2008; Nazarov & von Schrader, 2014). Employers have not acknowledged the valuable role the agencies play and subsequent mismatches in qualification and experience occur which affects the utilisation of disabled workers (Gilbride, Stensrud, Ehlers, Evans, & Peterson, 2000). Kulkarni and Kote (2014, p.182) have presented a matrix which highlights the functioning of these agencies in relation to employers who seek to improve the working experiences of PWD. The matrix in Figure 3 describes the agencies' roles as the Trainer, the Partner, the Facilitator and the Marketer where the immediacy of impact of the candidate's placement intersects with employer involvement.

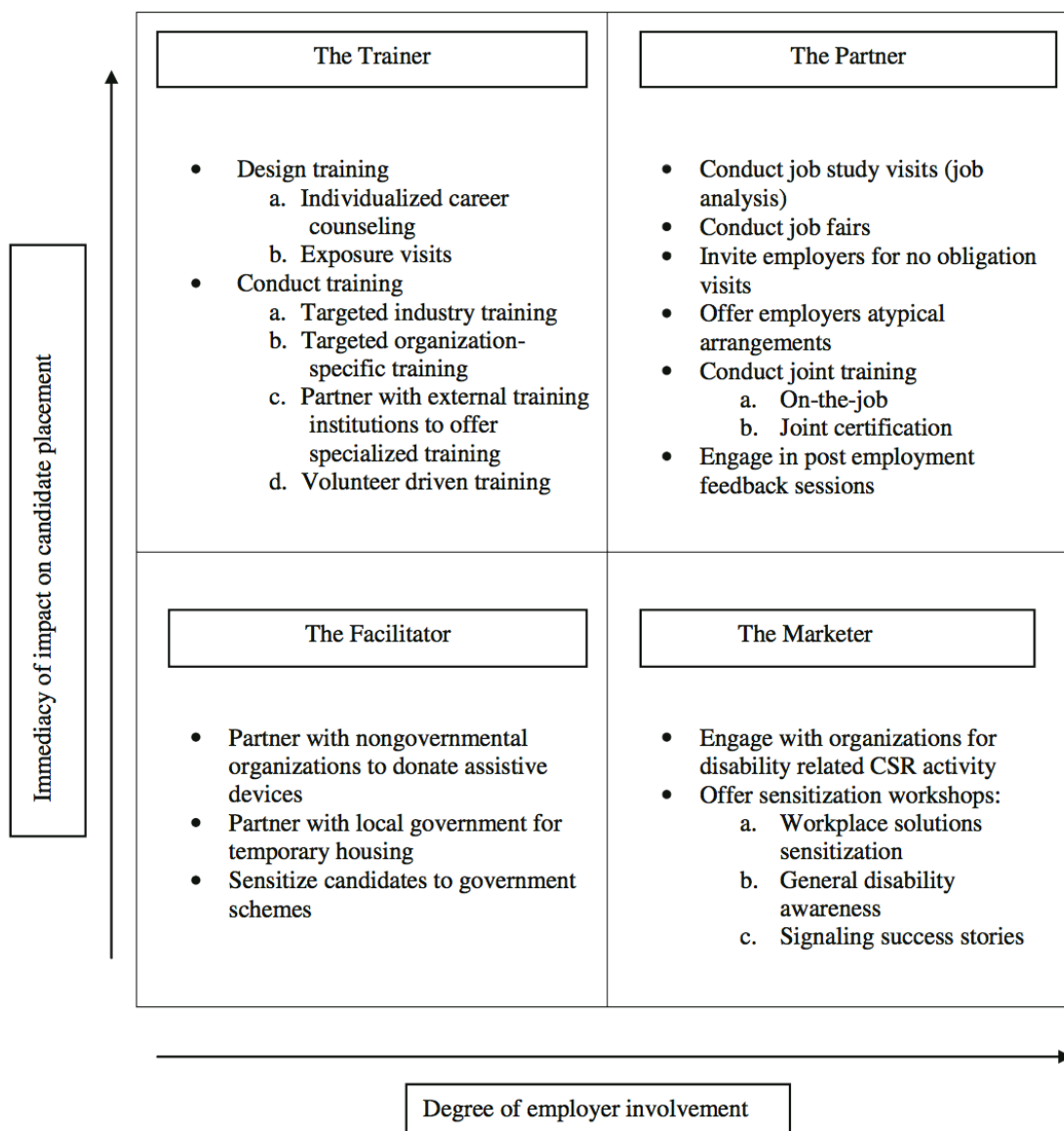


Figure 3. Focus of Employment Related Services of Disability Training and Placement Agencies

Furthermore, the authors have mentioned three key factors that exist for employers' practices where underutilisation occurs. According to Kulkarni and Kote (2014), agencies have suggested that disabled workers are affected by the practices of employers who lack a clear, unequivocal disability philosophy, who set aside ad-hoc jobs for PWD if and when they are hired, and finally, where employers are unable to manage the need and request for accommodation. Employers believe they have promoted inclusion, but often fail to define it clearly for themselves and employees (Hernandez & McDonald, 2010). They have unknowingly discriminated against prospective disabled candidates when non-disabled job profiles are used (Stone &

Colella, 1996) and employ unsystematic practices uncondusive for requesting accommodation (Colella, Paetzold, & Belliveau, 2004).

The role that PWD play in their career management is critical. Being active participants in determining their career trajectory has required PWD to formulate strategies that elevate them from situations where they might be underemployed (Ward & Baker, 2005; Wiggett-Barnard & Swartz, 2012; Zolna, Sanford, Sabata, & Goldthwaite, 2007). PWD often experience dysfunctional career thoughts, placed help-seeking low on their agenda and fail to indicate their abilities and expectations for promotions which further exacerbate situations where organisational members malign job-fit expectations. Often poor feedback is provided by superiors and co-workers and PWD are viewed as outcasts. Kulkarni and Gopakumar (2014, p. 455) have presented a model for career management of PWD and point out that disabled workers could adopt certain strategies, depicted in Table 3, to overcome their limitations.

Strategy	Key Import of Strategy
<p>Espousing a positive mind-set demonstrating extreme persistence</p> <p>Sensitising people to ability over disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signalling ability by learning new skills</li> <li>• Signalling ability by helping coworkers through newly gained skills</li> <li>• Signalling ability by trying to enhance performance through feedback seeking</li> </ul> <p>Engaging in disability advocacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness building</li> <li>• Influencing organisational policymaking with regards to accommodation</li> </ul> <p>Building, leveraging, and contributing to homophilous networks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forming networks comprising PWD</li> <li>• Seeking mentors who have a disability</li> <li>• Serving as role models or mentors to other PWD</li> </ul>	<p>Overcome worries and focus on tasks at hand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trounce stereotypes regarding competence</li> <li>• Sensitise others to performance potential of all PWD and help all PWD perform</li> <li>• Aid general adjustment and career growth of self and other PWD</li> </ul>

*Table 3. Career-Self Management Strategies of People with Disabilities*

#### **2.4. Barriers to Gaining, Maintaining and Reintegrating**

The decline or stagnation of the employment rates of PWD has drawn attention to the barriers to employment (Barrington, Bruyère, & Waelder, 2014). These barriers to employment have been interrogated, described, reviewed and documented through research undertaken by scholars in various academic streams (Barnes & Mercer, 2005; Danziger & Seefeldt, 2003; Gröschl, 2007; J. Hall & Parker, 2010; Johnson et al., 2004; Lindsay, 2011; Maja et al., 2011; Markel & Barclay, 2009; Perkins et al., 2006; Samaha, 2007; Schartz et al., 2002; Schur, Kruse, & Blanck, 2005). The perception created in society that PWD are unfit and unwilling to work (Berthoud,

2011; Finkelstein, 1993; Hemphill & Kulik, 2016; Robert & Harlan, 2006), has undoubtedly contributed to the low percentage of employed disabled workers. Research has shown that an underrepresentation of disabled workers persists and that the effects of social exclusion reach into their lives socially, physically and mentally (Ann, Yeung, Cocks, & McNamara, 2016; Miralles, Marin-Garcia, Ferrus, & Costa, 2010; Priebe et al., 1998). Employment is a vital component to full citizenship of all people in society, and eliminating the barriers to opportunities to participate fully in society has been essential for PWD (Abberley, 1987; Kirsh et al., 2009; Morris, 2001; Swain, 2008). Involvement in meaningful employment has allowed PWD to acquire and accumulate their own financial resources, has improved their standing within social networks, has provided greater purpose and contributed to the broader communal good (Barnes, 1992; Bates & Davis, 2004; Thabo Mbeki Development Trust for Disabled People et al., 2006). The social, physical and mental benefits resulting from being employed have not always been available to PWD, who encounter a multiplicity of barriers in their quest to be gainfully employed, and leads to their being excluded from contributing to society. The physical, attitudinal and policy barriers that persist within society have been acknowledged as having a direct impact on the degree to which PWD are able to participate in employment (Burchardt, 2004; Schur, 2002). These barriers have been viewed to have a similar or even greater impact than the underlying physical, sensory or intellectual impairment that might limit a person's activity (Whiteneck et al., 2004). According to Shaw and Gold (2011), environmental barriers have been widely discussed by scholars, with the most common barriers to employment and re-employment being identified as transportation, poor social support systems, employer attitudes, prejudice and stigmatisation, low self-esteem and confidence, discrimination and the failure to provide accommodating work environments (Andersson et al., 2015; Chen, Blankenship, Austin, Cantu, & Kotbungkair, 2016; Gilbride, Mitus, Coughlin, & Scott, 2007; J. Hall & Parker, 2010; Hemphill & Kulik, 2016; Nota, Santilli, Ginevra, & Soresi, 2014).

Disabling conditions have often affected mobility, personal care, communication and social relationships which might require short-term assistance or, in the case of persistent disabling conditions, different types of long-term social support (Braithwaite, Waldron, & Finn, 1999). The types of support available to PWD could affect employability and includes emotional support to assist with seeking

employment and reintegration, support to access information, feedback and physical assistance (Faber, Wind, & Frings-Dresen, 2016; Fabian, Luecking, & Tilson, 1994; McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005). Guerette and Smedema (2011) have explored the relationship between perceived social support and well-being in visually impaired adults, and have noted a correlation between social support and depressive states, life satisfaction and social well-being. The individual's employment prospects have improved where positive social support mechanisms are in place.

Family support has been identified as a key factor that contributes to the improved psychological well-being of disabled workers or job seekers. Support from the family has assisted workers in the integration process as they define their working roles (Hirst, Thornton, & Dearey, 2004; Kennedy-Jones, Cooper, & Fossey, 2005; Lindstrom et al., 2011). The presence of family might provide emotional and physical support through encouragement and mobility support as people look for employment. Research into unemployment duration and disability re-employment by Sciulli et al. (2012) has suggested that being married increases the re-employment probabilities of people with psychological, visual and musculoskeletal challenges and illustrates the positive effect family support brings to the working lives of PWD. In comparison, Kulkarni and Lengnick-Hall (2011) have suggested that the perception PWD have of their family and friends' support also acts as a limiting factor, which increases their reluctance to request assistance during socialisation processes and might have a negative outcome on their employment. Soeker, Wegner, and Pretorius (2008) found, in the case of workers with chronic back-related pain disorders, that some participants felt their reintegration into work could not have occurred without the help of society, while others believed their families and society were unsupportive and judgmental. The researchers observed, where the main breadwinner became unemployed, that the support from the family for that person to return to work might increase. Social support within the workplace has also been vital in ensuring that workers can flourish. In particular von Schrader, Malzer, and Bruyere (2014) have highlighted the importance of supportive workplaces in motivating prospective workers to disclose their disabilities. Disclosure during interviews has better assisted employers and disabled employees in managing expectations and costs for accommodation and ensures more support from co-workers, supervisors and social networks (Lindsay & DePape, 2015).

In spite of the improved legislative provisions for the employment of PWD, employer attitudes have presented as a major barrier to PWD employment (Hahn, 1988). Although some employers' attitudes towards hiring PWD have generally improved (Ju et al., 2013), the prevailing attitude has reflected as one of stigmatisation. The beliefs that PWD are absent more often and less productive than non-disabled people, have higher turnover rates, are less qualified and challenging to recruit, are costly to accommodate, increased legal liability, present challenges in assessing ability and require additional supervision have been contrary to evidence presented in literature (De Guimaraes, 2015; Gewurtz et al., 2016; Kaye, Jans, & Jones, 2011; McFarlin, Song, & Sonntag, 1991). Although employers are often seen to reflect global attitudes of inclusion towards PWD and seen to be supportive of employment equity initiatives, on closer inspection of specific attitudes to the employment of disabled workers, employer views and practices have tended to be more negative (Hernandez et al., 2008).

Together with negative attitudes, dismissive corporate cultures that stigmatise and prejudice, PWD have limited employment opportunities (Ali et al., 2011; Brite et al., 2015). The increasing literature on high-performance work systems has illustrated the impact of policies on organisational performance, and highlights the experiences of disabled workers as shaped by the values, attitudes and norms housed within organisations (Schur, Kruse, & Blasi, 2009). Robert and Harlan (2006) have suggested that organisational mechanisms intentionally or unintentionally create unfriendly environments where PWD are made to feel unwelcome. They have contended that discrimination is manifested, overtly or subtly, as policies, procedures and rules, presented as tools to encourage or discourage attitudes towards PWD. Field studies conducted by Lengnick-Hall et al. (2008) have further illustrated employers' attitudes towards the qualifications and ability of disabled workers, resulting in a lower uptake of PWD in employment. Furthermore, Louvet's (2007) experimental study, built on the model of Stone and Colella (1996), has shown that applicants with a disability are perceived to be warm and receptive, but also seen to be incompetent and unsuitable by employers where jobs require interpersonal interaction, irrespective of their ability.

Stone and Colella's (1996, p. 355) model, in Figure 4, illustrates the complexities that exist when personal, environmental and organisational factors are integrated. In

addition, it provides an explanation for how PWD are perceived and responded to in the workplace.

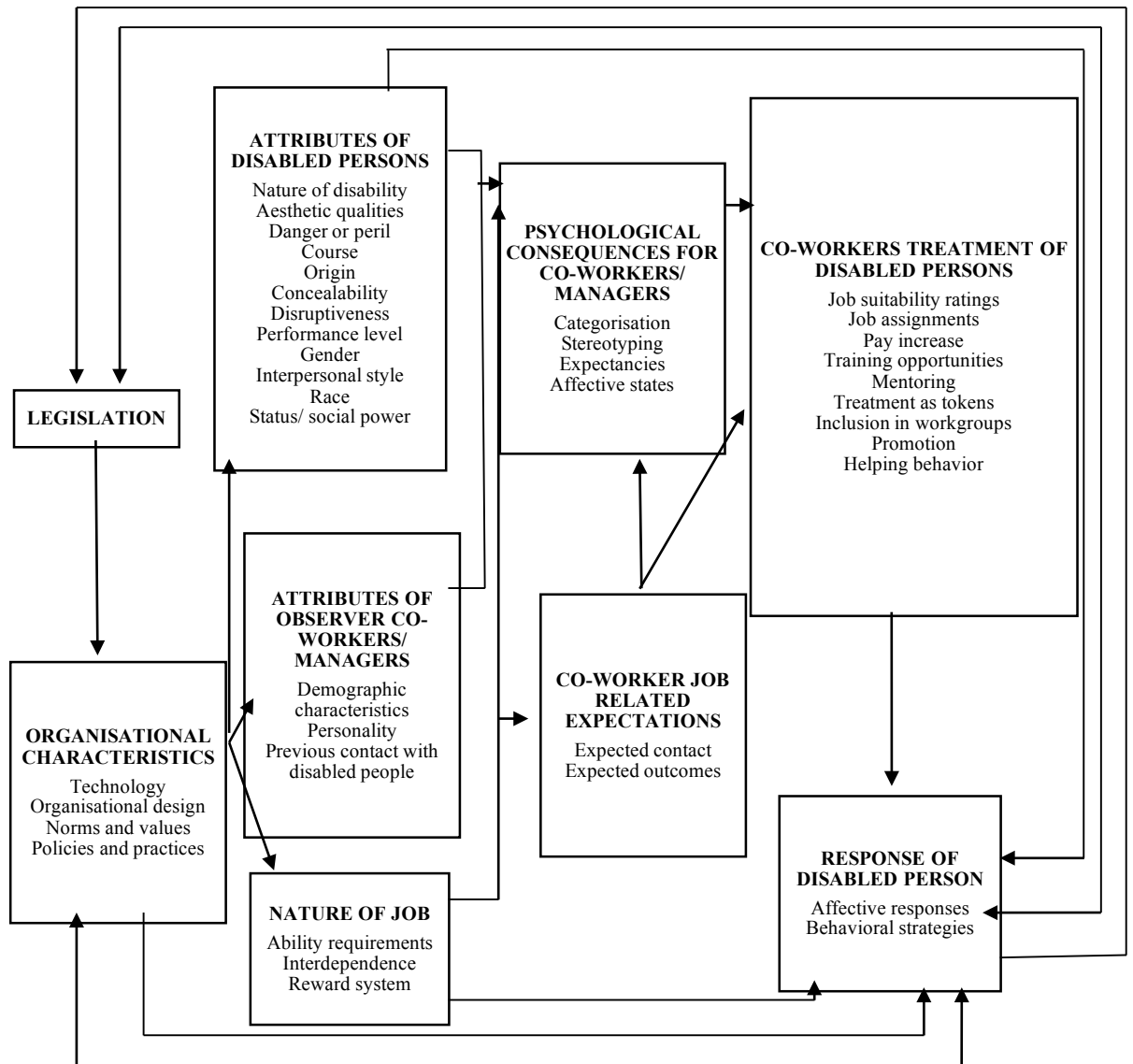


Figure 4. Model of Factors Affecting the Treatment of Disabled Individuals in Organisations

This multidisciplinary model has drawn from social psychology, sociology and rehabilitation psychology and could be used to move beyond treatment related problems and facilitate better use of PWD's talents within organisations. The model has suggested that both human and environmental factors affect the way disabled workers are treated. Legislation has been influential as it shapes the behaviour of an organisation and the adoption of technologies, norms, policies, values, practices and design that characterise its operations. Consequently, the character of an organisation

has played a large role in determining the nature of people that are employed there or are attracted to seek employment (Lemmink, Schuijf, & Streukens, 2003). The model has also indicated that characteristics of the organisation determine the qualities and features of both the disabled person (employed or seeking employment) and that of co-workers and managers (observers). The perception of PWD in the workplace has been heavily influenced by the qualities of both the disabled person and observers. Stone and Colella (1996) have suggested that managers play a key role in how well PWD integrate into working environments (Skarpaas, Ramvi, Lovereide, & Aas, 2016). Along with the influence of these attributes of PWD and observers, organisational characteristics have influenced the nature of jobs, how rewards are attributed and the interdependencies that exist. The model has also forecast that the attributes of the disabled person and the nature of the job would influence job-related expectations. Moreover, the model has suggested that “observers expectancies and affective states [were] important determinants of the treatment of disabled individuals” (Stone & Colella, 1996, p. 357).

The role of observers/managers has been key to determining the way in which disabled workers are perceived, along with the disabled workers’ response to the way others treat them. The model has identified four mechanisms, that have implications for business practices, to improve the perceptions of PWD. Firstly, organisations are required to modify managers’ views through education and training programmes (McDonnall, Crudden, & Zhou, 2013). The second mechanism requires adjusting managers’ behaviour by directly influencing how they are incentivised and rewarded. They are to be rewarded based on their ability to mentor and facilitate the integration of PWD in the workplace. Thirdly, co-workers affective responses are to be addressed by “(a) using educational programs to allay co-workers' fears about varying disabilities, (b) eliminating the use of competitive reward systems, and (c) ensuring that all employees are treated fairly (e.g. co-workers are not expected to assume added responsibilities when disabled individuals are hired)” (Stone & Colella, 1996, p. 392). Finally, disabled workers are to play an active role in altering the perceptions that managers have of their abilities through developing strategies to overcome biases.

Workplace accommodation for PWD has received a significant amount of attention compared to universal design (UD), where it is considered to reflect a virtue framework in practice (Barclay et al., 2012). Accommodation[s] are specific

solutions for individuals or groups and are not generally usable by all people. UD is design intended for use by the largest amount of people with the least need for specialised adaptations (Huang et al., 2016; Zolna et al., 2007). Literature addressing disabled workers has presented reasonable accommodation as part of organisational strategies and practices (Gida et al., 2007; Golub, 2006; Kulkarni & Kote, 2014; Schneider & Nkoli, 2011; Solovieva, Wallsh, & Hendricks, 2010; von Schrader, Xu & Bruyère, 2014; Ward & Baker, 2005), its role in facilitating employment (Lindsay, 2011; McDonnall, 2011; Miralles et al., 2010; Schmidt & Smith, 2007; Wiggett-Barnard & Swartz, 2012), the impact on costs of employing disabled workers (Hernandez & McDonald, 2010; Johnson et al., 2004; Miceli et al., 2002; Stuart, 2007), the effect of legislation and policies on the provision of accommodation (Bagenstosf, 2004; Dube, 2005; Mabbett, 2005), accommodation in relation to the application of alternate theories to avoid discrimination (F. Chan, McMahon, Cheing, Rosenthal, & Bezyak, 2005) as well as the experiences of PWD encountering or requesting accommodation (Balser & Harris, 2008; Kennedy-Jones et al., 2005; Shaw & Gold, 2011).

The physical accessibility of the workplace has often presented as an obvious barrier to employment because employers often lack the know-how for effective job accommodation (McDonnall, O'Mally, & Crudden, 2014). The environment in which PWD have been required to function present constant challenges as they conduct their work. Workplace design, including the design of office spaces and furnishings, has played a major role in how PWD integrate into the workplace and impacts their productivity. Zolna et al. (2007, p. 192), in reviewing the literature on accommodation strategies, has categorised accommodation into four broad areas, listing specific examples of accommodation that impact PWD as described in Table 4.

Types of Accommodation	Examples of Accommodation
Assistive technology	Assistive technology Wheelchair Product purchase Special equipment Other equipment Assistive devices Computer access Alternative computer access
Physical work environment	Mechanical adjustments (workstation/restrooms) Ergonomic work environment Aids to sensation Memory aids Transportation accommodation Architectural modifications Accessible design guidelines Ergonomics practice Eliminate flickering lights, use blinds or light filters Provide low wattage overhead lights and use task lighting. Park near entrance Automatic door opener Accessible route to workstation
Job requirements	Controlling hours Changing the way tasks are done Job process modifications Changed behaviour Reduction in physical demands of the job Modifying tasks and tools Flexible hours, more frequent breaks Work at home
Personal assistance and training	Personal attendant or service animal Note taker Someone to help Assistance from others Sensitivity training for supervisor and co-workers Allow calls to doctor during work hours Provide counselling

*Table 4. Examples of Accommodation Types*

Irrespective of the conventional limitations that PWD have experienced, gender and the type of disability also play key roles in the employment experiences of PWD (Chouinard, 2010; Huang & Chen, 2015; von Schrader, Malzer, & Bruyère, 2014). Disability specific programmes geared towards improving the likelihood of gaining employment have also been shown to primarily focus on the skills (Gustafsson, Peralta, & Danermark, 2013; Phillips et al., 2016) required on the labour demand (job opportunity) and labour supply (employee outputs) spectrum, overlooking the value of social capital, whereas social capital has been shown to be a major contributor to the employment experiences of PWD (Potts, 2005). Poor job contact networks have contributed to the barriers experienced. There are similar consequences for non-disabled and PWD. Although the networks of PWD have tended to be limited, its results are more catastrophic than for non-disabled people which illustrates the value of resourced job contact networks (Golub, 2006). Granovetter's (1974) seminal work has highlighted the mechanisms of communication that link employers with prospective employees via social networks. The sensitivity towards issues of disability and social inclusion has remained absent from many employment processes. Limited tolerance has been shown for providing accommodation to facilitate improved networks and communication which could be attributed to unmindful strategy and decision-making within businesses (Chun, 2005; Crossan, Mazutis, & Seijts, 2013). Job contacts have provided job seekers with information about opportunities, internal or unadvertised, and provide a 'foot into the workplace' efficiency in knowing about opportunities and better paying jobs. Low educational levels combined with the lack of information have also contributed to the reduced opportunities to access employment (Kulkarni & Kote, 2014). Moreover, the preparedness of PWD to seek accommodation has not always been a given and could be influenced by how useful, fair and appropriate the accommodation is perceived to be (Schmidt & Smith, 2007). Other factors such as pain and fatigue have also contributed to creating barriers to employment (Shaw, Tetlaff, Jennings, & Southall, 2013). The failings of equal opportunity legislation have been evident where PWD still face work environments that do not accommodate their needs. The impact of these barriers have continued to contribute to the unemployment and underemployment of PWD, and their exclusion from society (Areheart, 2008; Dube, 2005). Organisations utilising UD might not necessarily generate such barriers, as

they might implement processes and infrastructure that promote the best possible use by all people (Barclay et al., 2012).

## **Conclusion**

Research has shown that barriers to securing employment exist and that various role players affect the unemployment and underutilisation of disabled workers. Employers have played a key role in effecting change in the employment rates of PWD in South Africa and globally. Research has shown that their role is particularly vital in that PWD either achieve equally well or exceed job performance, in their supervision requirements or work attendance compared to non-disabled people (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2008). The advent of the anti-discrimination legislation promoting civil rights has not had the desired result in reducing unemployment of PWD and has called for a renewed approach to ensure the meaningful employment of PWD (Hernandez & McDonald, 2010; Russell, 2002). Employers' views of the contributions of disabled workers are to broaden beyond the targeted numerical approaches that satisfy legislative requirements (Gida et al., 2007; Jongens, 2006). The impact of antipoverty measures in South Africa might have had an impact on the declining employment rates, but it is accepted that empowering PWD to enter informal and formal employment through skills development is critical (Mitra, 2008; Swartz & Schneider, 2006). Employers should ensure that they have addressed the environmental barriers through improved internal policies and processes that eliminate the physical and attitudinal barriers PWD encounter (Barnes, 2012; McFarlin et al., 1991; Perkins et al., 2006; Shaw & Gold, 2011; Whiteneck et al., 2004). While PWD have played an active role in shaping the perception that employers have of their abilities and contributions (Kulkarni & Lengnick-Hall, 2011), new ways of exploring barriers and experiences could shift the paradigms so commonly encountered within employment situations (Barclay & Markel, 2008; Thanem, 2008). The successful implementation of UD in organisational processes has shown that inclusion improves while addressing unemployment and underemployment of disabled workers (Barclay et al., 2012).

The following chapter presents the conceptual framework of the study, explores the research on the common conceptions of disability and introduces recent developments in the understanding of disability in diversity. The agenda in

organisation studies is considered along with the impact diversity management has on the employment of PWD. The resurgence of Aristotelian virtues in business and the application of UD, as indicative of a virtue framework, being employed to promote the inclusion of PWD in employment are discussed.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The chapter introduces the conceptual framework applied to this study. It explores the common conceptions of disability, these being the moral/religious model, the medical model and the social model as the prevailing paradigms for understanding disability. The general views and criticisms of the models are delivered as a backdrop to the employment experiences of PWD. The chapter proceeds with an overview of disability in organisation studies followed by insights into diversity management as a practice, and a discussion of the ethical foundations of diversity in the intersection of diversity and business ethics. This is followed by a discussion on the tensions within the business case for disability in diversity and embodying disability in diversity. The chapter concludes with an introduction to Aristotle's virtues, the resurgence of virtues in business, Aristotelian virtue ethics in business, virtuous managers, community and disability and UD within a virtue framework as a signifier of the application of virtue theory within organisations.

#### **3.1. Common Conceptions of Disability**

The value that society places on the physical body has determined the usefulness of individuals to their communities (MacIntyre, 1984). The construction of social hierarchies has, for centuries, been shaped by difference, where able bodied persons were placed at the centre representing the norm, while 'others' were different and away from the norm (C. Thomas, 2004b). Social structuring has created a paradigm of human functioning that values 'capacity' creating a fault line between 'normal' and 'disabled' (Patston, 2007). People who therefore view themselves as non-disabled, have derived a perspective of who they are not (P. J. Devlieger, 2005). The narrative of the ideal productive physical body has essentially drowned out the voices of PWD, diminishing their status in communities and writing them out of history. Changing the course of this narrative has largely been the focus of disability activists and scholars set on regenerating cultures that embrace diversity (Barnes & Mercer, 2005; Finkelstein, 1996; Oliver & Barnes, 2006; Swain & French, 2000).

Within the Western understanding of disability, the approach has not been far reaching and all-encompassing. PWD have consistently challenged the norms through seeking social inclusion and the removal of environmental barriers. The rise

of the disability rights movements in the US (Batavia & Schriener, 2001; Hahn, 1988; F. S. Hall & E. L. Hall, 1994) and UK (Beckett, 2006; Finkelstein, 1996; Shakespeare, 1996) has drawn political attention to the equal rights, aimed at fair treatment and personal autonomy in society, of PWD. The disability rights movements have inspired scholars to conceptualise disability in new ways. The development of models based on stigmatisation has indirectly also given rise to the characteristic parameters of responses to persons with disabilities (Finkelstein, 1980). Although the understanding of the construction of disability has evolved in sophistication, the models remain mediums for the description of 'difference' and shaping identities (Smart, 2009). Although various models encompassing rehabilitation, economic, empowering, tragic and professional constructions exist (Rieser & Mason, 1992), the three most common will be further discussed.

The three most commonly used conceptions of models to explain disability are the religious/ moral model which describes disability as a punishment for sin (Otieno, 2009), the medical/ biomedical model which places an ingrained emphasis on clinical diagnosis (Brisenden, 1986) and the social model which focuses on how disability is produced socially (Hughes & Paterson, 1997). A commonality between the moral and medical models has positioned the disability within the individual and conflicts paradigmatically with the approach of the social model, which has positioned the oppressive disablement in the environment and society (Olkin, 2002). Olkin's (2002, p. 133) comparison of the moral, medical and social models of disability provides an overview to key concepts within disability, as presented in Table 5.

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Moral</b>	<b>Medical</b>	<b>Social</b>
<b>Meaning of disability</b>	Disability is a defect caused by moral lapse or sins, failure of faith, evil, test of faith	A defect in or failure of a bodily system that is inherently abnormal and pathological	Disability is a social construct. Problems reside in the environment that fails to accommodate PWD
<b>Moral implications</b>	The disability brings shame to the person with the disability and his or her family.	A medical abnormality due to genetics, bad health habits, person's behaviour.	Society has failed a segment of its citizens and oppresses them.
<b>Sample ideas</b>	"God gives us only what we can bear" or "There's a reason I was chosen to have this disability."	Clinical descriptions of "patients" in medical terminology. Isolation of body parts.	"nothing about us without us" or "Civil rights, not charity."
<b>Origins</b>	Oldest model and still most prevalent	Mid-19 <sup>th</sup> century. Most common model in the US. Entrenched in most rehabilitation clinics and journals.	In 1975 with the demonstrations by PWD in support of the yet-unsigned rehabilitation Act.
<b>Goals of intervention</b>	Spiritual or divine, acceptance	"Cure" or amelioration of disability to the greatest extent possible.	Political, economic, social, and policy systems, increased access and inclusion.
<b>Benefits of model</b>	An acceptance of being selected, a special relationship with God, a sense of greater purpose to the disability.	A lessened sense of shame and stigma. Faith in medical intervention. Spurs medical and technological advances.	Promotes integration of the disability into self. A sense of community and pride. Depathologising of disability.
<b>Negative effects</b>	Shame, ostricisation, need to conceal the disability or person with a disability	Paternalistic promotes benevolence and charity. Services for but not by PWD	Powerlessness in the face of broad social and political changes needed. Challenges to prevailing ideas.

Table 5. Comparison of the Moral, Medical and Social Models of Disability

### **3.2. The Moral/ Religious Model of Disability**

The basis for the interpretation of bodily difference within westernised societies found its origins within Judeo-Christian societies. Scriptures referencing bodily difference, the impact of the church, the subsequent evolution of science, philosophy, politics and society, from the mid-17th century to 18th century, laid the basis for the modern day understanding of disability (Linton, 1998). Disability was viewed as something that was inflicted on the individual due to a failure in their practices of traditional cultural beliefs or God, resulting in punishment that required personal repentance (Avoke, 2002). The resultant bodily differences were ascribed to the doing of the devil, possession by demonic spirits, being cursed or having disobeyed God's laws, and positioned PWD as less than human in society (Rieser & Mason, 1992). These thoughts were generally embraced and have remained prevalent in societies where superstition plays an important role (Avoke, 2002). Individuals were subsequently subjected to moral and religious training to rehabilitate them towards being normal again (Smart & Smart, 2006).

Three broad themes that generally elicited negative perceptions of disability were captured within the moral/religious model. These were the conflation of disability with sin, the virtuous experience of disability and the charitable view of PWD (Eiesland, 1994). Historically, pre-industrialised agrarian societies "where work was organised around different principles such as social necessity and interdependencies" (Barnes & Mercer, 2005, p. 255), attributed roles and responsibilities to people based on their ability to contribute to the communal good (Barnes, 2000). As these disabled bodies were disempowered, they were moved to the outskirts of society and their usefulness diminished. Increased industrialisation and an emphasis on scientific knowledge and reason challenged the religious values of the time, ushering in a more clinical approach to disability, where power and dominance were asserted by the medical profession (Oliver, 1990).

Although predominantly viewed as an outdated model on disability, the religious model intricately intertwined disability with religious beliefs. Spirituality was considered an area in life where the meaning about existence and fulfilment in relationships with others was sought, and offered a context for understanding the universe and the way people responded to it (Poston & Turnbull, 2004). At the heart of the discussions about spirituality was a questioning of the role of the church

(Swinton, 1997), the meanings ascribed to spirituality (Schulz, 2005), cultural influences (Coleridge, 2000) and the renewed approaches by community and health practitioners working with PWD (Underwood, 1999). More recently, the role of spirituality in the lives of PWD has drawn insights from scholars, who have shown it to be a means of how people cope with disability.

Themes operating within this paradigm embraced sin or sanctity, impurity and wholeness, undesirability and weakness, care and compassion, healing and burden, and informed how PWD were perceived and responded to. Alternatively, PWD also signified Jesus Christ's suffering, or took on angelic characteristics, as a blessing to others (Clapton & Fitzgerald, 2014). Disability was also considered to reflect on those closest to the person which resulted in shame and despair being cast on the family (P. Devlieger, 1995). The atonement for sin and achieving spiritual acceptance became a priority for the individual and family in accepting their lot in life (Olkin, 2002). In traditional African societies, ignorance of the causes of disability and limited education promoted the eugenic cleansing of PWD from society (Avoke, 2002; P. Devlieger, 1995).

The pre-scientific moral/ religious model became outdated with the evolution of the modern era, which was significantly influenced by industrialisation. As a result, the framework was unsuitable within which to explore the experiences of PWD and employment in the 21st century (Smart, 2009). The model's explanation for disability having magical causes lost ground to modern reasoning and rationality (Clapton & Fitzgerald, 2014).

### **3.3. The Medical Model of Disability**

The medical model, historically, has been pervasive and powerfully cast in a medicalised approach to interpreting disability (Brisenden, 1986). As religious views were challenged through the advances in science, religious leaders, as conduits through which societal values were transmitted, came under pressure and were replaced by doctors and scientists who treated dysfunctional bodies (Rieser & Mason, 1992). Society now ascribed a new value to the human body. The commodification of the body placed emphasis on the profitability of society and the use of a body was largely determined by the industrialised practices the state sought for its growth (MacIntyre, 1984). The lived experience of individuals was reduced to

serve the interest of the state, and cultural hegemony crept in to serve the interest of a few, determining who was superior and who was inferior (Linton, 1998).

The model initially gained momentum as the industrial revolution brought an increased demand for production and levels of education, exacerbating the unfavourable perception of disability in society (Kruse & Hale, 2003). Scholars have sought to explain the impact of the medical model and social exclusion through the systematic operations of capitalist economies (Finkelstein, 1993; Oliver & Zarb, 1989). The mass production of goods in the 18th and 19th century required those who were not of the means to produce, to trade their physical bodies as a commodity in service of production (Finkelstein, 2007). The inability to engage in labour exchange practices resulted in the exclusion and diminishing of an individual's place in society (MacIntyre, 1984). Prior to this period, people perceived to have limitations, lived with their families in communities and were required to fulfil tasks according to their abilities (MacIntyre, 1984). The segregation of those with imperfect bodies to the outskirts of society, removed their opportunity to pay their way and created a dependency for care and charity (Beckett, 2006). Eventually bodies that could not meet the standards of production, as society advanced, were labelled as 'backward' and 'feebleminded' (Pfeiffer, 1993). People classified in this manner later became the targets of social policies developed in the mid-nineteenth century (Pfeiffer, 1993).

Grounded in westernised norms, which required the classification, quantification and description of pathology and severity of impairment, the model propositioned an objectivist account of disability (Gabel & Peters, 2004). Dysfunctional bodies were observed and analysed to reinforce medical findings (Hahn, 1988) and physical or psychological dysfunction were offered restoration through the prescription of treatment towards 'normality' (Crow, 2007). The model created a privatisation of disability where the medical practitioner or non-disabled person determined what was 'right' for the disabled person and eroded any responsibility for disability from other community members (Donoghue, 2003; Shakespeare, 1998; Thornton & Lunt, 1997). The reliance on western medicine resulted in people with similar symptomology receiving identical treatment plans for their individual experiences (Swain & French, 2000).

The severest criticism reserved for this model has been its inherent tendency towards creating unequal power relations between experts/ employers and recipients/

employees. At a macro-level, PWD were relegated to positions that were non-professional and non-managerial (Barnes & Mercer, 2005) and at a micro-level, organisations that failed to have formal procedures in place, only increased the disability people experienced (Foster, 2007). The disparate power relations were characteristically reinforced as society yielded to medical practitioners who influenced the generalised views, prejudices and attitudes held towards PWD (Smart, 2009). The approach also generated a negative tension when those, who were 'less impaired', actively sought to be medically 'fixed' and were more readily accepted within society as they were considered to have not 'given up' (F. Chan et al., 2005; McCarty et al., 1999). Typecasting and the adoption of certain 'disabled roles' also sustained the medical model which disempowered PWD. Areheart's (2008) account of the pitiable poster child (seen as objects of pity) and supercripple (someone with a heroic story trying to overcome their disability) analogies aptly described two of the prevalent stereotypes that found root in the medical model.

The following representative model, illustrated in Figure 5, has been adapted from the British Council of Disabled People's (BCODP) interpretation to illustrate the impact of utilising the medical model when applied to employment.

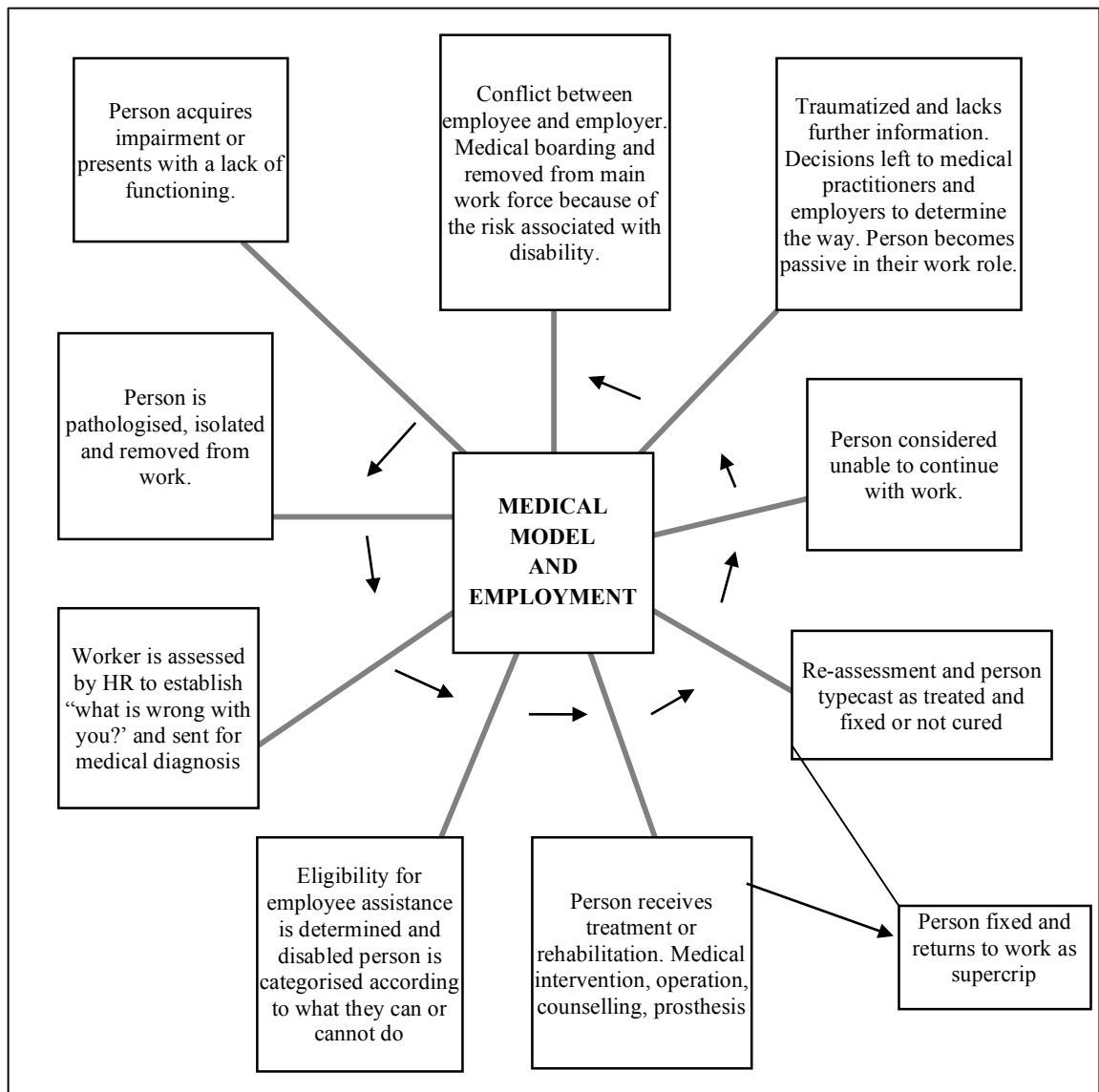


Figure 5. Medical Model and Employment adapted from the BCODP interpretation

By reducing disability to a simple biological experience with no sociological cause, the medical model approach led to various social and economic deprivations (Hahn, 1988). The model's divisive nature was evident in how it created hierarchies of disabilities (Lee & Park, 2008; McDonnall, 2011; Shaw et al., 2007). Although not many academic proponents of this model have been found, the model has generally been operational within many workplaces, medical services, charities, organisations for the disabled and other professional institutions, perpetuating occupational patterns and the oppression of PWD in society (Abberley, 1987; Shakespeare, 1996; Thornton & Lunt, 1997). Disability activists and scholars rejected this model largely on the basis that it ignored their lived experiences of disability (Brisenden, 1986) and

as PWD's experiences were paramount to this study, the medical model could not provide a suitable framework to support this study.

### **3.4. The Social Model of Disability**

The British social model of disability was originally conceived after adopting a social-relational understanding of disability, originally expressed by Vik Finkelstein (Finkelstein, 2005). Finkelstein<sup>11</sup> was exiled to the UK in 1968 after being forced to leave South Africa due to his political relations with the then underground African National Congress and SACP. Finkelstein's experience of the segregation policies forced upon South Africans provided him with a tacit understanding of social oppression. This oppression had at its core the proletarianisation and dehumanisation of individuals and groups, through continuous and systematic injustices that resulted in legal, political, economic, social degradation and the denial of access to valued resources while fuelling the domination of one group over another (Charlton, 1998; Cox, 1948; Davis, K. E., 2006; Freire, 1993).

Finkelstein became actively involved with various disability organisations and by the end of 1974, the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) was established on the grounds of the commonality in physical impairment and oppressions experienced by PWD (Finkelstein, 2007; UPIAS, 1976). In discussing the oppression and social interpretation of disability, UPIAS's commentary in their *Fundamental Principles of Disability* noted that disability was the limitation of activity which resulted from social organisations that failed to account for the physical impairments of people, thereby excluding them from participating in mainstream social activities (UPIAS, 1976). This interpretation positioned PWD as an oppressed group within society (Finkelstein, 2005; Oliver & Zarb, 1989). The critical distinction between impairment and disability was thus made where impairment was described as lacking function of a limb, and disability as the restriction in activity (UPIAS, 1976).

Mike Oliver, a social worker, referred to the UPIAS view of oppression and used definitions contained in the document, as a stepping stone for the further refining of the social model of disability in *Social Work with Disabled People* (1983). The

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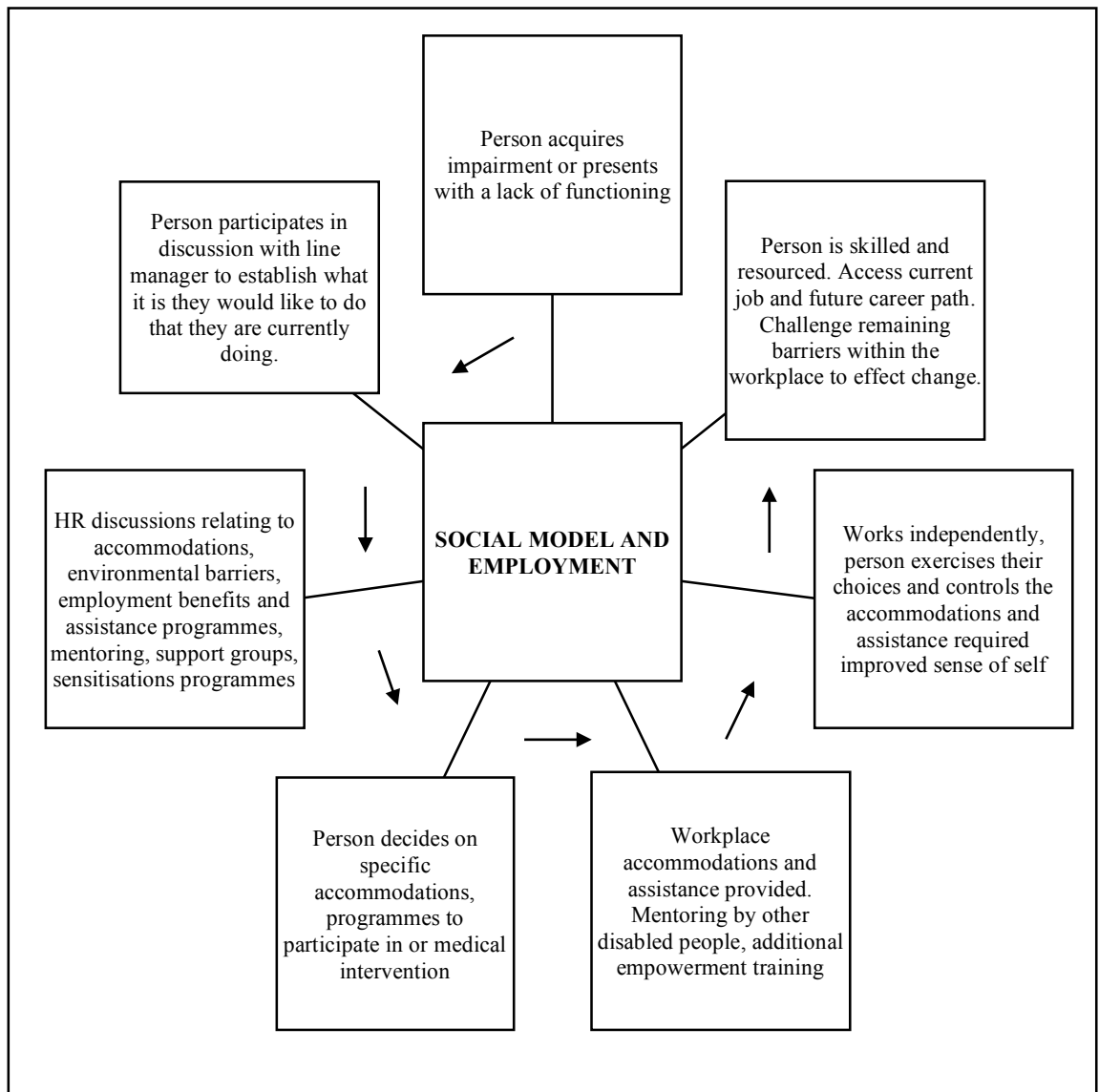
<sup>11</sup> Finkelstein (2005) proposes a veiled South African influence on the development of the Social Model in his article

conception of the social model resulted in the redefinition of disability as a social issue, which rendered many theoretical challenges, as disability was seen as a form of social oppression (Oliver & Barnes, 2006; C. Thomas, 2004b). The model directed its focus towards the barriers to social inclusion that originated from disabling environments, behaviours and cultures (Oliver, 1986), which propelled PWD forward politically through determining an opportunity for social change and identifying those who aligned with the ideology (Swartz & Watermeyer, 1996). The model characterised barriers for elimination as well as the moral responsibility to challenge the social exclusion created (Rispel, Molomo, & Dumala, 2008). Various interpretations, reclamations and revisions of the social model placed different emphases on material situations or the portrayal of disability (Shakespeare, 1996). The common thread across these interpretations was the understanding that disability was socially constructed (Finkelstein, 1981; Priestley, 1998).

By considering the uniqueness of each person's individual context, the social model offered some explanation for why PWD were included or excluded from the labour force and accounted for the underlying disabilism<sup>12</sup> and societal barriers that persisted (C. Thomas, 2004a). Employment was noted as a key means of battling the increasing impoverishment of many PWD (Gilbride et al., 2007; Kitchin & Shirlow, 1998). Figure 6 provides an illustration of the general impact when adopting the social model in relation to employment.

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<sup>12</sup> Sociological term meaning the discrimination against disabled people



*Figure 6. Representation of the Social Model in Relation to Employment adapted from BCODP interpretation*

The model, however, was not all encompassing and encountered criticisms (Beaudry, 2016; Crow, 2007). Feminist scholars, in particular, called for a deeper understanding of the individual experiences of impairment that were diminished by the social model. They also emphasised the discrimination experienced and the differences in contextualising disability by social movements which challenged race, gender and disability discrimination in the workplace (Morris, 1991; Crow, 1992; French, 1993). C. Thomas's (2004b) re-orientation of the social model, through including impairment effects, accounted for the model's limitations and extended the socio-relational aspect of the model, consequently asserting that only persons with impairments who faced oppression would be considered disabled, and the need to

prove a disability was not required. Finkelstein's village parable illustrated an implicit ideal of the social model that required an infinite number of considerations for the design of a village to accommodate every single individual's impairment needs. He conceded that these considerations would be almost impossible and, at times, unfeasible to meet each individual's specific impairment needs (Finkelstein, 2002). Attempts at creating this utopia would inevitably create tension within and across persons with varying impairments (Smart, 2009).

While the social model impacted the psyche of PWD and contributed to the determination of a collective identity (Putnam, 2005), the model has not notably impacted the employment system, because the solutions generally offered were based on an individual model of disability. Thirty years after conceiving the social model, Mike Oliver, has admitted the model's ineffectiveness in delivering meaningful impact on the employment of PWD, and has called for alternative models to be constructed (Oliver, 2013; Owens, 2015). As a response to the call for alternate views, the application of virtue theory to the experiences of PWD has offered another theoretical lens for exploration, where other models have failed (Barclay et al., 2012).

### **3.5. Disability in Organisation Studies**

The approach to research disability within organisations and management studies has been narrowed to address the needs of organisations, rather than problematising disability. The calls for the expansion and inclusion of various theoretical voices in shaping the objectives within organisation studies have been made by Harlan and Robert (1998) emphasising the inadequate commitment to theorising PWD's work experiences. The myopic research focus, which has primarily served the interest of organisations (Üsdiken & Leblebici, 2001), amplifies the voices of those in positions of management, while numbing the input of PWD (Foster, 2007). Social relations and the hierarchical structuring of social categories (gender and race), perpetuated through social processes, have taken preference previously, focusing on certain members within organisations, while ignoring others (Calás, 1992). The normative approach which has revolved around those who are considered to be 'in' while pushing 'out' those who do not meet the requisite standards, sees 'disabled bodies' holding less value than 'able bodies' in the workplace and research (Thanem, 2008).

Disciplines, when applying differing theoretical lenses, are able to challenge and contribute to the field of management and organisation studies (Polzer, Gulati, Khurana, & Tushman, 2009), provided the dominant approaches to knowledge generation become more inclusive (C. Thomas, 2004a). Leaning on the established body of knowledge within disability, studies have been mooted as another means to satisfy the calls of Harlan and Robert's (1998) to include more cross disciplinary research (J. Williams & Mavin, 2012). More recently, the fields of human resource management and diversity management have evolved, placing disability at the heart of academic inquiry (Pawlukewicz, 2011). The impact of legislation and conceptualising of disability have consequently paved the way for further empirical studies, thereby improving the understanding of disability and experiences of others in varied organisational contexts (J. Williams & Mavin, 2012).

### **3.6. Diversity Management**

Diversity has been described as a complex construct that depends on context and consists of various dimensions (D. Thomas, 2004; B. R. Williams, 2017). It has reflected the prominent social and cultural attributes in relationships between members within a group (Daya & April, 2014; Ditomaso, Post, & Parks-Yancy, 2007; Pant & Vijaya, 2015; Wambui, Wangombe, Muthura, Kamau, & Jackson, 2013). With increased diversity impacting organisations and the representation of minority groups rising (Cox, Lobel, & McLeod, 1991; Makhdoomi & Nika, 2017), the relationships between employees have increased in complexity, urging organisations to manage diversity effectively (Yongbeom & Strickland, 2015; A. N. Smith, Morgan, King, Hebl, & Peddie, 2012). Harnessing diversity has enabled organisations to benefit economically, legally and socially when addressing gender, ethnicity, functional ability or other attributes through applying best practice and drawing on the human capacity unique to their context, in order to improve innovation and decision-making (Cox & Blake, 1991; Guillaume, Dawson, Woods, Sacramento, & West, 2013; Henry, Petkauskos, Stanislawzyk, & Vogt, 2014; A. Thomas, 2003; Vohra et al., 2015). In this regard, diversity management could be viewed as a substitute for the equal opportunity movement with business objectives having replaced moral diversity arguments (Lauring, 2013).

The ADA, the UK DDA, the Australian DDA, and more locally the South African EE Act have been examples of the growing trend to legislate in order to further more inclusive workplaces (Areheart, 2008; Barnes & Mercer, 2005; Cooper, 1999; Roessler, Rumrill, Li, & McMahon, 2016; Sing & Govender, 2006). The upward trend of employers and governments passing laws to promote diversity and the inclusion of PWD in the workplace has coincided with the increased interest in management studies addressing diversity and diversity management. Various theoretical frameworks and empirical studies on how organisations could manage workforce diversity have been posited (Sippola & Smale, 2007) at the expense of understanding the construct of disability in diversity (Schur et al., 2005). Polarised views have persisted through the comparative research agendas that either promote an optimistic view of diversity management as a value adding approach (Smith et al., 2012), or criticise mechanisms that promote rather than combat inequalities (Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000).

The development of integrated views of diversity management (Gilbert et al., 1999), the application within human resource management (Gida et al., 2007; Shen, D'Netto, & Tang, 2010), the positive and negative effects of management practices (Konrad, Moore, Ng, Doherty, & Breward, 2013; Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010; Pless & Maak, 2004; Stewart, Crary, & Humberd, 2008; Syed & Özbilgin, 2009; A. Thomas, 2002), the business case and standards for diversity (Gilbert et al., 1999; Guillaume et al., 2013; Litvin, 2006; Robinson & Dechant, 1997; A. Thomas, 2003; Zhang, 2006), the impact of organisational culture and attitudes on diversity (Hicks-Clarke & Iles, 2000; Spataro, 2005), and varying theoretical and practical research designs utilised (Howarth & Andreouli, 2016; Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000; Sippola & Smale, 2007) have ultimately overshadowed the value disability contributes to diversity and have failed to improve the working experiences of PWD (Kulkarni & Kote, 2014; Markel & Barclay, 2009; Schur, 2002; Scott-Parker & Zadek, 2001).

### **3.7. The Intersection of Diversity and Business Ethics**

Ethics in business has been part of business since its inception. Ethical theories can be categorised within various ethical frameworks that form the basis for understanding individual and organisational approaches (Yazdani & Murad, 2014). Divine command-ethics with theological voluntarism has posited morality as being

dependent on God's will and articulates in various ways (Quinn, 1990), consequentialism has drawn the value of all actions from its consequences (B. Williams, 1973), deontological ethics, described as duty or rule bound ethics, have judged the morality of actions, based on the adherence to specific rules (Kant, 1781; Shafer-Landau, 2013), subjectivism or moral relativism has proposed moral judgments as dependent on personal values and considers the truth not to be absolute, but related to the moral standards of a person or group (Forsyth, 1980; Wiggins, 1990) and virtue ethics has pursued a moral excellence to form five distinctive frameworks (Audi, 2012; Chen, 2010; Crockett, 2005; B. J. Dobson, 1995).

Business ethics, evolved out of the acknowledgment by Bowen (1953) that businessmen had a social responsibility beyond profit seeking, has gained momentum and subsequently the contributions of ethical decision-making in business have gained traction (Morales-Sánchez & Cabello-Medina, 2013; Trevino, 1986). De George (1987, p. 203) has described business ethics as:

... a field to the extent that it deals with a set of interrelated questions to be untangled and addressed within an overarching framework. The framework is not supplied by any ethical theory – Kantian, utilitarian, or theological- but by the systematic interdependence of questions, which can be approached from various philosophical, theological, or other points of view.

Contemporary business ethics are considered to be threaded together by three strands - ethics in business derives its origin from secular and religious philosophies, the academic field of business ethics which is constructed through philosophy although its application has been rooted in social science methodologies, and the acceptance of business ethics through individualised practices which focuses on the organisation's social responsibilities (de George, 1994; Wines, 2008).

Managing diversity in the workplace has a strong ethical component and has been described as a moral issue aimed at fair and just treatment of all employees. It has been directed at enhancing equitable employee outcomes and reducing the marginalisation of those that experience discrimination (Nelson, Poms, & Wolf, 2012). Often the focus has remained on addressing numerical inequalities which does not necessarily create more inclusive workplaces (Powell & Sang, 2013). Organisations are evolving communities where business leaders play an important role in ensuring harmony and full participation of all its members (Lorbiecki & Jack,

2000; Solomon, 1994). Business ethics and ethical leadership have been key components for influencing the character and diversity within westernised organisations. In particular, it has invited renewed interest from management and diversity scholars, business leaders, human resource practitioners, social scientist, activists and political leaders (S. D. Baker & Comer, 2012; J. Dobson, 1990; Donaldson & Dunfee, 1994; Forsha, 2017; Goodpaster, 1991; Gotsis & Kortezi, 2013; Marsh, 2013; Rawwas & Arjoon, 2013; Stark, 1993; Syed & Özbilgin, 2009). Management theories and practices, employed by leaders, that have historically informed diversity practices, are increasingly under scrutiny as these were traditionally developed to evade legal action and changes within the labour force (Barclay & Markel, 2008; F. S. Hall & E. L. Hall, 1994; Litvin, 2006). It is cultural diversity within organisations that has been at the root of many challenges within business ethics (Dunfee & Donaldson, 1995), along with defining the morality of leaders and the business activities that guide organisations (Six, de Bakker, & Huberts, 2007). Today there has been an improved understanding that diversity management and business ethics (Cox, 1991; Hood, 2003) entail more than abiding by laws and the avoidance of negative consequences (Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000; Wooten & James, 2005). Diversity is similar to business ethics in that it deals with ethical questioning, values, principles, norms, expectations, relationships and connectedness between individuals who coexist within a community (Pless & Maak, 2004).

According to Gilbert et al. (1999), diversity and business ethics have intersected when certain ethical considerations underpin the organisation's efforts to promote diversity. They have suggested that three principles prevail for diversity to succeed. The first principle, the Golden Rule or law of reciprocity, is grounded in various world religions and cultures and suggests treating others as one would like to be treated oneself. In the case of employees, fair treatment of all employees is critical for diversity initiatives to succeed (Chen, 2010; Fry, 2003; Kreitz, 2008; Mele, 2009; J. T. Whetstone, 2003). The second principle, the Disclosure Rule, asks the question of how one's actions could be interpreted by others and if others would find one's actions appropriate. Communicating diversity decisions transparently provides an opportunity for success and relationship development (Drake, Meckler, & Stephens, 2002; Manroop, 2014). Should initiatives not raise any concern about being communicated openly, then it could imply that the decisions are probably ethical.

Finally, the Rights Approach focusses on the respect for the individual's dignity and the rights to certain freedoms (Sen, 2005). It has accepted the moral autonomy within each individual to decide how he/she would like to live his/her life to reach his/her full potential (Gilbert et al., 1999).

In comparison to westernised organisations, the South African approach to diversity within government and business has largely been directed at redressing historical social inequalities experienced by designated groups<sup>13</sup>. Much criticism has been levelled at the government's attempts to play 'big brother' and the associated financial burden placed on taxpayers and businesses, because it legislates for redress to promote equal opportunity and remove discriminatory practices affecting black people, women and PWD (A. Thomas, 2002). Differences between individuals have commonly been presented as needing to be corrected through management rehabilitation, human resource practices and the application of employment equity legislation (Gida et al., 2007; Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000). This limited scope in many ways reflects society's medicalised approach to understanding disability and the management of unique individuals (Thomas & Hlahla, 2002) through harnessing ways of 'fitting' disability into diversity management (Darling, 2003), contrary to approaches that suggest embracing and extracting alternative value out of the complexities that diversity offers (Potts, 2005; Schur et al., 2005). Global and local businesses have failed equally in considering the importance of the ethical alternative for promoting diversity through the inclusion of PWD in the workforce. Management practices have met diversity with platitudes using a profit motivated business rationale (Cox & Blake, 1991) through attaining numerical targets and avoiding legal penalties (Sing, 2012; A. Thomas, 2003; Wiggett-Barnard & Swartz, 2012).

### **3.8. Tensions within the Business Case for Disability in Diversity**

The profitability of diversity has contributed to its popularity within businesses (Bhattacharyya, 2015). The attempts to make a case for diversity have remained challenging (Kulik, 2014) and originate from two distinct assertions. Firstly, the value in diversity hypothesis has suggested that increased diversity would result in improved profitability and behavioural changes by employees. It has posited that

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<sup>13</sup> "designated groups" means black people, women and people with disabilities (Republic of South Africa, 1998, p. 8)

increased diversity efforts would improve staff 'buy in' and would lead to better business performance (Litvin, 2006). Secondly, as indicated by Cox and Blake (1991), the legal, moral and social reasons for adopting diversity management have not been regarded as less advantageous than the business case where organisations seek benefits through reduced absenteeism (De Dreu & West, 2001), attract creative and innovative employees (Mierke, Rosier, & Schoeller, 2012; Parrotta & Pozzoli, 2014), attract customers who value diversity (J. S. Leonard, Levine, & Joshi, 2004), improve problem solving (Gilbert et al., 1999) and organisational flexibility (Doherty, Fink, Inglis, & Pastore, 2010). Investing for profitability has been well received but the gaps between rhetoric and research findings are apparent (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). The need to modify and look beyond the business case, as identified by Kochan et al. (2003) following their large-scale research on the effects of diversity on business performance, has required that more nuanced, systemic and long-term approaches be considered to draw true value from diversity.

Tensions within the business case for disability in diversity have occurred more recently, considering the constricted focus on the costs of accommodating disabled workers. The managerialist attitudes of businesses (J. Williams & Mavin, 2012) sideline the voices of those minorities who have been affected by diversity efforts (Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010). It has also been well established that less is known about the experiences of disabled workers who request accommodation than what managers feel about including PWD in the workplace (Balser & Harris, 2008; William, 2016). Traditional employer views have suggested that disabled workers require more time from managers and more resources to provide for their career progression; their productivity is lower and the financial impact of adapting the working environment is costly (Hernandez & McDonald, 2010; Kotze, 2009; Mansour, 2009; Robert & Harlan, 2006; Schur et al., 2009; Stone & Colella, 1996). Critical approaches to diversity have clarified the mechanisations, intent and outcomes of diversity management, but fail to meaningfully contextualise disability in diversity (Janssens & Zanoni, 2005). Rather than promoting integrative approaches, the business case has inherently sought maximising profit for the organisation. The unintended outcome of this rationale is the escalation of exclusionary practices in the workplace which has disenfranchised disabled workers (Barnes & Mercer, 2005). These typified approaches have granted privileges to able-bodied persons and promote ableist communities, and have placed an overly critical

view on workers with disabilities, with claims that any difference is too radical and troublesome to accommodate, when addressing task output (Woodhams & Danieli, 2000).

The cost-benefit analysis in employing PWD has reared its head in most inquiries related to disability in the workplace (Björk, 2009; Lysaght et al., 2012; Pawlukewicz, 2011; Scott-Parker & Zadek, 2001). In addition, research that has problematised the treatment and roles of PWD with a medical and moral lens, with limited or no consideration for context (Smart, 2009; Stone & Colella, 1996), is not helpful as it overstates disabled workers as limited individuals who struggle to complete work tasks (Vehmas & Shakespeare, 2013). While some studies that have promoted disability in diversity are directed at the various employment positions that PWD hold, research has shown that negative perceptions and biases exist towards the employment of disabled persons at all levels (McFarlin et al., 1991). Stone and Colella's model (1996) of rater perceptions and treatment of PWD has confirmed that beyond the individual's personal experience of disability in the workplace, co-workers impact the way the employers appraise the disabled employee's performance. The model has illustrated how co-workers negatively categorise and utilise stereotypes to produce conclusions about the traits and abilities of PWD, ultimately devaluing the contribution PWD offer to the diversity within the workplace. The business case for disability in diversity could be addressed far more comprehensively by minimising the focus on co-workers and managers that have characterised disabled workers negatively when organisations provide accommodation (Colella, 2001).

Diversity and disability studies, motivated by producing economic justification and supporting anti-discrimination efforts (Kochan et al., 2003), have made a slight inroad into management studies, although there has been insufficient engagement with disabled workers (Barnes, 1992). Studies have proposed fresh approaches to expanding the disability and diversity discourse within business (Barclay & Markel, 2008; Gotsis & Kortezi, 2013; Markel & Barclay, 2009; Thanem, 2008). The proposition to explore established ethical frameworks in diversity and the employment experiences of PWD, has provided one step further in support of the development of business ethics, diversity management and organisational research. Consequently, the possibility that improved diversity management and ethical practices would address the low employment, under-employment and stigmatisation

of PWD could be elevated (Cameron et al., 2004; Chun, 2005; Markel & Barclay, 2009; Thanem, 2008).

### **3.9. Embodying Disability in Diversity**

While the theoretical and conceptual understanding of disability within diversity studies gained impetus in the 80s (Barnes, 2012; M Oliver, 1986, 2013; Shakespeare, 1996; Swain & French, 2000), inquiry into disability and employment has followed a less steep gradient as it ushers into discussions, through business ethics and links to corporate social responsibility (Kulkarni & Kote, 2014; Markel & Barclay, 2009; Miralles et al., 2010; Ståhl, MacEachen, & Lippel, 2014), the evaluation of human resource practices (Benítez-Silva, 2010; Gida et al., 2007; J. Hall & Parker, 2010; Miceli et al., 2002; Scotch, 1988) and equity or diversity management portals (Phillips, Deiches, Morrison, Chan, & Bezyak, 2015; Shen et al., 2010; A. Thomas, 2003; Wooten & James, 2005). Approaches to embrace disability in diversity have largely reflected the understanding of the individual and social models of disability (M Oliver, 1990). The critique levelled at the existing models is welcomed because meaningful changes in employment and the integration of PWD in the workplace have yet to be successfully effected (M Oliver, 2013; Owens, 2015). Scholars have challenged the view that disability is primarily socially constructed which bodes well for the embodied understanding of disability to progress the disability discourse. Arguments have been made to support the notion that disability is not only reserved for the external social world, but is also to consider the lived and embodied experiences of impairment (Crow, 1996; D. Thomas, 2004). Understanding that not all bodily experiences affecting PWD are socially constructed has been critical in determining how disability would impact diversity (Corker & French, 1999).

Diversity scholars have more recently introduced an embodied approach to discussions informing disability in diversity. Thanem's (2008) embodying disability in diversity management research has paved the way for further enquiry into the need for more holistic ways of addressing disability. An embodied approach to disability has provided the opportunity to build on the interrogation of disability models (Swain & French, 2000; Vehmas & Shakespeare, 2013) in the field of diversity management. By introducing more encompassing views on disability in diversity, embodied approach research has created an important opportunity to contribute to

the sparse literature on disability in organisations. Thanem's research has raised questions relating to the critical omission of disabling factors linked to impairment, when promoting organisational diversity and the participation of PWD in the workplace (J. Williams & Mavin, 2012). An embodied approach has challenged static categorisations of disability and impairment within diversity and the notion of 'who [was] in and who [was] out', while problematising what disability and impairment means for real people (Swartz, van der Merwe, Buckland, & McDougall, 2012; Vickers, 2015). The two most prominent models have their detractors, where social model proponents argue that this approach could ignore the oppressive features of disability and the emphasis on bodily difference (Thomas et al., 1997) might create further divisions within the disability community (Oliver, 2013). Medical model advocates have contended that perceived limitations as impairments are reduced to subjective constructs (Smart, 2009). By introducing more embodied approaches to disability, diversity management, business ethics and management scholars, who have agreed that diversity has an ethical basis, need to consider reviewing the traditional approaches.

Thanem (2008) has contended that PWD manage their disability by engaging their environment with the understanding that disability occurs through social and bodily processes, caused by the body and social barriers. The embodied approach has provided an alternative, and challenges the notion of the 'passive victim' of circumstance and environment. This consideration, built on efforts like D. Thomas's (2004) re-orientation of the social model and similar arguments posed by other scholars, has re-introduced impairment as a central consideration within disability (Crow, 2007).

Although diversity has delivered certain benefits to organisations, its sole intention should not be instrumental gain. The satisfaction of participating meaningfully in work (Beadle & Knight, 2012) based on the obedience to laws and the consequentialist approaches of cost benefit analysis (Hernandez & McDonald, 2010) in diversity management, has throttled the possibility of developing all-embracing diversity initiatives. The employment of PWD and their personal experiences of employment should receive the same attention, if not more, than contemporary enquiries into gender, race and culture (Thanem, 2008). If ethical decision-making is believed to improve business performance, it might be worthwhile to further interrogate the contributions to the understanding of disability in diversity from the

various schools of thought within business ethics. It would beg the question of whether ethical theories are relevant for ethical leadership (Dion, 2012). In this light, Markel and Barclay (2009) have suggested that alternatives exist, drawing on the moral pillars of diversity and the inclusion of PWD in the workforce. In recent years the resurgence of virtue ethics has provided organisations with the opportunity to improve diversity management efforts through developing organisational virtue (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2013). Western scholars, in particular, and the application of virtue in ethical decision-making have drawn on Aristotelian frameworks. Barclay et al. (2012, p. 338) have most recently bridged disability, diversity and ethical decision-making in their research by comparing traditional human resource processes with those utilising a virtue theory framework, reflected in the Table 6.

Human Resource Process	Traditional approach <sup>14</sup>	Virtue Theory Framework
Recruitment	Jobs posted using one format Recruitment sources do not consider diverse populations Post non-discrimination statements	Postings in alternative formats Recruitment sources consider disability groups Make sure notices are accessible Include PWD in recruitment materials and organisational websites
Selection	Train interviewers not to ask discriminatory questions	Screening processes are sensitive to diverse populations and focus on behavioural assessment
Accommodation	Request accommodation Accommodation might be questioned Person may be isolated through accommodation	Request accommodation Company considers UD and improved work processes for all
Performance feedback	Poor performance attributed to disability Situational aspects of performance analysed	Development feedback provided

*Table 6. Comparison between Traditional Human Resource Processes and Virtue Theory Framework*

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<sup>14</sup> Traditional approaches are not inherently negative, however, the probability of negative outcomes occurring is more likely as the organisation falls into scripted routines

### 3.10. Aristotle's Virtues

Aristotle believed that developing the excellence of character, *arête* [virtue] was the means to achieve excellence in conduct or way of being in action [*energia*]. He argued in his ethical treaty, *Nichomachean Ethics*, that the person who possessed this excellence in character would do the right thing, at the right time and in the right way. He considered the highest aim of all human endeavours as living the good life and *eudaimonia* [happiness], where happiness was evident through constant human flourishing. He emphasised the practical nature of virtue, being experienced in the “actions pertaining to life” and being “brought up nobly by means of habituation” to become good (NE 1095a3 and b5). Aristotle made a distinction between moral virtues and intellectual virtues (Solopova, 2016). In his *Nichomachean Ethics*, intellectual virtues are described as states of character required for right action and right thinking (Sonntag & McDaniel, 2013) and the way that the *psuchē* [soul/ mind] concluded truth. These virtues are grouped further into three categories viz. theoretical, practical and productive. Theoretical virtues include *sophia* [wisdom] (Domanski, 2008), *episteme* [empirical knowledge] (Greenwood & Levin, 2005) and *nous* [reason] (Ayede, 1998). *Phronesis* or prudence represent practical wisdom, the ability to discern, based on experience of what is proper action (Blockley, 2015; Riggio et al., 2010), while *technē* is representative of skill/ art and the knowledge of craft (NE 1094a1). Whereas intellectual virtues are acquired through education and learning to be one's best self, moral virtues are about being a better person and the contribution to the greater good, achieved through habit and practice. Eleven moral virtues are described in *Nichomachean Ethics*; these include courage, moderation, liberality, magnificence, greatness of soul, ambition, gentleness, friendliness, truthfulness, wittiness, and justice (NE III). Prudence, courage/ fortitude, temperance/ moderation and justice are perceived to be Aristotle's cardinal virtues to which all the others are linked (Arjoon, 2010; Robson, 2015).

Aristotle distinguished between what he considered passions, faculties or traits of character that contributed to the constitution of the *psuchē* [soul/ mind]. He explained passions to encompass bodily appetites, emotions and pleasurable feelings and faculties to represent the naturally acquired things like sight (Arjoon, 2009). Virtues, therefore, were not of the same making as passions or faculties as they concerned a disposition towards feelings and actions and did not motivate us to meet

desires. This left virtues to be representative of states of character or traits (NE 1104b 15-30). Whereas values were considered guiding principles aimed at personal and social ends desired, virtues were practiced continuously (Riggio et al., 2010). For Aristotle, the purpose of ethics was not only to have knowledge of what was good, but to actually be in the habit of doing good things which contributed to the ends of the *polis* [community] (Bykova, 2016; Bharadwaj & Bhuyan, 2013; Crossan et al., 2013; Queiroz, 2015). Aristotle believed that doing the right thing depended on the details within context rather than the mere application of a law:

we are conducting an examination, not so that we may know what virtue is, but so that we may become good, since otherwise there would be no benefit from it (NE II.2)

Aristotle's doctrine of the mean situated virtue between two vices or extremes:

Virtue is also a mean with respect to two vices, the one vice related to excess, the other to deficiency; and further, it is a mean because some vices fall short of and others exceed what should be the case in both passions and actions, whereas virtue discovers and chooses the middle term. Thus, with respect to its being and the definition that states what it is, virtue is a mean; but with respect to what is best and the doing of something well, it is an extreme (NE 1107a1-5).

Thompson presented these virtues and vices (Table 7) in relation to the actions and passions (Aristotle, 1955, p.104).

## ARISTOTLE'S ETHICS

### TABLE OF VIRTUES AND VICES

SPHERE OF FEELING OR ACTIONS	EXCESS	MEAN	DEFICIENCY
Fear and Confidence	Rashness	Courage	Cowardice
Pleasure and Pain	Licentiousness/ Self-indulgence	Temperance	Insensibility
Getting and Spending (minor)	Prodigality	Liberality	Illiberality/ Meanness
Getting and Spending (major)	Vulgarity/ Tastelessness	Magnificence	Pettiness/ Stinginess
Honour and Dishonour (minor)	Vanity	Magnamity	Pusillanimity
Honour and Dishonour (major)	Ambition/ empty vanity	Proper ambition/ pride	Unambitiousness/ undue humility
Anger	Irascibility	Patience/ Good temper	Lack of spirit/ unirascibility
Self-expression	Boastfulness	Truthfulness	Understatement/ mock modesty
Conversation	Buffoonery	Wittiness	Boorishness
Social conduct	Obsequiousness	Friendliness	Cantankerousness
Shame	Shyness	Modesty	Shamelessness
Indignation	Envy	Righteous indignation	Malicious enjoyment/ Spitefulness

*Table 7. Aristotle's Ethics: Table of Virtues and Vices*

### 3.11. Aristotelian Virtue Ethics in Business

Solomon's acknowledgement of the failings within ethical leadership and scholarly endeavours resulted in the publishing of *Corporate Roles, Personal Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach to Business*, which has been instrumental in the invigoration and expansion of Aristotelian virtue ethics into business ethics (de Bruin, 2013; Shanahan & Hyman, 2003), organisational studies (Moore, 2012a), economics (Bruni & Sugden, 2013), diversity studies (Litvin, 2006), philosophy and psychology (Barclay et al., 2012; Goodwin, Piazza, & Rozin, 2014). His approach to business has highlighted social incompetency in organisations and maintains that businesses not make excuses to behave unethically under the amoral veil of business is business,

feeding their bottom line (Solomon, 2004). Although Solomon (1994) dissociated himself from MacIntyre's melancholic reverence of tradition and community, he nonetheless refined his position on modern corporations that seemingly represent such communities. He described corporations as real communities sharing a sense of *telos* [purpose] and made the point for further exploration of the nature of the virtues. Central to his argument was the insight that business was a practice, whereby individual business transactions and exchanges took place in a social context that was structured by certain rules, expectations and goals (King, 2001). The coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity, through which goals, internal to that form of activity, were realised within the workplace, and formed the framework through which Aristotelian virtues were exhibited (Beadle & Knight, 2012; Mintz & Mintz, 1996).

Subsequently, the value of virtues, as building blocks of individual and organisational character, was shaped by the work of various scholars (Ferrero & Sison, 2014) who focused on the following: corporate roles and virtues (Solomon, 1992), the case for virtue ethics (Boatright, 1995), agent based approaches (B. J. Dobson, 1995), the integration of virtue ethics into business schools' curricula (Mintz & Mintz, 1996), the morality of management in organisations and explanations for why and how moral people behaved within business (E. Hartman, 2013; E. M. Hartman, 1998), the application of virtues in business (Kristjánsson, 2014; J. Whetstone, 2001), contrasting corporate character and virtues and conceptions of culture and values (Moore, 2005a), virtue ethics scales classifying beliefs about virtuous business people (Racelis, 2013; Shanahan & Hyman, 2003), virtue character scales linking organisational virtue and organisational performance (Chun, 2005), ethical frameworks for decision-making by managers (Arjoon, 2009) based on values and character strengths which moved beyond the deontological and consequentialist evaluations of strategic and proximal decision-making scenarios (Crossan et al., 2013), virtue in relation to meaningful work (Beadle & Knight, 2012), virtue ethics as a resource in business (Audi, 2012) along with the critiques and critical assessments levelled against to the adoption of virtue ethics frameworks (Hayes & Dobson, 2013; King, 2001; Koehn, 1998).

Essentially an Aristotelian approach to business is underpinned by the conception of living the good life and achieving *eudemonia* [happiness] and the consideration for human connectedness and wellbeing that surpasses the Kantian deontology of right

action and the consequentialist ‘the ends justifies the means’ approaches (E. M. Hartman, 1998; Mintz & Mintz, 1996; Solomon, 2003, 2004). Virtues are practised with the dual purpose of nurturing individual wellness and serving the common good of the community or business (Mele, 2009). These acquired qualities reflect the excellence in *arête* [character] which enable individuals to achieve happiness (Solomon, 2004). Where diversity is concerned, virtuousness advances the moral good. Cultivating virtue could eliminate prejudice and conflict in diverse workplaces when human interactions are valued and directed at collective goals (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2013; Queiroz, 2015) considering that organisational virtue has a direct impact on diversity and performance (Ely & Thomas, 2001). Trust and empathy engendered within communities and the promotion of self-disclosure in nourishing communitarian workplaces provides the foundations for virtuous organisations (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2013). Chun (2005, p. 273) provides various authors’ understanding of the virtues and the associated character traits in an overview of the human and business virtues illustrated in Table 8.

Aristotle	Courage, temperance, liberality, magnificence, pride, good temper, friendliness, trustfulness, witness, shame, justice, honour, sincerity
Solomon (1992)	Basic business virtue (honesty, fairness, trust) Virtue of corporate self (toughness, friendliness, honour, loyalty, shame) Related traits (honesty, loyalty, sincerity, courage, reliability, trustworthiness, benevolence, sensitivity, helpfulness, cooperativeness, civility, decency, modesty, openness, cheerfulness, amiability, tolerance, reasonableness, tactfulness, witness, gracefulness, liveliness, magnanimity, persistence, prudence, resourcefulness, cool headedness, warmth, hospitality)
Solomon (1999)	Ability (effective, pride, confidence, dependability, competence, effectiveness), Acceptance, Ambition, Amiability (friendliness, agreeable), Articulatness (respected, concerned, serious, trust, loyalty, secure, caring, superior, focused, inspiring, sympathetic, helpful), Competitiveness (competitive, motivating), Contentment (controlling, reasonable, confident, cooperative), Courage, Creative (imaginative, innovative), Determination (persistent, dependent), Entrepreneurship (independent, corporate, technical), Fairness, Generosity (generous), Graciousness (competent, controlling, charming, relaxing), Gratitude, Heroism (leader), Honesty (honest, trust, condor), Honour (proud, respect), Humility (sharing), Humour (humorous), Independence, Dependable, Integrity, Justice, Loyalty (loyal, supportive), Passion (passionate), Responsibility (responsible) Saintliness, Shame, Spirit (spirited), Style (stylish, charming, elegant, attractive), Tolerance (peaceful) Toughness (tough), Trust (trustworthy, confident), Trustworthiness (patient, responsible), Witness, Zeal (enthusiastic, interesting)
Shanahan and Hyman (2003)	Empathy (compassion, caring, graciousness, attentiveness, amiability, generosity, humility, trust, contentment), Protestant work ethic (creativity, passion, competitiveness, entrepreneurship, charisma, ambition, autonomy, courage, independence, determination), Piety (saintliness, spirit, shame), reliability responsibility, trustworthiness, ability, articulateness, prudence), respect (cool headedness, tolerance, cooperativeness, humour), Incorruptibility (honour, honesty, integrity)

*Table 8. Various Conceptions of Virtuous Traits*

### **3.12. Virtuous Managers, Community and Disability**

Whetstone (2001) has described virtue as an internal, qualitative characteristic making up part of a person's character, spiritual in essence, and void of material or

biological substance. Virtue has been closely linked to values-based leadership with literature on values-based leadership describing values as the core beliefs and thoughts that leaders utilise as a moral compass when they make decisions (Russell & College, 2001). They are enduring beliefs about what behaviours are preferred, and are prioritised as one sought to achieve an external standard or code (Buchko, 1999). The prioritising of codes of good practice and meeting equity targets by business leaders could be questioned as the employment rates of PWD continue to decline, opening the way for the application of a virtue framework.

Proponents of virtue ethics have acknowledged that ethics within business encounter challenges of conjecture, pragmatism and application in real terms by managers in organisations (Whetstone, 2001). The manager plays a role in fulfilling the corporate purpose, as previously described by Koehn (1998), and is tasked with ensuring that the firm achieves its objectives and cooperation towards these objectives (Davis & Stazyk, 2016; Rego, Vitória, Magalhães, Ribeiro, & Cunha, 2013). In another sense the manager has the intrinsically moral task of building the community (Fujimoto, Rentschler, Edwards, & Härtel, 2014; C. Zehir, Muceldili, Altindag, Sehitoglu, & S. Zehir, 2014). E. M. Hartman (1998) and Solomon (2003) further amplified the sentiments of Aristotelians that ethics are about virtues of character, and through understanding character, one would make a better manager, from a moral point of view rather than simply subscribing to a set of principles (Gini & Green, 2014; Morales-Sánchez & Cabello-Medina, 2015). The virtues within business is further acclaimed by Moore (2015) who has argued that virtue plays a key role for managers in sustaining practices and humanising business (Beadle & Moore, 2006; Moore, 2005b, 2008, 2012b; Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2015), which eventually translates to organisational virtuousness as the actions of managers become characteristic of organisations on the whole (Cameron et al., 2004).

Whetstone (2001), through his explanation of how virtue fits into business ethics, proposed that virtue ethics that are equal and complimentary to moral reasoning are an important additive in the formation of human character for managers, based on a duty or values based justification. Aristotle emphasised the importance of the excellence in *arête* [character / virtue] in so much that the man (organisation) who displayed this excellence in character, did not follow what was popular, but instead did the right thing at the right time and in the right manner (Mintz & Mintz, 1996). According to Aristotle, each person was to consider him/herself as a member of a

broader community, the *polis*, and was to work towards excellence in refining him/herself and the contribution made to the common enterprise of the community (Dobson, 1995; Moore, 2005b; Solomon, 1992). Aristotle's application of his theory on household management and virtues has been applied successfully to management practices in modern corporations (MacIntyre, 1984; Moore, 2002, 2005b; Solomon, 2004). If businesses were to be all embracing communities, where humanity and compassion for others support diversity (Solomon, 2000), business leaders would accept PWD as members of the working community who contribute productively to the community endeavours (Robinson & Dechant, 1997). In addition, MacIntyre's (1984) call for a political society that focussed on the common good and the interests of the whole community has also resonated with disability scholars:

We are with Alasdair Macintyre when he calls for a form of political society in which it is taken for granted that disability and dependence on others are something that all of us experience at certain times in our lives and this to unpredictable degrees, and that consequently our interest in how the needs of the disabled are adequately voiced and met is not a special interest, the interest of one particular group rather than of others, but rather the interest of the whole political society, an interest that is integral to their conception of their common good" (Vehmas & Shakespeare, 2013, p. 46).

It has been argued that managers who value social justice and the integration of PWD, or whose personality characteristics predispose them to supporting or mentoring PWD, would have a strong influence on how organisations accept PWD in the workplace. These managers are in a position to alter the norms, values, character and culture of workplaces and facilitate the integration of PWD (Stone & Colella, 1996). Organisational culture in return primes the human resources processes and reinforces them.

Arjoon (2000) has challenged the conceptual divergence of business and ethics on the basis that the purpose of business is ethical business, and the tensions experienced by business and society result from the lacuna in ethical leadership. The dynamism of virtue theory, as a theory of business, has asserted that businesses might still profit when leaders adopt ethically motivated strategies and refute the traditional code of conduct and legislative compliance approaches as the best profit generating strategies. Although South Africa's equality laws, are in many instances,

different to those in the US and Europe, South Africa has experienced similar difficulties in enforcement and monitoring (McGregor, 2011). It has been accepted that legislation has played a vital role in eliminating unfair employment practices, but an over-reliance on it might negate the benefits of more holistic practices (A. Thomas, 2003). Corporate social responsibility, the corporation's pious "self-conscious corrective" (Bakan, 2005, p. 28) along with EE and Broad Based Economic Empowerment and Codes of Good Practice have become some of the tools used by managers in business for mandatory, rather than voluntary, redress of these imbalances (Esser, Ferrarini, Nelson, & Sjöberg, 2009). It has become apparent that South African managers have fallen back on local and international tools for promoting equality and have adopted a rights-based approach, geared towards meeting legislative imperatives. The declining numbers of PWD in meaningful employment has been an indication that this approach has its flaws. Arjoon (2000) has suggested that if individuals practise virtuous behaviour within organisations, there would be improved integration of persons with disabilities into the workplace. In order for the corporation to be a good community, it is to be an all embracing community (Solomon, 1994). PWD have experienced many barriers to full citizenship within corporate communities and are denied more opportunities in comparison to those who are not disabled (Almada & Renner, 2015; J. Hall & Parker, 2010). Solomon's rejection of the Darwinian approach of every man for himself has acknowledged that our identities gain meaning within communities and for most people, this is achieved through work in companies or institutions (Solomon, 1998). Holmqvist (2009), who investigated the employment of PWD, has reinforced the understanding that work practices are crucial for the development of self and the acquisition of various social roles. According to Solomon (1998), the emphasis placed on "rights" generally enters discussion, once harmony and community are scoured and presented as valid demands, rather than carefully discussed solutions.

### **3.13. Universal Design within a Virtue Framework**

As work plays a key role in many PWD's happiness, workplaces with cultures of UD offer opportunities for the creation of the "good life" (Dunn & Brody, 2008). It has been suggested that the design of an organisation's environment is neither inherently

virtuous nor not inherently virtuous (Cameron, 2003), but that the application of UD is consistent with a virtue theory approach that moves beyond the call for accommodation and inclusion, as promoted through the social model (Stone & Colella (1996). Accommodation has contributed to drawing unwelcome attention to PWD and further removes them from their colleagues (Imrie, 2012). Organisations that have developed a culture of UD in which barrier free workplaces are shaped, take everyone into consideration thereby reducing the focus on individual needs of accommodation (E. H. W. Chan, Lee, & Chan, 2009). UD is commonly associated with inclusive design, design for all, lifespan design and barrier free-design (Björk, 2009; Felix, 2005) and presents with various definitions where Mace’s definition (1997) is regarded as the most commonly accepted, as articulated further in Table 9 (Björk, 2009; Imrie, 2012; Joines, 2009):

universal design is the design of products and environments to be useable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design (Mace, 1997; p. 1).

Principles of Universal Design	
Principle one: Equitable use	The design is useful and marketable to people with a diverse range of abilities Provides the same means of use for all users
Principle two: Flexibility in use	The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities Provides choice of methods
Principle three: Simple and intuitive use	Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills and current concentration levels Eliminates unnecessary complexity
Principle four: Perceptible information	The design communicates the necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities
Principle five: Tolerance for error	The design minimises hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions Provides fail safe features
Principle six: Low physical effort	The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue Minimises sustained physical effort
Principle seven: Size and space for approach and use	Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility. Provides adequate space for the use of assistive devices

*Table 9. Principles of Universal Design*

The theoretical basis for UD has seldom been evaluated, but could be linked back to normalization theory (Wolfensberger, 1972), social role valorization theory (Nirje, 1985) and ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Normalization theory had its roots in the norms and standard setting for the welfare of mentally retarded persons in the 50s and called for the same opportunities to be presented to PWD, as those without disabilities. Social role valorization theory focused on the process of normalisation and the devaluing of individuals in society, and raised social awareness and the unification of all people towards accepting difference. Ecological systems theory acknowledged the societal influence on how humans develop within a micro, meso, exo and macrosystem, with its defined roles and rules for interactions between individuals and the environment (Nolan & Taylor, 2008).

Although UD has been considered to have traces of medical model underpinnings addressing inappropriate designs, it has, more specifically, directed its purpose in a people centred manner at issues of social inclusion and creating environments that facilitate freedom of movement and access through overcoming elements of society's structure that cause the suppression of human potential (Myerson, 2007; Skinner, 2008). UD is applied in architecture (Imrie, 2012; Joines, 2009), education (McGuire, Scott, & Shaw, 2006), recreation (Sherlock-Shangraw, 2013), technology (Björk, 2009; Riley-Huff, 2012; Zolna et al., 2007), transport and travel (Odeck, Hagen, & Fearnley, 2010) as well as municipal services and planning (Basas, 2013; Chan et al., 2009). UD in the workplace exists, (Nolan & Taylor, 2008) but has received far less attention in comparison to the need for specialised accommodation for people with various disabilities (Huang et al., 2016; William, 2016; Zolna et al., 2007). At the root of this accommodation is the inclusion of specific individuals or groups that has subsequently fostered a culture that devalues people as it tries to normalise their experiences. A pervasive culture of UD, in comparison, has sought to foster accessibility and full engagement of all citizens through its efforts (Nolan & Taylor, 2008).

### **3.14. Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the understanding that PWD in full community would experience *eudemonia* [happiness] and lower levels of stigmatisation in organisations that have higher levels of virtuousness. This

framework stands to elevate the experiences of PWD beyond that of the established medical model that locates a ‘problem’ within an individual. The power relations with those who have determined their disability limits the autonomy that PWD could express. Although the prominent social model has addressed the social construction of disability, the acknowledgment of Mike Oliver (2013) that it had not attended sufficiently to issues of impairment, illustrates its most basic flaw in not addressing the experiences of PWD. As indicated in Chapter 1, the research is aimed at understanding the experiences of persons with disabilities and therefore this study cannot ignore impairment as part of PWD experiences. Compliance related approaches by organisations have fallen squarely within social modelling, with limited impact on ensuring meaningful employment and addressing the underutilisation of PWD. Aristotle’s claim of human endeavours to achieve the good life, which was evident through human flourishing and connectedness, requires at its fundamental level, the practice of good actions in a habitual way. Many organisations have addressed the social barriers due to global attitudes, but seldom practice being good in all aspects of their business all the time. In the prevailing climate of promoting diversity, virtuousness could advance the moral good and, in return, reduce prejudice in the workplace. The role of managers remains critical in adjusting the norms, values, character and culture of workplaces, and their embracing virtue frameworks would not only require a move beyond eliminating socially constructed barriers, but would also direct attention to their characters.

Virtue theory is therefore a useful way in which to explore the employment experiences of PWD, in relation to management and its commitment to fostering a good all-embracing community (Barclay et al., 2012). The study is directed at highlighting the unique experiences of PWD, in relation to their lived experiences in engaging employment as a vital aspect of their lives. This exploration is ultimately geared towards assisting working communities to better understand disability in diversity and to provide benefits to organisations, society, and PWD.

## **Conclusion**

In cultures reliant on Western medicine, the objectifying of bodies has led to the negative and unequal power relations. Although the improved socio-relational understanding of disability has filtered into society, the medicalised understanding of

disability and its impact remain evident in the economy, where disability has been seen to represent inability and the need for financial assistance, rather than the ability to acquire wealth independently (Barnes & Mercer, 2005; Finkelstein, 2007; M Oliver, 1990). The rejection of medical diagnosis as the definitive explanation of disability has challenged the medical model's legitimacy in explaining disability, while the move to revise the social model has acknowledged the dissatisfaction of PWD and its ineffectiveness to bring about meaningful change. Increased organisational diversity elevates complexity requiring organisations to manage diversity better. Moving beyond profit seeking challenges the ethical decision-making that occurs in organisations. Historically, theories and practices have informed diversity practices that are directed at minimising possible penalties for failure to act in a fair way. Research objectives for disability in organisations need to be addressed to include the various theoretical voices (J. Williams & Mavin, 2012). Existing models of disability have been challenged and the proposal for an embodied approach within diversity has paved the way for further inquiry into the experiences of disabled workers (Barclay et al., 2012; Thanem, 2008). Virtue ethics in this regard has been considered in a meaningful way to address the failings of other models. The modern-day resurgence of Aristotelian virtue ethics in business is underpinned by the conception of living the good life and achieving *eudemonia* [happiness]. For businesses as communities to embrace all members equally, they should view PWD as productive contributors to the communities' common good (Barclay & Markel, 2008; Beadle & Moore, 2006; Solomon, 1992). Organisations utilising a virtue theory framework experience benefit both the organisation and society, as positive work experiences for persons with disabilities move beyond satisfying the needs of selected individuals and offer opportunities for the creation of the "good life".

The following chapter details the *Research Methodology* employed. The research design along with the methods utilised are discussed. The research strategy detailing the rationale for adopting case studies in this qualitative study is explained. The research methods, sampling, data collection and analysis are detailed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the rigor, ethics and limitations of the study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study aimed to explore the employment experiences of PWD. The two key objectives were:

- to understand the experiences of PWD
- to propose a conceptual model as an alternative framework when exploring the experiences of PWD by addressing the following research questions:
  1. How do PWD experience the employment process?
  2. How do PWD acclimatise and acculturate in organisations?

This chapter elaborates on the research design used to answer the research questions. Drawing on the principles of architectural design, research design has been described as a “blueprint” to guide researchers to design and conduct a study while providing a picture of the final outcome (Scarduzio, Giannini, & Geist-Martin, 2011). According to Yin (1994, p. 19) “every type of empirical research has an implicit, if not explicit, research design”. Good research design has been considered as a real entity where its components work harmoniously together to ensure successful functioning, rather than representing a rigid plan to follow blindly (Maxwell, 2008). This chapter discusses the research paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The research strategy and rationale for case studies are discussed followed by the research methods used to gather and interpret the data. The chapter concludes with a discussion of validity, ethics and limitations of the study.

#### **4.1. Research Paradigm**

A researcher makes knowledge claims, at the start of a project, with some assumptions about the learning that is to occur during an inquiry. Knowledge claims have been described as paradigms or epistemologies and ontologies or broad methodological approaches (Creswell, 2003; Crotty, 1998). The philosophical underpinnings of a study are attributed to by adopting a social constructivist lens where social constructivists attempt to gain a better understanding of the world they live and work in by developing subjective meanings of their experiences (Creswell, 2003). Constructivism suggests that truth is a matter of perspective while not

altogether rejecting some idea of objectivity (Baxter & Jack, 2008). For constructivists, “the aim of inquiry is understanding and reconstruction of the constructions that people (including the inquirer) initially hold, aiming toward consensus but still open to new interpretations as information and sophistication improve” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 113). Close collaboration with the study participants, allowed for their voices to be heard, and provided the researcher with an opportunity to listen to the stories of real people in real circumstances in their specific realities. The opportunity to hear people’s stories has been considered a key advantage for constructivists (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Lincoln has described the voice of the researcher as a “passionate participant” who is actively engaged in developing a multi-voice reconstruction of his or her own construction as well as those of the participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 115). The goal of inquiry is to “rely as much as possible on the participants’ views of the situation studied” (Creswell, 2003, p. 8). It was through the stories of participants and their description of their individual realities that the researcher could better comprehend their actions (Robottom & Hart, 1993). Social constructivists address the specific contexts in which others live and work to understand these settings, and acknowledge their own personal backgrounds’ influence on shaping their interpretations. The intent of this study was to interpret the meaning PWD ascribed to the world they lived in, through developing a pattern of meaning (Creswell, 2003).

#### **4.2. Research Strategy**

Practical considerations or strategies defining the inquiry were made, along with the philosophical underpinnings which guided the procedures adopted in the research design. Qualitative case study, as an approach, provided me with the opportunity to “explore a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544). Qualitative research presented the opportunity to explore and understand the employment experiences of PWD. It was expected that various stages of inquiry would be attended to, as participants engaged in the study (Anderson, Leahy, Delvalle, Sherman, & Tansey, 2014; Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002).

#### **4.2.1. Rationale for a Case Study Approach**

I adopted a case study approach to explore the experiences of disabled employees, with the unit of analysis in the study being employed PWD in 12 organisations. Two key proponents of case study, Stake (1995) and Yin (1994), used this methodology with different methods to explore topics and reveal their essence. The approach by both was based on a constructivist paradigm (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). Yin (1994) defined a case study as an empirical inquiry that interrogated phenomenon in real life context where the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not easily identified. Stake (2006, p. 1) described cases as “special” and accounted for as “things”, “an entity” and “rarely verbs” or “a functioning”. As qualitative case study originated from studying the experiences of real cases immersed in real situations, it was suitable as a design to explain the real-life employment experiences of PWD. It was within the cases that the prospect of examining functioning arose. The cases became the showground on which functions and relationships were accumulated to be observed (Stake, 2006).

According to Yin (2009), case studies were the preferred method when (a) “how” and “why” questions were to be investigated, (b) the investigator was unable to issue control over events or direct the behaviour of study subjects, and (c) the focus was on a present-day phenomenon within an authentic context. Case studies allowed for explanatory insights to come to the fore through the description of specific cases (Babbie, 2010). It was considered a major purpose of social scientific studies, whereby the researcher observed and then described what had been observed (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Bryman & Bell, 2007). The qualitative understanding of cases necessitated being familiar with the activity of the case within its contexts and specific circumstances. The circumstances were anticipated to influence the activity, along with the familiarity and understanding of the activity (Stake, 2006).

Guba and Lincoln (1981) contended that case studies were ideal for reporting information as they provided thick descriptions of events in a grounded manner and simplified data for easy interpretation and communication of knowledge. As a strategy, it concentrated on the interactions within a single setting (Eisenhardt, 1989) where the interactions allowed me to recognise cases as integrated systems (Stake, 2006) with the opportunity to investigate complex social problems within organisations (Yin, 2009).

Cases could be vigorous and have an “inside” and “outside” where a few of the “outside” features assist with defining the context and environment of the case (Stake, 2006, p. 3). The case study enquiry relied on multiple sources of evidence with data being converged through triangulation while drawing on prior theoretical developments to guide both collection and analysis (Yin, 2009). Only certain features of a case were studied thoroughly as the researcher attempted to capture the experience of the activity. A case operates in real time, encounters obstacles and interacts with other cases; it plays different roles as it moves through different life stages. Only one stage might be observed, while history and what lay ahead are also drawn into the context. I relied on a personal understanding of the activity and experience of the case to answer the research questions (Stake, 2006).

#### **4.2.2. Unit of Analysis**

In determining the research question, consideration was given to what a case would represent. Miles and Huberman (1994) contended that the case represented the unit of analysis as a phenomenon occurring within a confined context. They considered the unit of analysis to be that which the inquirer directed attention at; it was the centre of the study. The unit of analysis determined the case and was related to the research question and the what or who the researcher wanted to draw conclusions from, at the completion of the study (Ginige, Amaratunga, & Haigh, 2010). To determine the unit of analysis, I followed the recommendations of Miles and Huberman (1994) and asked questions related to whether the analysis was directed at individuals, programmes, processes or differences between organisations. To delineate the case, the proposed unit of analysis was discussed with my supervisor and fellow research students, as suggested by Yin (2009). A key component of this process was deciding what a case would not be. Time and activity were utilised as restrictors to bind the case to contain the scope of the study (Creswell, 2003; Stake, 1995). Determining the restrictions was similar to the use of inclusion or exclusion criteria in quantitative studies, except in this study, the boundaries referred to the depth and breadth of the study. The unit of analysis was thus determined as employed PWD who represented the prime source of data to draw conclusions from, using their experiences of employment (Babbie, 2010; Yin, 2009).

### 4.2.3. Type of Case Study

After the research question, the case/unit of analysis and its boundaries were established, I considered the nature of the case study to be undertaken. Yin (2003) determined cases to be explanatory (used to explain casual links in complex real-life interventions), exploratory (used to explore situations where an intervention is evaluated with no clear, single set of outcomes) or descriptive (used to describe interventions and the real-life context it occurs in). He further distinguished between single and multiple-case studies with “either a single unit of analysis (holistic) or multiple units of analysis (embedded)” (Ginige et al., 2010, p. 8). Stake (1995) labelled case studies as intrinsic (where researchers have an intrinsic interest in a subject specific to a unique situation), instrumental (the intent of researcher is to understand a specific situation) or collective (similar to a multiple case study). As the study contained more than one case, a multiple-case/ collective study approach was adopted which allowed me the opportunity to perform an analysis within and across each setting.

In a collective case study, the single case is important as it forms part of a certain collection of cases. Individual cases might share the same characteristics or conditions (Stake, 2006). Stake (2006) identified case study problems to be mirroring complex, situated and problematic relationships. He considered the value of a case study to be in how researchers were required to consider “foreshadowed problems” (Stake, 2006, p.10) and to concentrate on theme-related observations, interpret patterns of data, and reformulate the themes as findings and assertions. A multiple case design was preferred over a single case study design because single case study design generally involved the unusual or rare case, the critical testing of theory, and revelatory cases, while the evidence from multiple cases study design could be more persuasive and robust when explaining the experiences of disabled employees (Yin, 2009). Stake (2006) considered cases within a collection to be bound together categorically and described this grouping as the “quintain”; it was the arena for the cases to be studied. He noted that multiple case research started with the quintain and to better understand it, the researcher studied some of the single cases and their similarities and differences. A case study protocol was developed to include four broad areas describing the purpose of the protocol, data collection procedures, outline of the case study report and the case study questions, to improve the

reliability of the data collection process (Yin, 2009). This design further supported my intent to improve the methodological rigour of the study. Yin (1994) proposed between six to eight cases for theoretical replications and three to four for literal replication. This study consisted of 12 cases.

### **4.3. Research Methods**

#### **4.3.1. Selection Procedure**

The selection of cases focused on employed PWD. Researchers have considered selection to be a feature of research that is ongoing and guided by theory, reflection and judgments which emerges over the course of a study (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Case study, as a design, suited purposeful selection, as the intent of the study was to gain information rich data (Patton, 2002). The selection process commenced with cases that were already in some way known to me, which gave me a critical understanding of the phenomena that contributed to how the participants were selected (Stake, 2006). All participants were sent an invitation to participate (Appendix 1) with the details of the study (Appendix 2). On their agreement to participate, a subsequent organisational request form was sent to their employers (Appendix 3), followed by telephonic discussions where further clarity was requested. The final selection was based on 12 cases that were identified where organisational consent was received. The first case was conducted as a pilot study, followed by the second to address any challenges in the protocol and data collection procedures. Although Stake (2006) cautioned that the usefulness of a collective study was limited when fewer than four or more than ten cases were chosen, it was believed that this approach would improve the research rigor. The complexity within disability and the limited cross disability studies were also believed to justify the selection and inclusion of all 12 cases.

#### **4.3.2. Challenges**

While case studies have required flexibility in approach (Yin, 2009), accessing disabled employees for this study was challenging. Although I believed that the study would benefit both PWD and their employers, the initial responses for participation were slow. On reassessment of the selection of participants, I sought feedback from those who initially declined the invitation to participate. Their

responses suggested that the nature of the study had made some employers reluctant to allow them to participate, because of the perceived risk to the organisation's reputation. The social visibility of the population created a challenge to accessing the participants, even though I knew where possible participants were located (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981).

As someone who worked within the disability sector, I informed various rehabilitation agencies of the study and they informed their networks. The responses were also slow, but where I received active leads, I employed snowballing as an additional means of selection. Snowballing allowed for participants to refer other experts where I had difficulty accessing suitable participants, due to reputational and privacy concerns (Shafie, 2010). Employing this method was effective in locating members within a "special population" as the study was directed at a "sensitive issue" (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997, p. 792). At times, contact with participants occurred fortuitously through the work I was involved in. Although not "entirely a process of chance"; I grew attentive to information related to the study allowing my "prepared mind" to take "maximum advantage" of the opportunities that arose (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981, p. 148).

#### **4.3.3. Final Selection**

The final selection included all 12 cases. Each case's selection was based on the participant's intimate knowledge of living with disability and employment (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). All 12 cases met the requirements, as suggested by Stake (2006, p. 23), regarding the relevance to the "quintain", as they offered sufficient "diversity across contexts" and provided "good opportunities to learn about complexity and contexts". I included cases based on their potential to explore how participants' experiences played out in different environments. Cases were discussed with my supervisor and considered based on what could be learnt from them and their contexts. I remained aware of how accessible participants would be, so they would be able to spend the most time with me (Stake, 2006). The participants consisted of ten men and two women; five coloured; four African and three white; the youngest was 23 and the oldest 55 at the time of the study. The selection was considered diverse and sufficient to address the research question adequately. The manageable size allowed me to achieve depth in the interviews and allocate meaningful time for

observations (Yin, 2009). The participants had varying conditions of employment and impairments, which provided ideal opportunities to gain an intimate understanding of each participant's experience of employment in a different context. Their diversity in impairments created opportunities to consider the impact across a range of participant experiences. A profile of participants is presented in Table 10.

Name	Age	Gender	Race	Qualifications	Relationship	Duration Employed	Impairment	Onset	Cause	Period Disabled
Wandile	35	Male	African	Degree	Cohabiting	2 years	Paraplegia	Late onset	MVA <sup>15</sup>	2.5 years
Saliem	23	Male	Coloured	ABET	Single	15 months	Cognitive	Congenital	Unknown	23 years
Simphiwe	23	Male	African	2nd year Diploma	Single	8 months	Paraplegia	Early	Viral infection	23 years
Peter	40	Male	White	Degree	Single	1 year 5 months	Quadriplegia	Late onset	MVA	25 years
Thandeka	25	Female	African	ABET	Single	1 year 2 months	Visually impaired	Congenital	Unknown	25 years
Gerhardus	55	Male	White	Diploma	Married	15 years	Paraplegia	Late onset	Viral infection	55 years
Johannes	38	Male	White	Degree	Married	2 years	Hard of hearing	Late onset	Viral infection	2 years
Rafique	45	Male	Coloured	Post Graduate	Single	13 years	Paraplegia	Late onset	MVA	18 years
Mikail	36	Male	Coloured	Diploma	Single	5 years	Deaf	Congenital	Unknown	36 years
Francois	45	Male	White	Degree	Single	7 years	Paraplegia	Late onset	MVA	20 years
Claude	40	Male	Coloured	Degree	Single	6 months	Blind	Congenital	Cataracts	40 years
Shannon	57	Female	Coloured	Diploma	Single	2 years	Blind	Late onset	Viral infection	30 years

Table 10. Participant Profile

#### **4.3.4. Data Collection**

The methods employed to collect data formed a key component of the study so as to address the research questions (Creswell, 2003). To a large degree, researchers observe as much as possible for themselves and, at times, rely on others' observations and records. It was essential for me to find out first-hand what participants were involved in and how they functioned. Case individuals were observed in their own working environments to address the research questions aimed at understanding their experiences of work, as their context had an influence on their activities (Stake, 2006). The research methods included semi-structured interviews and field notes, as the primary sources of data, an exploration of organisational policy documents, and the observation of participants in their working environments. I collected biographical and medical details and provided a more detailed introduction to the study during the semi-structured interviews. The interviews were recorded on a digital recording device in MP3 format with the permission of participants. I followed a specific protocol and ensured that data was collected first hand and accurately. Records of the interviews, recordings and transcriptions were stored electronically (Gochros, 2008). I also documented all contact with participants, including telephonic and e-mail correspondence, which added to the context of the study. Where the participants were further observed in their workplace, I captured observations and further input from participants by taking additional field notes. Semi-structured interviews allowed for the initial face-to-face interviews to be conducted and for telephonic follow up interviews to occur where participants were not readily available. This was considered to be acceptable by Sturges and Hanrahan (2004, p. 116) who explained that researchers "whose research depends on close interaction in the environment of the respondent might supplement face-to-face interviews with telephonic contact, but most of the data will be collected by often lengthy face-to-face interviews". Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggested that interviews were justified data collection methods due to their affinity with real life conversations. The importance was placed on interactions and the exchanges and negotiation of meaning that occurred between interviewer and interviewee which corresponded with constructivist approaches to research.

#### **4.3.5. Biographic and Medical Data**

Participants were informed of the requirement to collect biographical and medical details related to their disability, as part of the conversation, at the start of interviews. This information was gained before progressing with the more formal part of the interview. In some cases, participants shared additional medical records that they felt they wanted to share like X-rays or doctors' letters. This information was shared voluntarily with me, to the extent where participants felt comfortable, which contributed to providing further context, as reflected in the participants' profiles in Table 10.

#### **4.3.6. Rationale for using Interviews as the Primary Source of Data Collection**

Interviews, as a common form of collecting data, allow for a deep level of interaction with participants. To gain insight into the experiences of participants, researchers are required to listen, reflect and articulate the experiences of participants – to make sense of their daily existence (Greeff, 2005; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Qualitative interviews grant further credibility to a study, as they allow for specific questions to be asked with the necessary malleability which enable the interviewer to explore points of interest which arise. Interviews also contribute to the process by limiting the opportunity for misinterpretation of participants' inputs as clarity can be sought immediately (Silverman, 2000). The choice of interviewing, as a method, suited the case study design. It allowed for face to face dialogue to answer "how" questions, introduced topics that were contemporary and required the researcher to bring the context into focus (Mason, 2002; Yin, 2009). The interviews created the opportunity to get closer to participants, to intimately engage with and understand the world around them (Rowley, 2000). I also used interviewing as it was a common experience to everyone, a part of everyday life in some way. I believed that participants would be able to draw on their past experiences, as a means of managing their expectations, therefore they would be more comfortable to express themselves through dialogue (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

#### **4.3.7. Form of Qualitative Interview**

Semi-structured interviews have been a commonly used method for collecting data in qualitative studies (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). Even though semi-structured interviews could be administered through written questionnaires, electronically or telephonically, I chose face-face interviews as the primary means of collecting data because my presence could provide structure to the interview situation, and I could discern any discomfort experienced by participants and offer emotional support or breaks where necessary (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The semi-structured interviews involved the use of pre-selected questions and created the flexibility for me to enquire further, for the purposes of gaining clarity. A guide was used to ensure that the same key questions were asked of all participants and that the data gathered would be similar in nature (Berg, 2009). I remained open to altering the order and wording of questions to spontaneously respond to and explore issues that arose. I omitted questions that were inappropriate for specific participants and introduced additional questions where necessary (Power, Campbell, & Kilcoyne, 2010).

The interviews were conversational in style and at the start, I gained the biographical and medical details, and answered any questions participants had (Patton, 2002). The purpose and intention was to build rapport with the participants to gain perspective through their stories. Where any assumptions and knowledge were shared with the researcher, these laid the foundation for discussing the responses of participants (Johnston, Weaver, Smith, & Swallow, 1995). One of the advantages of the face-to-face interviews was being able to observe participants' gestures, facial expressions and non-verbal communication which enhanced the meaning of their spoken words (Knox & Burkard, 2009). Participants were inclined to freely disclose their experiences as they felt more at ease, which was more challenging during telephonic follow ups (Shuy, 2003). I introduced new elements such as organisational policy documents where the opportunity arose and guided participants into their role as informants. I refrained from giving advice or delivering judgement, and bore in mind that my main task was to understand the meaning of what participants said (Dennis, 2014; Kvale, 1996).

Appendix 5 lists the type of questions used in the interviews. Its foundation was the use of grand tour questions, informed by what Leech (2002, p. 667) described as "The single

best question I know for semi structured interviews”. The interview questions were divided into three interchangeable categories drawn from Spradley (1979). Descriptive questions were divided into a further five types and were used as a means of eliciting an ongoing sample of the participant’s language. “Grand tour questions” were utilised to draw out participants’ stories about their broad experiences. “Mini tour questions” were similar to “grand tour questions”, but were aimed at eliciting descriptions of a specific activity. “Example questions” were used to obtain concrete examples of activities or occurrences while “experience questions” were aimed at a specific time period. “Native-language questions” were used to gain clarity on the words used by participants (Westby, 1989, p. 4-5). Structural questions were used to understand how participants organised their knowledge, and contrast questions were used for discovering the dimensions of meaning participants used to distinguish between events in their life.

The openness of the questions created ample opportunities for reflections and pauses, without being hasty to address the questions that followed, increasing the vivacity and depth of responses. I also used techniques to stimulate or encourage participants to provide data, specific to a topic like Stake (2006, p. 31), who observed that “an interview should be less about the interviewee than about the case and of the most effective techniques, include the use of probes where certain materials are used to elicit comment or interpretation”. At times, I shared documents like international disability specific conventions with participants to gain further insight into their experiences. De Leon and Cohen (2005, p. 200) found that adding material and object probes to the most common verbal probes, like the “silent probe”, the “echo probe”, the “uh-huh” probe, the “tell me more” probe created a more person-centred interview. Throughout the interviews I continuously sought to improve rapport by repeating explanations, restating participants’ responses and asking questions directed at use, rather than meaning (C. Westby, Burda, & Mehta, 2003).

#### **4.4. Data Gathering Sequence**

##### **4.4.1. Pilot Case**

According to Yin (2009), several reasons, including some unrelated to the final selection criteria, might facilitate the use of a pilot case. In this study, the use of a pilot case was

beneficial in that it allowed me to evaluate how I intended to collect data and it determined the usefulness of the procedures I was to employ with other cases. The pilot case was familiar to me and presented an opportunity to address a case with a sensory impairment, something I had anticipated would pose communication challenges. As mentioned previously, familiarity influenced the selection of the pilot case, which allowed for less formality and a longer period of contact than what was possible with the other cases. I observed the participant over two separate days; the interview took place throughout the first day and consisted of two face-to-face interview sessions. On the second day, I returned to observe further. Ambiguities, the clarification of questions, possible omissions and logistical issues were addressed within the pilot case (Noor, 2008). It also provided an opportunity to review the processes, resources and management techniques I had employed (Thabane et al., 2010). The case was written up and documented with the addition of my personal experiences of conducting the case. The pilot data was shared with my supervisor who offered insight into the foundational issues that were addressed. The information was assessed in relation to the relevant literature so that the final design would draw upon both the existing understanding and new empirical views (Yin, 2009). It was decided to include the pilot in the full selection due to the richness of the data, and after confirmation with my supervisor, the interview was reasonably comparable to the later interviews.

#### **4.4.2. The First Interview**

After conducting the pilot case, I arranged the interviews with participants at their workplaces. With all the interviews, except for two, I was introduced to the Head of Human Resources prior to commencing the interview. I introduced myself formally to the organisation representative and confirmed consent, again, to conduct the interviews. The face-to-face interviews lasted between one and two hours. The two-hour, face-to-face interviews took place where participants were immobile and had requested to remain in a central venue. Where participants requested to move through their environments, the interviews progressed as we moved. Upon returning to the initial meeting venue, we concluded the interview with further questions. I remained aware of participants' time and their work commitments, ensuring to check whether they felt they

needed to return to work. I then observed participants from a comfortable distance for about another two hours.

#### **4.4.3. The Follow Up**

Not all participants were available for further interviews. Where participants agreed, I returned within a month to observe them for between two and four hours. In two of the cases, the time exceeded two hours as the interviews were interrupted by the participants having to attend confidential meetings. I also used the opportunity to confirm that my initial transcriptions were an accurate account of the face-to-face interviews. Where telephonic follow-ups occurred, the interactions were briefer and did not last longer than 20 minutes.

#### **4.4.4. Interpreting the Data**

After the data was collected a decision was to be made about how to analyse the information gathered (Spradley, 1979). As people experience many things simultaneously, I was aware that my thoughts and observations would encompass the scanning of many happenings, variables and contexts. I examined different settings looking for “correspondence”, things happening together, that correlated and where repeated correspondence was evident, I could make sense of the “interactivity” of the cases (Stake, 2006, p. 28). I maintained a strict chain of evidence within the analytical process (Yin, 1981) relying on inductive thematic analysis. As a process, this required the comprehension of textual data, identification of themes, coding and interpretation of the structure and content of the themes (Babbie, 2010).

The process of analysing the interview data observed the six-step framework, as suggested by Coleman and Unrau (2008). Initially I prepared the data through transcribing the interviews. The written text was a verbatim transcription of the audio files which allowed me to stay close to the data, allowing for meaning to emerge. I removed all the personal information of the participants to protect their identities. During the process, I used QSR NVivo 10, a qualitative analysis software programme, to organise the audio files, transcribe each interview and analyse the transcriptions. After organising and transcribing the data, I read each interview twice more and made notes

with interest points. The points of interest were arranged in a mind map to keep track of my thoughts in relation to the data. I implemented an inductive or “bottom up” approach where pre-existing codes were used, instead of identifying patterns that were repeated. A code essentially captures the “nature or character of the data” (Fletcher, Macphee, & Dickson, 2015, p. 5). At this point, the initial coding identified a sequence of meaning units/patterns or codes by identifying commonalities between the codes (Aronson, 1994). I then followed this with organising and reorganising the codes as necessary. I continually compared the codes, and those that were very similar were integrated and categorised together. I then identified commonalities and deviations, as a second level of coding, between categories which illustrated relationships that could exist. Once I had collated the data, I interpreted it by means of a conceptual classification system, to determine the relationships between the major themes that emerged. Participant feedback on the organising of themes was requested. The final stage of the framework addressed validity as discussed in the analysis report below.

#### **4.5. Analysis Report**

The analysis and reporting on data collated from case studies are challenging because of the complexity within case studies, as Baxter and Jack concurred (2008, p. 555), “[i]t is difficult to report the findings in a concise manner, yet it is the researcher’s responsibility to convert complex phenomenon into a format that is readily understood by the reader”. The analyses of data, based on the interviews, biographical information, observations and review of organisational documents, are presented in Chapter 5, which details the Case Introductions, and in Chapter 6, which introduces the three themes that emerged overall as illustrated in Table 11. The first theme, *Factors Influencing Employment* captured the experiences of PWD during the periods where they were seeking (re)employment. Their experiences relating to accessing employment were analysed, as well as their experiences of the barriers to employment encountered. The second theme *Inclusion in the Workplace* analysed the experiences of PWD during their integration into the workplace and the challenges faced around disclosing their disability. It also dealt with the concept of ‘normality’ within the working experiences of the participants. The third theme, *Accommodation in the Workplace*, analysed the

participants’ work experiences related to accommodation and the importance of assistive technology and personal support, along with the organisational practices that either promoted or inhibited accommodation.

<b>CATEGORIES / THEMES</b>		
Factors influencing Employment	Early Experiences of Inclusion at the Workplace	Accommodation in the Workplace
<b>SUB-CATEGORIES / MINI THEMES</b>		
Pre-employment Experiences	Induction and Orientation	Requesting Accommodation
Access to Employment	Disclosure of Disability to Co-workers	Assistive Technology
Environmental Barriers to Work	Striving for Normality	Personal Assistance
	Early Acceptance in the Workplace	Organisational Practices
	Frustration and Vulnerability in the Workplace	

*Table 11. Outline of Analysis*

#### **4.6. Validity**

“All field work done by a single field-worker invites the question, why should we believe it?” (Bosck, 1979, p. 193). Qualitative researchers have claimed various conventional frameworks to be unique to qualitative studies to ensure the validity within the methodologies used (Shenton, 2004). Guba and Lincoln’s (1981) construct proposed four main criteria that must be met to defend the trustworthiness of a study, including credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Amankwaa, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Maxwell (2013) instead suggested that mastering understanding was an

imperative for qualitative research before addressing issues of validity. He considered validity to be a derivative of understanding gained from qualitative inquiry. Maxwell (2013, p. 124) argued further that qualitative researchers were exposed to two broad threats to validity, “researcher bias, and the effect of the researcher on the individuals studied, often called reactivity”.

#### **4.7. Researcher Bias**

Validity was not ensured merely through adopting processes; it was also required to lend credibility to the conclusions drawn. Miles and Huberman (1994) considered the two threats, relating to researcher bias, as the subjective selection of data that suited the theoretical groundwork and goals of the researcher, and the selection of data that were topical and elevated specifically by the researcher. Williams, Unrau and Grinell (2008) cautioned researchers in this regard and emphasised the awareness that researchers were to maintain in being able to determine whether their conclusions could be considered truthful or not. Maxwell (2013, p. 124) suggested that the explaining of biases offered researchers some reprieve in validating the outcomes of a study. He explained, though, that it was impossible to manage these issues through “eliminating the researcher’s theories, beliefs and perceptual lens”.

Three methods were embedded in my approach to address researcher bias. The interviews were intensive and observations occurred over different time periods, allowing for a “rich description” of events to be collected (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991, p. 615). Two methods utilised throughout the data collection included intensive interviews, along with long periods of observation, which were conducive to collecting rich data and relied on verbatim transcriptions and descriptive note taking (Maxwell, 2013). I maintained contact with the participants and all transcriptions were returned to participants for comments. I also verified my observations of the participants through sharing these with them. Where the opportunity presented itself within the interviews or observations, I asked for the participants’ opinions on whether my observations of their interactions with others and the environment were accurate (Baxter & Jack, 2008). As a form of member-checking, the second interviews and calls presented an opportunity to receive feedback on the constructions I had formulated, based on the data collected

(Donnelly et al., 2010). Throughout the study, I used triangulation as another means of addressing validity. Triangulation is the process of gaining assurances of what the researcher had seen and heard to keep misunderstandings to a minimum, thereby validating the researcher's sense of the situation, the observations and reporting. At a minimum, at least three confirmations were required to attest that key meanings were not being overlooked or misinterpreted. It was a process of repeated data collection and critical review of what had been said (Stake, 2006). The process included various perceptions to illuminate meaning, as well as to confirm the repeatability of an observation or interpretation. As no observations or interpretations could be repeated with perfect synchronicity, triangulation also contributed to clarifying meaning through presenting different ways for the case to be seen (Flick, 2002). Throughout the data collection and analysis, I had regular discussion sessions to debrief and to review the data collection and analysis methods with my research supervisor (Flick, 2002). Upon entering the field, I also ensured that I was familiar with the relevant policy documents relating to the employment of PWD, to gain an informed understanding of the culture of the workplace. Throughout the study, I returned to the existing literature to validate what I had seen and heard (Rowley, 2000).

#### **4.8. Reactivity**

Maxwell (2013) suggested that it is impossible to remove any influence a researcher has on informants. In this regard, being actively involved within the disability sector, I remained cautious to not express my personal opinions about the employment conditions I observed. I avoided asking leading questions and constantly repeated participants' responses to ensure their views were reflected. As I considered myself to be an ally of PWD, and with working within the disability sector, I was conscious of how participants would seek validation from me about their experiences. The complexity of my relationship with participants was increased by my being viewed as an insider to some degree, and I constantly had to remind myself that it was their opinions and experiences that I wanted to hear, rather than confirm my personal views.

My being familiar within the disability sector, I believe, contributed to the openness with which some respondents agreed to participate in the study and share their experiences.

While they were agreeable, I did not assume that I understood their experiences prior to engaging with them in their working environment. As a young researcher, I depended on the guidance of my supervisor for the “disciplined reflexivity required to avoid clinging to assumptions” (Thorne, Kirkham, & Flynn-Magee, 2004, p. 10). The familiarity made me relate to their experiences in such a way that during interviews where participants spoke of “non-disabled” people, I found myself identifying with their stories as if I were someone on the “other-side”. Although this might be contentious to PWD who believe that only a lived experience of disability can translate in true understanding, I felt, during the interviews, that their social experiences were like mine. Their continued experiences of discrimination resonated deeply with my personal experiences of racial discrimination. In those instances, contrary to Maxwell’s (2013) assertion, I believe their influence on me outweighed my influence on them.

Another challenge was my role as the researcher, and the power that researchers might hold over their informants, particularly in disability related studies. The ownership of the study generally resides with the researcher where participants do not actively participate in the construction of the study. Although this study was not approached from a participatory action paradigm, I was keenly aware of keeping participants informed of the progress along the journey to avoid the observer subject status. Miles and Huberman (1994) found that participants in studies benefitted from the process. My engagement with participants allowed them to express their views of their working experiences, with the consent of their employers. This created an opportunity for the participants to be heard. The listening “was an opportunity to give back” where some participants felt they had not had an opportunity to express themselves openly before (Shaw, 2003, p. 21). All the research took place at the participants’ places of employment. Having worked in the field of independence development and having common experiences with participants, for example, facilitating employment for PWD, it was challenging to silence my thoughts about stereotypical employer attitudes and practices. I remained aware that my primary relationship was with the PWD, who happened to work in these locations. I was to hear their voices and subdue my own “moral, social and political stance” (Porter, 2007, p. 82). Throughout the process, I believe I remained sensitive to the needs of

participants and respected their experiences through capturing and reflecting along with them, a process which was personal, emotional, physical and intellectual (Mason, 2002).

#### **4.9. Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations have been present in research of any nature, and arise from the interactions between people, generally at the point where there is an opportunity for any conflict of interest (Mouton, 2011). Although multi-faceted, two dimensions are generally housed within qualitative research - procedural ethics and ethics within practice (Homan, 1991). Procedural ethics forms part of the early stages of the research process and is defined by the application for clearance to conduct research with human subjects. Prior to collecting data, I submitted the research proposal which detailed the methodology and conveyed any potential concerns to the Graduate School of Business Ethics Committee (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). The approval was granted and paved the way for engagement with participants and their employers.

Ethics in practice refers to the day-to-day ethical matters related to the study. Benatr (2002, p. 1134) noted a danger that might exist when “researcher’s views may dominate” and expressed the importance of all participants to be informed of the nature and purpose of the research, to be given the opportunity to have their questions answered, to give true informed consent and make un-coerced decisions to participate. Informed consent formed the foundation of the ethical consideration. Prior to commencing with the data collection, participants were briefed about the nature of the study and the requirements to participate before committing to the study (Appendix 4). Yin (2009) noted that the study of contemporary phenomenon in real life contexts require special care and sensitivity. Along with informed consent, the confidentiality of each participant’s information was discussed telephonically and through e-mail correspondence. E-mail correspondence included an information letter describing the purpose of the study, the title, aims, methodology and an explanation that participation was on a voluntary basis. Prior to commencing with participation, the participants were presented with a consent form to confirm that they had received and understood the nature of the study and the information furnished to them. The participants were also made aware that they could participate or withdraw from the study if they needed to,

without any prejudice. The principles of autonomy, justice and beneficence were adhered to, respected and maintained throughout the duration of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Autonomy related to respecting the participants' decision to participate in the study, having received all information related to the study, including the informed consent form. Justice related to how fairly the benefits of conducting the research were distributed. All participants were assured access to the final findings, at their request. Beneficence could be summarised as doing no harm through increasing the possibility of benefit instead of harm. I took all the effort to ensure that the participants' confidentiality was maintained throughout the study by removing names from transcripts and being available to discuss any part of the study with participants, when required during the study (Flick, 2006).

#### **4.10. Limitations**

The nature of the study and the sensitivity around legislative compliance and moral imperatives initially posed a challenge in recruiting participants. Another limitation related to the nature of the topic was that participants felt uncertain about their responding freely and truthfully without negative consequences from their employers or being influenced by me (Maxwell, 2013). To guard confidentiality, I maintained a strict protocol with gathering and securing the data and removed information that could identify participants. Securing identities has become challenging within special populations; there are low numbers of employed PWD which impacted participants' willingness to participate in the study.

Although I collected data from only 12 cases, the amount of data that was captured and transcribed impacted on the time and resources I could commit to the study. The use of the qualitative analysis software supplied by the University helped greatly. The reliance on technology to assist with the analysis, also posed the risk of moving too far away from the data, something which might then gain a "reality outside of the context of their production" (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 26). I believe the measures put in place, through initially analysing the data on my own and sharing it with my supervisor, mitigated this risk.

Certain limitations like the generalisability of the results, the lack of uniformity with measurement, and the data collection and analysis being time consuming are inherent to case studies (Yin, 1994). The complexity of social issues detailed through case studies might pose problems regarding the way in which conclusions are represented. It might be difficult for a researcher to capture every detail sufficiently well, to provide a total picture and in reporting some aspects, others are invariably omitted. As the pursuit of science placed considerable emphasis on generalisability and the pursuit of professional work placed value on particularity, I remained aware that the approach was a stepping stone toward theory with the primary instrumental interest of moving beyond the case (Stake, 2006). Acknowledging that cases might represent varying perceptions, Maxwell (2008) noted that the specificity of the cases studied within a context made external generalisability very cumbersome. Stake (1995) suggested that the use of case studies in fact required specificity, the intimate understanding of a situation. Case studies do not make standard claims and instead as Yin (2009, p. 15) clarified “case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not populations or universes”. In this sense, by conducting case studies, the goal was to “expand and generalize the theories (analytic generalization) and not enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization)”. I intended addressing generalisability through comparing previously developed theory as a comparative template to the empirical results of the study. A data collection protocol was adopted to ensure a logical replication from one case study to the next.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, the research methods through expanding on the purpose and data collection techniques were detailed. The rationale for adopting a multiple-case study approach were traversed along with the possible limitations. The unpacking of Coleman and Unrau’s (2008) analytical framework contributed to the structure of the study. The concerns relating to researcher bias and reactivity as issues of validity were addressed. The multiple-case study approach was used as the focus to determine the experiences of PWD in their workplace and the influences on these experiences. The case studies could not be viewed outside of their contexts, the workplace, because it was within these

contexts where experiences were gained that influenced how PWD integrated into the workplace. It would have posed a major challenge for me to have not considered the context, as the work experiences were related directly to the context (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

## CHAPTER 5

### CASE STUDIES

The chapter details the individual case studies included in the study. The participants' experiences of disability are related and descriptions of the impairment and social support network are included. The experience of being employed as a disabled person, and the working environment of each participant are also set out. Furthermore, each case study provides insight into the nature of the participants' work, the associated challenges they experienced and their employers' policies on employing PWD.

#### 5.1. Wandile

Age	Gender	Race	Qualification	Relationship	Duration Employed	Impairment	Onset	Cause	Period Disabled
35	Male	African	Degree	Cohabiting	2 years	Paraplegia	Late onset	MVA	2.5 years

At the time of the interview, Wandile was 35 years old. He described himself as a black, Xhosa-speaking male and had one brother. He acquired his physical impairment at the age of 33 years in a motor vehicle accident in which he was a passenger. At the time of the interview, he was unmarried and lived with his girlfriend in a semi-urban community, approximately 50 minutes from his workplace. He had been in full time employment for two years after his accident. He considered his standard of living as modest. Wandile worked for a company that produced and distributed food products nationally and supplied major retailers. He worked in a laboratory and did not have his own office space. The laboratory was situated close to the head office and the buildings were separated by a main road. Wandile reported to a senior technician and was the only disabled person employed at the head office. He was from a semi-urban community on the outskirts of a town renowned for farming produce originally.

After attending secondary school, Wandile completed a university degree in science and technology. He was the first person in his family to graduate from university. He considered his achievement to be a result of the "sacrifice" his family made and his

personal determination to succeed. At university, he was actively involved as a “typical student” and had not ever considered the thought of being disabled. Even though he was aware of students with disabilities, he was not conscious of their struggles as students. Wandile believed that he would always be able to “run and walk freely” and took it for granted. He believed many “people live like this” without thinking they could possibly have the same fate.

The emotional impact and adjustment to being paraplegic troubled Wandile often. He believed one could never be prepared to have one’s life altered in such a way because “you can’t plan for this”. After his injury, he withdrew from his social commitments as he wanted to deal with his disability on his own. He believed that unless someone shared the same disability, it would be difficult for that person to empathise and advise him on moving forward. “You think they talking nonsense because they don’t know what you going through.” Listening to others’ encouragement was not necessarily what he wanted to hear. “Maybe these people the things they saying maybe you must give it a thought. I shouldn’t be all negative and all of that.” He accepted he had become depressed for a lengthy period and his self-imposed isolation from friends and family did not help the progress he hoped to have made. He felt his accident was a critical life event, like the death of a family member, and he needed lots of time to “cry for the loss”.

Wandile’s relationships with his brother and girlfriend were instrumental to his rehabilitation. He believed that being able to “depend on them” carried him through the “darkest moment” of his life. His brother lived in the same area as he did and was available to assist him during his rehabilitation. His girlfriend had been supportive through this time; he expressed gratitude that she had remained with him after the accident. Wandile believed that his disability had an immediate impact on the relationships he had with people as his “friends don’t always have time to help”. He felt that having to manage his rehabilitation and not wanting people to see him in a “state” contributed to his feeling isolated after the accident.

As a wheelchair user living in a semi-urban community, Wandile’s mobility was hindered significantly by the poor infrastructure. “It’s a hell of a hassle.” However, he managed to navigate the area, with the assistance of other community members. He believed the community was sympathetic to his needs and some people “went out of

their way” to help him, while others just ignored him. Wandile considered the varied responses to his disability from his community to be as expected; he behaved in the same way before his accident. After his impairment, Wandile was introduced to a new way of considering PWD. His introduction to “the opposite side” led him to adjust his world view, accepting that he would face challenges beyond what he was prepared for and his experiences as a non-disabled person had equipped him for.

At work, he was immersed daily in a technologically advanced environment, yet he felt the accessibility to it could be described as rudimentary. The laboratory team consisted of specialists responsible for ensuring all products met the required health and safety specifications within their industry. The team consisted of five people reporting to a senior technician and were closely scrutinised by managers at the head office. Wandile believed that the organisation was well intentioned and although no formal policy regarding disabled workers existed, they had established a team to initiate the process in due course. The head of human resources explained that the organisation welcomed diversity within the workplace, not only through internships, but for full-time employment and encouraged the recruitment of disabled workers through the promotion of universal access principles. The organisation subscribed to a code of ethics that listed integrity as a virtue they sought to uphold.

## 5.2. Saliem

Age	Gender	Race	Qualification	Relationship	Duration Employed	Impairment	Onset	Cause	Period Disabled
23	Male	Coloured	ABET	Single	15 months	Cognitive	Congenital	Unknown	23 years

At the time of the study, Saliem was 23 years old. He described himself as a coloured male of Cape Malay origins. He was unmarried and lived with his widowed mother and his sister in a three-bedroomed house. They lived in a community with low levels of employment and a high crime rate. He accepted that violence was a daily occurrence and his “survival” was dependent on knowing people and knowing where not to go. He attended a mainstream school for his primary and part of his secondary schooling, but

eventually could not manage its demands and withdrew from school. He was diagnosed with a cognitive impairment late in his childhood. Saliem's younger sister is not disabled and he tried to ignore comparisons between his cognitive ability and hers. He had been unemployed for a prolonged period before gaining employment at a company that operated nationally in an industrial environment. He lived 45 minutes away from his place of employment where he assisted with the operation of heavy machinery and other manual tasks. He reported to a line manager and was an unofficial team leader.

Saliem described his primary schooling as a "blur" and said it was unfortunate that his teachers had not identified his impairment earlier. "I think it was in standard three or four when my mother found out that if the teacher talks to me then I listen but I can't like write it down." He believed that his development was affected by his mother's and teacher's inability to identify and address his needs. "I don't know what's the word for it but they say it's part of my brain I don't know it's very slow." He stated that due to the varying degrees of academic achievement children experienced in school his "slow learning" went unnoticed. Saliem reflected that he had developed various techniques to compensate for his learning difficulty, relying on other students to assist him. He also believed the changes within the education system allowed him to be promoted without having to "write proper exams". His impairment went unnoticed in an overcrowded class with Saliem relying on his friends to complete his work after school.

Saliem's closest relations were his sister and mother. His mother had not identified his impairment until the later stages of his primary schooling. She had always "suspected something was the fault" but without having medical confirmation, believed it was just his "slow learning" style. Saliem's childhood was loaded with comparisons to his sister's achievement. He was constantly made aware of her achievements, compared to his, as she was considered an average pupil and achieved well on the sporting field, something Saliem had little interest in. He was proud of his sister's achievements, but the constant comparisons added to Saliem's frustration, even after his impairment was identified.

The community Saliem lived in was fraught with violence and socio-economic challenges. He believed that because his impairment "was like invisible", it was not easy for him to share it with others or for them to identify with it. He did not have a clear

understanding of the cause of his impairment and chose to rather not divulge the severity of his disability for fear of being ridiculed. His frustration occasionally resulted in his becoming extremely physical and “aggressive”. Saliem felt that because he couldn’t make sense of his impairment on his own, it would be futile trying to explain to others. The medical reports that he had received at the state hospitals were from his childhood and he had failed to follow up with his treating practitioners because he considered it would not be helpful or “change the situation”. Having grown up around gangs and having been friends with others who eventually participated in gang-related activities, Saliem felt had ensured his security in his community.

After leaving high school, Saliem did not receive any support or further educational training and stayed home until he was “able to do work”. He was unaware of where he could access further support and he did not feel comfortable with disclosing his impairment. Saliem explained that he developed his new “own system” of “doing things” to avoid being identified as a disabled person. He did odd jobs to contribute towards the income of his household and to occupy himself. He preferred to do work with his hands that did not require him to identify his disability. Saliem considered himself to be someone who “had a gift to do things” with his hands. He also kept busy around his house and the surrounding neighbours, fixing whatever required attention.

Saliem’s employers had no written policy document stating their commitment to employing persons with disabilities. The head of human resources indicated that they were still formulating a policy; they had decided to reach out to PWD by starting with their employment. Saliem was introduced to the opportunity by a friend who was working at the same company who had become aware of it through an internal circular. The organisation operated in a highly-industrialised setting, with many hazards, which excited Saliem as he could display his handiwork. Saliem worked as an assistant to a driver along with three other colleagues in his team. The head of human resources confirmed the organisation was aware of the various codes of good practice; they provided educational opportunities and offered learnership programmes, specifically for PWD, and adopted aspects of UD.

### 5.3. Simphiwe

Age	Gender	Race	Qualification	Relationship	Duration Employed	Impairment	Onset	Cause	Period Disabled
23	Male	African	2 <sup>nd</sup> year Diploma	Single	8 months	Paraplegia	Early	Viral	23 years

At the time of the study Simphiwe was 23 years old. He described himself as a black African male, living with his parents. He was single and was interested in entering a relationship if he “found the right girl”. He was the youngest of three siblings and the only one to have contracted polio at an early age. They lived in a three-bedroomed house and it took him approximately one hour to travel to work using public transport. Simphiwe explained his physical disability caused minimal disruptions for his family as he “did not get extra attention because of his disability”. His parents played a crucial role in exposing him to various experiences and did not keep him secluded in his home environment. Simphiwe attended mainstream schools and completed part of his tertiary education at a college. He worked for a local municipality in an open plan office on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor and reported to a team leader.

Simphiwe felt his parents encouraged him from a young age to participate actively in community social activities. He believed he developed his confidence when exposed to activities that his siblings and other non-disabled children also participated in. His family tried to ensure that he did not see himself as ‘different’ to other children. Simphiwe explained that he carried this awareness throughout his youth and made a concerted effort to demonstrate his abilities whenever he could. “I did normal stuff that even a non-disabled person does. I don’t do anything that is only for the disabled.” His expectations of himself motivated him to steer clear of any activities that he believed would further draw attention to his disability. Simphiwe explained that wherever he went, he wanted to be fully integrated in activities or, not participate at all.

In describing his socialisation within his community and culture, he felt that PWD were not easily accepted. He said that he was fortunate because he developed his confidence and a level of fearlessness in an open-minded environment. His friends were “not sympathetic” to his disability and welcomed him fully. He initially experienced physical

challenges at school, but felt that he gained an advantage, as a disabled person, by being exposed to environments that were not specifically tailored for his needs as he was growing up. He had to develop in the same way as his friends did. "I went to normal school and I had like normal friends so there wasn't this disabled thing." His educators also made minimal allowances for his disability and he believed this prepared him to better manage the negative perceptions uninformed people had of his physical disability. Constant exposure to challenges that other non-disabled friends encountered made Simphiwe feel included. He believed that he "had good friends" and the friendships he had established were mutually beneficial. He inspired his friends and motivated them as they did him. He was grateful for the learning experiences because it shaped his thinking, as a young adult entering employment. His active engagement in activities made Simphiwe "forget" that he was disabled, often until someone would sympathetically draw his attention to his disability. The reminder frustrated Simphiwe as he believed some people were unable to understand him beyond his physical appearance. "But it's just the people sometimes that will remind you that you know you disabled."

Tertiary education was important for Simphiwe. After completing high school, he found that the caring environment he came from was not easily replicated in the tertiary institutions. He only completed his second year of college and was unsuccessful in his third year. Financing his studies was too costly; Simphiwe had to make alternative arrangements and seek employment. "I did a Diploma, but I failed. I failed in my third year. I was going to go back, but I didn't go. It cost too much." His parents encouraged him to explore other options rather than give up hope, which led him to seek employment and he made a personal commitment to return to his studies once he could afford to do so. He believed that had his financial situation not affected his decision to continue his studies, he would have been able to improve his opportunities for employment. He considered it to be a valuable learning experience, providing him motivation to succeed.

Simphiwe worked in a department that was responsible for the mass participation of individuals in health programmes at a community level. His interaction with the public was mainly telephonic and he had limited involvement outside of his office building. His work was administrative and included aspects of finance. As part of the local

government, the department was subject to policies of inclusion and accommodation of PWD within the workforce. The department was also guided by disability policy guidelines that “adhered to the principles of universal design and other international, regional and national instruments that informed the design of products, environment and services that are usable by all people to the greatest possible extent, without the need for adaptation or specialised design”<sup>16</sup>. Simphiwe was unaware of the detail of the policies that were available on the website of the municipality. The documents were also made available in print.

#### 5.4. Peter

Age	Gender	Race	Qualification	Relationship	Duration Employed	Impairment	Onset	Cause	Period Disabled
40	Male	White	Degree	Single	1.5 years	Quadriplegia	Late onset	MVA	25 years

At the time of the study, Peter was 40 years old. He described himself as white and of English origin. He was one of two siblings and currently lived on his brother’s property in a separate dwelling. They lived in an affluent suburb which was expanding rapidly. Access to medical facilities, transport and shopping centres was readily available to him. Peter was single, had not been married and had no children of his own. Peter had developed a strong bond with his brother’s son and considered him to be like his “own”. They spent time together after school and Peter considered himself to be his nephew’s mentor. Peter was employed by a non-governmental organisation providing training for disabled youth and adults. He described his condition as being “a C4 quadriplegic<sup>17</sup> with little movement below the chest”. He felt “working from home was best” and reported to the head of the organisation directly through electronic mediums. He attended specific meetings at the office only when he was required to do so.

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<sup>16</sup> Republic of South Africa (2010, p. 5)

<sup>17</sup> C4- indicates the level at which spinal injury occurred (4th Cervical vertebrae). No functioning of upper and lower body limbs

Peter believed he was a “quintessential student” and that “a day without learning something is a day wasted”. His accident occurred while he was a school pupil and he had been disabled for close to 25 years. His experiences as a university student with physical challenges led him to develop other skills to navigate his studies. “I developed more of an eidetic personality or an eidetic memory rather where I could transcribe an entire day’s lectures in an evening by memory. And that’s something I had to develop.” While at university, he felt the support received was not ideal and had to use alternative means of submitting his assignments and exams. “When I was at university it was a problem because they didn’t have those things back then. So everything was done orally. From my first exam to my last exam.” The experience was considered a “blessing in disguise” as he gained greater confidence in his ability to perform as a student. “I got more confident, I mean everybody has got the ability it’s just that you need to ensure those circuitries in your head are myelinated and you only do that by actually doing that.”

After successfully completing his first course, Peter went on to postgraduate studies and expanded into other fields of interest. He considered technology as key to his development. Peter believed that he was “always learning” about his impairment, disability and the ways that he could overcome his physical challenges through technology. Peter accepted that patience was required for him to succeed. He believed that with additional time given to complete a task he would be able to compete with any able-bodied person and exceed expectations. He learned seven languages as he believed communication was important considering he had international stakeholders to please, and at the time of the interview, had undertaken to learn an eighth language. “It might take me some time but I don’t think there’s a degree that I couldn’t pass.”

Peter considered his family support as vital and was grateful to have them close to where he lived. He employed a personal care worker whom he considered to be part of his family. “We’ve been together now almost seven years. She’s like part of my family.” He valued her contribution to improving his quality of life and was unsure of how he would be able to continue without her assistance daily. “I mean I’d feel the same about losing her as I would about losing a sibling or a parent or whatever.” Peter felt that having to employ someone to assist him was because he had “no other choice” if he wanted to be

successful in his endeavours. He believed that the relationship was mutually beneficial but transcended a working relationship as he took a deep interest in her personal life. “You know we’re very close, we do for each other, if she’s got a problem we sort it out, I make a plan for her.” Peter preferred not to socialise with other PWD for fear of being categorised as being alike. He considered his impairment to be one characteristic of himself that shaped his understanding of disability. “I don’t look at my disability as something which defines me but it does place certain limitations.” Peter preferred not to dwell on his disability with other PWD and was pragmatic in his approach. He enjoyed adventure and physical activities that took him beyond his physical limitations. “I didn’t actually hang around disabled folks as you know they tend to talk about their disabilities. That wasn’t going to be me.”

Peter worked for an organisation that promoted the development of PWD. They offered various services addressing the needs of their recipients. The organisation had branches nationally and Peter’s work was region specific. He held a highly skilled position within the organisation and utilised his qualifications effectively. He reported to the Chief Executive Officer of the organisation and considered his working arrangements to be flexible. The organisation was affiliated to international disability bodies and subscribed to prescripts in local and international legislation and policy documents that promoted the equality of PWD in the workplace. The organisation accepted UD as a core pillar ensuring accessibility. The documents were available in text and through the organisation’s website.

### 5.5. Thandeka

Age	Gender	Race	Qualification	Relationship	Duration Employed	Impairment	Onset	Cause	Period Disabled
25	Female	African	ABET	Single	1 year 2 months	Visually impaired	Congenital	Unknown	25 years

At the time of the interview, Thandeka was 25 years old. She described herself as Xhosa-speaking and a mother of two children. Her extended family lived approximately 1200 kilometers away. Thandeka shared a single story corrugated iron structure with her

sister in an informal settlement. She described the area as filled with “tsotsis” [gangsters] and not ideal for raising her two children, and decided to send her children to live with her mother. “I’m not staying with my kids at this time.” At the time of the interview, Thandeka worked for a company that operated nationally. She lived one hour away from work and worked in an open plan office. She had been employed there for two years. She reported to a line manager and received additional support from the human resources office.

As a child Thandeka was raised in a sheltered environment where she felt excluded from many experiences other children had. Her sister was not visually impaired and constantly being compared to her sister created resentment. “She wasn’t treated the same like me.” They grew up in a single parent household and were sent to different schools. Thandeka attended a special school for blind and visually impaired children, and her sister attended a mainstream school. Thandeka spent much of her time with her “own friends” who were visually impaired and did not socialise very often with her sister. Thandeka believed she had been disadvantaged through attending a special school as her social network was limited, especially when she related the impact of limited networking to work.

Her sister was employed temporarily as a domestic worker and was not able to consistently contribute financially to the running of their home. Thandeka was still a recipient of a disability grant that was a consistent source of income for their household. The grant was “all the money” she earned for a prolonged period and her sister’s financial contribution was felt to be unreliable. A portion of her disability grant was used to support her mother who cared for her two children. “I send them money for eating.” Thandeka’s responsibility towards her children was a priority and she experienced being a single, disabled mother to be challenging. Her relationship with her partner was tense; she felt unsupported because he was employed in another province and only visited their children occasionally which she felt was “not right”.

Thandeka did not have the opportunity to complete her schooling and left school in grade 11 to help her mother with caring for neighbourhood children in an informal “school” they ran as a business. She felt that her vision was “still good enough” to allow

her to work, with minimal impact and limitations while she helped her mother care for other children.

Working with children shaped her ability to empathise with other working parents that made it difficult for her to part from her children when she found work. “I don’t like the way it is now.” It was difficult to reconcile the need to work with the need to send her children away, but she felt it was a necessity considering where she was currently living. The separation from her children caused her to be depressed and Thandeka felt it place a strain on her relationship with her mother. She relied on her mother to raise her children, and felt that her mother doubted her ability because of her visual impairment. “I don’t want them to stay here and I don’t have a house it’s only a shack and it is not good for the children because of the freeway, but there is no choice.”

As her sight deteriorated, Thandeka realised she required more assistance to maintain her independence. She was referred to an NGO by the local clinic and spent two years training in various skills development programmes. Thandeka received training in Braille literacy, orientation and mobility, skills of daily living and computer orientation. “I went there to learn how to do things.” She moved to another NGO after completing this training, and did her “computers”. Her intention was to acquire marketable skills to be employable. Thandeka remained in contact with the first NGO as she refreshed her skills periodically. “I still go for training.”

Thandeka’s employers had no written policy document stating their commitment to employing persons with disabilities. The head of human resources indicated that they were still formulating a policy, but were proactively recruiting PWD. He explained their core values included acceptance and honesty. Thandeka had been made aware of the employment opportunity through an NGO and while unemployed, decided to explore it further. The prospective employment was in a highly-industrialised setting and the hazards were plentiful for a visually impaired person. Thandeka initially accepted a post that placed her on the factory floor and at the time of the interview, had received a promotion and moved into the head office building. The head of human resources confirmed they were aware of various codes of good practice and provided educational opportunities and offered learnership programs specifically for PWD.

## 5.6. Gerhardus

Age	Gender	Race	Qualification	Relationship	Duration Employed	Impairment	Onset	Cause	Period Disabled
55	Male	White	Diploma	Married	15 years	Paraplegia	early	Viral	55 years

Gerhardus was 55 years old at the time of the interview. He described himself as a white Afrikaaner male who grew up in a conservative family. He was married and a father to two daughters and grandfather to three grandchildren. Gerhardus lived with his wife Alice<sup>18</sup> in a middle-class suburb, an approximate 10-minute drive from work. He had been employed in his position for over 15 years and was nearing retirement. Gerhardus described his standard of living as modest and felt blessed to have his needs met daily. At the time of the interview, Gerhardus worked in a well-established organisation. He worked from a private office on the lowest level of the building and had access to toilets and a kitchen on the same level. Gerhardus reported to a senior clergyman and the governing board of the organisation.

Gerhardus was one of five siblings, the middle child, and described his childhood as imbued with experiences of rejection and ridicule as he was the only child with an impairment. He felt that his disability was an embarrassment to his family, using words such as “vulnerable” and “shame” to describe this period. “You know it is like that I think you know you talking vulnerability, you talking about shame, you talking about so for myself all my life.” Gerhardus felt he had a “hard” upbringing and had to compete unfairly with his able-bodied siblings and peers, but considered himself to have succeeded against all odds. Growing up in a farming area of the “Orange Free State”, the cultural expectations that young men were expected to fulfil, placed lots of pressure on him to conform to what “normal” children did. He explained that as he could not participate in the same way as non-disabled children, it attracted additional attention to him and manifested in being mocked daily. Interacting with other children was something that happened by invitation rather than occurring naturally. Over time he used

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<sup>18</sup> Not her real name

humour as a means of deflecting attention from himself to reduce the negativity associated with his impairment:

I used to get so mad when kids used to tease me. I used to see kids walking like this [illustrating a crooked walk] and I used to try and catch them and neuk [beat] them, hey, till I saw the funniness of it and then I started laughing with them and then that was over, you see.

The constant mocking by his peers was surpassed by the disdain Gerhardus's father showed towards him. As an infant, Gerhardus contracted polio and subsequently developed his physical impairment. The effects of the disease caused significant physical weakness, resulting in the underdevelopment of his leg musculature. His father's reaction to his disability was the major contributing factor to his low self-esteem as a child. Their relationship was characterised by degrading exchanges about his physique. "He was embarrassed. So I used to box and he came to watch me box one day and he said NO, instead of encouraging me he couldn't handle my limitations, he was embarrassed." His father's embarrassment, in particular, impacted how he initially interacted with other authority figures. He struggled with resentment and reflected on it regularly, accepting the exchanges as preparation for the rejection and discrimination he would encounter later in his life. "My dad said to me one day, you're not a man you're half a man." Gerhardus internalised his father's resentment which affected his socialisation negatively and prevented him from experiencing healthy adult relationships until he met his wife.

Acceptance from his wife was a turning point in his life, unravelling the helplessness he felt throughout his childhood. Her unconditional acceptance motivated Gerhardus daily. Gerhardus believed he was denied a childhood due to his physical appearance and physicality. However, he took certain lessons into his adulthood, such as planning and setting achievable goals when he undertook work as a minister of religion, overcoming physical barriers that were unavoidable in his work. "Once my wife accepted me fully for who I am, my physicality, I've got no skaam (shame)." Out of the feelings of shame and disappointment, developing his experiences gave Gerhardus more confidence to overcome his disability. He viewed himself as a leader and someone who could support others encouraging them to address the challenges they encountered. "I became a leader

in my community, in all the communities I've been...and so you push yourself. I'm there to give and in giving you receive sometimes but you don't burden people with your burdens." Gerhardus chose not to disclose the cause of his impairment freely to avoid drawing additional attention to himself, and in many instances allowed people to draw their own conclusions about his impairment:

Whenever people ask me 'How are you?', I say 'I'm fine' because I'm ministering...not the other way around. So I will not stand before them as somebody that's got Polio. I mean half of them don't even know that I've got Polio. They just say 'What, did you have a motor accident?' I say 'No my leg's a bit sore'.

The policies of his organisation, contained in print and electronic media, reflected integrity, humility, compassion and generosity as virtues they espoused. The organisation's website promoted these virtues with further explanations detailing what members and staff could expect when belonging to the organisation. The organisation had a dedicated ministry to persons with a disability although Gerhardus was not directly involved in this department. The multi-level building Gerhardus worked in was shared with other ministers and administrators running the affairs of the organisation. He was also expected to travel as part of his duties, when required to counsel members of the congregation. He worked many weekends, hosting conferences and was largely responsible for arranging all logistical elements, as well as the content for presentations. Although he had great support from his wife and children in overcoming barriers in society, Gerhardus was faced with the reduction of his work duties, due to his deteriorating physical state. His career and physical condition converged to a point where he had to weigh up the benefits of continuing to work against the continued risk to his physical wellbeing.

## 5.7. Johannes

Age	Gender	Race	Qualification	Relationship	Duration Employed	Impairment	Onset	Cause	Period Disabled
38	Male	White	Degree	Married	2 years	Hard of hearing	Late	Viral	2 years

At the time of the interview, Johannes was 38. He described himself as Afrikaans and family orientated. He was married and had two daughters both under the age of 10. Johannes and his wife, Janet<sup>19</sup>, grew up in the same community and shared similar social circles into adulthood. They lived in a gated community approximately 45 minutes' away from his work place. He maintained a good standard of living after recovering from some financial difficulty encountered after losing his hearing. Johannes lost his hearing overnight at age 36, without any prior indication or symptoms. He worked in a profitable engineering company that produces goods for distribution to individuals and corporates. He had been employed there for just under two years and had a private office and supervised the operations in the factory warehouse. His office was on the first level of the warehouse, overlooking the factory floor.

Johannes considered himself to be the life of the party and centre of attention before losing his hearing. The reduction of his social circle soon after acquiring his hearing impairment impacted his work and family life. Johannes felt his impairment altered who he was:

I'm not as before. I was very outgoing and man it was just like I was a grapgat [joker] of note. I was always in the middle of things and then after that I lost a lot of friends and I told you my whole character changed.

Overcoming the effects of hearing loss was difficult and his inability to communicate effectively with close family and friends made him "mad". Johannes felt that the loss of hearing denied him the opportunity to experience a "normal family life" and took him into a "state of depression" that others could not understand. The impact on his immediate relationships was "real" and created "doubt by others" in his ability to

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<sup>19</sup> Not her real name

provide financially for his family. “It was extremely hard on me and not only on me but also on my family.” The erosion of his confidence increased his frustration and manifested through fewer opportunities to socialise, especially where he had to “speak to others”.

At the time of the interview, Johannes had not yet rekindled past relationships; he believed the lack of understanding as having caused division in his friendships. He had grown accustomed to the loneliness and had become more discerning about friendships. “I’m not the social guy that I used to be but I haven’t become less of a human, I’m just more selective of who my friends are and the activities I do.” His willingness to reconnect with old friends improved as he grew more accustomed to his hearing loss. It was difficult for Johannes to access the appropriate assistance to overcome the basic challenges associated with hearing loss. His sudden loss of hearing catapulted him into a “world of disability” that did not easily cater for him. Johannes was critical of the national organisation representing the interests of deaf people as he believed they didn’t “recognise” people with his type of disability. It was the only “governing body at the moment”; he felt their approach to be exclusionary, as people like him “were always in the middle not being 100% deaf”. The need to find a way of lifting him out of his depression drove Johannes to reach out to other people who shared similar experiences. “There’s more people with hearing impairments like myself than there are with people that are totally deaf.” He connected with individuals who had no scientific background in hearing loss, but who shared a common experience of disability and they exchanged ideas of how to manage the impairment.

The determination to find a solution to his hearing loss resulted in Johannes accepting the opportunity to undergo an experimental medical procedure, with no guarantee he would recover any of his hearing. Johannes believed the opportunity for others to do the same was available, but accepted that not every person who had some hearing impairment shared the same drive and motivation to regain their hearing. He admitted he had limited knowledge about deaf culture and did not want to associate with it as he believed it would limit his opportunities at work and his social life. “They live in such a small world and half of them could have the procedure done and change their lives completely.”

Johannes’s current employers had no formal policy relating to the employment of persons with disabilities. Integrity was listed as a business virtue, which they wanted to uphold in all their activities, on the website and in company documents. Johannes was positive that during the data collection period the organisation continued to embrace virtue and even though he “did not represent the management” he could say with confidence that “they don’t see my disability, they see me and my ability.” Johannes believed that his ability to manage people and his technical skills were comparable to any hearing person and that he was an asset to his employers who welcomed him openly and sought to address his inclusion in the workplace. This was something that Johannes believed highlighted their commitment to employing PWD as he did not have to “fight” for recognition, compared to his previous employment experience.

### 5.8. Rafique

Age	Gender	Race	Qualification	Relationship	Duration Employed	Impairment	Onset	Cause	Period Disabled
45	Male	Coloured	Post Grad	Single	13 years	Paraplegia	Late	MVA	18 years

At the time of the interview, Rafique was 45 years old. He explained that he was of Malay origin and described his upbringing as conservative and traditional. His family lived in a suburb predominantly inhabited by Cape Malays. He shared a home with his octogenarian mother, eldest brother and two sisters. He was unmarried and believed that his disability influenced his relationship status. His family was closely knit and supportive of his needs. Rafique explained that in most of his daily activities “as a paraplegic” he needed “some kind of assistance”. His eldest sister was instrumental in assisting with preparing himself for leaving home each day. Rafique worked in a department that he believed held a “premier” status amongst other government departments at the time of the interview. He had been employed there for more than a decade and was intent on remaining within governmental employ until his retirement. He had a small office with a built-in desk that housed his computer and loose filing, as

he did not have a filing cabinet. Rafique accessed his office on the first floor via a ramp and with assistance.

Rafique experienced a good quality of life and attributed this partially to having good familial support and earning a competitive salary. The foundation of his support at home was his elder sister. While Rafique highlighted his relationship with his elder sister, he acknowledged the role his other siblings played, as his mother had grown too old to care for his physical needs. His elder sister was “at home basically”, supporting him with his physical needs daily. He believed he was fortunate his sister could perform this critical role, ensuring he had an excellent quality of care. “If I was married, obviously my wife would take that role but I am still single and it’s fortunate that she’s at home, she’s unmarried, she’s unemployed so it was to my advantage.” He believed his sister had made a significant personal sacrifice to care for him and was his “personal assistant” and he “could not do without her service”. He expressed some regret at being a “burden” to his family as his disability impacted how they lived their lives.

Rafique’s motor vehicle accident was traumatic for both him and his family. The nature of his upbringing and the constant involvement of family in his affairs were instrumental in his rehabilitation, education and career. Rafique considered it to be “better” that he acquired his impairment late in life; he acknowledged he was exposed to “different” challenges compared to someone who had a congenital impairment. He believed that his life skills had developed sufficiently into adulthood to face the barriers to inclusion in society after his accident. The lengthy rehabilitation period he underwent, provided him with an opportunity for reflection and to plan how he was to overcome new barriers. Reflecting on his past and a “probable future” as a non-disabled person caused Rafique to express concern about maintaining his current and future quality of life as a disabled person, as he was “getting older” and “picking up weight”.

For over 13 years, Rafique was responsible for advising other departments and government services, with over 400 staff members, on critical policy related issues. The high profile his office held made Rafique a “visible” presence. Although progress was made to ensure he could work more effectively, “more could be done”. Rafique worked directly with people he believed could make an immediate difference to the quality of his work experience. He expressed how his position required him to constantly follow

procedure and maintain the decorum of his office, sometimes to the detriment of his own work-related needs. Long periods in his wheelchair periodically resulted in Rafique developing “pressure sores”. A critical area that he felt required attention was the human resources available to assist him. He had made use of makeshift assistants, one of whom “used to do the carpets” and was appointed through a gentlemen’s agreement. The management of his disability was not easy to do on his own and time away from work impacted on his ambitions to further his career. He felt it would be better “not having to worry about these things as it impacts on your work”. Rafique was cognisant that his being a wheelchair user affected the perception non-disabled people had of his ability to hold his position at work. “Ad hoc” solutions developed to assist Rafique at work impacted his confidence significantly. Managing his “unique routines” associated with his impairment, while still completing high-level research with strict deadlines, placed additional pressure on him to perform above others’ expectations. Rafique believed his career progression was inextricably linked to these “personal routines” and the reliance on an “assistant” professionally and personally was unquestionable. He viewed his disability as complex and as a wheelchair user, the interaction with others and the environment was at times “physically and emotionally costly”.

The department Rafique worked in operated within the parameters of two policies promoting the accommodation of PWD. Historically, a division between political staffers and operational staffers existed and support to operational staff was limited due to budget constraints. Rafique, as an operational representative, benefitted from the “lesser” of the two policy documents that detailed the principled support for operational representatives who were disabled. Rafique expressed strong criticism of the dual approach to support operational staff and political appointees. The department was also guided by disability policy guidelines that adopted the principles of UD and was led by international conventions that promoted the accessibility to all environments and services.

## 5.9. Mikail

Age	Gender	Race	Qualification	Relationship	Duration Employed	Impairment	Onset	Cause	Period Disabled
36	Male	Coloured	Diploma	Single	5 years	Deaf	Congenital	Unknown	36 years

At the time of the interview, Mikail was 36 years old. He described himself as coloured and a non-practicing Muslim. He was one of 10 siblings, unmarried and lived in his father's home. He felt that he did not receive any favourable treatment from his parents as a child and that they were unprepared to raise a deaf child. "I'm treated in the same way by my family they don't make me a special person." His childhood was troubling as he battled the prejudice of an uninformed community and the perception that he was a "dommie". He considered his standard of living as satisfactory as a direct result of his employment status. At the time of the interview, Mikail worked for an organisation that operated nationally and delivered development programmes for PWD. He worked with more than 15 people and had a private office space on the second floor of the office building. The building was undergoing some reconstruction at the time.

Mikail's father immigrated to South Africa and met his wife to-be there. His father raised him as one of ten children and Mikail considered the attention he received to be diluted. Attempts to integrate him into mainstream community schools failed. In addition, the local madrasa [Islamic religious school] had expressed an unwillingness to accommodate him. "The Moslem school didn't accept me because of my deafness, so they said they don't have time for me." After failing to be placed at a school, Mikail's father attempted home schooling. This was not ideal for Mikail and he felt it did not provide the necessary stimulation he required at that time. His father made a valiant attempt, but it lacked sound educational principles. "My father says stay at home I'll teach you, but he did not teach me I don't think in the right way."

Mikail attributed his sense of independence largely to the death of his mother before his tenth birthday, and having to adjust to his deafness on his own. He felt his independence was influenced significantly through the isolation he experienced. "That is why I'm a very independent person because of my mother's death. I always ask myself why did my

mother die before my father?” Mikail took a while to come to terms with the passing of his mother and he believed this affected his confidence. “After three years I had to accept that my mother died.” Moving forward required Mikail to assume more responsibility than he was ready for, with limited support from his father and siblings as they did not share his experience of being deaf.

His relationship with his family impacted how he socialised with others. His family was close-knit, but Mikail, as the only deaf person in his family, felt removed for a long time:

They will focus more on family gatherings and I don't do that. All my brothers, they're not deaf. My one brother before me lost his hearing only four years ago on his left ear, like 20% hearing loss but he wears a hearing aid.

Communicating with his siblings and others was difficult as a child. Even though his siblings learned sign language, Mikail felt they did not recognise its importance to him. “He knows sign language but don't believe in sign language because his whole life he believed he would hear.” Mikail considered communication important in shaping his character and he wanted varied experiences to improve his confidence when relating to others. As he grew up he became more outgoing and sought out experiences. “I'm a very open person, outgoing person, [I want to] meet people, socialise with all kinds of people.”

A turning point in Mikail's life occurred when he eventually attended a special school and participated in sports. “I took part in sport. I was a Western Province swimmer and volleyball player. That changed my whole life and I then wanted to be there.” The sense of achievement motivated Mikail to further his education. His achievements on the sports field became a focal point that highlighted his ability in a positive light. He felt he could finally make a fair comparison to his siblings who did not achieve on the sporting front, but had an equal opportunity to do so. “I'm talking about I'm the youngest of ten children. My brothers just never took part in sport in school. They go to school and come home. It would be different with me.” Mikail wanted more independence but felt he could not leave his family home yet, as he believed he needed to support his father.

“My father has to run the business. Today I feel like living on my own but something’s pulling me back.”

Mikail worked for a development organisation. He reported into a head office located in a different province and was responsible for managing more than 15 people daily. His work included office administration, advocacy, liaising with various government departments and ensuring appropriate implementation of programmes. He had been in the position for close to ten years and was seeking different opportunities. The organisation was actively involved in policy development relating to the education, employment and recognition of disabled children and adults. The organisation contributed to the Codes of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities and considered the Constitution of South Africa as their guide to creating and ensuring employment opportunities for disabled persons. The organisation also subscribed to the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and believed that universal access was critical in ensuring that PWD were given access to opportunities in education and employment.

#### 5.10. Francois

Age	Gender	Race	Qualification	Relationship	Duration Employed	Impairment	Onset	Cause	Period Disabled
45	Male	White	Degree	Single	7 years	Paraplegia	Late	MVA	20 years

At the time of the interview, Francois was 45 years old. He described himself as a white Afrikaans male. He lived with his mother and his father was deceased. He was a quadriplegic wheelchair-user for over 20 years, having acquired his impairment in a motor vehicle accident in his mid-twenties as a university student. His parents were his “ondersteunings persone [care-givers/support]” at home. They took care of his chores and assisted with his medical care, when required to do so. He felt indebted to them for their sacrifice, going beyond what was expected of them. He was his parents’ only child and considered his family to be conservative. As a university student, Francois was actively involved in the promotion of accessibility for students. He held a business

degree that he felt prepared him to work in a professional environment. Francois worked for a university that had developed its own disability charter for the promotion of access to education and other opportunities for disabled students. He managed six people and reported to a department director. His office was on the ground floor with access to ablution facilities on the same level.

Francois believed his accident was unfortunate and was grateful that he had survived as a passenger. His parents played a crucial role in supporting him through his rehabilitation even though “they were traumatised” by the accident. Their hopes for him were derailed as they believed he would encounter challenges that would be insurmountable as a wheelchair-user. Because his parents were retired at the time of his accident, he felt it was “unfair on them”, but recognised that they were more available than to dedicate time to assisting him thereby accelerating his rehabilitation. He was not really an “uitgaande persoon [outgoing person]”, and found that his circle of friends diminished after the accident.

Francois’s rehabilitation resulted in his missing a large portion of the university academic year. He was fortunate to be assisted by the university rehabilitation department that had world-class facilities. His rehabilitation helped him to “aanvaar” [accept] his “toestand” [condition]” so he could focus his attention on returning to his academics. After completing his rehabilitation, he returned to his academic programme and completed a business degree. He felt that the degree offered him the opportunity for greater employment opportunities. He followed his undergraduate degree with a further qualification in the health sciences faculty. He developed new friendships and his student activism created opportunities to meet “like-minded” students.

After his accident, Francois accepted the promotion of accessibility for disabled students as his “social cause”. Prior to his accident, he had not felt a “connection” to other PWD. “Dit was nie in my geaardheid nie” [It was not in my nature/ make up]. His introduction to disability only occurred after his accident. He felt that all people should be made aware of disability, be it the possibility that they may be affected first-hand or as one who is expected to support others who have become disabled. Francois considered it was unfortunate that he had become aware by accident “letterlik en figuurlik” [literally and figuratively].

Francois considered employment as a means of displaying his ability. He felt that for others like him, the opportunity to be gainfully employed could dispel the “myths” associated with being disabled. He had always worked within the university, in other departments, and believed it was in some way sheltered, compared to other persons having to work in a corporate environment. His determination to succeed and the need to repay his parents’ sacrifice made him choose the initial commerce stream of study. The employment opportunities were expected to be greater and higher paying. The “costs” associated with his impairment were constant and Francois did not want to add to the contribution his parents made in supporting him financially. Francois felt that most people would not consider that disability cost more than what they could see. He realised that the costs were unavoidable and not necessarily affordable by others. Taking the time to get proper medical care was also important for Francois as he believed it would later prolong his working career. He accepted that the quality of care he received was significant.

Francois worked for a leading academic institution at the time of the interview. He had recently returned from mourning the loss of his father. He was aware that his mother remained his primary source of support and was aware that her age would make this task more difficult. He considered the University to have made significant leaps in its disability policies and the implementation thereof, since his days as a student. The policy accepted that UD was a non-negotiable in creating learning environments that catered for all individuals irrespective of their disabilities. The University conducted various disability sensitisation courses, distributed written text and electronic media that highlighted its policies and its promotion of universal access to all students. The documents were freely available to students at the administration office as well as on the University website and associated portals.

### 5.11. Claude

Age	Gender	Race	Qualification	Relationship	Duration Employed	Impairment	Onset	Cause	Period Disabled
40	Male	Coloured	Degree	Single	6 months	Blind	Congenital	Cataracts	40 years

At the time of the interview, Claude was 40 years old. He described himself as coloured and was a single father. He grew up in a community plagued by gang violence and poverty with few opportunities for blind people. He became blind as a young child through the development of cataracts and glaucoma. He considered his achievements as a “triumph against all odds”, having battled the prejudices of a community that lacked understanding of blind people. Claude was a father to three teenage sons. At the time of the interview, the youngest was in his final year of secondary school while the others had recently completed their schooling. They lived in a middle-class suburb, an approximate 90-minute drive from his place of work. At times, he would have to travel close to three hours to satellite offices to conduct his work. Claude believed they lived a more than modest lifestyle, even though he considered his remuneration as “incommensurate with his skills”. At the time of the interview, Claude worked for a government department and held a senior position, reporting to a supervisor. There was a high level of security and closed-circuit television cameras throughout the building. Claude had a private office and a consultation room where he met with members of the public. His private office was in a secluded part of the building on the fourth floor and had an inter-leading door to his consulting room. Claude had been employed for four months at the time of the interview.

During his primary and secondary schooling, Claude attended a special school and lived in a boarding facility away from his family. The experience of being removed from his family to further his education was initially difficult for him to manage, but after settling in, he believed it was a great benefit to his “personal development”. He had to acclimatise quickly to a learning environment that lacked the nurturing that his family home offered, but he felt it accelerated the development of his “independence”. The school offered an environment where other children shared his experience of disability

and they too were not living with their family. A “camaraderie with others” developed as well as a competitiveness to excel. Although Claude felt he made friends at school, he never carried those relationships into his adult life.

Posturing was a necessity to function in his community. Claude’s experiences of being intimidated as a blind teenager led him to develop a “type of self-confidence” that buffered the advances of other insensitive community members. The survival skills he acquired made him “street wise” and he felt it served as ideal preparation for his career. The ability to talk his way out of situations where he felt vulnerable was refined because he never shied away from confrontation with others. Claude placed himself at the centre of social settings ensuring he did not miss out on anything. He “was probably the most well-known person” due to his openness and was considered an extrovert. His self-confidence was, at times, misunderstood and interpreted as arrogance.

Tertiary education was challenging for Claude. He acquired skills through a local non-governmental organisation (NGO) which contributed to his independence. During this time, Claude gained a mentor with whom he remained in contact and consulted when making important career decisions. The support from the NGO was basic and “all they could afford at that time”. Claude’s resourcefulness carried him through his tertiary education, with the NGO providing basic support and some financial aid. The emotional support from his mentor assisted Claude in contextualising the institutional barriers to his education. Travelling independently to university was a major challenge to Claude as he felt vulnerable because of his blindness.

Although Claude considered his resourcefulness as a key attribute to his academic successes, his reliance on his family and friends was something he “could not do without”. Blindness posed some obstacles that Claude was convinced could not be avoided in his personal life and at work. Having people around him most of the time was comforting to Claude and made him feel safe. Safety was high on Claude’s agenda and he had secured his home with a state of the art alarm system. In addition, Claude had three highly trained dogs that secured his property along with an armed response that was available 24 hours.

The organisation Claude worked for promoted the reasonable accommodation of PWD in the workplace. Two policies existed for PWD and as an operational staff member, felt

he had access to the lesser of the two policies. The “preferential” treatment was reserved for political staffers. Claude was opposed to the use of two differing policies and considered it an unethical way of treating employees. The organisation also adhered to the guidelines that subscribed to the principles of UD and international legislation that promoted the design of products, environments and services to be used by all people.

### 5.12. Shannon

Age	Gender	Race	Qualification	Relationship	Duration Employed	Impairment	Onset	Cause	Period Disabled
57	Female	Coloured	Diploma	Single	25 years	Blind	Late	Viral	30 years

At the time of the interview, Shannon was 57 years old. She described herself as coloured and came from a farming community approximately 800km from the Cape Metro. She had been blind for over 30 years. Shannon had been married for approximately one year at the time she became blind and subsequently separated from her husband due to the challenges he experienced with accepting her blindness. Shannon described this as a “blessing” as she felt he would not have coped with her disability for a longer period. Shannon had two children from a later relationship, but chose not to remarry. She explained the need to assert her independence as a blind woman as having influenced her decision to remain single. Shannon lived as a single parent, caring for her son. Both children had completed their schooling and were enrolled for tertiary studies. At the time of the interview, Shannon worked for a non-governmental organisation that facilitated the development of other PWD. She worked from her own private office, with the use of rudimentary assistive devices.

Shannon was the eldest of six siblings, one of three sisters and three brothers. The onset of her blindness had a drastic impact on her family, as she was the main source of income at the time. Shannon had moved from the small farming town to seek further opportunities for education and employment in her twenties and gained a tertiary qualification in education. Her siblings remained in the “dorp [rural town]” and she supported the family financially. She had worked in the education sector for two years

prior to developing a sudden illness that resulted in her losing her sight overnight. “I went bed reading and woke up blind.” Going blind forced Shannon “to give up” her job knowing there was inadequate support for her as an educator.

Shannon’s experience of marriage inspired her to focus more intently on her independence as a blind woman. Blindness was manageable as a single person but would have been “ondenkbaar” [unthinkable] had she stayed married to an unsupportive husband. Shannon had her first child four years after going blind and felt “lost” and “obligated” to leave her child with her sighted mother. She “couldn’t stand up against” her mother who was convinced her blindness made her inadequate to raise her child. Shannon relented and left her first born with her mother. Her second child was born three years later and Shannon remained committed to being single until she found “a guy that could give me what I want”. The need to assert her independence manifested as Shannon’s “mothering instinct kicked in” when she wanted to rear her second child on her own. Although her mother was not convinced, Shannon was determined to raise her second child by herself. Shannon only assumed full parenting of her first child after her mother passed away.

As a teacher, she experienced the education system as “unprepared to assist a blind educator” and Shannon decided to leave her employment. Subsequently she completed her independence training at two NGOs, acquiring various skills. Shannon believed that her motivation combined with her previous experience as an educator, equipped her to successfully gain these skills ahead of other blind colleagues. Six years after going blind, she returned to the local university to complete a diploma course specialising in rehabilitation. Four years later she completed a qualification in higher learning and was recognised as the best educator in the Western Cape and placed second nationally. Sharon was awarded a bursary to further her studies in Adult Basic Education.

Shannon lived with her daughter sharing a single room flat. She used a guide dog to assist her with her mobility. The flat was fully serviced but did not allow for privacy. Shannon explained her reliance on her daughter and dog as crucial in her experience of blindness. She considered that her second daughter had to assume “lots of responsibility”, but it would be impossible for her to manage in the same way as she did when she was younger. Shannon used her working dog to assist her with “walking to the

shops only in the neighbourhood” as her dog was prone to being attacked by other dogs when travelling outside of her immediate community. The stigma and prejudice within society gained less of Shannon’s attention as she had accepted being blind. Shannon explained that after three decades of being blind she was happy “not to see again”. She believed that most people would want to see, but she preferred to continue her life as blind, even if a medical cure was found. Shannon believed this was an important message to convey to other blind people as they might focus on regaining their sight rather than gaining the skills they require to function independently.

Shannon was part of a team of professionals who facilitated training for PWD. She reported directly to a senior manager and indirectly to two other professional staff members. She had been employed for over 25 years and was nearing retirement. The organisation’s policy on accessibility promoted universal access and the need to ensure that persons with disabilities live independent lives and participate fully in all spheres of life. Shannon was positive about the evolving nature of the organisation and its work, internally and externally, to eliminate barriers to participation in society. She remained convinced though that individuals within an organisation with good policies, still needed to ensure proper implementation.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter introduced each of the cases within this study. Each case presented provided insight into the participants. The following chapter details the *Findings and Analysis* where three themes emerged. These three themes are underpinned by various mini themes that are used to categorise the experiences of PWD.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

The chapter presents the findings and analysis of the data and consists of three sections. Extracts from the data were used to illustrate the analysis and reflect the themes that emerged.

The first section, *Factors influencing Employment*, is a description of the case study participants' experiences as they were seeking employment. An analysis of their experiences relating to accessing employment follows. The section concludes with the findings and analysis of environmental barriers to employment.

The second section, *Early Experiences of Inclusion in the Workplace*, describes the participants' experiences as they integrated into their new working environments. Then the section presents the findings and analysis in relation to how the participants disclosed their disability and established working relationships with others. This is followed by an explanation of the concept 'normality' and the early acceptance the interviewees experienced. The section concludes with an analysis of their frustrations, as described by the participants, in relation to their impairment.

The third section, *Accommodation in the Workplace*, presents the findings and analysis of the participants' experiences of accommodation in the workplace. The request for accommodation, the use of assistive technology, personal assistance and organisational practices are analysed.

#### **6.1. Factors influencing Employment**

##### **6.1.1. Pre-employment Experiences**

Seeking employment was not an immediate consideration for participants who experienced the late-onset of disability. In most cases, their employment was preceded by a period of rehabilitation or training with a specialised rehabilitation/ vocational agency. Participants were prompted to find work either because they valued the financial benefits of employment or felt empowered through the rehabilitation process. Although they received support and understanding during this period from family members and friends, their motivation was not only influenced by what others said, but resulted

largely from periods of reflection and personal introspection. Adjusting cognitively and emotionally took time and effort. Accepting their personal disability profoundly impacted all the participants' attitudes to seeking employment. The adjustment did not necessarily occur in an obvious or explicit manner, but was part of a process. Peter, rather than contextualising his disability as a life event, considered his progress towards seeking employment to have occurred after integrating his disability into one of his many characteristics. Wandile best captured the shift in his understanding by contextualising his impairment as a life event, as one of many others to come:

It was a process. You have to get back to work, you have to face the world. In rehab you're not really facing the world, you preparing yourself. At that time, it was a waste of time and money because my life just ended that day. People don't know what you going through. But sometimes you have your own time where you think to yourself and it's a mental thing the psychological thing. I realised there is still life. So I needed to get work.

Previous experiences of seeking employment, and their impressions of employers influenced the level of motivation participants felt to find employment. Individual educational levels and employer requirements contributed to how the participants viewed their opportunities for success. Participants were aware that the Grade 12 Certificate was a minimum requirement for employment within the government sector and some private sector companies. The motivation to seek employment fluctuated where participants knew they did not meet the requirements, or had previously suffered rejection. Participants with tertiary qualifications experienced similar fears, also reinforced by experiences of rejection. They grew sceptical of employers' motives after several applications for employment were unsuccessful. Francois and Johannes were equally sceptical of employers who would readily employ PWD and confirmed a lowered motivation to actively seek employment. Francois explained:

When I first started applying for a job in '94 when the whole process of change started, before that it wasn't easy and I know for a fact that the one guy said to me, I sent in my CV, he got my CV from CVs that was thrown out for the job because it said disability.

The participants' experiences of rejection and pity were not only limited to seeking employment, but also in seeking to improve their levels of education to enhance their employment prospects. The impact on their livelihoods was immediately evident, especially where participants were the main financial contributors, but the underlying long-term effects on their self-perception and self-esteem were subtle. The impact of these negative experiences was long lasting and contributed to the extended periods of unemployment that some participants experienced. Overcoming self-doubt was difficult, but critical to the process of seeking employment. For Mikail, the struggle to access tertiary education contributed to his initial lack of self-belief and avoidance of employment. Mikail said, "That made me doubt myself that very same day I went to Y to try to apply but it affected my feelings and career". In contrast, the experiences of rejection strengthened some participants' resolve to seek employment. Johannes described his experience and the fortuitous engagement with his employers: "There was about two or three guys that went for the interview but fortunately my experience made me have belief and is what saved me and landed this job".

Accessing the appropriate support as soon as possible, after acquiring an impairment, proved essential in preparing the participants, physically and emotionally, to seek employment. Rehabilitation impacted the readiness of all participants at different stages when they contemplated entering or re-entering employment. External agents such as rehabilitation specialists, vocational training institutes and NGOs that offered independence training were important links to employment opportunities and played a role in preparing participants for their employment search, even though participants questioned some agencies' motives and roles. The participants felt that rehabilitation extended the traditional employment continuum through their becoming part of the process of re-entering employment. Shannon, Thandeka and Claude were connected to organisations that facilitated rehabilitation, through which they gained skills they felt were useful in seeking employment. Thandeka explained, "2012 I did get a call from the NGO and they say I must get to the business looking for Mr. Z. That is how I get this job. They (NGO) trained me and got me a job". Access to agencies directly influenced the participants' development, often facilitating access to low skill level jobs. In Johannes's case, he believed the lack of appropriate support services affected the ease

with which he adjusted to his acquired impairment, as well as the opportunities to find alternate employment. As he explained:

We don't fit in at DEAFSA but we also have a disability. Over the years, it's always been getting help from overseas. It's only now in the last two or three years that DEAFSA is catering for people with disabilities like myself.

Prolonged periods of absence for medical reasons affected how employers responded to the participants. Some were prone to experiencing extended periods of absence when their physical health deteriorated. The anxiety around retaining employment and finding new employment increased as participants were not always sure whether employers would be understanding of the disability and how it impacted their physical health. Peter and Gerhardus shared similar experiences related to rehabilitation. Gerhardus's deteriorating physical condition required a five-month rehabilitation period during which he was bedridden after surgery. He grew anxious during this period and contemplated seeking alternate employment. Acknowledging the impact on the organisation, he was mindful that, unlike non-disabled people, it was nearly impossible to seek employment during that time:

There was an incident that resulted in me having a back op and I was hospitalised. I had to be in bed for 4 or 5 months. The organisation just said you must get better, but I don't think any of the staff came to visit me and I thought I had to find a new job. But it is not that easy.

Invariably a concerted physical, emotional and financial effort was required to seek employment. The participants described the impact of their impairment, specifically the physical effort required to overcome environmental barriers to seeking employment. The physical effort related to presenting an appropriate physical appearance and mobility, while the emotional effort was directed at managing their personal expectations. The financial impact of distributing curriculum vitae and travelling to interviews also affected the frequency with which some of the participants sought employment. Peter, Thandeka, Simphiwe and Saliem explained that their reliance on others played a crucial role in the regularity with which they sought employment. Peter acknowledged he had no other choice, especially where employers did not use alternative strategies, and the physical effects of manipulating his body placed him at a disadvantage, in comparison to

non-disabled people. “I’ll have to make the effort. I have get out of bed. I have to get up in my chair and I go. It only happens if she is around.” Travelling long distances to access limited opportunities was not uncommon for participants. The availability of opportunities specifically for the participants, in relation to non-disabled people, was not always guaranteed. They felt that, in relation to their non-disabled counterparts, their time, money and physical effort to seek employment was negatively compounded by their disabilities. Saliem explained the effort he went through in seeking employment to avoid relying on a disability grant:

I was working in 2006 in Mossel Bay and I was stabbed there one time, a finger away from my heart, but lucky I’m still living. I wanted a new work close to home. And it was a security company I was supposed to write down and I was feeling so like how can I say like I can’t do it. But to earn the money I must travel and pay.

### **6.1.2. Access to Employment**

Accessing employment was a major milestone for all the participants. The process and experience was not necessarily uniform for all. The available emotional and physical support during this period also varied amongst participants. They described their anxieties regarding the perceived expectations of employers and colleagues, and their reasons for employing PWD as a contributory factor to the barriers to accessing employment. The anxiety contributed to self-doubt and, in some instances, it had played a role when participants had previously rejected opportunities to access employment. For Wandile “it was never easy” as he believed his initial challenge was to overcome his perceived perceptions of others. Developing a personalised solution to overcome these perceptions was believed to be critical to accessing employment by the participants. Shannon explained that even though access to opportunities was easier to contend with in familiar settings, having the necessary confidence and taking personal responsibility for her actions improved the way she accessed employment. “For me that is part of my personality which will take me far past other blind people. You must have the confidence to work.”

Previous personal experience as well as access to rehabilitation agencies contributed to how easily the participants gained entry to new or re-employment opportunities. Participants felt that employers believed they would be taking a risk and that the risk outweighed the benefits when employing disabled individuals. The participants agreed that this belief contributed to how difficult it was for them to access employment. Participants also believed that their desire to work was influenced by an employer's recruitment and selection process. It was an indication of how well the employer understood disability, how determined they were to employ PWD and an indicator of the participants' future experiences, as described by Rafique:

I remember distinctly there was a rep from HR on the panel. He didn't really go into detail. I explained to them my condition and what I would need. They thought look I'll be office bound, there wouldn't be much in terms of needs and at the time I didn't really discuss that I would need a personal assistant because I was told there are people here who can assist.

Thandeka also expressed some doubt about future expectations as:

Mr X didn't do an interview. The only thing he asked for was my grades if I passed, if I could travel with the transport from my home to that place in that industrial area. I said I can do that all and I passed matric is that okay? He said he will call me again to start working.

On the other hand, Johannes' experiences with his previous employers showed their inability to accommodate him and, in desperation, he sought alternative employment. Johannes felt that his experience was made less difficult by his prospective employers being open-minded and empathetic:

When I was interviewed, they asked me about the hearing. I explained to them and that was the last about my hearing and they understood and the interview and everything went as normal and till this day it's very open.

Participants also commented on the culture of the organisation and other practices such as disability sensitisation programmes, which were not uniform, that impacted their experiences as they accessed employment. Rafique and Claude, both governmental employees, were particularly critical of their employers' not meeting employment targets. The participants did not always positively receive an employer's predetermined

disability sensitisation efforts. Where such programmes were intended to facilitate improved access, participants believed these had to be consultative and individualised. Generic approaches to sensitisation were felt to place the participants on stage for inspection, a process that other non-disabled employees did not have to undergo when accessing employment. Simphiwe, Mikail and Wandile were opposed to these efforts as they limited their autonomy. The nature of the organisation also affected how access was promoted. Simphiwe detailed a previous experience of accessing employment through an internship:

When I got there the managers, including HR, were discussing that I should be placed on the ground floor. A week prior to my interview [they] gave them awareness on disability. It just makes me want to leave because [they] made me feel like an alien, like a different species, like a different creature.

Access to employment was improved where participants could capitalise on established personal and work-related networks. The knowledge of assured access, where participants were previously employed or gained access through informants, increased their confidence and eliminated the tension and constraints they felt when having to seek employment without access to information about employment. Although participants believed that having the requisite skills and qualifications improved their chances of access to employment, direct introduction to opportunities was found to be more influential in how they accessed employment. In some cases, the delays in accessing employment related directly to their expectations of matching their qualifications with an appropriate opportunity. Peter, Saliem and Francois found that their personal relationships facilitated their access to opportunities. Peter commented on the impact of a personal relationship. “The CEO at the time was someone I knew from church so you know as it works like she knows me, I know her, bam done sorted.” Similarly, accessing employment through an established work network contributed to the participants’ motivation as described by Wandile:

I started here then I was away for about six months but while I was still in hospital they visited me and informed me they’re going to take me as permanent. This made me think that I’m still someone. I’m still valued and that helped the rehabilitation as well.

Legislation and internal company policies did not necessarily improve the participants' accessibility to employment and participation in the open labour market. Mikail and Shannon expressed their concerns as employees within the non-governmental sector. Although legislation was directed at improving the participants' opportunities, employers were not always equipped or motivated to ensure the application and provision of opportunities. Employers often adopted informal approaches to implementing policies. At times, participants felt their access to employment resulted from pity, or well-meaning and good employers, where financial incentives were believed to possibly sway employers more readily. In Peter's case, he questioned the impact of employment equity legislation. He believed access to opportunities amongst PWD to be limited because legislation promoted equal opportunities based on racial determinants. Peter responded by focussing on the value he believed he could contribute to an organisation:

I don't have a BEE benefit. I've just got to work that much harder to prove myself so that you don't employ me as a disabled person but rather as someone that can add value to your organisation but I'm a white male in South Africa so I got to suck that up.

Accessing employment also offered participants an opportunity to influence future policies and the culture of organisations. Actively driving policies, more specifically to improve access to employment opportunities, was critical as stated by Wandile:

There wasn't a programme specifically for disabled people but they just recently got an employment equity thing running so I made sure I am part of that committee. It can make you feel frustrated at times but this is not your world, things happen in their own way and it can make you unmotivated but you must help the change.

### **6.1.3. Environmental Barriers to Work**

The physical barriers to employment exceeded those of their non-disabled colleagues and it took effort, and assistance from others, to overcome. Participants felt that the effort required to get to work largely went unnoticed and was unrewarded. Preparing for work, at times, required participants to have an unusually early start to the day, that in

turn, shortened the rest period they would have at night. This effort required them to expend more energy, over a longer working day and week, than their colleagues, with less time to recuperate. Physical exhaustion related directly to the effects of an impairment in overcoming structural barriers, often contributed to frustrating their efforts to get to work. Wandile explained the impact of extended working weeks:

You've worked for five days, your body's tired. I'm not sure if the body is programmed to work five days but my body feels one day's rest is not enough to recover and my body doesn't operate the same as an abled, it just changes, it's not the same. You have a full day but you see you're comparing me to yourself because you recover in one day, I need more time.

Planning reduced the margin for error to derail the physical efforts of participants, as they prepared to travel to work. The planning was detailed and spanned their movements over an entire day. Planning for most eventualities regarding their work output and possible barriers they would encounter ensured they were able to focus on their work more attentively. Events that occurred outside of what could be reasonably planned for were interpreted to be part of their disability. The extent of Peter's physical disability required meticulous planning, especially when he had to attend to meetings:

I've got a routine that I work to. Disability doesn't define me. It all needs to get put into a schedule and you stick to it. I plan my week or day like any other guy able bodied or not. However, you've got to be realistic, right. You jump in the shower you can be out in 10 minutes. Fine. I go hop in the bath it could be an hour and this is when planning is important.

Participants found that employers were unaware that pain management was often an inherent part of disability. Impairments that were physical in nature often had long-term effects on the musculoskeletal system and extended to the nervous system. Although some sensory impairments induced pain, this was generally short lived. In the case of the blind participants, postural deviations formed over extended periods of time. Here medication alleviated minor concerns such as headaches caused by poor posture. The morning after an inactive night was particularly challenging for participants who were physically disabled. The inactivity caused muscle contractions and decreased their range of motion. The impact of some physical impairments required long-term pain

management strategies. Pain impeded the participants' concentration which affected how they prioritised activities and their ease of movement at times, resulting in their having to rely on others for assistance in completing tasks. Peter explained the effects of medication. "You know, I don't have the energy I used to. The medication for pain turns you into a bit of zombie and I couldn't think straight". Gerhardus, on the other hand, described a non-medicalised routine he developed to manage his constant pain:

Because of the polio, I've got to keep on shifting through the night to alleviate pain. I don't get to rest. I wake up in pain. I squeeze my legs where the pain is and hold it there till the pain subsides. I then think through my day. I have to mentally and physically prepare myself. I have to intentionally think about every step I take to survive and the energy and concentration that I need for something as simple as walking but [for others] it will just come automatically.

Participants developed safety routines to reduce the anxiety they felt that was caused by the increased vulnerability created by their impairment. Physical harm was often believed to be the biggest threat, when travelling to and from work, particularly when they used public transport or lived in areas commonly associated with high crime rates. Sensory impaired participants often believed the harm to be more severe because they could not see or hear a threat approach. In the case of physically impaired participants, the fear of further physical injury was considerable. Although non-disabled people are also targeted by criminals, their ability to identify and respond by avoiding situations was believed to be different. Gerhardus's description of his arrival at work provided insight into his fears:

Arriving at work early, I would disarm the premises ensuring that nobody sneaks into the building. I'm vulnerable at that point. I don't want to be pushed and fall. Before I used to bounce back. I was strong enough but now I break. I have to accept that I'm fragile.

Transport to and from employment often created additional financial and emotional cost. Physically disabled persons who could afford their own vehicles were required to have them modified for driving at their own expense. Lift clubs established through informal networking often helped to reduce the frustration with travelling, but this came at a cost

when there was minimal freedom to determine a travelling schedule. The public transport system was considered unavailable, unreliable, unsafe and unsuitable for the participants. The closer the public transport terminals were to the participants' home and work, the lower the costs were to travel. Even in the instances where specialised transport services were available, attempts to get to work were often hindered by the poor municipal infrastructure. Wandile explained, "Public transport - there's no Dial-a-Ride coming this side from Cape Town. It was a hell of a hassle". Access to transport played a key role in the participants attending to opportunities for employment during their recruitment and more importantly, once employment was confirmed. Untrained public servants often ignored the participants' needs while other citizens' curiosity, resulted in unwanted attention, and had a lingering effect on their mood for work. Simphiwe recounted one of his many similar experiences. "A simple transport route takes off hundreds of people. Otherwise I get to work in a different mood because they ask me stupid things and they stare. I don't think they understand but it has some negative effect."

### **Summary**

Seeking employment was often preceded by periods of rehabilitation or unemployment. The need to gain employment was often primarily driven by financial factors. Participants felt demotivated to seek employment for prolonged periods because of previous experiences of rejection. External training agencies were of value for the participants and their employers in preparing them for employment. Employers were to be prepared for extended medically enforced absenteeism in some cases where participants had deteriorating conditions, and invariably had to acknowledge the extreme effort the participants undertook to get to work. Gaining access to employment was a major milestone and legislation and internal organisational policies could improve access to opportunities, if implemented properly. Developing personal strategies to get to work with the least amount of effort contributed to a positive working attitude for the participants. These strategies revolved around reducing any frustration encountered prior to getting to work, planning and developing routines, managing pain, the economical use of resources, the use of public or private transport and ensuring personal safety.

Ultimately the participants were required to manage many complexities, including the pain and personal disbelief, that could limit their success in seeking employment.

## **6.2. Early Experiences of Inclusion at the Workplace**

### **6.2.1. Induction and Orientation**

Employers' induction and orientation processes for the participants were criticised for introducing new employees in open forums without discussion. The participants were placed at the centre of discussions on disability, presented by external disability agents or internal human resource practitioners. The use of other agents to discuss their disabilities made participants feel undermined during the process. Generic induction programmes were experienced as rehearsed and insincere attempts at understanding the complexities that participants lived with. Less personally invasive approaches were preferred. Participants felt most comfortable during authentic and sometimes informal induction and orientation processes where discussions about disability developed organically, and they could offer first hand responses to co-workers rather than them hear an expert's opinion. Simphiwe questioned the value of these experts:

A disabled awareness where you bring all these people that are not disabled to a meeting and some special person would come and make them aware.

Why, I don't know what do you want to make them aware of?

Participants felt that at times some employers adopted unconventional approaches. However, they were warier of the purpose and outcomes where structured programmes were presented without consultation. The participants felt that these programmes were often presented to allay the fears and anxieties of non-disabled employees, rather than to address issues from the participants' perspectives. Active involvement in determining the nature and unfolding of these programmes required participants to determine the narrative they were prepared to accept regarding their disabilities later during their employment. The participants held realistic expectations regarding disability awareness programmes and suggested that the need would not exist in environments that were all-embracing. Wandile explained his satisfaction with an unobtrusive approach:

If you start in a place where the emphasis is on your disability, I just don't want to come. Here it's been seamless. My third job and this is the best. I

haven't heard anything about sensitisation but if they do I want to be part of it. I haven't been excluded me from everybody. It makes you want to come and try your best and do more.

Participants questioned the motives of employers when structured programmes were provided. They believed that, as part of the recruitment/ interview phase, employers should address the disabled person's preferences during their induction and orientation. Individualised and intimate opportunities allowed the participants to feel they were not getting special treatment from their employers. The recognition of the barriers within employment situations was evident for the participants and they were dissatisfied with the engagement of senior management who were often absent during their orientation. Participants suggested they preferred to blend into the existing ways of doing things and the working culture, but this was best achieved when managers were active participants, leading the way for others. Claude described the first two weeks at his new employment:

Initially my mentor, the senior person designated as my mentor, wasn't here. So for that two weeks I really felt lost, and that is why, you know, when he actually came, that is why I was so angry with him because he knew that I was coming here. Did he want me to fail?

The participants used the induction and orientation periods as an opportunity to educate co-workers about disability. Early engagement with colleagues allowed participants to set the foundation for their working relationships and establish the way they wished to be interacted with. In circumstances where participants failed to express their dissatisfaction with staged programmes, the status quo remained regarding other decisions concerning them later in their careers. Autonomy and control in the process and engaging with co-workers challenged the norm of established power relationships. Participants felt validated when they could take responsibility and address issues openly with management. Mikail pointed out his approach:

I'm a very open person. I noticed how different people react to a deaf person. Some had no patience but when it comes to the type of person that says I can't do that, that is where I stand up.

Preparation for the participants' arrival was an important indicator of the empathy employers felt towards their workers. Alterations to the physical environment, where

necessary, and the provision of assistive technology improved their induction and orientation experiences. The alterations would incur costs that employers were expected to assume. The participants believed that employers, at a minimum, were to have a basic understanding of their needs to be accommodated, based on their interviews. Further consultation could occur after an initial period of orientation. Gerhardus shared his willingness to compromise on his needs:

I became part of a team fulfilling a certain role when I arrived. There was a step into the office that was difficult for me to climb, so they removed the step and made it a ramp. It came at an expense to the organisation. I was given the best possible chairs for my sitting and they considered a lift. I just said I'm doing things on the ground.

### **6.2.2. Disclosure of Disability to Co-workers**

The disclosure of a disability did not immediately guarantee working conditions to be free of discrimination. Having control over the way disclosure occurred, created opportunities for the participants to address the stereotypical ideas co-workers held. Disclosure in a staged forum was equated to admitting to an inability to perform tasks, where the impairment became the focus and not the disabling environment. How the disability was disclosed affected the participants' overall integration into the working environment. The disclosure of disability to co-workers at times occurred with or without the participants' consent. Disclosures occurring with the disabled worker's consent took place after the employer initiated a dialogue regarding their needs. Participants felt that the best time to initiate discussions about disclosure was when a formal offer of employment was made. The participants also felt that engaging with senior staff about disclosing their disabilities to co-workers was essential, as other workers would follow their example. When employers chose to inform co-workers of the participants' disabilities without their consent, they felt betrayed, as Simphiwe explained:

"I just feel like it should be done voluntarily. Maybe there should be a programme or something done quietly where you decide if you need to

disclose something, this is what I need, not something to be advertised everywhere.”

Withholding information about an impairment allowed participants to be perceived and interacted with as regular, ordinary, non-disabled employees would be. Participants felt that there were good and bad times to disclose an impairment which affected productivity alongside non-disabled colleagues. They experienced that when disclosure was made where impairments were not immediately obvious, co-workers become judgmental. Afterwards some co-workers expressed animosity towards the participants because they considered accommodation to be special treatment. Disclosures that occurred in this manner created a negative working experience for the participants and co-workers were felt to respond with ignorance. Johannes recounted his experiences where his cochlear implant was noticeable. “When you speak to people they act normal but the moment they see that you have a disability they start speaking louder or they pull back a bit.” When impairments became noticeable, participants acknowledged they felt more vulnerable. Caution was expressed about how readily participants would make themselves vulnerable to others, as the effects were lingering, although humour played an important role in deflecting attention away from the mystic of an impairment. Saliem highlighted how he managed his vulnerability and “jokes” once people became aware of his cognitive impairment:

People like to make jokes with me and I like to make jokes with them. But if I’m maybe going to tell someone and they going to make fun of me, I don’t care. If you want to make jokes about it, you can.

The participants felt that, in some instances, immediate disclosure was not necessarily helpful as it created misguided perceptions and unnecessary tensions with co-workers. Co-workers were believed to feel they needed to attend to and act as personal support staff to disabled colleagues, as soon as they became aware of their disabilities. Early disclosure in the case of visibly impaired participants often resulted in high levels of curiosity which persisted for short periods, with much attention focused on the tools that supported their independence. In the case of blind participants, the assistive technologies were of interest to co-workers. They reacted with disbelief and mistrust of participants in

the event of late disclosures or discoveries, where impairments were less visible, as clarified by Johannes:

Every now and again I can see when I'm sitting with someone you can see his eyes he suddenly glances at it and points at it in disbelief. I say sorry it's just an implant and then start telling them what it is just to get that out the way. I'll tell them I'm actually hearing disabled. If I take this off I can't hear.

### **6.2.3. Striving for 'Normality'**

Traditional references to 'normal' in society were based on non-disabled people's standards and interpretations. Participants considered the standard norms to be historical, unfair and misdirected. The notion of 'normality' often crept into the participants' attempts to assimilate with minimal disturbances into an established work place culture. Although participants considered impairment as a characteristic alongside others, 'normal' was believed to be a state to rehabilitate towards, or they would be considered as not normal by employers and co-workers. The participants were, at times, inclined to use stigmatising terms when their own understanding of the construction of disability was based on the effects of their impairment which, in turn, reinforced the concept of the 'other' in the workplace. Simphiwe explained:

Even normal people have their own difference. Disabled people are different so it's hard for me to say we should be treated like this because all disabled people don't need the same treatment. I don't do anything that is only for the disabled. I went to a normal school and I had normal friends.

The participants developed various strategies to appear normal to others to deflect attention from themselves in the workplace. They felt that co-workers would perceive their disabilities as a burden; attempts to alter these perceptions often drove them to exert themselves beyond their physical capacity. Additional effort would be put into doing tasks independently to avoid asking for assistance, even when they felt co-workers would be willing to assist. Self-worth, confidence and determination played a role in the participants' attempt to appear 'normal'. Peter explained how he attempted to make

others more comfortable with his disability and how, for himself, his attempts contributed to the way he perceived himself:

You're aware that people are aware of your disability but you don't want them to be AWARE of your disability, so you go out of your way to be normal. You don't want to burden people so you try to be as normal. I don't see myself as someone any more or less than anybody else and there's no inferiority with my disability.

Acceptance by managers, co-workers and clients was at the heart of the participants' assimilation into an established 'normal' working environment. The belief that performance had to be equal to non-disabled co-workers in physical output, affected how and when the participants felt they deserved to be accepted as 'normal'. They believed they could accept recognition once they fulfilled their job requirements in the same way their co-workers did. Doing more became a personal expectation even when employers did not require it. Gerhardus acknowledged that, as a disabled person, it was ingrained in him to exceed others' expectations:

I went out of my way to be normal because the job required it and I put myself out physically to achieve this. I don't think others would have considered that it a real takes effort for me to get from A to B.

The participants related their difficulties in transitioning from the 'normal' world to the world of disability, with late-onset of disability. The concept of 'normal' was used amongst the participants and not solely in comparison to non-disabled people. Participants who acquired an impairment late in life, believed that it was more difficult to move away from 'normal' to becoming disabled. The experiences gained before becoming disabled made it more difficult to accept as having moved away from the 'norm'. In effect, two 'normals' were constructed by these participants; a normal in comparison to non-disabled people and a normal in relation to others with disabilities, as clarified by Johannes:

I always say it's better to be born deaf than to become deaf because then you know what normal was. Now also we have our own differences. We don't want to be treated the same we don't have the same kind of disability.

#### **6.2.4. Early Acceptance in the Workplace**

The participants' experiences contributed to their perceptions of how well they were accepted within a working community. Participants who felt they were accepted as part of a team, confirmed that they integrated more easily and embraced the culture of the organisation more readily. Participants also maintained that conflict arose in instances where they were excluded from activities and events, believing it to reflect management's values, with participants feeling animosity towards managers. In addition, poor awareness and inadequate accommodation made the participants feel ostracised. Although physical accommodation demonstrated elements of acceptance, participants felt emotional empathy to be lacking in their experience of feeling accepted at work. Employers who lacked this insight created unbearable working conditions as Johannes revealed:

My previous employer could not accept the fact that I was going deaf and we started picking up conflict and it was very bad. I actually was demoted into my job from being a manager just to a normal salesman because they said I couldn't manage. I didn't want to be part of that anymore and looked for another job.

Although organisations had policies on the inclusion of PWD that acted as guidelines, there were challenges in the proper implementation. The participants felt guidelines were important, but questioned the integrity and sincerity of managers and co-workers when simple barriers were encountered. Where barriers persisted, participants believed policies were used to coerce others into accepting their presence. Full integration and acceptance were only possible when most co-workers willingly exceeded the minimum guidelines in policies. The participants believed integration and acceptance by others required co-workers to adjust their perceptions of the participants in the workplace. Claude explained that, as a person with a disability, he also had a role to play in pushing for acceptance:

People must accept you as a person with a disability; they must make adjustments. I can hear people whispering and gasping for air. "Is it true, is that a blind public servant?" So as more started to accept me here, the more they understood he can work or deliver. And the catalyst for him to accept

me was that huge fall-out that we had. Ironic, but true. You must make them feel you want to be there.

The participants found that pity and sympathy from co-workers delayed acceptance into an organisation. Managers and co-workers who were fixated on being sympathetic about the perceived injury were seen to be wasting their attempts to foster inclusion. The participants believed that actions were a clearer indication of others' intent and acceptance. They also expressed their discomfort with being made to feel grateful to others for being welcomed into the workspace. When managers and co-workers were believed to be self-accepting, they were more inclined to accept the participants. Shannon felt her acceptance had to be based on more than her disability:

As soon as people start taking pity then what does it say about how they treat me. I don't need favours. That will make me feel less effective, less of a human being. You will only be able to accept the person for who and what he is if you are able to accept yourself for who and what you are. I accept my blindness with my shortcomings. That's me and if you can't, then deal with your own problem.

Participants wanted to avoid being perceived as unworthy and unwilling to work. Seeking acceptance also occurred through the extra effort put into the appearance of being 'normal'. The participants believed that because they could exceed others' expectations, they would gain acceptance. Acceptance was found to come at a cost as participants either extended themselves physically or accepted being treated as an 'other'. Where impairment was obvious and disclosed, the attitude of others became key to being accepted. The employment experience was found to be limited where participants chose not to disclose their disabilities for fear of rejection. Pete explained his approach to gaining acceptance at work:

The majority of the staff here are abled-bodied people. You know there are unseen disabilities and some people don't volunteer these things. No-one wants to be seen as a leper, you know. It's human nature we all want to be superman in everybody else's eyes.

### **6.2.5. Frustration and Vulnerability in the Workplace**

Participants experienced frustration where their impairment affected their inclusion in the workplace. Some employers were understanding and accepted their vulnerabilities in certain circumstances. Participants found that they often spent additional time planning to execute their tasks yet, at times, became fatigued or doubted themselves. Where tasks were shared with co-workers, they believed they had a greater responsibility to deliver and often directed their frustration at themselves, resulting in conflict with co-workers. The inability to respond to requests by managers in the same time-frame as non-disabled co-workers was unavoidable and agitated the participants, as Rafique explained:

You can imagine the frustration. I can do the job. My boss will call in a minute; you have to be at the meeting right now. Now assuming I'm in bed, I have to do my routine, I can't tell the boss look I'll be there in three hours' time. It can lead to confrontation.

Employers often overlooked simple challenges that the participants experienced. Developing personal strategies was important to minimise their frustration and exposure to harm. Scenario planning often resulted in different strategies that helped minimise the stress the participants associated with their disabilities. Barriers were always going to be present in a workplace, primarily around the needs of non-disabled people, and the participants felt they needed to adjust accordingly. The participants often made use of informal networks of support to execute various tasks where employers did not provide assistants or the required accommodation. As these informal networks included people, on days when they were not available or unwilling to assist, participants were frustrated as Francois explained. "Sometimes I get here first and it's frustrating, there's a lock on the main gate and the security guy is not there to open. If I'm lucky one of my colleagues is around."

Frustration also increased where participants believed they were disadvantaged and could not compete with non-disabled colleagues equally. The lack of support and resources affected how they delivered their work. Participants also felt that these situations were avoidable and impacted their integration in the working environment; they expressed frustration with this. As frustration built up, participants often felt the best option was to find alternative employment as Claude explained:

There was a point in time I said I'm actually going to just simply quit. I don't have the energy to deal with the frustration and incidences of frustration. Sometimes I feel frustrated with having to depend on an assistant so much so that I take it out on her.

Relying on others at work and adapting to systems and processes designed for non-disabled people reduced some of the participants' independence. The use of text-based communication in organisations where blind and visually impaired participants worked, and the lack of adequate sign language interpreters for deaf workers exemplified instances where participants grew frustrated, as expressed by Shannon. "Braille. That gives me total independence. But they expect the things from me in sighted print to make their lives easier, but what about my life? Why can't they learn Braille?"

Feelings of vulnerability in relation to their physical working environments were common amongst participants. The risk of personal harm and injury was considered frequently. The effect of their impairment frustrated participants as it exposed them to different health and safety risks at times. In instances where participants were required to travel to and work in different locations, they were exposed to new and unfamiliar barriers that had to be overcome. Employers required some participants to work off-site and often did not consider that changing work environments would be problematic for disabled workers. Participants working in office buildings believed that employers often failed to consider designing spaces to be accessible for all PWD. The focus was often on physically disabled workers and seldom included accommodation for those with sensory impairments. Participants believed that if this were managed appropriately their personal vulnerability could be reduced. Mikail expressed his frustration when made to feel more vulnerable when no consideration was given to his sensory impairment. "You put a ramp up approved by City of Cape Town thinking deaf people need a ramp, but they can't provide a recognised and qualified sign language interpreter?"

## **Summary**

The participants considered themselves worthy of employment and where they believed they were employed out of sympathy, their dignity was often impacted negatively. Policy implementation was a key factor in the best possible inclusionary efforts of

organisations and the participants played an active role in altering existing stereotypical perceptions. Acceptance by others often revolved around being perceived as ‘normal’ and the participants made a concerted effort to exceed others’ expectations. Disclosing their disabilities impacted the way managers and co-workers treated the participants. The participants also felt that it would remain their prerogative to disclose impairment details to others only in situations where their autonomy was respected. The participants assessed the organisational culture on arrival, based on the organisation’s efforts to include them in all aspects of employment. The participants used the initial stage of entering the workplace to educate others about their needs as best as possible, to lay the foundations for further engagement. Frustration was evident where the necessary resources and support were not immediately available, thus delaying the participants’ integration to communal work settings.

### **6.3. Accommodation in the Workplace**

#### **6.3.1. Requesting Accommodation**

The participants made various requests for accommodation in the workplace. The most common included requests for physical assistance, provision of assistive technology and the alteration to working environments. Although accommodation was important to facilitate the best possible functioning, the participants often found it to be perceived differently. Accommodation created conflict where financial output was expected from employers and they were resistant or delayed implementation. The participants believed that if timeously communicated, the restrictions could be managed and overcome, ensuring their improved productivity. Failure to engage through dialogue resulted in participants feeling demotivated and disappointed as Shannon explained:

You do need assistance once in a blue moon, the things you can’t help for. If I have to read something. I really can’t do that. I will tell them in advance I really do need a person who will be able to see to give me assurance. Your colleagues also have their own workload and using them takes time out of their day. If they need to help you, it shouldn’t be things you are able to do yourself.

Time off from work was another critical accommodation the participants sought, specifically for medical complications. The allowances made for travelling to and from work, in situations where employers understood the effort taken in preparing for work, were not taken for granted. The ability to work in the comfort of an unobstructed environment also made the participants less anxious as they issued more control over how they would engage with their working spaces. Working from home was also considered an ideal means of saving time and resources for employers, where the participants had already invested in accommodation. Pete confirmed that his working from home arrangements saved his employers from duplicating costs and allowed him to extend his working week in moderate comfort, even though he believed employers should be willing to be responsible for some of the costs:

For the most part I lie in bed all day not because I want to but because it's the easiest, there's less distraction and unless I'm employing two guys, and they don't come cheap, it is saving money. I would love to tell you I work five days a week and take my weekends off like everybody else. The fact of the matter is I work seven days a week because it's a case of I work till I just feel like I don't feel like anymore.

Reasonable accommodation was often considered to be a right that was to be realised through legislation and organisational policies. The participants believed that the use of the word "reasonable" often gave employers a valid reason to deny certain accommodation, especially where organisations had employed many persons with disabilities. The cost implications were perceived to be the reason employers failed to act. The participants believed the character of organisations was to develop beyond just making financially reasonable accommodation, but instead were to accept that accommodation requests were valid and they were to legitimise requests through the appropriate provision of resources. Wandile expressed his frustration with encountering policies for reasonable accommodation on his return to work, and his initial reluctance to challenge his employers to shift their culture based on minimum compliance:

You don't want to get involved because it's frustrating and shows the lack of understanding, lack of interpreting. If you say the Constitution is your

basis with reasonable accommodation that's enough, then put yourself in that person's situation, be empathetic, tomorrow it can happen to you.

Internal organisational policies were also expected to be transparent and provide the best benefit to all employees. The use of separate policies for non-disabled and disabled workers, or as in the case of Rafique and Claude, two policies for different levels of staff was not ideal and created animosity and discontent. Rafique was most critical of the confusion that multiple policies had on the accommodation for staff:

It says policy on reasonable accommodation. Then there's one for the members. So that's applicable to officials and this one for members. As a person with disability, it is part of my work managing my disability. I will be more productive if accommodations are in place. The institution must meet me halfway. It also contributes to comfort you feel in the office.

### **6.3.2. Assistive Technology**

The participants insisted that technology could either enhance or disrupt their productivity. The availability of the required technology assured participants of their ability to deliver their work in an unhindered way. Disruptions were experienced where the assistive technology was sought without consultation, resulting in wasteful expenditure, and contributing to the participants' displeasure. Employers who were well informed, consulted and provided the most suitable technology at their disposal. Peter suggested that PWD also had to understand the technology provided, for it to have a meaningful application. "So yes, for me to do what I do I need a computer and I need know-how. I don't have the world's greatest computer but I have everything I need to be productive."

Medical interventions utilising technology were often not considered as an employer's responsibility by the participants. They distinguished between experiences where they acquired their disabilities outside of the working environment and the possibility of acquiring an injury on duty. Employers were expected to be aware that even though the injury might not have occurred at work, the financial, emotional and social impact would inherently affect them. Participants felt that if the injury occurred while on duty, all costs for providing the requisite technology should be accepted by employers, as opposed to

constructive dismissal of the injured employee, to avoid the cost and outlay of assistive technology. The return to work could be assisted by these medical interventions and the appropriate technology, even with some limitations. Johannes explained how his experience of returning to work was enhanced through technology:

With a cochlea implant my life is now improved. It is limited; it is a mechanical device so it doesn't have a brain. It cost me a lot to be able to do my work – about R360 000 on this operations, cochlea implant, phones, gadgets and that sort of thing.

Cost was considered the most limiting factor in providing assistive technology in the workplace. The capital costs were believed to be excessive by employers and the maintenance costs often went unaccounted for. The participants explained their willingness to make use of their personal devices to offset some of these costs. They, however, expected that the maintenance would then be accepted by employers where the devices were used in their employ, much like non-disabled people were provided with computers, stationary and other utilities to perform their tasks where employers accept those costs. The appropriate technology was also believed to save employers costs over time and minimise the reliance on other co-workers. Mikail believed that his employers benefitted from his using his personal devices:

That technology is for us and them [employers] but they are expensive. It does affect me because I have to have a back-up but they say it's expensive.

I will need a higher package. For now, all I did is I joined insurance.

Independent functioning in the workplace was affected by the provision of assistive technology. The receipt or delays of assistive technology impacted the social adjustment participants could enjoy and the way they experienced inclusion in the work place. Managers were pivotal to ensuring that the participants could start working on arrival. Participants felt frustrated when they were unable to be productive due to the unavailability of technology. The experience was uncomfortable to contend with, as the participants believed co-workers perceived them as being paid for nothing. This might not have been true, but the participants felt it cast an unwanted shadow on their performance and expectations held by others. Claude explained that his wait for technology initially hampered his performance and ability to compete with his co-

workers. “You know, I sit here [now]. I mean that thing alone is about R15 000 and then the software that’s an extra R15 000. It makes me seriously competitive [having the technology to perform my duties].”

Other than improving efficiency and productivity, the provision of assistive technology also impacted the participants’ social inclusion. Where the standard means of communication restricted participation to social discussions, participants often felt isolated. With the use of social media platforms having grown in popularity within the workplace, the participants also felt excluded in this instance. Organisational systems and processes were most often housed on IT systems from which participants were often excluded. Thandeka’s experience of minimal access to the IT system demonstrates how a PWD’s dignity can be affected. “I’d like to have it. I’d like to have a computer because if you want to take leave you have to use someone’s computer to apply for the leave on the computer and that is something personal.”

### **6.3.3. Personal Assistance**

The participants often faced situations where the effect of their impairment limited their ability to execute tasks independently. Employers seldom viewed providing an assistant, as part of a resourcing solution, in the same way as providing assistive technology. Requests for this type of human resource were often denied as organisations often did not consider such job functions. Personal assistants were not always required, but were often part of an individualised solution for the participants. Participants felt that in some instances they could forgo the technology if they had a personal assistant who would integrate more systematically into the established organisational practices alongside them. Rafique expressed his frustration where bureaucratic processes limited his options:

They say on an individual basis they will negotiate. They would just go as far as you happy in your office, the rest is for you to sort out. People are strictly following these policies. It’s still a bone of contention for me 13 years later. I had my own unofficial ‘personal assistant’. He did the carpets here and it was great having him around but he was 76, and when he got involved in an accident, he really couldn’t help anymore.

The qualification of personal assistants often went unquestioned and in cases where employers provided such accommodation, participants wanted to ensure they had the best possible help. The tasks requiring support commonly included aspects of personal care/ablution routines, private banking matters, scheduling, interpreting, driving and reading. Participants believed assistants had to be caring individuals who would maintain their privacy and dignity. They also stressed that the relationship hinged on trust and respect and was one where they were wary of the power dynamics created by their reliance on another person. Mikail suggested that some employers did not consider the appointment of assistants thoughtfully:

If I've got a headache, I would take Panado. Doesn't mean I'm a doctor. I need to study more to become a doctor. It's the same with an interpreter. There needs to be acceptance by the deaf community. The person was speaking and the interpreter stopped. I asked why and she said, "You don't need to know because it's difficult words." Some interpreters are controlling deaf people.

The participants believed there would always be situations in the workplace where they would inevitably have to rely on someone for assistance, due to the nature of organisations and their practices. Organisations that were designed around the needs of non-disabled people presented the most necessity for assistants to be provided. Even though barriers were encountered, participants felt that technology enhanced performance, but people could contribute more. Being able to discuss workplace challenges with someone trustworthy could also be an outlet for frustrations. Claude explained one of his insights:

Irrespective of what equipment, I will not be able to read that handwriting. It's just not possible. So it is there where my assistant comes in to tell me. One bad part of having a disability is that you always going to need somebody. You know no matter how. You can have the best state of the art equipment but you always going to need a human being for emotional support and assist you with something.

Personal assistants could also reduce the exposure and vulnerability that the participants experienced in their working situations. Their vulnerability was not only related to

safety, but also personal care. The responsibility that personal assistants were expected to assume was evident in long-term relationships. In short-term, ad hoc relationships, participants felt more exposed and vulnerable. This related particularly to medical care and ablution routines that took place at work - strangers and unofficial assistants were not ideal. Pete felt his situation was not unique but the extent of his relationship with his personal assistant extended beyond work:

She is there for peace of mind first and foremost. So, if anything were to go wrong then you have someone who can pick up a phone for you or make a call. That's a position of responsibility. We've been together now almost seven years she's like part of my family. I mean I'd feel the same about losing her as I would about be losing a sibling or a parent.

#### **6.3.4. Organisational Practices**

With the low unemployment rates and underemployment of PWD, the motivation for employing the participants remained questionable. The participants were mindful that by being employed by organisations that focused on meeting employment equity legislation targets, they would still encounter challenges, as the organisation's motivation was not necessarily sound, according to the participants' standards. Legislative target-driven practices were not only limited to organisations that were profit driven, but also service related institutions. Leadership played a critical role in guiding the interpretation and implementation of organisational policies. When the employment processes fell outside of what the organisations traditionally followed, the participants felt sceptical of the long-term success of disabled workers. Gerhardus's awareness of this was heightened. "You become aware that your employers don't know how to handle disabled people. Here other disabled people are not directly employed by us. It's an abnormal way of [employing] somebody with a disability. They are outsourced." An incongruence between actions and intent was a clear sign of the challenges leadership faced in attempting to promote sound and fair organisational processes that would benefit the participants. Gerhardus went on to explain, "Not that leadership is not truthful but they are sometimes calculating. It's not that people don't care; it is just time."

The moral obligation to employ the participants was considered to extend beyond compliance and was a sign of an organisation of good character. The values expressed in internal policy documents, based on legislation, gave employees a sense of an inclusive environment, but this easily translated into distrust when implementation fell short of the participants' expectations. Participants believed that since the government was the leader in the development of sound policy, there should be no opportunity for failure in reaching their specified targets, as explained by Claude:

The only thing that I know of is the fact that the state endeavours to employ disabled people to comply with the Employment Equity Act. We've got all these documents. We've got these policy guidelines and, yes, we have to start somewhere but it [is] still clearly lacking. Your formal policies lay the guideline and there must be that interaction in order to give practical effect to what is intended. It certainly inconsistent if you say universal design. It implies making things easy and pleasant but, at the moment, I'm not having that.

Private sector employers were given some reprieve as the participants believed they were primarily profit driven. To ensure policy alignment and appropriate implementation, participants often had to resort to threats and unpleasant actions to assert their rights. Claude continued, "I had to resort to threats. I mean I can show you emails where I said if my stuff is not done within seven days I'm taking you to the Constitutional Court. It's only then that people really, you know, replied."

Time to construct the best possible policies and practices was essential along with adopting an inclusive and collaborative approach. Employers, PWD and other stakeholders were expected to determine the best possible working solution that would consider all stakeholders needs. The participants felt that they were not necessarily the only marginalised persons within organisations, and any policies and practices developed should be for the benefit of the greater communal good. The participants stressed the importance of senior managers driving the process, giving it further value as other co-workers followed their actions as expanded by Wandile:

What they saying they haven't achieved yet but they are very close because they going in the right direction in terms of virtues. Not everyone is going

behave the same, but from the top management, I will say yes, they are moving in the right direction.

Managers who created opportunities for participants within their daily activities and adopted informal mentoring roles contributed to the confidence the participants gained. Motivation to return to work was also enhanced where participants felt that the organisation had put a plan in place for their progression. Clearly defined programmes were also more easily followed by managers who had limited experience of working with PWD. Mogamat shared the contribution to his motivation:

I feel great about it when he come and ask me to do something. I gain confidence. I'm become more willing to work for him. If he asks me anything, I will do it. I think he's looking at me like, how can I say, I'm his right hand.

The adoption of UD principles in many organisations were often acknowledged but incoherently applied. The participants felt the overriding experience to be that the policies and values organisations espoused were based on displaying a good appearance on the outside, but often fell short on the implementation inside. The risks were clear in situations in which the participants remained at a disadvantage where UD was accepted but the environments remained unchanged, particularly where historical building sites were concerned. Participants also felt that where these policies were adopted and meant to be implemented, educational staff programmes were to be used to inform as well to address environmental barriers. Rafique expressed his disappointment at unchanging environments considering the evolution of organisational policies:

I had a fall two years ago because the ramp didn't comply to universal design principles. They put rails in after. It's a bit of an ad hoc arrangement. They thought I would sue. So, they got wellness officers to approach me and we went through all the buildings to check out the lifts for future. Some of the ramps in the old building don't conform to the regulations. It leads to lack of confidence also. You feel demotivated.

## **Summary**

The participants made various requests for accommodation to improve their working environments. Physical infrastructure, technology, time, and human resources were important to improve opportunities for success. Employers who could address these requests beyond a legislative minimum compliance approach, were considered good employers. The interpretation of 'reasonableness' was believed to hinge on financial cost, which the participants believed would be manageable, with improved returns over time. Adequate support promoted the independence of the participants in the workplace, even though it was acknowledged that relying on co-workers was inevitable in environments designed for non-disabled people. The qualifications and willingness of personal assistants were significant as they contributed to the participants' effectiveness at work. The participants believed that employers were moving in the right direction even though organisations that adopted UD still struggled as the infrastructure did not necessarily meet the expectations of the adopted policies. The participants also believed that the effect of their impairment remained a critical challenge in planning for career progress, especially where the condition was deteriorating.

## CHAPTER 7

### DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the findings are discussed in relation to existing literature. The objective of the study was to understand the overall employment experiences of PWD and address how their requests for accommodation as well as their acclimatisation and acculturation in organisations were perceived. The findings confirmed that the impact of impairment could not be viewed as separate from other environmental barriers. The study also provided evidence that PWD often made requests for accommodation to improve their productivity. The discussion is divided into three sections. *Factors influencing access to Employment* deals with PWD's experiences of gaining access to employment, seeking employment and the barriers encountered while getting to work. The second section, *Inclusion at the Workplace*, discusses induction experiences, the disclosure of disability, how PWD strove for 'normality' and acceptance at work as well as the frustrations and vulnerabilities they experienced. The last section, *Accommodation in the Workplace*, addresses the manner in which requests for accommodation were experienced and the expected enhancement of and integration in the employment experiences.

#### **7.1. Factors influencing access to and gaining employment and re-employment**

##### **7.1.1. Pre-employment Experiences**

The study found that rehabilitation/vocational agents (professionals, employers, and personal relations) play a significant role prior to participants seeking or re-entering employment. Participants flourished emotionally and physically when they accessed information from reliable sources and received physical assistance in their efforts to become gainfully employed, in keeping with McQuaid and Lindsay's (2005) findings where development agencies were key to improving the employability of disabled job seekers. Similarly, Lysaght et al. (2012) reported that vocational rehabilitation agencies assisted PWD's with overcoming uncertainties which improved their willingness to enter the open labour market, as was also found in this study. The findings of Ann et al. (2016) further corroborated this study's findings as they too found that specialist rehabilitation agencies played a pivotal role in determining career choices and were

fundamental to the vocational experience. Moreover, Gore et al.'s (2013) findings also pointed to the importance of continuous support offered by service providers in motivating and reassuring PWD during the task of seeking employment.

Guerette and Smedema (2011) reported that improved psychological well-being and adjustment to disability occurred where there were high levels of family support. Familial support increased this study's participants' positivity towards their employment prospects; they felt a responsibility to the family to return to work, thereby improving their employment prospects. Lindstrom et al. (2011) also found that young adults' employment prospects were improved where familial support was high. Similarly, Ann et al. (2016) found that the understanding and acceptance of family and friends, as an informal support structure, contributed positively to the employment experience and was helpful in promoting job seeking.

In this study, the time for personal reflection during rehabilitation was essential to determine and contextualise the impact of the disability, prior to actively seeking employment. The findings identified the importance of a positive rehabilitation experience which contributes to the psychological/emotional readiness of PWD to seek employment thereby avoiding prolonged periods of depression and anxiety disorders.

Dutta et al. (2008) explored the employment outcomes of PWD using vocational rehabilitation agencies, and found that job placement assistance and other support services were related to job success for PWD. Rehabilitation agencies, in this study, were found to act as a direct link to employment opportunities providing participants with access to information and job interviews. Ann et al. (2016) recently asserted the value of these agencies when they found that PWD experienced difficulty in seeking employment when they had limited information about agencies that facilitated employment for PWD. In this study, PWD believed that employers who utilised numerical targeting and were pressurised by time constraints, relied mainly on agencies to facilitate the employment of PWD which suggests a shortcoming in the relationship between agency and employers. Gilbride et al.'s (2000) research showed that employers often undervalued the rehabilitation agency's role in employment. More recently, Gewurtz et al. (2016) found that the importance of these agencies was not be underestimated and that improved relationships between employers promoted the hiring

of PWD. This study found that when agencies had information related to work opportunities, they used historical knowledge of the participants' previous training or rehabilitation and provided upskilling to match the participant with the work opportunity. The agencies also provided additional support through recruiting PWD on behalf of employers, a role that is vital to facilitating employment, as was found by Fabian et al. (1994). This study found that agencies were willing to facilitate employment, even where underutilisation was possible. Hemphill and Kulik (2016) found that specialist agencies were often more successful in finding placements in sheltered employment or other disability related employment, and in many instances, employer apathy towards the employment of PWD resulted in driving job seekers towards positions that did not optimally utilise their skills and abilities. The pressure on agencies to legitimise their existence was highlighted in this study; they allow the flow of information although their motivation is questionable where a foot in the door approach is adopted. Dutta et al. (2008) alluded to the "internal and external pressures" that some agencies experienced in motivating the effectiveness of their services when facilitating employment. The findings of this study pointed to agencies' willingness to prepare PWD for employment, while also being aware of their need to satisfy the employer's needs.

In line with research conducted by Lindsay (2011), where barriers to employment were explored with PWD through conducting a Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, the willingness of PWD to work was not in question. Participants in this study explicitly expressed their willingness to work. They were motivated by financial need; moreover, they expressed a desire to avoid dependence on a social grant that was considered inadequate to ensure a good quality of life. However, the findings revealed more than a willingness to work; they indicate that good quality of life, based on financial security, plays a key role in motivating PWD to seek employment. This was found to be equally important to those seeking or re-entering employment. Research by Almada and Renner (2015) showed that full access to employment had a direct impact on the quality of life PWD experience. Similarly, Eklund and Sandlund (2016) found that employment contributed to psychosocial functioning and well-being as well as overall quality of life.

Where participants were the main financial contributors to the household, their willingness to return to work was exceeded by feeling they were compelled to do so.

The way organisations positioned themselves to recruit and reward persons with disabilities, by placing emphasis on educational qualifications and skill levels, played a role in determining the participants' desire to remain in employment or seek alternative employment. Moore (2008) utilised the chicken and egg analogy to illustrate the importance of virtuous agents and their role in developing the character of employees, rather than using a narrow view on personality. He pointed out that as the individual character develops, so too does the overall organisational character. Virtuous agents are to be in place, to ensure this development, as a precondition when evaluating the morality within management. In line with Lemmink et al. (2003), participants in the study assessed the organisation's character according to how it responded to employing PWD and their broader impression of the benefits associated with the employment. The study showed that the role of managers, as experienced by PWD, was critical to their employment experiences. Ricco and Guerci (2014) found that managers were primarily responsible for the employment of PWD, and were best inclined to do so in conjunction with the development of an inclusive organisational culture, and not only follow a prescriptive set of actions or compliance with the law or a marketing gimmick. They further observed, as this study found, that organisational culture primed the management of recruitment, retention and reward process and reinforced it. This study provided evidence that where managers were unwilling to accommodate persons with disabilities, the resultant demotivation and isolation prompted participants to seek alternative employment, which aligned with McFarlin et al.'s (1991) description of bias and its impact on PWD at all levels of employment. Ann et al.'s (2016) findings corroborated this impact where feeling devalued, rejected and isolated followed the onset of disability. In earlier literature regarding the role managers could play, Dobson (1995) described an agent based approach that promoted virtuous agents void of a "moral schizophrenia". In this study, this "moral schizophrenia" related to the employment of PWD where meeting targets was the primary concern under the guise of doing good through employing PWD. An agent-based manager, as Dobson (1995) observed, would continuously seek to improve decision-making. In this regard, the complexity entailed in

the employment of PWD would be better facilitated through a manager's application of a virtue, like courage. Managers are to move away from the traditional means of recruitment and evaluate their success, not through meeting targets, but rather their application of sound, moral judgement when evaluating the potential of PWD.

The Skills Development Act promotes the development of workers' skills, but it has not regarded rehabilitation as part of the skills development ambit. In this study, most employers' focus was perceived to be narrow as they assessed the participants' ability using educational qualifications, and legislation that required the employment of PWD. Prospective employers were unable to commodify the effort participants put in, prior to getting to work, while others could not see the value of having workers, who acquired a disability, undergo rehabilitation as part of their work skills development. Participants subsequently experienced recruitment where they were viewed as "pitiable and supercrip's" (Areheart, 2008, p. 187). This study highlights the impact that stigma has on PWD's identity and self-esteem in their search for employment, as supported by the findings of Barclay et al. (2012) who lamented the stigmatisation that impeded the integration of PWD in employment. The findings showed that participants' experiences of seeking employment could not be adequately conceptualised through the medical and social models' frameworks, as these ignored the unique/individual experiences of the effects of impairment and supports the call for a review of the experiences of PWD. Oliver (2013) also called for the reinvigoration the social model of disability and C. Thomas (2004b) affirmed that the effects of impairments could not be ignored. Owens (2015) contributed to this debate by addressing Arendt's issues of power and plurality (1972) which offered a more refined conception of the body and experience. The findings of this study suggest that, beyond the conceptions of body and experience, the influence of managers and employers is to be considered in framing PWD experiences of employment. Flynn (2007) suggested that in constructing enduring organisations virtuous managers were required to have an aptitude for high principles and standards along with an appreciation for people and profits.

In addressing the main objective of this study, the findings provided evidence that PWD view their pre-employment preparation as part of a process within an employment continuum. Their personal experiences, attributed to overcoming physical and emotional

barriers, are often overlooked as valuable work experience by employers. The study found that participants' experiences of rejection contributed to their feeling demotivated to seek employment and, in certain cases, resulted in prolonged periods of unemployment. Ali et al. (2011) found that while motivation to be employed was high, the active seeking of employment was low for PWD, compared to non-disabled people. The acknowledgement of the effects of impairment (medical absence, depression, anxiety etc.) on PWD's ability to seek employment is significant as it highlights the employers' requirement to consider expanding their responsibilities when recruiting PWD. J. Williams and Mavin (2012) observed that impairments had a real impact on how people organised their contexts with legitimate implications on their employment experiences. Adopting a social constructionist view is helpful in directing attention to the environmental barriers, yet the lived experience and connection to impairment is often overlooked. The participants' experiences showed that their integration improved at a later stage, provided their employers were aware of the impact of their impairment.

### **7.1.2. Access to Employment**

As PWD are more likely to have smaller social circles, they are less exposed to people in key positions within organisations that could facilitate access to information and entry to employment. The study found that being part of established social networks contributed to facilitating the participants' access to employment. Some participants who acquired their disabilities while being employed, were granted access to re-employment based on their previous work histories and the perceived reduction in risk the employer took, because they were already familiar with the employee. Based on the participants' experiences, employers appear to be more interested in employing PWD with whom they already have a trusting, working relationship. These findings were consistent with Potts' (2005) assessment of the value of social capital in fostering employment opportunities for PWD, in which the employer's preference towards employment based on trustworthy information about prospective employees, was highlighted. Furthermore, Andersson et al. (2015) concluded that PWD were more likely to be employed by employers that had a history of employing PWD, compared to those that had none. Although this speaks specifically to employing outside candidates, they made no

reference to re-employing or keeping in employ individuals who acquired the disability during employment. This study found that the character of the organisation impacted PWD's experiences both positively and negatively. In terms of virtuous organisational behaviour, Rai (2015) suggested that organisations should act justly in order to achieve their goals and build communities while serving society. This study found that participants who acquired disabilities during employment were denied access to further opportunities in situations where employers were uninformed and unwilling to accommodate their needs, which indicates a reluctance by some employers to facilitate the inclusion of PWD. Naami (2015), while exploring the relationships between disability, gender and employment as a case study in Ghana, found that it was typical that PWD, who were employed, experienced difficulties in gaining promotion within organisations. As this study found, failure to promote PWD within organisations leads to their relinquishing their organisational citizenship and seeking alternative employment. Naeem (2016) concluded that organisational citizenship behaviour was linked to organisational effectiveness, and that the relationship between job satisfaction and citizenship behaviour was stronger than job satisfaction and performance. In this regard, organisational virtuousness needs to be further developed to ensure that PWD avoid giving up their citizenship.

The study's findings somewhat aligned with Granovetter's (1974) findings which recognised job seekers' preferences to access employment through established contacts, as it provided them with a more intimate insight into opportunities and higher paying jobs. This study found that disabled job seekers believed they had a greater chance of gaining employment through having direct access to information about employment opportunities. Similarly, Torre and Fenger (2014) found that gaining access to the networks of employers was beneficial for both PWD and agencies who assisted them with placement. The findings also pointed out that positive employment experiences for PWD are related to knowing someone in an organisation. From these insiders, they are more likely to find out about jobs that were not necessarily well advertised. Advertisements for positions are most often the primary means of notice and contact between a prospective employer and employees. These give PWD insight into the organisation and their projected image while often detailing the attributes of candidates.

Hemphill and Kulik (2016) considered these advertisements essential for PWD in their making sense of employment. Although in this study the jobs accessed by some participants were not specifically for PWD, they were a suitable match because they had someone with credibility within the organisation to act as a personal reference when they engaged with the employer. Assertive communication was touted by Dyck and Kleysen (2001) as helpful in building relationships. Here the study suggested that organisations ensure that managers act with self-control and temperance when they provide PWD access to their networks. The findings here maintained that having established contacts contributed to improving the acclimatisation and inclusion of PWD in employment.

Kulkarni and Kote (2014) found that where mutually beneficial outcomes to PWD and employers were agreed to, prior to PWD gaining access to employment, the types of jobs accessed through agencies were primarily entry-level posts and were perceived to be part of the employer's attempts to increase the diversity of employees, based on numerical targets. This study found that participants who were associated with rehabilitation agencies often gained access to employment directly because of an established relationship between an agency and employers. The findings concluded that the benefits of these relationships were mutually beneficial for the agencies and employers. However, the findings also pointed out that employers who had established relationships with agencies had easier access to PWD. The experience of employment is not void of an element of desperation from both parties: the PWD who need employment to enhance their financial security and the employer seeking to satisfy their organisational objectives. The study found that the lack of appropriate financial incentives to persuade private sector employers to employ PWD limited the willingness of organisations to create access to opportunities. These persuasion mechanisms were addressed in the works of Thornton and Lunt (1994) where they confirmed the use of persuasion mechanisms, along with educational material, to be meaningful in promoting the employment prospects of PWD. Based on the findings and literature, legislation has been ineffective in persuading organisations to employ larger numbers of PWD, which points to the impact it has on prolonging unemployment and reducing the challenges that PWD experience prior to gaining and maintaining employment.

PWD who are professionally qualified are more inclined to want to gain access to employment opportunities in line with their qualifications. The findings of this study concluded that being able to access employment with an appropriate match contributed to PWD's confidence, which improved their later experiences and acclimatisation in the organisation. The benefits of providing access to employment or re-employing PWD, as Basas (2013) confirmed, were that employers want to hire qualified people and want minimal disruption or cost involved in their integration. Huang et al. (2016) also found that more educated PWD were often more conversant with assistive technology and were therefore more appealing to employ.

It was found that employers' approaches to recruitment and selection were not uniform in design and posed barriers to how PWD were able to access employment. Robson (2015) suggested that constancy was reflected through the way organisations explained the good at which their virtue was directed, while also describing the overall set of virtues within which it was located. Virtuous recruitment approaches are to articulate clearly the purpose for including PWD. Kulkarni (2013) identified the need for employers to engage with new recruits, prior to their arrival, to improve the chances of relational integration into organisations. Apart from the willingness of PWD, the manner and motives with which employers recruit PWD affect their opportunities for employment. Uniformity is not necessarily a requirement, however, when considering the experiences of PWD and existing literature, improving the way PWD acculturate in organisations can be addressed through proactive engagement with prospective employees, prior to confirming employment. Organisations and managers who engage earlier with PWD and understand their needs during the recruitment phase results in PWD being more confident about their ability to access employment.

The study found that employees working in the non-governmental sector had been recruited primarily through word of mouth; in these cases, no alternative formats for recruitment were employed. Barclay et al. (2012) suggested the use of UD principles in the recruitment and selection process to attract a more diverse range of employees which is in line with the behaviour of a virtuous organisation. The findings suggest that even though disability organisations, as employers, promote the employment of PWD, they do not necessarily foster diversity within their organisations. According to the

employment experiences of the participants, it was evident that there were more positive outcomes for employment where organisations served a specific disability group and provided access to applicants experiencing the same disability. This practice within the disability sector was found to be contrary to recruitment strategies employed to promote diversity. Literature on the diversity within disability organisations is scant and poses an interesting challenge for disability organisations in light of the re-orientation of the social model, as D. Thomas (2004) called for, and the embodying approach of disability in diversity, as Thanem (2008) proposed.

Private sector employers were perceived to be more conservative in their approach, and although access to employment opportunities was mainly promoted by word of mouth, the study found that employers used alternate means of recruiting PWD. The perception that managers in private and non-profit sectors remained unconvinced that PWD could improve organisational performance was confirmed by Scott-Parker and Zadek (2001). They suggested further that businesses that created enabling environments, based on a clear vision for promoting diversity, would contribute to building a virtuous cycle for the overall benefit of society through balancing social cohesion and economic competitiveness. Private sector employers were also perceived to be more interested in fulfilling quotas and appeared not have comprehensive screening processes. As stated previously, Ricco and Guerci (2014) pointed out that this was a narrow approach to inclusion and did not promote good internal practices within organisations who wished to promote diversity. It appeared that social media was a prominent platform for disseminating information and recruiting PWD. The experience of accessing employment was positive initially for PWD gaining access to employment in this manner, but later they often encountered challenges with requests for accommodation and their inclusion into the organisation. In keeping with Stone and Colella's (1996) suggestion that the practice of quota hiring might benefit PWD in the short-term, the study found that managers prioritised disability above qualifications which led to jobs subsequently being tailored around an individual's disability.

Government employees perceived their employer to be most compliant in using various means of recruitment and advertising, more specifically, detailing PWD as receiving preferential consideration for employment. This finding was somewhat consistent with

that described by Barclay et al. (2012) who suggested that virtuous employers made notices accessible and included PWD in recruitment material, including social media. Huang et al. (2016) discussed the benefits that UD had on the experiences of PWD. This study suggests that the application of UD throughout the employment experience of PWD would go far to ensure that PWD are able to adequately engage their environment and participate meaningfully in the employment process. The study found that PWD gaining access to government employment did so through formal channels and suggests that personal networks have little bearing on their success. In addition, even though government departments were perceived to have engaged across various mediums within the recruitment, the screening and interview phases introduced challenges, as managers and HR professionals were perceived as not equipped and sensitive to the needs of interviewees. Sing (2012) pointed to the lack of adequate recruitment strategies in the public service as a factor that limited the access to employment of PWD in South Africa. He also linked this limitation to the poor ties public service departments had with PWD's organisations and agencies that have an established database of PWD.

Legislation played a role in guiding employment processes. It was found that PWD perceived the employer's willingness to grant access to employment, as strongly motivated by the EEA. The study also established the belief that the EEA was unable to ensure meaningful employment of PWD when employers were focused on avoiding fines and targeting PWD. This was in line with Thomas and Hlahla's (2002) findings that suggested numerical targeting contributed to the underutilisation of PWD and placed businesses at risk where they did not meet such targets. Meaningful experiences of employment can be supported by legislation. Targeting PWD, based only on their disabilities, does not necessarily guarantee their inclusion and full integration and could lead to the social and professional exclusion of PWD. Brite et al. (2015) described this as a perverse form of inclusion. In terms of fostering inclusion within organisations, Gotsis and Kortezi (2013) pointed to the usefulness of a values and virtues approach, to be applied within various human resource domains, along with other policies to foster equality. They suggested that organisational virtue based on an Aristotelian ethical framework would provide a new impetus to diversity interventions in organisations.

The study found some participants were recruited cross departmentally which was as a more convenient approach to accessing highly skilled and qualified PWD. Participants were critical of the poor access to government employment, based on their experiences, considering it was the main driver of legislation advocating for the employment of PWD. The failure of government to reach its targets casts a shadow on its role in providing access to employment. It suggests that the EEA has failed in ensuring access, as individual departments appear to have failed to address the broader context as contained within the INDS, a point which Dube (2005) and others raised in their research. More specifically, the EEA reference to implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups at all occupational levels in the workforce was not perceived to have been achieved by the participants. This is an indictment on the impact of government policies and the recommendations the Public Service Commission (2002) set out to ensure access to employment for affirmative action candidates. In this regard, the study highlights the isolation and rejection expressed by PWD when accessing senior opportunities, as they were often the only disabled applicants purposefully recruited or in contention for the position. Dutta et al. (2008) expressed similar concerns over the availability of highly skilled and qualified PWD in the labour pool. Although the opportunities for successfully accessing opportunities were increased for qualified PWD, their experiences did not reflect an abundance of available opportunities.

The study found that PWD did not believe legislation worked in their favour. Racial biases were perceived to exist, even with the employment of PWD. The findings concluded that some white disabled men feel disenfranchised by the existing affirmative action legislation which denies them access to employment. EE was considered disadvantageous to the efforts of white PWD who were competing with others when posts were designated. According to the participants, disability remained a secondary characteristic in defining the eligibility of employment opportunities. These perceptions were contrary to the findings of the Department of Labour (2015) and Stone and Colella (1996) who both indicated that white males were better represented at higher levels of employment. However, the experiences of PWD, in this study, are to be seen in the context of high unemployment rates that black PWD experience, with limited resources

to support how they access opportunities. This impacts negatively on PWD's experiences of employment and highlights the discrimination that persists within the South African labour market, as identified by Burger and Jafta (2006). PWD experience legislation as another barrier to overcome.

### **7.1.3. Environmental Barriers to Work**

Employers were perceived to be unaware of the effort required to manage the effects of impairment and how it compromised various life activities. The effects of returning to work, on the rehabilitation of an individual, were previously identified by Young (2010) as minimal. However, this study concluded that the effort required to get to work is substantial. This study's findings aligned with De Guimaraes (2015) who pointed out that the demands associated with work were not to exceed the capacity of PWD. It was found that prior to arriving at work, PWD underwent specific personal care routines to address medical complications and their appearance associated with their impairments. William (2016) proposed that flexibility regarding time be considered as essential for employers of PWD. In this study employers were perceived to have a limited understanding of the need for additional time. In some cases in this study, an assistant, a paid personal care-giver or family member, were found to be invaluable to the effort to get to work, but was not understood or provided for by employers. Morris (2001), who addressed the accessibility of an assistant during an exploration of the impact of impairment on the lived experiences of PWD, confirmed the lack of personal assistance to be a major environmental barrier. Employing an assistant is costly and compensation from employers or government is recommended as a means of improving PWD's employment experiences and assisting them to access employment. In considering accommodation within the employment experiences of PWD, the EEA makes no provision for financially incentivising employers to assist PWD to get to work. A. Thomas (2003), in contrast, highlighted practices in Scandinavian countries where employers were financially incentivised to support and mentor PWD which limited the impact on the employers' bottom line. This was likened to the findings of Thornton and Lunt's (1997) assessment of employment policies across 18 countries, some of which suggested supported wage systems, targeted wage subsidies for those seeking re-

employment, as well as grants for adaptation of work environments. Similarly Chouinard (2010) expressed the importance of incentivising employers rather than adopting punitive approaches. Punitive measures are perceived to promote ableism as employers are reluctant to accept costs in offering employment assistance to PWD.

Pain management is a challenge for PWD and the development of organisational cohesion. In this study, participants who experienced physical impairments were often required to perform pain management rituals at the start of the day or contended with limited rest during the night which induced fatigue more frequently. Pain forms part of PWD's employment experiences. It was often consistent and intolerable for some in this study, who found their work to be physically demanding and fatiguing. Pain was often exacerbated by the efforts to overcome environmental barriers, at times to the point of incapacitating some participants. Hirst et al. (2004) made similar findings as respondents of their studies indicated intermittent and unbearable pain as the most challenging aspect to manage in their work. Medication often, in some cases, minimised participants' ability to function optimally, due to the dosage strength of the medication. Barclay and Markel (2008) addressed the impact of drugs on performance and confirmed the negative impact it could have on the employment experiences of PWD. This further impairment was addressed, by some, through discarding medical professionals' advice and adopting a more intuitive means of managing pain. The study found that the management of pain resulted in atypical ways of PWD doing their work. Schur's (2003) findings were similar in that ongoing pain limited the ability of PWD to conduct work in standard ways. Leiulsfrud et al. (2016) found that amongst others, health issues presented a major barrier to employment and that employers' designs of compensation systems influenced whether PWD opted to remain in or step out of employment. In this study, participants were willing to work through the pain to overcome any barriers to work, even with further cost to their own well-being. Sinnicks (2014) proposed that virtuous managers played a crucial role in ensuring cohesion within organisations and that their support in understanding the needs of PWD could further contribute to developing a sense of community.

The main physical barriers encountered by participants related to safety and travel to and from work. The vulnerability of PWD is related directly to the effects of the impairments

they experience. The study found that participants who were physically disabled were concerned with further injury, due to limitations in their mobility, while those with sensory impairments were more focused on their ability to identify any physical threat to avoid harm. Participants believed this impacted their ability to get to work and non-disabled people were not affected to the same degree. Managers were found to fall short in their decision-making regarding the safety provisions made for PWD, especially where participants were required to work away from the office. This contrasted with Audi's (2012) opinion that virtuous managers would weigh up the safety requirements of some employees and make effective decisions, at the expense of company profits. Stone and Colella (1996) agreed that organisations that select managers who value social justice would facilitate the most appropriate inclusionary practices to accommodate PWD. In this study PWD perceived themselves as more safety conscious than other employees, based on their impairments, and were able to contribute to the value of companies in a unique way through highlighting the common barriers that exposed all employees to risk.

The ability to get to work on time using safe and accessible transport had a practical and emotional effect on participants, as corroborated by Schmidt and Smith (2007) who found transport to work to be the most frequently reported limitation expressed by PWD. The findings showed that the use of private transport, as part of lift clubs or modified vehicles, offered participants a better sense of personal safety; they avoided frustrating encounters with other travellers or physical barriers. The INDS, as a key piece of legislation, has failed to provide the public transport system as a first option for PWD to be safe, reliable and accessible. The interplay between social attitudes, legislation and political power, which have a direct impact on the experiences of PWD (Cook & Burke, 2002), was demonstrated by the findings where participants were frustrated in their attempts to get to work because public transport was not centrally located to home and work. Lukyanova et al. (2015) found that transport was a major barrier to both gaining and retaining employment, where PWD often found it challenging to seek employment, and then subsequently, to meet expectations of getting to work on time. In this study, none of the employers made provision for transport which participants believed would have been mutually beneficial. Transport provision eliminates time delays and reduces

the stress associated with travelling and unaccounted for physical barriers. Where PWD have access to reliable transport, employment experiences are improved which results in positive contributions to their productivity and work experiences.

PWD create informal support networks to overcome barriers that expose their vulnerabilities. These networks are built up over time through enlisting co-workers as assistants on a voluntary basis. The co-worker's commitment to assisting was viewed as an unwritten social contract by participants. In the absence of the voluntary assistant, participants had to negotiate various structural barriers in the workplace that often contributed to their frustration. While much is known about the impact of informal support networks on the employability of non-disabled people, its impact on the work experiences of PWD has not been thoroughly explored. Donnelly et al. (2010) suggested that informal support networks might counterbalance any losses in the sense of how PWD fitted in socially at work, due to the negative attitudes of employers or co-workers. Knights and O'Leary (2006) observed that the broader community had an influence on our virtues. This study found that voluntary role players, like assistants, presented employers with an alternative to managing the costs of accommodation which they could commit to assist with formally.

## **7.2. Inclusion at the Workplace**

### **7.2.1. Induction and Orientation**

Induction processes are the initial points of contact with co-workers and are ideal for establishing expectations between managers and co-workers. The study found that the way PWD were introduced and subsequently adapted to their new working environment were largely influenced by the initial encounter during which they assessed the environment and attitudes of others towards disability. The employers of PWD in this study, who hosted induction programmes that did not consider their entire experience but rather narrowly addressed their disabilities, were negatively perceived. Induction processes present PWD an opportunity to influence organisational culture through offering alternate ways of understanding PWD in the workplace. Guillaume et al. (2013) suggested that perpetual homogeneity within organisations would be challenged when diversity management occurred in an active manner. In keeping with Kulkarni and Kote's

(2014) findings, this study found that participants' scepticism increased when induction interventions were run by external experts. This study suggests that managers are to be exposed to structured training to address the concerns of newly appointed PWD.

The study found that co-workers were influenced by the managers' behaviour and adopted similar approaches as their managers, when engaging with PWD. Moore (2008) placed the burden of influencing organisational change on managers who determined the moral behaviour within organisations. Induction processes offered participants an opportunity to engage with co-workers and set parameters regarding their working relationships. Both Kulkarni and Kote's (2014) and Stone and Colella's (1996) findings showed that managers were central to ensuring the inclusion of PWD. In the same way, this study found that managers influenced how others perceived PWD. In this study, it was found that along with managers, co-workers often had limited exposure to PWD and that relationships started off with an imbalance, because of the lack of understanding of PWD needs, which led to generalisations about their disabilities. According to F. S. Hall and E. L. Hall (1994), an additional barrier was created when co-workers, who were uninformed, tended to generalise from a single characteristic and formed an overall assessment of the person's ability. Participants found it to be more effective when ground rules were established in informal settings, which co-workers perceived as less threatening. Arjoon (2000) suggested that moving beyond simple organisational rules which told people how to behave was required, and that the support of such interactions was a display of an organisation's virtuousness. The findings concluded that PWD want to remain employed when they are comfortable with the way their working relationships start and are more inclined to approach co-workers at a later stage. Participants felt that they could address stereotypes and perceived dependencies on non-disabled co-workers during their induction which could avoid the perpetuation of distorted power relations. They believed that employers could better prepare for these engagements when they discussed their entry to employment at an earlier stage.

In justifying the value of diversity practices, Scott-Parker and Zadek (2001) observed that challenges arose where organisational processes were not geared to explore and overcome prejudices and fears towards PWD so as to realise their full potential and contributions. The study suggests the necessity for such processes to include an

expanded scope which addresses the individual holistically and does not address isolated characteristics of an individual. It found that organisational culture was perceived as negative when the organisation overly focused on addressing the fears of co-workers and the perceived risks to employers. This negative perception of the organisation is reinforced when, during induction processes, PWD are separated from other employees, and results in their feeling excluded and suspicious of the employers' motives for employing them. This study showed that PWD not only wanted to participate in discussions about disability, but also wanted to play an active role in determining the narrative around their induction and orientation in the organisation. These findings were similar to those of Gida et al. (2007) who observed that induction processes created opportunities for new employees, to gain information about the organisation, as well as for the organisation to learn more about new employees and their needs. In this study, PWD experienced the attitude and culture of organisations as negative, even though alterations to the physical environment, prior to their arrival, were found to be a positive indication of the organisation's overall inclusionary effort. While induction and orientation experiences forecast acceptance into the workplace, the study showed that disclosure of disability sets the scene for working relationships.

### **7.2.2. Disclosure of Disability in the Workplace**

The study found that, as new employees, PWD strategically considered how they would disclose their disabilities as it impacted how their working relationships with others would unfold. Lindsay and DePape (2015) found that employment experiences were improved for PWD who were previously educated on how and when best to disclose a disability in the employment process. This study showed that PWD found it difficult to "know how" to disclose their impairment and often defaulted to delaying disclosure. The findings also showed that the timing of full disclosure and how it occurred were important as it could lead to distractions in the workplace, and a loss of productivity amongst team members who became fixated on the disability. It was also found that when disclosure occurred, because of a request for accommodation, managers became concerned with the financial impact on the organisation whereas, contrary to what most literature has shown, Ju et al. (2013) found that employers considered the costs

associated with employing PWD to be reasonable and negotiable. According to Gida et al. (2007) organisational costs were more accurately conceptualised in relation to time and effort to alter perceptions of PWD within the workplace.

Understanding organisational virtue was critical for managers during their planning, formulation and implementation of organisational strategies (Chun, 2005). Managers who were in tune were better able to facilitate the process of disclosure within the broader organisational processes. Colleagues were also key to determining the approach that PWD adopted and their perceptions informed the actions of PWD. Line managers were also crucial to closing the perception gaps that were experienced and pointed to the importance of managers' knowledge of disability. William (2016) found this to be key in the experiences of PWD when exploring reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities. The study found that the disclosure of disability impacted how others and the organisation perceived PWD which most times resulted in stigmatisation and stereotypical characterisations. It was also found that some co-workers questioned PWD's ability and at times, conflict arose when co-workers implied that preferential treatment was given when certain allowances were made. The study found that the managers' responses to disclosure were illustrative of their motives for employing PWD. Moreover, this research showed that the importance of PWD and their managers discussing or previewing scenarios to engender a realistic set of expectations, before PWD enter unknown employment settings.

Participants who were intent on avoiding disclosure found it allowed them an opportunity to establish a working reputation that was not describable in relation to their disabilities. In this way, participants avoided being isolated from their co-workers. McDonald et al. (2007) also found that workers who more readily concealed their disabilities had more choice in their group affiliations and that disclosure often resulted in isolation. On the other hand, van Niekerk (2009) pointed out that the decision not to disclose disability was related to the anticipation of unknown consequences. Van Niekerk (2009) too highlighted the experiences of otherness by people with psychiatric impairments who chose not to disclose their impairment. Although it was considered a valuable strategy to assist with assimilating into the organisation, participants in this study felt disclosure could not be avoided entirely. Where participants delayed

disclosure, they often encountered more questions after disclosure, as co-workers became interested in establishing why they were not informed sooner. This study found that co-workers were unsure of how to respond appropriately and that prejudiced responses often followed disclosure.

The disclosure of the extent of disability is perceived as a private matter, as shown by the study. Disclosure of an impairment does not necessarily result in positive changes in the workplace and participants were hesitant to have information shared without their consent. Participants were more inclined to suppress the disclosure of their disabilities where their impairments were not immediately visible to avoid being perceived as weak and unable to perform tasks. Gida et al. (2007) also found that PWD in South Africa did not voluntarily disclose their disabilities for fear of stigmatisation and the stifling of career opportunities. In this study participants found managers and co-workers, who were unaware of the impairments, treated them differently after they became aware. In cases where impairments were visible and obvious, it was found that the full extent of the disability was not revealed until there was certainty that the disability would not impact negatively on how the participants acclimatised to their new working environment. Acceptance into the organisation is, to some degree, improved where disclosure is not required because the disability is not visible, although Roberge and van Dick (2010) pointed out that diversity in organisations was beneficial, and that disclosure indicated a willingness to be vulnerable with others. More so, they noted that benefits were mutually beneficial when there was disclosure because it contributed to improved dyadic relations, group dynamics and accommodation. This study, however, found that PWD had contrary experiences to non-disabled people who disclosed their sexual identity, for example, where disclosure also led to increased stigmatisation, but did not necessarily present additional costs in terms of accommodation to the organisation.

When considering the impact on institutionalising shared culture, A. Thomas (2003) pointed out that it was more beneficial for diversity to occur through businesses and teams. This study found that the presence of PWD at different levels within an organisation was beneficial as it allowed for sharing of disability specific information more intimately and directly with non-disabled co-workers. The way disclosure occurs

crucially impacts PWD relationships with others and their early work experiences. Participants were critical of the stereotypical representations often presented in workshops that were designed to create awareness. Participants also found it challenging to identify with the organisations where they were objectified in sensitisation workshops. These workshops often positioned participants as requiring more assistance than necessary, and highlighted their inabilities rather than the value they brought to the organisations. It was also found that describing general experiences of disability was not necessarily helpful in situations that could have been better addressed, through different platforms, for example, during their working activities when they could have offered more specific information about themselves.

Piccolo, Greenbaum, den Hartog, and Folger (2010), in addressing ethical leadership, noted that new employees made judgements about the organisation and derived meaning about their jobs based on how well the relationships with their managers were established. This study found that the managers' availability during the induction period provided participants with assurances and opportunities to raise accommodation concerns. They reported high levels of anxiety and frustration when managers were unavailable during their orientation, which created unnecessary tension between themselves and co-workers who did not know how to assist them. This can be avoided through better management processes where ethical leadership and managers play a central role in the development of new employees (Drake et al., 2002). In this study, a manager's sincerity was questioned and his/her character was judged negatively when not available or unreachable. It was found that a trusting relationship with a manager was necessary for PWD to function optimally.

### **7.2.3. Striving for 'Normality'**

The concept of 'normality' as defined by non-disabled people places an additional challenge before PWD as they attempt to address the redefinition of its standards. Oliver's (1990) concept of normality, which stemmed from a medicalised perspective and was aimed at restoring PWD to an acceptable standard, was found to be highlighted when participants believed the more normal they could appear, the more they would be accepted by co-workers and managers. Avoke (2002) criticised the focus on norms as a

medicalised approach that narrowly defined normality within organisations, instead of celebrating difference. Shakespeare (1996) expressed a similar concern and called for the deconstruction of an assumed normality. The study found that attempts to appear 'normal' were at times counterproductive to promoting diversity and challenged the value non-disabled people placed on how they identified themselves in relation to others. The study also found that PWD ascribed a perceived standard of excellence to their co-workers early on at the start of their employment. After the disclosure of an impairment, comparisons between non-disabled and disabled staff become unavoidable, as organisations are constituted predominantly of non-disabled people and their stereotypical views about disability. This study found that PWD more readily acculturated towards the established concept of 'normality' when they were in the minority. In organisations that were dominated by PWD, the concept of 'normality' was addressed from an advocacy perspective, which challenged its existence in society. The study also found that the effects of impairment needed consideration for PWD to be integrated and assimilated into the work environment more successfully. Developing positive human impact within organisations would be achieved through restructuring organisational structure by including employees in the decision-making processes of the organisation (Barclay et al., 2012). It allows all employers the opportunity, in collaboration, to define organisations as normal.

It was found that managers could influence the redefining of normality by adopting a value creation approach which extended benefits internally and externally into the community. Participants' attempts at exceeding others' expectations formed part of their attempt to appear 'normal'. These efforts often exposed PWD to risk when they attempt to overcome barriers in the same time and manner as non-disabled co-workers. Vehmas and Shakespeare (2013) maintained that impairment was part of the human condition and that it might impact anyone, at any time. Kulkarni and Lengnick-Hall (2011) argued that managers often did not set the same performance expectations for PWD. Likewise, this study found that lowered expectations devalued PWD abilities and in return, they adopted a form of posturing to prove themselves. Participants who experienced the late onset of disability found it more challenging to transition from being the standard of 'normal' in comparison to participants who acquired a disability early in life. They were

conflicted and remorseful as they became recipients of a standard forced upon them based on physicality. The tension created is indicative of what Linton (1998, p. 2) described as “the normal vs pathological, the insider vs the outsider”. The experiences recounted in this study suggest that the idea of normality, as perceived by PWD, delays the integration of PWD and their adoption of an organisation’s culture.

#### **7.2.4. Early Acceptance in the Workplace**

Once PWD gain the acceptance of managers and co-workers, they impose fewer personal restrictions on themselves and perceive fewer barriers to integrating into new workplaces. This finding is related to Kulkarni's (2013) who pointed out that a lack of relational acceptance might develop into feelings of inferiority and other self-limiting behaviours that would limit integration within the workplace. According to Arjoon (2009), common sense decision-making was associated with intellectual and moral virtues. More specifically, when managers possessed moral virtues of justice they, as decision-makers, could provide others with what was required so they could execute their duties and rights. The study, in contrast, found that some managers’ decisions isolated PWD when they withheld information from them and they were excluded from activities for example, when managers decided for PWD that they could not perform certain physical tasks. The manager’s sincerity and integrity were questioned and PWD believed they were being denied their rights as autonomous beings.

Organisational changes, including infrastructure changes made prior to or during the arrival of PWD, were considered by participants as a sign of their employer’s acceptance. This acceptance was described through Golub's (2006) conception of the mutual accommodation model which argued that organisations had a greater obligation to incorporate group differences, irrespective of the value they added. Underpinned by Golub’s (2006) model, this study suggests that employers who work within a virtue framework would not have to consider any “loss” as they have constructed their working environment to provide access to all. The implementation of internal policies was perceived by participants to be an indication of the willingness of co-workers and managers to promote diversity for the well-being of the organisation. Participants indicated that co-workers and managers were to become aware of their personal

shortcomings before they made any judgements about PWD's abilities. Participants also felt that personal reflection provided fertile grounds for developing a trusting relationship, especially when there was congruence between what people said and did, based on policies. Once trust was well established, participants felt accepted and gained confidence in their co-workers and the organisational policies, which was in keeping with von Schrader, Malzer, and Bruyere's (2014) understanding that company policies would be ineffectual if supervisors and colleagues allowed discriminatory behaviour to occur in spite of existing policies. This study also pointed out that sensitisation programmes would be better served if they included elements of personal introspection that highlighted the prejudices of non-disabled people. Pity was considered as a reinforcement of the otherness of participants in the study. Similarly, Smart and Smart (2006) showed that PWD did not appreciate sympathy in the workplace; its display resulted from lowered expectations and the withholding of critical information which reinforced perceived inabilities. The validation from senior colleagues through constructive feedback allowed participants to feel included which resulted in their willingness to take on further challenges within the organisation.

#### **7.2.6. Frustration and Vulnerability in the Workplace**

Frustration in the workplace was inherently linked to the participants' experiences of their impairments. They had grown accustomed to experiencing barriers in society that elicited a similar level of frustration in the workplace. The study found that participants made a distinction between the frustrations they expressed in response to environmental barriers, and those based on their impairments. Impairments required participants to dedicate additional time to preparing themselves for work and often the efforts to exceed others' expectations resulted in fatigue. In understanding disability, there needs to be an appreciation of the complexity of the interactions between impairment effects and the social responses to PWD (J. Williams & Mavin, 2012). Similarly, this study indicated that where collaboration was required between PWD and non-disabled co-workers, PWD were more critical of their impairments as they felt their efforts were representative of all PWD. The study found that fatigue related to overcoming the effects of impairment contributed to frustration and lowered participants' productivity.

Shaw et al. (2013) also identified the impact that managing fatigue had on PWD and how it frustrated their day to day existence.

Participants believed that their physical vulnerability contributed to their emotional vulnerability. Their reliance on others to assist in the workplace, which facilitated their inclusion in activities, required participants, at times, to discuss their personal needs with relative strangers. In instances where participants were required to travel and work in different locations, they felt their vulnerability increased. Participants felt that employers often did not consider a change in the environment to be problematic for PWD. Some participants revealed that the focus was often on facilitating the inclusion of physically disabled workers, and seldom included provisions for those with sensory impairments as was identified by Burchardt (2004) who also highlighted the structural designs in workplaces that facilitated access for some, while lacking consideration for others. Participants believed that if this were managed appropriately, their personal vulnerability could be reduced. Barclay et al. (2012) similarly proposed that improved design would assist with limiting the vulnerability of PWD in the workplace. Cueto and Rodriguez (2016) related the importance of adopting UD in enhancing the engagement with environments. The impact of adopting what is considered an indication of virtue within organisations, is supported through this study when PWD expressed their support for UD. They indicated that gaps remained where employers adopted the concept, but failed in practice.

### **7.3. Accommodation in the Workplace**

#### **7.3.1. Requesting Accommodation**

The experience of integration into the working environment is affected by the way requests for accommodation are managed. An employer's understanding of the available technology and the appropriate supply of resources is significant to how PWD are accommodated within the workplace. In this study, accommodation requests, which were often related to the natural environment, work and home environments, attitudes, medical care, transport and existing policies, were infrequent. However, accommodation was required to improve participants' productivity. The study found that employers were often underprepared to accommodate PWD which impacted their inclusion and safety

experiences and their vulnerability. von Schrader, Xu, and Bruyère (2014) concluded that employers were more likely to use reasonable accommodation based on legislation, determined the types of accommodation to implement and bore in mind the impact it had on the workplace culture and morale of PWD. The link between accommodation and productivity is supported through the findings of the current study and previous studies. Hernandez et al. (2008) concluded that managers had unfounded biases related to the productivity of PWD while Lengnick-Hall et al. (2008) found that the introduction of technology in organisations could lessen any perceived productivity gap between non-disabled people and PWD.

Physical assistance to overcome barriers was found to be key to integration in the workplace and pertinent to performance. This study confirmed the observations of Bruyère (2000), who identified signs of reluctance from PWD to request accommodation in the workplace, when it was found that there was a reluctance to request assistance, even though it would have had minimal impact or disturbance on operations. The study found that accommodation requests were often met with hesitation by managers when courage and fairness were required to make meaningful changes to support PWD. Whetstone (2003) referred to these as two cardinal virtues to be displayed by managers. Both public and private sector managers were perceived to be concerned about the impact of accommodation on co-workers and the associated costs, and were also perceived to be unsure of how to manage the requests. Co-workers were found to be resentful due to the additional assistance given to PWD. Heyman et al. (2016) reminded employers, as this study had, that colleagues played a crucial role in removing barriers within employment. Furthermore while Hirst et al. (2004) found that public sector employers received greater assistance at request, this study has found that, within South Africa, participants in the public sector were more critical of the lack of attention (as perceived by them) to their requests. This study also revealed that co-workers, rather than agitate for more inclusive environments, chose to raise concerns about the special treatment participants received. The public sector employees in Chouinard's (2010) study experienced similar attitudes and behaviour from co-workers.

It was found that flexible working arrangements reduced participants' anxiety, minimising the physical impact on their bodies. Employers were expected to be sensitive

towards the medical complications that some participants experienced, which they felt were best attended to at home. Schneider's (1996) discussion on the environment's impact on disability was relevant to working environments. Her concerns were limited to PWD transitioning from rehabilitation centres to unequipped home environments that led to further medical complications and hospitalisation. This study expanded on Schneider's (1996) observations to incorporate the work environment and found that it often lacked the required medical support or space which contributed to PWD being away from work for prolonged periods. The findings of this study concluded that PWD experiences of employment are enhanced when they work from home as they are productive, especially where employers are unable to replicate their home environments and its accommodation. Requests to start work later were perceived as preferential treatment by non-disabled co-workers and affected how well PWD acclimatised to the working environment. Managers were hesitant to make such allowances which often required PWD to extend their working hours. Part of the experience participants endured was to convince their managers that their requests were a cost saving to the organisation. Likewise, Kaye et al. (2011) found that employers were reluctant to recruit and retain PWD because they perceived the costs of accommodating PWD to outweigh the benefits of employing PWD. The findings of this study provide evidence that PWD believe that accommodation costs are to be shared by both employer and employee where their employment, as an outcome, provides mutually beneficial results.

Travelling to and from work, when using public or specialised transport, was found to be stressful and challenging as participants encountered prejudice and stereotyping along their daily travel routes. The study found that PWD sought alternate means of transport at a financial cost to themselves. Linton (1998) addressed the use of specialised transport and the labelling of the vehicles as contributing to the prejudice PWD experienced. Services were described as inefficient and unreliable as with this study's findings. Linton's (1998) objection to prejudiced labelling of such transport was supported by this study and pinpointed the need for well-informed and sensitised drivers.

It was found that the application of internal organisational policies and compliance with legislation were to have guaranteed PWD the opportunity to be reasonably accommodated. However, participants were critical of being accommodated, within

reason, where employers were not willing to accommodate them, when their requests might not have been unreasonable. Requests for accommodation also had a negative impact on working relations where co-workers viewed this as special treatment. Employers who had internal policies for accommodating PWD ensured more positive experiences for PWD. The study suggests that public sector employees seem to have reservations about the use of reasonable accommodation when UD is perceived to be adopted within the prescribed policy. Lindsay (2011) explained that in addition to social barriers like policies and attitudes, the physical environment also acted as a barrier. This study found that severe physical impairments restricted the participants' ability to participate physically in work activities and where possible, PWD prefer working in environments they have control over. The study also established that PWD were willing to forgo socialising in the workplace when their productivity could be improved through working from home. A compliance induced organisational culture restricts the way UD principles could be applied. In turn, the physical barriers encountered restricts participation and inclusion in the workplace. It was also found that not enough had been done in private sector employment to align internal policies with legislation and that effective monitoring to accompany implementation was missing. This study suggests that NGOs are assumed to apply the prescripts more effectively, even though some criticisms remain. This study also raised similar points of interest to those of Stuart (2007) who highlighted the impact of disability legislation on the culture within organisations. She observed that many organisations failed to actualise disability legislation through not altering their corporate disability policies. This study observed that public and private sector employers, although they confirmed their support for and adoption of disability policies, appeared to have failed to implement and monitor its efficacy, based on the experiences of participants.

### **7.3.2. Assistive Technology**

The study found that technology enhanced PWD's ability to integrate while employed. Assistive technology also improved their productivity and efficiency as it primarily removed barriers to communication. It was, however, established that uninformed human resource practitioners and managers often made assumptions about PWD needs

and developed solutions without consulting them, especially when knowledge and experience in using assistive technology were key elements for successful utilisation. The purchasing of the incorrect technology led to frustration and held cost implications managers had to justify. Björk (2009) explained the use of UD as a means of avoiding similar frustration and costs. His findings concluded that where there was a mismatch between the technology and use, the true costs were exacerbated as people were excluded from making the best possible contributions they could. He pointed out that costs increased significantly as the result of poor planning on the part of employers. The impact of technology on performance was evident in the current study; the timing of the delivery of these resources affect how well PWD integrate into their workplace. This study's findings went further in demonstrating that, in the absence of assistive technology, PWD were willing to work with alternatives which reiterates a call on organisational practices to innovate towards PWD needs.

Medical technology provides PWD the opportunity to regain functioning which improved work experiences. This was beneficial to both participants and employers although the costs were not shared. Employers were often encouraging of these interventions as they assumed it restored functioning; it requires less assistance from their side. The improved functioning arose from attempts to eliminate an impairment that contributed to better experiences of integration and fewer requests for accommodation. The findings of this study indicated that medical technology could have a positive impact on the employment experiences and acculturation of PWD. Ward and Baker (2005) described similar findings which suggested the strategy was akin to a "systemic personal change" that was used to improve workplace integration. The use of medical technology is at times rejected as it fuels the medicalised model of promoting PWD's right to employment. The rejection of medical interventions as a means of addressing disability was examined by Oliver (1990) who challenged medicalised approaches where disability was viewed as a long-term social state that was not curable. This study moved beyond the political and experiences of oppression that medical interventions ignored, and found that PWD who experienced the late-onset of disability were more inclined to explore these treatments.

The financial impact on employers is perceived to be managers' main concern when requests for assistive technology are addressed. Participants believed that employers seldom conducted assessments that evaluated the necessary technology and actual associated costs. Instead, they believed employers relied on subjective opinions based on minimal facts where they felt the costs were manageable and low. This study found that adequate assessments that addressed environmental barriers were pivotal to ensuring PWD were not isolated within the work environment. This study further highlighted the role informed managers could have in determining how PWD could become more mobile, communicative and included in the workplace. Hernandez and McDonald (2010), too, found that despite management's perceptions, costs were reasonable, although the initial financial outlay in environments that did not implement UD principles, were excessive. This study corroborated these findings where PWD who had already acquired technology for their personal use, often attributed no cost to employers. Delays in the provision of devices cause tension between managers and employees. Managers who were responsible for requisitioning assistive technology, expected participants to be productive despite a lack of assistive technology, due to procurement authorisation delays. In this study, public sector employees were perceived to be most affected by bureaucratic processes which led to delays in delivery as no one department was assigned to address such needs. NGO employees often had their own devices or employers had sourced donations to ensure they were provided with assistive technology. In both sectors, processes were similarly dependent on external factors which resulted in significant time delays. No provision of devices affected the participants' ability to deliver a high standard of work, and they stood the chance of being assessed unfairly, particularly in instances where the employer had the responsibility to provide assistive technology. This was in line with Kulkarni and Gopakumar (2014) who found that PWD acknowledged that technology made them more productive.

Although access to assistive technology is key for integration, Imrie's (2012) findings suggested the need for accommodation could be circumvented through adopting UD whereby negative experiences for PWD would be avoided. UD offers a value neutral perspective where the provision of technology is directed at all employees and removes

the need for specific attention to individual requests. Barclay et al. (2012) promoted the application of UD as a means of moving beyond assistive technology, and as a response to ensure inclusion was consistent with a virtue theory approach.

### **7.3.3. Personal Assistance**

Some tasks and activities in the workplace, it was found, require the help of an assistant for PWD to overcome environmental barriers. Although technology is important, the availability of an assistant is a necessity to overcome some environmental barriers. Morris (2001) described her personal experience of encountering environmental barriers and the reliance on personal assistants as unavoidable. The study found that, if PWD were to have a dedicated assistant, they would be able to overcome some aspects of their impairment. This study also found that PWD were not only interested in being provided with assistants, but were willing to be responsible for overseeing them and their performance.

It was found that managers were reluctant to provide assistants as it increased the number of staff they had to oversee, and they could not justify the cost of these human services. NGOs seldom had these resources available unless they were provided on a voluntary basis. The value of personal assistants was described by Solovieva et al. (2010) as being crucial to maximising the potential of PWD in work. The study found that public sector employers were perceived to be competitive and it was perceived that they employed people, at their own expense, to maximise their functioning. In keeping with the expectations of PWD and their requests for accommodation, the INDS lists the provision of personal assistants as a key factor in promoting equitable working conditions. The needs expressed by participants who wanted to be able to direct their own activities, while also assisting with the prevention of auxiliary conditions (The Office of Deputy President, 1997) confirmed its provision. This study found that, contrary to the explicit INDS provision, the requests for personal assistants were often rejected. Employers' failure to respond adequately to requests for accommodation, hampered the positive experiences of employment and their requests for accommodation. The findings concluded that the lack of detailed legislation related to disability impacts negatively on the integration of PWD in work. Furthermore, the

findings concluded that by holding employers accountable and improving the monitoring of employment equity, legislation implementation would improve the way PWD are included and embraced in their employment. Markel and Barclay (2009) suggested that organisations that moved beyond compliance with legislation and addressed their ethical and moral responsibilities could meaningfully address the underutilisation of PW. These organisations could exemplify their grounding in virtue, ethics, values, principles and integrity (Barclay et al., 2012).

In this study, personal assistants assisted with medical care, personal care, private errands and mobility. It was found that a willingness to assist and a caring nature were key attributes required by assistants, with not much emphasis placed on educational qualifications. Although in some cases, where communication barriers existed, assistants had to be trained adequately to meet set standards within the disability community. Bruyère (2000) highlighted the provision of qualified sign language interpreters and readers as examples of personnel who would be indispensable for people with sensory impairments. Personal assistants also reduce PWD's exposure to physical harm and vulnerability in certain environments, in addition to promoting their productivity. Leiulsfrud et al. (2016) exploration of the perspectives of PWD confirmed this study's observation that having the necessary funding to employ a personal assistant would improve the prospects of gaining and retaining employment. The value of personal assistants, above other forms of assistance, is not to go unnoticed and is to be considered by prospective employers as meaningful, and not only reasonable, accommodation.

#### **7.3.4. Organisational Practices**

This study found that employers who focused on numerical compliance while seeking to maximise their financial profits or avoid penalties, encountered more challenges in employing PWD, in comparison to those who viewed diversity as a contributor to organisational value. The leadership styles and management decisions were highlighted as being influential to how organisational policies are implemented and how co-workers adopt attitudes towards accommodating PWD. The sincerity of employers is questioned when it is perceived that the main aim is to meet numerical targets. It was found that good leaders moved beyond only complying with legislation, and were able to do the

right things for the right reasons. Hood's (2003) description of transformational leaders who sought to move beyond legal prescription and implement more socially responsible and ethical practices, reflected what participants of the study described as their ideal leader. Leaders, as found in the participants' experiences, appeared to select ethically based practices, yet their motivation differed from that of transformational leaders.

Weaver (as cited in Moore, 2008) highlighted the influence of superiors on the ethical behaviour of managers where he asserted that the development of virtuous or vicious identities in organisations would be affected by the behaviour of leaders, co-worker and group behaviour, and the cultural norms housed within an organisation. He also cautioned that this development could result in role transference, where the leaders of an organisation could be seen to exercise the overall moral agency for the organisation, and lower level workers could behave as if moral agency was not part of their responsibility. This study moved beyond addressing only the leaders of organisations and suggests that co-workers are also to display transformational and virtuous qualities. Furthermore, the study suggests that motivation is to be defined more clearly through assessing the character of leaders, where good leaders direct their concern towards the rights of others rather than that of themselves and the organisation (Solomon, 1992).

The study found that the policies of the organisation influenced organisational practices. The intentions of managers and organisations were evaluated based on how they prioritised the employment and accommodation of PWD. Gotsis and Kortezi (2013) suggested that virtuous organisations valued diversity and inclusion as strategic priorities and essentially elevated the position of low status groups within organisations. This study found that calling into question the character of managers and organisations spoke to the undervaluing of PWD, and the diversity PWD contributed to homogenous workplaces. The study also found that organisations had adopted UD as the framework within in which to address disability and diversity, but the application thereof was considered to be flawed. Barclay et al. (2012) suggested that organisations adopt UD to work within a broader virtue theory framework. UD conceptually aims to mitigate or eliminate the effects of impairment. Whereas assistive technology stemmed from a medical model orientation as in repairing an impairment, and the social model attributed the environment to be the cause of disability, UD recognised impairment and its effects

through its intent to design for the widest range of users (Ward & Baker, 2005). It was found that the application of UD principles was often lacking because of the incomplete knowledge that managers and co-workers had regarding disability. Even though participants were aware that UD was an all-encompassing approach, it was found that legislation that stipulated reasonable accommodation was often conflated with universal design.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has covered the interpretation of the findings in relation to the literature reviewed. More specifically, the discussion addressed the employment experiences of PWD as being influenced by various factors. In assessing the existing literature, an overview of factors that influenced PWD's access to employment and experiences during employment is provided. The assimilation and acculturation within organisations and requests for accommodation were eased where supportive processes were in place, and led to the sharing of experiences and building of co-worker relations. The application of virtue to the inclusion of PWD in the workplace hinged on generating ways of utilising social capital in the development of communities and inclusive working environments. The following chapter presents a conceptual model which offers an alternate analytical tool for evaluating the employment experiences of PWD.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND CONCLUSION**

The purpose of the study was to explore the employment experiences of PWD. The two key objectives were:

- to understand the experiences of PWD
- to propose a conceptual model as an alternative framework when exploring the experiences of PWD by addressing the following research questions:
  1. How do PWD experience the employment process?
  2. How do PWD acclimatise and acculturate in organisations?

The study expected to offer organisations, organisation leaders and PWD insight into improved options for the inclusion of PWD in the workplace and to promote better employment prospects and inclusionary practices through an alternative framework to contextualise the employment experiences of PWD. Furthermore, the research intended to contribute to the disability discourse, by providing an overview and map of the legislation and models of disability that affected the employment of PWD, and presenting the intersections of the areas of diversity, business ethics and disability in South Africa. This final chapter introduces a conceptual model that articulates a reconstruction of the employment experiences of PWD by embodying a paradigmatic lens of virtue. Drawing on the virtue theory framework presented by Barclay et al. (2012) and the data gathered, the conceptual model proposes an alternative framework to explore the experiences of PWD. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the significance of the findings for organisations and makes recommendations for future research.

#### **8.1. PWD's Experience of the Employment Process**

Various factors influence the employment experiences of PWD. In this study, these included seeking employment; personal acceptance of disability; previous experience and qualifications; physical, emotional and financial effort and organisational culture.

### **8.1.1. Seeking Employment**

For most participants, the foundation for future employment was laid during their engagement with rehabilitation or vocational agencies which provided both physical and emotional support. Seeking employment was underpinned by the perceived financial benefits that PWD believed could be accrued along with the improved feelings of empowerment they felt while working with rehabilitation agencies which were important links to employment opportunities. The motivation to seek employment was influenced by periods of reflection and personal introspection while completing rehabilitation or vocational training which were complemented by the support of family and friends. Gaining access to rehabilitation and support services soon after acquiring an impairment provided PWD, in this study, a better opportunity to receive both physical and emotional support which aided their efforts to seek employment. The support PWD received determined how well-equipped and ready they were when they contemplated entering or re-entering employment. The availability of opportunities, specifically for PWD, was not always guaranteed but the experience of seeking employment was important to avoid relying on a disability grant.

### **8.1.2. Personal Acceptance of Disability**

The acceptance of their disabilities impacted PWD's attitudes to seeking employment and willingness to work. The contextualisation of their impairment and previous experiences of seeking employment played a role in motivating PWD to find employment. They experienced a cognitive and emotional adjustment which occurred over time and required personal effort. Experiences of disability were unique and adjustment was viewed as a personal process, therefore, the contextualisation of their impairment was considered to be a part of their employment experiences. Two prominent views came to the fore where impairment was either considered to be similar to any other physical characteristic or, it was viewed as a life experience that contributed to the experience of employment. For PWD who experienced the late-onset of disability, seeking employment was not often considered a priority while they were still coming to terms with their disabilities. It was evident that PWD levels of acceptance contributed to their experiences and affected their willingness to work.

### **8.1.3. Previous Experience and Qualifications**

As PWD traversed the employment spectrum, their educational level and qualifications were key components that affected their experiences. Where PWD in this study did not meet the requirements for employment opportunities, or had previously suffered rejection, based on their qualifications, these experiences contributed towards their developing a scepticism of employers' motives. Participants who were the main financial contributors felt a heightened sense of obligation towards their families and with regular rejection, the underlying long-term effects on their self-perception and self-esteem were apparent. The impact of rejection due to inexperience, inadequate or lack of qualifications contributed to extended periods of unemployment for some, while others found that the rejection strengthened their resolve to seek employment. Addressing self-doubt posed challenges, but it was instrumental in the process of seeking employment. Their experiences of recruitment and selection processes, which were subsequently viewed as indicators of future experiences, often affected their desire to work. Employment was more accessible in instances where PWD had established personal and work-related networks. PWD's confidence was increased and limited tension was experienced when they gained information about employment through known informants. Furthermore, in instances where employers were found to be unwilling to ensure the best possible employment experience, PWD were inclined to seek alternate employment.

### **8.1.4. Physical, Emotional and Financial Effort**

PWD made a concerted physical, emotional and financial effort to gain employment while navigating the impact of their impairment and exerted great physical effort to overcome environmental barriers. Prolonged periods of medical absence evoked various responses from employers and affected their job security. Where physical conditions were deteriorating, PWD believed that absences from work were inevitable, which resulted in increased anxiety levels. PWD acknowledged it was nearly impossible to seek employment when they were on a "forced" medical absence. PWD often explored other employment opportunities when they were not sure whether employers were understanding of their disabilities. Physical pain compounded PWD's experience of

disability and often impeded their concentration, ability to prioritise activities and levels of mobility. Their reliance on others was common when employers were unwilling to provide alternative strategies to accommodate their medical concerns. Access to transport facilitated attendance to opportunities during recruitment, and after employment was secured. However, the experience of travel to and from work was often financially and emotionally costly for PWD, especially when the public transport system, which included the specialised transport service, was generally unavailable, unreliable, unsafe and unsuitable. Through their experiences, PWD believed they needed to develop personalised solutions, which included safety routines, as a priority to overcome barriers. Ultimately, PWD's experiences of accessing opportunities were better when they were familiar with the settings, were sufficiently confident and took personal responsibility for their actions.

In answering the first research question, this study found that PWD experience the employment process in distinct ways. These include periods of reflection which aid their participation in rehabilitation and vocational training, the impact of educational background and/or qualifications on gaining employment, the physical, emotional and financial effort along with their reliance on others for assistance which is required to access opportunities, and overcoming restrictive perceptions and environmental barriers that limit their ability to seek and gain employment.

## **8.2. PWD Acclimatisation and Acculturation in Organisations**

In this study, acclimatisation and acculturation to the organisation as experienced by PWD were influenced by organisational culture and policies; induction and orientation practices; and co-worker expectations.

### **8.2.1. Organisational Culture and Policies**

The culture of organisations and their practices were not uniform. This led to varied experiences of acclimatisation and acculturation for PWD who appeared to acclimatise more quickly when employers were open-minded and empathetic. PWD often criticised disability sensitisation programmes when employers pre-determined an approach. Generic approaches to sensitisation limited the autonomy of PWD and affected the way

they acclimatised to their new environments. Although the programmes were intended to facilitate improved access, PWD wanted to be consulted regarding their individual needs. Legislation and internal company policies were often directed at improving the PWD's opportunities, however, inclusiveness was hindered, particularly when employers were not equipped or motivated to ensure that PWD were provided the best opportunities to integrate. Informal approaches to implementing policies and prevailing attitudes of pity stifled the way PWD acculturated within their organisations.

When PWD embraced the organisational culture, they considered themselves to have an opportunity to influence future policies and practices of the organisation. Actively engaging with policies, through dialogue, to improve the accessibility of employment opportunities made PWD feel part of a broader working community. PWD believed they maintained their autonomy and right to determine their specific working conditions in these instances. PWD acclimatised with less anxiety when employers and colleagues accepted and understood the physical effort required to perform in a similar manner to non-disabled workers. Feeling part of a community meant that PWD were acknowledged along with the effort they made to participate in a full working day. According to PWD, they believed that their acclimatisation to the pace and rigors of a working day was influenced by their planning which could reduce the margin for error. PWD embraced their conditions and wanted to focus on their work more attentively rather than be hindered by their impairments. PWD were also able to acclimatise more easily when informal networks of support were available to them.

### **8.2.2. Induction and Orientation Practices**

Induction and orientation processes were key in facilitating the acclimatisation of PWD. Active involvement and individualised engagements demonstrated to PWD that they were part of a broader community which led them to believe they were not receiving special treatment. Acclimatisation was eased, in this way, as PWD viewed the induction and orientation periods as opportunities to educate co-workers about disability under the leadership of their managers. Autonomy and control were necessary experiences for PWD to acclimatise. When orientation activities placed them at the centre of discussions about their disabilities, they felt undermined and robbed of their choice. These instances

created resistance towards acculturating to the organisational culture as participants deemed them to be formulaic, rehearsed and insincere. Acclimatisation was also impeded when co-workers expressed animosity towards PWD because they considered accommodation to be special treatment. Less personally invasive approaches provided the platform for improved acculturation. PWD felt validated when they could take responsibility and address issues openly with management, especially when the practice was already embedded within the organisational culture. Alterations to the physical environment and the provision of assistive technology, as part of an effort to reasonably accommodate PWD, assisted with their integration. The design of the physical environment, particularly the use of UD principles, played a meaningful role, in their experiences of integrating into unobstructed working environments. Simultaneously, PWD felt that the disclosure of a disability did not imply conditions were free of discrimination. Controlling the manner of disclosure during their induction and orientation created opportunities to address stereotypical ideas and their overall integration into the working environment. When employers disclosed PWD's disability without their consent, embracing the culture of the organisation became challenging. In some instances, PWD felt that humour played a positive role during their introduction to the organisation and deflected attention away from their disabilities.

### **8.2.3. Co-worker Expectations**

PWD developed various strategies to appear normal so as to feel and be part of a working community. Their acclimatisation was hampered when they were frustrated by the effects of their impairments. Co-workers perceived some PWD's disabilities as a burden, and in their attempts to be included as part of the working community, PWD exerted themselves beyond their physical capacity. Self-worth, confidence and determination played a considerable role in the participants' attempt to acclimatise and integrate into the prevailing ways of operating within organisations. Their perceptions of how they were accepted and when they felt accepted influenced and determined whether they integrated more easily and embraced the culture of the organisation more readily. In circumstances where there was poor awareness and inadequate accommodation, PWD felt ostracised and failed to embrace the organisational culture. PWD believed that total

integration and acceptance occurred only when co-workers willingly exceeded the minimum guidelines of the organisational policies which detailed the inclusion of PWD. The challenge of meeting managers' objectives in the same time-frame as non-disabled co-workers also resulted in prolonged and uncomfortable periods of acclimatising.

In answering the second research question, this study found that the acclimatisation and acculturation of PWD in organisational settings were influenced by whether PWD viewed organisations as open-minded and empathetic; whether PWD could, or could not, exercise choice and control over how policies, sensitisation programmes and the disclosure of their disabilities unfolded; whether employers were prepared, equipped and motivated to integrate; whether there were alterations to the physical environment along with the provision of assistive technology, as part of an effort to facilitate reasonable accommodation; whether PWD felt self-worthy, confident and determined; and whether co-workers were willing to exceed the minimum guidelines detailed in the organisational policies that promoted the inclusion of PWD.

### **8.3. Proposing a Conceptual Model**

Models have been used to make sense of the world around us or the problems that we encounter when attempting to put ideas into practice (Oliver, 2004). Models are typically abstract representations of things occurring in the real world. With the complexity in the relationships between PWD and non-disabled people, and the multi-faceted employment experiences of disability, developing a model that was quantitatively predictive was close to impossible. The opportunity, though, existed to construct relationships between the factors that could be observed. In other words, a conceptual model could be utilised to, "help people think about behaviours of components in complex systems" (Brandt & Pope, 1997, p. 62). In concluding the analysis of this study, I propose a model that adopts an alternate lens to view the work experiences of PWD, presented in Figure 7.

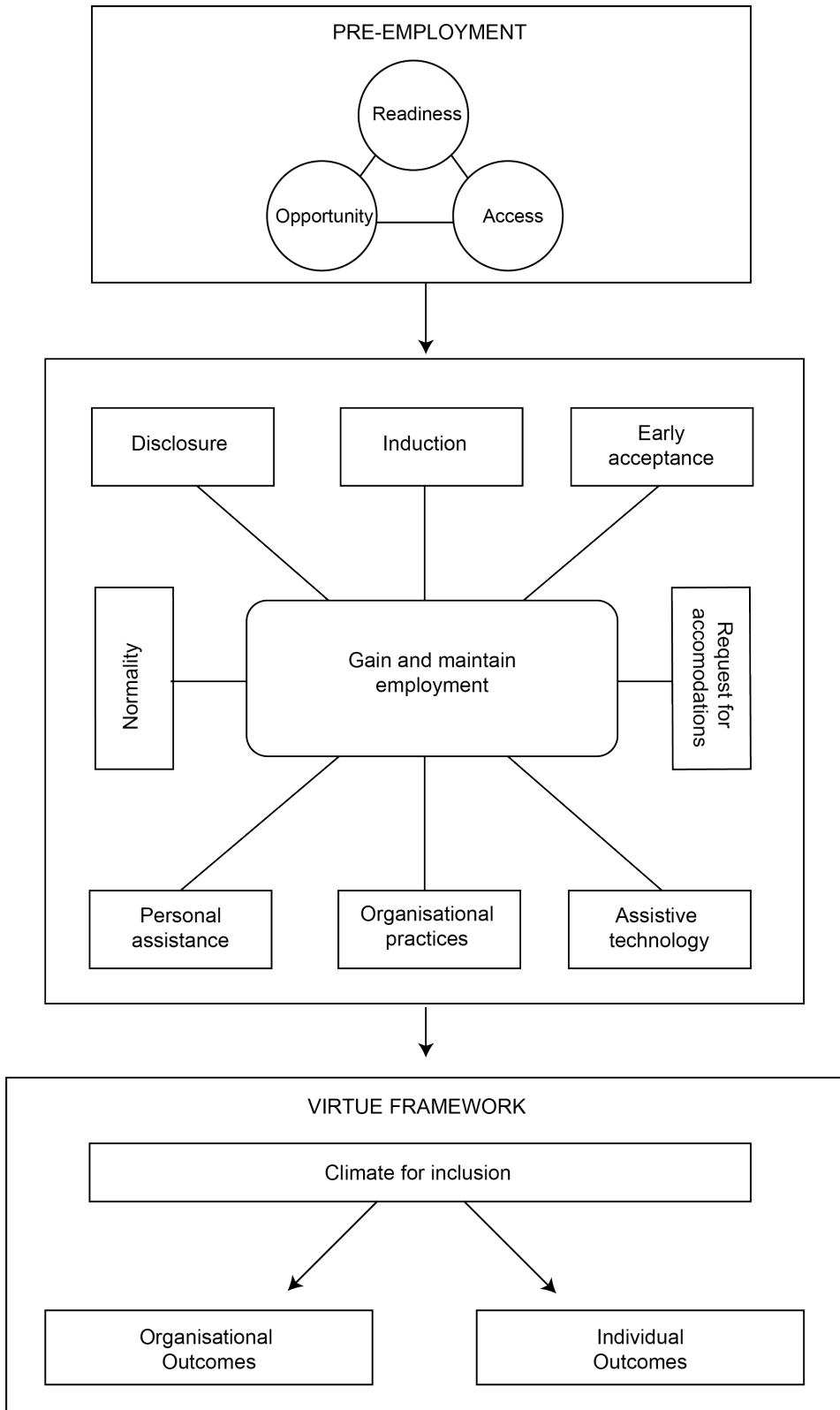


Figure 7. Conceptual Model

Source: Bam 2017

Whereas other studies have directed attention to processes that are developed with a top down approach, this model proposes a holistic view of the work experiences of PWD. My model proposes that the experiences of PWD would be enhanced through establishing working communities within organisations which are reflective of organisations that intend to distribute decision-making to a broader base. My model proposes two key aspects:

1. The proactive engagement with managers and co-workers in a working community is critical to developing meaningful employment experiences for all members of an organisation. The community groups are to allow for an improved opportunity for information to be shared, promote relations between co-workers as they learn and develop through their work experiences, and directly influence a culture of inclusion within the organisation.
2. Organisations are to display trust in these communities as they assign responsibility in a resourceful manner to those within the organisation. According to Solomon (1992) trust, resourcefulness and responsibility are all business virtues directed at the improvement of the broader society.

At the core of the model are the experiences of PWD. The model further proposes that:

- PWD experiences are to be primarily split into a Pre-employment Phase and a Gaining and Maintaining Phase.
- The Pre-employment Phase is to consist of three elements – readiness to seek employment, access to employment and opportunity barriers to work. To progress successfully from this phase, PWD are to overcome physical, emotional and (financial) resource challenges. The Gaining and Maintaining Phase is to be characterised by elements that establish and contribute to a climate for the inclusion of PWD.
- The Virtue Framework and Climate for Inclusion are to be determined and influenced by the working community's ability to redefine work and equip PWD. The Climate for Inclusion is to promote organisational efficiency and individual outcomes.

## **8.4. Relating the Model to Empirical Findings**

The findings of this study showed the importance of the pre-employment phase where PWD encountered challenges that were not considered, by prospective employers, as directly related to their employment. These challenges posed immediate limitations on how PWD gained and retained meaningful employment.

### **8.4.1. Pre-employment Phase**

#### **8.4.1.1. Readiness to seek Employment**

PWD's readiness to seek employment was characterised by three factors, namely previous experiences of seeking employment, rehabilitation agencies and periods of introspection. Previous experiences influenced how willing PWD were to seek employment. Continual experiences of rejection contributed to self-doubt and prolonged periods of unemployment. The second factor, rehabilitation agencies, served in various ways to assist PWD to seek employment. Studies such as that of Buys and Rennie (2001) and Kulkarni and Kote (2014) have focused on the utility of rehabilitation agencies for organisational benefit. This model suggests that agencies are to play a critical role in providing the necessary physical and emotional support to PWD, before considering the utility for organisational or employer benefit. In its employee recruitment practice, the virtuous organisation would have well-developed relationships with rehabilitation agencies as part of its defined community. In a manner, similar to which Moore (2005b) described, virtuous managers would be able to support prospective or current employees through their understanding that agencies would be an additional resource of support to employ. The virtuous manager would essentially be the central figure, an imperative for an organisation to engage in its practices with excellence. During periods of rehabilitation, PWD often became introspective, and took time to evaluate their immediate circumstances and future. Physical rehabilitation and independence development resulted in job training that this model recognises as a critical part of the experience of disability. The proposed model identifies that rehabilitation agencies would fulfil a further role of being a conduit to employment

opportunities, while managers and organisations would improve the work experiences of PWD through improving their relationships with these agencies.

#### **8.4.1.2. Access to Employment**

The model proposes that access to employment would be influenced by four factors, namely legislation, personal perceptions, organisational culture and networks. The inefficiency of legislation was addressed from the perspective of addressing the employment gaps that exist (Pope & Bamba, 2005). A further complexity was that organisations that were intent on compliance were at risk of adopting informal organisational policies that did not result in enhanced experience of employment. The model suggests that policy driven approaches alone would not achieve meaningful employment experiences for PWD. Organisational culture that was experienced through the organisational practices when recruiting PWD, would determine whether PWD successfully accessed employment. The culture would be predominantly shaped by internal factors. Virtuous organisations, as suggested by Barclay et al. (2012), would be viewed as those that improve access through providing learning opportunities, which compel employees to act in a particular manner. Organisations that operated within a virtue framework would encourage new and existing employees to create improved access to employment through expressing their expectations throughout the employment process, and as early in their recruitment as possible. The methods of recruiting and selecting employees were indicators to PWD, when accessing employment, of an organisation's understanding of disability. The final factor, access to social networks, has been considered (Hirst et al., 2004) as an important access point to employment. The proposed model suggests that employers play a role in limiting the duration of unemployment, where a person has acquired an impairment during their employment, and in such cases, form part of the social network.

#### **8.4.1.3. Opportunity Barriers**

The readiness to seek employment was characterised by opportunity barriers within the environment namely, structure, policy and attitudes that prolonged periods of unemployment which limited access to employment. Access to opportunities were

influenced by the negative perceptions PWD held about how others perceived them. These perceptions were not tested, but assumed, and were based on personal histories of experiences. This model proposes that even though opportunities might avail themselves, PWD would have to alter any negative perceptions and self-doubt to be ready to access the opportunity. Various physical barriers needed to be overcome before PWD were able to arrive at the opportunities (McFarlin et al., 1991). UD would be a key indicator of a virtuous disposition that would facilitate access to employment for PWD. This model recognises that, prior to addressing environmental barriers, impairment poses various barriers to personal functioning. Furthermore, the model proposes that environmental barriers are always to be viewed in conjunction with impairment. It goes on to propose that impairment includes an internal and external experience for PWD. Environments may change, but the impairment remains. Sufficient time is to be allocated to planning how to overcome environmental barriers to reduce discomfort. The conceptual model holds that accessible transport, as an environmental barrier, is a key element to transcending barriers to employment. Virtuous employers would remove environmental barriers through adopting strategies such as making company transport available or adopting flexible work from home arrangements. Pain management is to be acknowledged in the same manner as other structural barriers. Prolonged periods of pain limited the ability of people to act on opportunities. And finally, to gain employment, PWD often placed themselves at risk to further injury or harm to explore opportunities.

#### **8.4.2. Gaining and Maintaining Employment**

##### **8.4.2.1. Induction**

The model proposes that the induction and orientation of PWD should be characterised by establishing a dialogue about needs, the proactive involvement of managers, the possibility to educate others and not employing external agents to facilitate the introduction to organisations. Induction processes should provide PWD the opportunity to engage in open dialogue with managers regarding their needs. Integration would be improved if the platform for open dialogue is created between managers and PWD within the recruitment and selection stages of employment. The model proposes that managers are to be key role players during induction as they have authority and

influence over co-workers. Research has shown that PWD have minimal participation in decision-making in organisations and are to be at the centre of the process and determine the narrative during their induction (Schur et al., 2009). Similarly, Barclay et al. (2012) proposed that virtue within organisations facilitates the understanding that individuals make active decisions about the narrative surrounding where they work and how to behave, based on their personal values. Organisations should use the induction processes as an opportunity to educate co-workers first-hand, instead of relying on external agents. Discussions about disability-related specific needs should be addressed at the earliest point of the working relationship and should take place at the commencement of work.

#### **8.4.2.2. Disclosure**

Disclosure was characterised by personal control, consent, manager influence, timing and the response from others. The model proposes that PWD should have control over the details of when and how their disabilities are shared within an organisation. Studies have addressed disclosure from an avoidance of bias and stigmatisation approach (Robert & Harlan, 2006). However, PWD, as owners of their personal experiences, would prefer to determine whether they disclose any disability or not. Markel and Barclay (2009) showed that early disclosure could be beneficial to PWD as they might be perceived as more qualified. If disclosure were to occur, it is best facilitated within the recruitment, selection and induction processes. The model proposes that personal disclosure in intimate circumstances would be more effective than in open forums, facilitated by external agents, and it addresses concerns of bias.

#### **8.4.2.3. Early Acceptance**

Various factors influenced early acceptance of the PWD within their organisations. These included how PWD embraced the organisation's culture, encountered conflict, informed organisational policies, avoided being pitied, embraced co-worker perceptions and exerted themselves to exceed self-imposed expectations. The integration of PWD into organisations was influenced by their experiences of being part of a team. The acceptance by managers and co-workers also influenced how PWD embraced the culture of organisations. The power and privilege that were exercised by non-disabled people in

an organisation were determined by management behaviours and their values. Unsatisfactory outcomes such as isolation and low job satisfaction would be overcome when PWD are included in organisational events and processes as early as possible in their employment. The working communities proposed earlier are key to dismantling power and privilege. The model suggests that to avoid conflict and isolation, internal organisational policies should be viewed as guidelines to be exceeded, and not merely to be met. Consistent with Aristotle's theory, Mele (2009) argued that acceptance of the objective existence of a person and their lived experience contributes to a more personalised experience of virtue. The presence of pity and sympathy delays the acceptance of PWD at the integration stage. While other studies have focused on the lowered expectations of managers (e.g. von Schrader, Malzer, & Bruyere, 2014), this model proposes that irrespective of other's expectations, PWD are to adopt their own standards of performance and expectations. The aspiration to meet or exceed the standards of others often results in further injury when it is not properly managed.

#### **8.4.2.4. Normality**

The model proposes that 'normality' would enter experiences where induction processes are inadequate in facilitating dialogue and disclosure would become limited. Normality was characterised by PWD who pretended that all was fine, yet they felt like a burden, therefore they assimilated to avoid questions and had experiences of othering. PWD who entered employment encountered norms that were based on non-disabled people's standards. The concept of normality was also linked to experiences during the pre-employment phase where traditionally, rehabilitation was expected to return a person to a state of normality. Where inadequate induction processes and disclosure occurred, the need to appear normal influenced how PWD integrated into the work place. Shakespeare (1996) suggested that claims towards normality reflect a minimising of the importance of impairment. In communities that are all embracing, as Solomon (1992) indicated, virtue would flourish. The concept of normality was unhelpful in contributing towards a climate for inclusion. Based on previous experiences, PWD were more inclined to assimilate into the prevailing culture as an avoidance mechanism, which resulted in

negative work experiences. The late onset of a disability impacted how PWD interpreted their acquired disability and its impact on work.

### **8.4.3. Request for Accommodation**

#### **8.4.3.1. Assistive Technology**

When PWD were consulted, and considered as knowledgeable about assistive technology, there was the potential to enhance performance. When this was not so, technology had the potential to create a disruption. Managers were crucial to ensuring that consultation and discussion led to the earliest supply of technology. Increased productivity was closely linked to the availability of appropriate technology, prior to commencing employment. Negative experiences and dissatisfaction occurred in instances where costs restricted access to assistive technology. The model proposes that diminished independence and opportunities for social exclusion in the workplace would likely result, if assistive technology were not made available in organisations, particularly in those that are technology driven. Barclay, Markel and Yugo (2012) presented a similar argument which suggests that virtuous organisations ensure that their operations and processes are accessible to the largest possible audience through design that embeds within it the application of adaptive technology.

#### **8.4.3.2. Personal Assistants**

Where technology was not available, personal assistants became an alternative to support PWD performance. Personal assistants helped with medical care, ablution routines, driving, financial matters and interpretation. The model suggests that the provision of personal assistants be considered as an individualised solution, where the level of qualified support would contribute to the independent functioning of PWD in the workplace. Managers' understanding of the need for assistants played a critical role when accommodation was requested. Organisations that were ethically orientated reflected their values within their decision-making processes which determined how managers utilised their observations when guiding the organisation. These managers played a crucial role in that they created the foundation for the ethical orientation of

organisations (Hood, 2003). Studies have addressed the usefulness of personal assistants, from the perspective of assisting with activities of daily living and certain work activities (Solovieva et al., 2010). Personal assistants would contribute to the improved emotional functioning of PWD in the workplace as they would become confidantes and, in our local context, would reduce PWD's vulnerability to physical harm.

#### **8.4.3.3. Organisational Practices**

Where PWD were targeted specifically to fulfil an employment quota, conflict arose. Organisational practices are to be congruent with the intentions reflected in organisational policies. My model suggests that long-term employment satisfaction would be linked to how managers interpret organisational policies and assist co-workers when implementing it. Studies (Gröschl, 2007) have assessed policy implementation that were developed, without the inclusion of PWD in the process, to evaluate its effect. In developing organisational policies, PWD should proactively contribute to the design and the process should be ongoing as new people enter the organisation. Managers who adopt informal mentoring roles would be better able to facilitate and equip PWD, thereby improving the opportunity for success. Drake et al. (2002) similarly recommended that leaders within organisations should be prepared to provide help and nurture relationships to the point of support as these would be welcomed by PWD.

### **8.5. Virtue Framework**

#### **8.5.1. Climate for inclusion**

The environment played a critical role in creating a climate for inclusion and how PWD integrated into an employment setting. As organisations distribute decision-making to working communities, they would become more attentive to the needs of PWD. The model advocates that establishing working communities would demonstrate the organisation's sensitivity, understanding and empathy towards PWD. Shanahan and Hyman (2003) described sensitivity and empathy to be attributes of a virtuous organisation. The model suggests that the bottom up development of internal organisational policies would attract suitably qualified and skilled PWD, thereby adding

to the diversity within organisations. Innovation in this regard would promote the climate for inclusion of PWD as opposed to compliance with legislation. Arjoon (2000) considered the improved integration of people within organisations as representative of virtuous organisations behaving in a prosocial way. Prosocial behaviour and improved working experiences for PWD would further benefit society. Increased diversity within organisations would lead to greater innovation and attract diverse customers. Satisfied employees would result in lower turnover of staff and improved integration of PWD, in addition to the improvement in relations with non-disabled co-workers. As PWD were increasingly valued in organisations, their commitment would increase and the importance they placed on their jobs would further motivate them to succeed.

### **8.5.2. Organisational Outcomes**

The relationship between the benefits accrued to an organisation and that of PWD is intimately linked to the climate for inclusion. The notion that organisations should overwhelmingly benefit from a relationship that increases its profits is viewed as counterproductive within this model. Solomon (1992) suggested that discussing the economic imperative of organisations is unavoidable, but the need to focus on the individual within the organisation and the ethical framework of operation is critical for sustainability. The model proposes that as managers, co-workers and PWD work in community, the organisational benefits would extend beyond an economic and legalistic paradigm of enrichment for the organisation. As these communities flourish, the decision-makers would be able to determine mutually beneficial working conditions that avoid morally compromising practices. Whetstone (2003) argued that moral managers have a meaningful role to play, particularly in refusing to compromise on values and taking responsibility for their actions. The associated, intangible benefits for example, improved reputation, would be enhanced and would contribute to the sustainability of the organisation. The model proposes that managers and co-workers would have a responsibility to consider the long-term perspective and the effects of their actions and decisions, not only on the immediate community they work within, but the entire organisation. Furthermore, the model suggests that improved outcomes for the organisation would arise as managers assume responsibility to shape organisational

culture through actions that mirror a society that promotes inclusion. Benefits to the organisation would accrue best when organisations manage organisational processes and PWD were not viewed as separate entities, but as part of a community, interwoven in an environment primed for inclusion. Barclay et al. (2012) recommended the use of UD as illustrative of a virtue framework that ensures a positive impact on the inclusion of PWD in organisations. The model suggests that compliance with the law would not necessarily ensure a climate for inclusion. A voluntary approach by members in working communities would be driven by virtue and a higher ethical standard that would be determined by managers, co-workers and PWD meeting the moral obligation not codified within law. Oliver and Barnes (2006) contended that PWD are to be active participants in shaping any rights-based approaches within a legalistic framework. The model proposes that the outcomes for organisations would be connected to the expectations that PWD hold, and the intensification of virtuous behaviour within organisations would improve the manner in which organisations are held accountable for their contribution in ensuring an inclusive society. Societies would be able to assess whether organisations behave in responsible ways, and not only in their own interests. Finally, the model proposes that as decision-making and new ways of including PWD evolve within organisations, the ownership of inclusionary practices would spread throughout the organisation and be legitimised through the active involvement of PWD.

### **8.5.3. Individual Outcomes**

The model proposes that were PWD able to act on their right to choose the conditions within which they work, environments which are accessible and do not hinder integration, inclusion would be fostered. As PWD were able to integrate within inclusive working communities and play a role as active citizens, the attention directed at their impairments and the associated pain, some PWD experience, would minimise. Solomon (1994) considered the value in ensuring citizenship to communities, particularly working communities, and the impact on the broader society. J. Williams and Mavin (2012) similarly proposed active citizenship as a means of developing alternate means of being. In gaining employment PWD would be able to better address the impact of their impairments and the financial constraints often imposed on them. Within a working

community, PWD would be able to address openly their workload and the effect on their functioning. Excessive workloads were detrimental to the well-being of PWD and this model suggests that PWD's health should be managed over time, as the failure to do so could result in further injury and early retirement or retrenchment. Rai (2015) cautioned that organisations wanting to behave in virtuous ways are to be aware that excessive workloads could have a negative impact on daily working conditions. The model suggests that the impact here extends to broader society, as working PWD would remain financially independent if their health were actively managed through appropriate workloads. In this model, PWD would have the option to decide whether they would continue with their employment when they felt they were unable to meet the expectations related to their work. Furthermore, the model suggests that within a virtue framework, the climate for inclusion would be improved when organisations facilitated improved social networks that PWD would gain access to and would be able to retain, if they decided to seek alternate employment. Ali et al. (2011) noted similarly that there is a positive impact on society when the social networks improve, along with the skills gained, in these working environments applied outside of work. The way PWD would feel towards their employers would also develop within working communities. As PWD were further acknowledged within their working communities, they would be able to impact the culture and practices of the organisation affecting their overall job satisfaction. Gotsis and Kortezi (2013) posited a direct link between the beneficial outcomes of the employment of individuals to job satisfaction. This model further purports that active involvement in working communities would reduce the social isolation that PWD often experience. The skills gained within these work communities would further benefit PWD as they would be able to transfer this knowledge to the communities within which they live, resulting in an overall benefit that would accrue to society. Finally, the appreciation for PWD as being active contributors to an organisation's sustainability would address stigmatic perceptions within mainstream society and provide further benefits to PWD.

## **8.6. Summary**

There were various factors influencing the employment experiences of PWD as the prevailing frameworks were called into question. In this model, it is suggested that organisations operate from within a virtue framework, which would facilitate equal opportunities for employees, and make them more competitive, stimulate innovation and creativity, and benefit their sustainability. The proposed model presents a conceptual framework to explore the experiences of PWD who would apply effort in their quest to secure employment and would become fully integrated citizens in working communities. The effort to gain employment was often unnoticed by employers and the model presents alternatives to both employers and PWD on how to improve their approaches to overcoming the barriers to employment. Organisational policies often fell short of having a meaningful impact on the experiences of PWD due to poor implementation. The active engagement of managers and co-workers in establishing smaller communities within organisations would hold value through the redistribution of decision-making powers. The model suggests that a climate for inclusion – through the application of a virtue framework – would be shaped as PWD would work together with managers and co-workers to redefine their situation as they became better equipped. Traditional approaches, based primarily on complying with legislation, were not conducive to fostering organisational citizenship for PWD in organisations. Organisations that entrusted the responsibility to their in-house communities in a resourceful manner, would stand to benefit along with the individuals and broader society.

## **8.7. Limitations and Future Research**

The need for further research in understanding disability in the workplace is evident. The scope of the study was limited as it included 12 participants only. Representivity could have been improved through including a wider range of people with varying impairments in different locations. The findings of the study are thus to be considered as being limited in its generalisability. A further limitation is that this study included participants who predominantly had visible impairments that were known to employers. Future studies could draw on a wider range of participants to test whether the proposed model could capture the experiences of PWD adequately. Adopting this approach could

also lead to new opportunities to assess the value of communities within organisations. The scope was also limited as the study did not address post-employment experiences. Future studies could attend to PWD exiting employment to broaden the understanding of the relationship between employers and PWD. While the data from this study was based on PWD, future studies could test the model with other disadvantaged groups. In addition, the racial and gender differences amongst PWD and their relationships with employers could be explored. The compliance-adherent approaches that organisations adopt could be further examined in relation to the re-invigoration of ethics within business, as it is shown to be reclaiming attention by business leaders and scholars. The experiences of disclosure by PWD could be further explored in future. This study highlights the need for more in-depth investigation of these experiences and the perceived consequences, particularly during the recruitment and induction phases of employment, as these phases present the foundation of the overall employment experience. The need for identifying and evaluating the efficiency of strategies that address the recruitment and hiring of PWD and employment outcomes is also justified. The sole focus on Aristotelian virtue may be viewed as a limitation to this study, as a more westernised approach. Future research addressing the application of the cardinal virtues, from the perspective of PWD seeking employment, may further unpack the role of virtue in prospective employees' readiness to seek, gain and maintain employment. The impact on organisational practices may also highlight improved ways of recruiting PWD through the appropriate application of virtues like, prudence, temperance, courage and justice. Moreover, the need for future research to explore other paradigms of virtue ethics, which may challenge established ways of managing diversity within organisations, can be addressed through eastern virtue-based approaches. Without overlooking the value of eastern virtue-based approaches, the opportunity to explore the application of additional virtue ethics paradigms, presents researchers with opportunities to extend the dialogue regarding virtue and the employment of PWD. Furthermore, virtue ethics requires further interrogation regarding its application in supporting the employment experiences of PWD. In this regard, the application of Confucian virtue ethics may broaden the impact of virtue ethics on the employment experiences of PWD and contribute further to the resurgence of virtues in organisations, while exploring the

recruitment and retention of PWD. With the resurgence of spirituality within the debates by disability scholars, future research could move beyond eastern and western philosophy, and could include addressing virtues as espoused by religious figures and their application to the employment experiences of PWD.

A collaborative approach including a broad range of stakeholders, PWD, managers, co-workers and customers, could assist with improving the human resources processes when hiring PWD. Invisible disabilities present both the prospective employer and employee with challenges, and research around the interview experiences could alleviate more barriers to inclusion. Stigmatisation remains a significant barrier to employment as well as the social experiences within workplaces. Here the experiences of PWD and colleagues should be interrogated further. This study also suggests that an exploration of the perceptions of PWD towards their colleagues should be addressed, where previous experiences have possibly led to biased characterisations of co-workers. The education of managers and co-workers on disability should receive greater attention as the value of disability sensitisation, as a practice within workplaces, needs to be assessed for its effectiveness in ensuring inclusion.

The relationship between rehabilitation organisations, vocational agencies and employers requires further attention as these bodies have been shown to provide crucial services in assisting PWD to gain employment. In this regard studies addressing the effectiveness of specialist recruitment agencies with no disability background and specialised disability organisations should be undertaken. Furthermore, the relationships between these two types of organisations and employers could contribute to developing more unique means of facilitating employment. Finally, research comparing the experiences of persons with late-onset disability, compared to experiences of those with congenital impairments should be explored. This comparison could be extended to further compare experiences with non-disabled people. In the context of South Africa, with decreasing employment rates, increased poverty and marginalisation of PWD, studies could adopt different paradigms where the participation of PWD in the research design could be explored to provide more opportunity for the voice of PWD to be heard in research. Furthermore, different methodological approaches could be explored to reach a larger selection of participants.

## **Conclusion**

Empirical research addressing disability, employment and virtue is sparse. The current study is meaningful in that it provides insight into these domains from the perspective of PWD. This study set out to explore the employment experiences of PWD through the presentation of 12 cases that described how various employment processes were experienced. The acclimatisation of PWD into these employment settings provided insight into the participants' perspectives rather than that of their employers. The objective of understanding these experiences was enhanced through the analysis and findings, that were presented through the thematic analysis, which ensured that both the purpose and objectives were met. The conceptual model proposed is offered to strengthen future research in this area.

Employment has offered PWD an opportunity to improve the quality of their lives. The prevailing compliance related practices that organisations have employed have not necessarily contributed to improving the underemployment of PWD. Moreover, in the context of South Africa, and Africa as a whole, the impact of disability on PWD has been exacerbated by the prevailing socio-economic climate. The need for employment therefore plays a critical role in reducing not only poverty, but also addressing the social inclusion of PWD.

As part of a large, untapped human resource, research regarding PWD experiences has not gained much momentum. Studies of this nature should move beyond the confines of being located within the mainstream disability discourse and continue to activate further dialogue within business, management and diversity disciplines. Although it was impossible to understand every disabled person's unique experience of employment, this study has met its objective of providing insights for PWD, employers and researchers regarding how PWD experience employment, how they acculturate to work environments and how their requests for accommodation are experienced. Finally, the value of the study can be seen in its contribution to providing an alternate framework from which to view such experiences in the future.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1: Email to participant**

Dear.....,

Just to confirm our appointment after our telephonic conversation this morning. I have attached an information letter containing details of the study. Please let me know if you have any queries. We will discuss the informed consent form further when we meet.

Kind regards,

Armand Bam

Attached interview information letter:

## **Appendix 2: Interview Information Letter**

Dear Participant

This letter serves as an invitation to consider participation in a study that I, Armand Bam, am conducting in fulfilment of the PhD: Business Administration through the University of Cape Town, Graduate School of Business. Ethical approval to conduct this study has been obtained from the GSB Research Ethics Committee (REF>>>).

### **Research Title**

*Exploring the work experiences of disabled people in virtuous organisations*

### **Research Purpose**

The study seeks to improve the understanding of the employment experiences of disabled people in organisations that use a virtue theory framework as a moral imperative when employing disabled people.

### **Methodology**

The research will adopt a multi-case study approach to explore the experiences of disabled employees. The research methods will include the use interviews, document analysis and various modes of observation. These interviews and observations will take place at your place of work. The interviews and observations will range in time but would require at least 45minutes of your time for the interview. Interviews will be recorded on a digital MP3 recorder and stored on an external hard drive which will be securely stored in a safe when not in use. Your participation in the study will be on a voluntary basis and participation will not result in any remuneration. The information gathered during the study will be treated as confidential and not disclosed without your prior consent. No known risks are associated with participating in the study. The findings of the study would be made available to all participants on request after the final assessment of the thesis.

### **Please note:**

Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any point if you so wish without any prejudice. All information gathered and provided by you will be confidential and the study has no know risks. All identities of the participants will remain anonymous. No sensitive information will be published without your prior consent.

If you require further clarification, please feel free to contact me at any point. Interviews will be at least 45 minutes and I may require additional time to gather more information at a later stage.

Thank you in advance for considering to participate in this study and I look forward to further engaging you on your acceptance.

Yours sincerely,

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Armand Bam

Tel: +27 21 7053753; Mobile: +27 716330699; Email: [armand@lofob.org.za](mailto:armand@lofob.org.za)

Research supervisor: Dr. Linda Ronnie

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### **Appendix 3: Letter to Human Resources Department seeking organisational consent**

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am a PhD student at the University of Cape Town, Graduate School of Business intending to conduct a research thesis in fulfilment of the requirements towards the degree PhD Business Administration.

The proposed thesis is titled:

*Exploring the work experiences of disabled people*

The study seeks to improve the understanding of the employment experiences of disabled people. The main aim of the study is to improve the understanding of virtue theory and moral decision-making and its influence on organizations when creating meaningful employment processes, working opportunities and environments for disabled people. The study is significant as it seeks to bridge the discourse between disability, diversity and management practices within organisations. The study should provide further insights into the employment and underemployment of disabled people. The study has received ethical clearance from the Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research Committee (Ref>>>>>).

Your organisation's willingness to allow the study to be conducted within your organisation is important in expanding the current understanding of disabled people's work experiences. I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss this further with you and I am available to meet at your earliest convenience.

Kind regards,

Armand Bam

### **Appendix 4: Informed Consent**

I have received the letter of information and understand the information about the study being conducted by Armand Bam in fulfilment of the requirements of the PhD: Business Administration at the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business.

I have been informed and I am aware that parts of the interviews and observations may be included in the research. I have been informed and acknowledge that I may at any

time withdraw my consent to participate. I have been informed and acknowledge that my participation is voluntary and may withdraw from the study if required to do so without any prejudice. I have been informed that all information will be confidential and the study has no known risks. I am aware that the data collected will be stored safely for six months after which it will be deleted. No sensitive information will be published without my permission. All participants' identities will remain anonymous.

I have been informed that I am free to contact the researcher to seek any clarification with regards to the study if I deem it necessary.

With full knowledge and understanding of all above, I agree to participate in this study by my own free will.

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please print)

Signature confirming participation: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher contact details: Armand Bam Tel: +27 21 7053753 Mobile: +27 716330699

Email: [armand@lofob.org.za](mailto:armand@lofob.org.za)

Research Supervisor: Dr. Linda Ronnie Tel: +27 21 406 1428 E-mail:

[linda.ronnie@gsb.uct.ac.za](mailto:linda.ronnie@gsb.uct.ac.za)

Research Ethics Committee of Graduate School of Business, University of Cape Town:

Chairperson PG Committee: Tel: >>>>>>>>

## **Appendix 5: Semi-structured interview guide**

At the beginning of each interview I provided a brief explanation of the nature of the research and interviews.

### **1. Purpose**

*The purpose for me asking you to share with me is to improve my understanding of your experiences of work. I am interested in learning about the way you experience work in this organization from the point where you were alerted to the job through to your current experiences. I am not interested in the generic challenges or successes that disabled people experience. You may still choose to share this with me as we meet but that is not my purpose. So I am interested in learning about the way you experience work in this organization from when you were alerted to the job through to your current experiences.*

### **2. Interview Explanation**

#### **a) Project Explanation**

*The research will assist me to learn about the way in which organizations employ PWD and the influences on the people who work here. I will use the information I gather and analyse it to discover which elements of their employment and management processes are most influential, how they develop and why. I am interested in your work and what it is that a PWD does within this organization. I want to know how PWD talk about what they do, how they see their work, their colleagues and themselves. I want to study PWD experiences from your point of view.*

#### **b) Recording Explanation**

*I would like to make notes as we go to assist me with capturing what you are saying. If you will allow me permission, I will record this interview on my audio recorder so that I can review it later and not be restricted by note taking alone as we talk. Will that be OK?*

#### **c) Native Language Explanation**

*I am not very interested in the jargon and technical speak about employment unless you generally converse in that manner. There is no right answer or way of answering. The most appropriate answers are those that sound like you and make use of language that*

*you would usually use. So while you are talking, I would like you to consider talking about these questions in a way that you might to a close friend or family member.*

d) Interview Explanation

*As we progress I might ask you to have a look at some documents or pictures to illustrate something you have identified. Since we are at your work place, you might also choose to visit a space or place you have made reference to. This type of detail will assist me further in understanding your experience.*

e) Question Explanation

*In the event that I may be looking for some other information, I will generally inform you that we will be moving to a different question. I might suggest that I would like to ask you a different type of question.*

### **3. Questions**

a) Descriptive questions

These questions allow the researcher to gather an ongoing sample of the informant's language.

*"Would you describe yourself to me as you would to a new acquaintance or how you think a friend would describe you to me?"*

*"Your impairment is of importance could you share with me how you acquired it and the impact on your daily living?"*

*"Can you explain how you came to be employed at X and where you worked previously and any significant work experiences?"*

*"Would you take me through a general working day? You can start with what you do at home to prepare for work that are different from other days and go through the steps until you return to home?"*

*"Can you describe a typical week of your daily work life for you from the beginning to the end?"*

*"Can you tell me what it is you do at your work place?"*

*"Can you tell me of any programmes or opportunities specifically designed for disabled people within your organization?"*

*“Tell me of the last time you thought of any specific opportunity or programme directed at disabled people? Tell me what occurred and why you were thinking about it?”*

*“Could you show me where you last engaged with something specific or designed for disabled people and describe some of the things you experienced as you engaged with this?”*

*“When you thinking about something from work during the week, did it affect you in any way? Can you tell me the way in which it affected you?”*

*(As we are sitting here can you have a look at this document/ picture and take me through what you understand or remember about the experience)*

*If you have challenged anything related to your disability, can you describe what that was? Could you describe what you can remember about the circumstances you experienced as you did this?*

*“Can you share some of the details about the way any of your work routines happen?”*

*“Can you describe what typically is involved in the activity/s you considered?”*

*“When was the last time you experienced a challenge related to this activity/s? Can you describe what took place?”*

*“After this experience did you manage to change the way you were able to perform this activity?”*

*“Can you show me what happens during the activity we talked about?”*

*“Can you describe your thoughts or feelings as you go through this part of your routine you are showing me?”*

*“Can you provide an example of the kind of challenging events you find yourself remembering during the week?”*

*“Can you provide an example of the kind of successful events you find yourself remembering during the week?”*

*“Can you tell me some of your best experiences in work?”*

*“If you were telling a friend about your experience that you had at work, how would you describe it to them?”*

b) Structural questions

*“You have described different ways that work has impacted on your routine and the way you felt because of what you experienced with some activity? Would you like to take me through the different ways that you can feel X?”*

*“Can you think of any other activities related to your work you would also want to do?”*

*“Would you normally say X to your friends or is that a term you are using for my benefit as a researcher?”*

c) Contrast questions

These questions allow the researcher to discover the dimensions of meaning which the respondents use to distinguish the objects and events of their world.

*“You have indicated that X, Y, Z has all had an impact on your experiences. Would you explain the impact each had on you?”*

*“You recalled a particular aspect of your routine X, during a particular kind of weekly activity, Y. In what way would you think about X differently when another weekly activity such as Z is mentioned that takes place?”*

*“Can you tell me the difference between A and B in your work? Can you give me the reasons why B would be different from A?”*

*“How would you describe the experiences you have made mention of and impact on your daily working life?”*