

CHAPTER 3

WORKPLACE-EFFECTIVE MOBILITY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Despite the various challenges facing employees with disabilities in the workplace explained in Section 2.4, some of them usually yearn to attain workplace-effective mobility to become prosperous and competitive, while the majority remain impoverished (Yelin & Katz, 1994).

The chapter therefore discusses the origin of the concept of workplace-effective mobility and identifies various dimensions thereof. The dimensionalisation of the concept is an important step towards fulfilling the task of identifying criteria for workplace-effective mobility in order to enhance workplace equity. The chapter reviews significant previous studies and their role in determining a relevant process for identifying criteria for workplace-effective mobility in this study.

Finally, the chapter explains the rationale for identifying well-delineated criteria for workplace-effective mobility. Central to the identification of criteria for workplace-effective mobility is the critical role of the value judgments of experts.

3.2 ORIGINS AND NATURE OF WORKPLACE-EFFECTIVE MOBILITY

In Section 1.11.2, I indicated that the concept of workplace-effective mobility is not used in literature and could thus not be linked effectively with other literature bases. I coined the term specifically for the study by integrating several concepts that describe the construct. These concepts are workplace mobility, job/occupational mobility and career mobility. The impact of personal, physical, economic and social factors in enabling or

inhibiting employee mobility in general is inherent to all these concepts. Workplace-effective mobility is about these concepts used in concert and not individually, taking into account enabling and/or inhibiting factors.

In order to appreciate the position of workplace-effective mobility in the literature and the use of the term in this study, the concepts of workplace mobility, job/occupational mobility and career mobility are explained in this section. Drawing on Van Ham (2002), I contend that the initial use of the term workplace mobility occurred in discourse relating to unemployment, and aimed at reducing occupational and spatial mismatches and social security costs. A spatial mismatch can result from the competing demands of a person's workplace and residential location (Van Ham, 2002). An occupational mismatch results when an individual's skills and qualifications do not match the job opportunities available to the person (Chapple, 2006).

The inability of job seekers to harmonise the competing demands of their workplace and residential location and to meet occupational requirements can result in unemployment or underemployment, or even in difficulty in maintaining productivity levels in people's current jobs (Van Ham, 2002). These job outcomes are more prevalent in a slow-growing or stagnant economy (Moscarini & Thomsson, 2007). Therefore, to avoid any of these job outcomes, employees should attain workplace mobility, which is a term that Van Ham (2002) uses to describe processes that job seekers undergo to reduce occupational and spatial mismatches in order to achieve occupational success. In order to achieve a spatial match, job seekers either migrate closer to workplaces or commute, thereby harmonising the competing demands of workplace and residential locations (Van Ham, 2002). The need for a spatial match may therefore force job seekers to widen their job search and ultimately to accept jobs at a greater distance from their places of residence (Van Ham, 2002). The decision to migrate or commute, however, is based on cost considerations regarding housing or travel (Hofmeister, 2006).

Several challenges which may create a drag on the economy have, however, been identified with regard to job seekers ability to attain spatial and occupational matches (Chapple, 2006). The first challenge relates to the extent of discrimination between the haves and have nots in society. According to Chapple (2006), where people's residences are segregated from their workplaces, it is costly for minority groups to expand their job searches either through migration or through commuting, and thus they experience poor job outcomes (underemployment or unemployment).

Furthermore, job seekers from low income groups and minorities tend to find it difficult to attain spatial and occupational matches because of racial and ethnic discrimination (Chapple, 2006). Such discrimination is exacerbated by the fact that minorities are usually underrepresented in workplaces, leaving them with limited social networks to combat the adverse effects of discrimination on job access (Chapple, 2006). The job outcomes of under- or unemployment also have an effect on the ability of job seekers to develop self-motivation and healthy lifestyles, and to acquire job-related knowledge and skills.

In order to achieve an occupational match, job seekers need to acquire skills and educational qualifications to qualify for available job opportunities (Hofmeister, 2006). Therefore, job seekers that do not develop these personal attributes remain in a vicious cycle of under- or unemployment, particularly in periods with a high unemployment rate (Van Ham, 2002).

The discussion on workplace mobility in the context of spatial and occupational mobility has thus focused on a discourse of accessibility. An improvement in this discourse related to employee transitions from one job to another or from one employer to another. As in the case of accessibility (job opportunities must be available), viable careers must also be available, thus creating a perceived certainty of finding another job (Moscarini & Thomsson, 2007). In order to ensure career viability, job

seekers have demonstrated a willingness to acquire skills by undertaking horizontal or vertical moves (job mobility) or to improve their qualifications to access suitable job opportunities (Van Ham, 2002). In this context, workplace mobility is associated with job mobility and may include voluntary terminations, layoffs and total separations, as well as individual career choices (Neal, 1999).

Job mobility has also been defined as a change of establishment which manifests in a change of an employee's identification number in the employing organisation or a movement from employment in one organisation to employment in another, or even a movement within groups of organisations (Nas *et al.*, 1998). Because of the implications of job mobility on organisational commitment, other discourses focused on the effects of organisational commitment on workplace mobility. Studies on organisational commitment look at the availability of preferred jobs (Ginzberg & Hiestand, 1968) and job opportunities (Davia, 2005) to determine employees' commitment to an organisation.

Subsequent to Moscarini and Thomsson's (2007) assertion that job mobility depends on viable careers, a debate began on workplace mobility as career mobility. In this discourse, career mobility is defined as the perceived capacity to make career transitions across organisational boundaries (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). Career mobility comprises physical elements (a crossing of boundaries) and psychological elements (achieving perceived capacity). According to Sullivan and Arthur (2006), the perceived capacity to make such transitions depends on a person's motivation and identity (knowing-why), skills and expertise (knowing-how), relationships and reputation (knowing-whom). These factors were noted as personal attributes earlier in this section.

Given these trends in the discourses on workplace mobility, I coined the concept of workplace-effective mobility to reflect and integrate the various effects of accessibility, job mobility, commitment, perceived

capacity on finding work, making an effective contribution and enjoying an economically active lifestyle. Previous research acknowledges the importance of job access, the availability of opportunities and demographic differences in attaining workplace mobility through the acquisition of skills and qualifications. However, such research was either rather general and did not focus on employees with disabilities, or investigated employees with disabilities within the discourse of accessibility.

The focus of previous research relating to employees with disabilities has been on accessibility, and the role of personal, social, economic and physical factors on accessibility (see Section 3.3). Regrettably, these factors do not seem to have been fully integrated into the construct that I call workplace-effective mobility and there is a dearth of information in this regard. Because of this lack of information on workplace-effective mobility, the concept was created for purposes of this study by integrating the various factors identified for workplace mobility as defined in Section 1.11.2. Therefore, it was not possible either to locate this concept within the international literature or to contrast it with other concepts such as work or job readiness, as the construct covers more than the discussion on these concepts could offer to the current study. For instance, job or work readiness research has focused only on the effectiveness of either rehabilitation or the return-to-work programmes offered to people with disabilities; for example, a study by Li *et al.* (2006).

Drawing on the work of Simpson (1990), in this study workplace-effective mobility is described as a fundamental concept associated with the notion of workplace equity; hence, an investigation into the concept can provide further insight into the extent and causes of workplace immobility. The causes of workplace immobility confronting employees with disabilities, as discussed in Section 2.4, necessitate the identification of well-delineated criteria for workplace-effective mobility to regulate these individuals' access to job opportunities equitably, and to

ensure their satisfactory integration in suitable workplaces. The task of identifying criteria for the workplace-effective mobility of employees with disabilities therefore begins with a dimensionalisation of the concept, which is explained in the sections below. It is a concept that previous studies have not sufficiently articulated.

3.3 DIMENSIONS OF WORKPLACE-EFFECTIVE MOBILITY

The various perspectives on job or career mobility have personal, physical, economic and social implications. The concept of workplace-effective mobility is dimensionalised according to these personal, physical, economic and social perspectives. The dimensionalisation of the concept in this way assists the clarification of indicators, which are subsequently developed into criteria for workplace-effective mobility.

The sections below therefore explain the various dimensions of the concept of workplace-effective mobility and clarify its indicators. It will become evident that workplace-effective mobility depends on some personal capacity, access to the physical environment and social support, and that it may lead to improved quality of life.

3.3.1 Personal dimension

The personal dimension relates to elements of the personal capacity of employees with disabilities that enable them to attain workplace-effective mobility. According to Sullivan and Arthur's (2006) argument on career mobility, the personal dimension is comprised of motivation and identity, skills and expertise, and relationships. These elements are therefore explained in this section.

3.3.1.1 Motivation and identity

Motivation is an important element of a person's sense of coherence. As the sense of coherence has already been explained in Section 2.3.5, it suffices to indicate that people with a strong sense of coherence are motivated to and want to cope with environmental stimuli (Albrecht & Devlieger, 1999), which in this context, are the work assignments that employees with disabilities need to perform. Therefore, employees with disabilities need to demonstrate a willingness or self-motivation (Ingledew *et al.*, 2004) to perform work-related tasks (Chatterton, 2005) in order to achieve workplace-effective mobility.

The explanation of self-esteem and a self-concept in Section 2.3.5 relates to identity, which derives from the quality of individual experiences. A positive self-concept or identity is associated with resilience (Weiss *et al.*, 2003) or a sense of purpose and autonomy (Morgan *et al.*, n.d.). Minority groups that have collectively experienced tokenism tend to build a strong group identity, thereby resisting token appointments in favour of a collective identity (Blair & Jost, 2003).

Other identity aspects of workplace-effective mobility emanate from the gender roles, age and identity status and health conditions of employees with disabilities.

One study found that employees with disabilities who have limited or no family responsibilities achieve greater mobility than those with family responsibilities (Clark, Stump & Wollinsky, 1998), because they are able to maintain their focus on their job responsibilities. Similarly, young, divorced and separated employees with disabilities have been shown to achieve greater mobility than their older and married counterparts (Baldwin & Johnson, 2001; Gesthuizen & Dagevos, 2005).

Employees with disabilities who have the capacity to handle their workloads, despite the severity of their disability and bodily or structural limitations also tend to achieve greater mobility. Obesity and frequent pain (Koster *et al.*, 2005) may reduce the workplace-effective mobility of employees with disabilities.

Self-motivation and the ability of employees with disabilities to resolve identity-related issues are very important personal dimensions in their attaining workplace-effective mobility.

3.3.1.2 Skills and expertise

Skills and expertise or know-how relate to competence (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006), which is developed by acquiring the new knowledge (Barron *et al.*, 2006) needed to deal with one's environment (Sideridis, 2006). Continual enhancement of competence is important for success in a knowledge economy, because employers tend to reduce the number of low-skilled employees (Muffels & Luijkx, 2004) in favour of highly skilled employees during an economic recession. Therefore, the development of competence enhances a person's marketable skills and contributes to the likelihood of a job-related move (Schaeffer, 1985).

Because the development of competence depends on schooling and appropriate on-the-job training (Simpson, 1990), good quality education is very important, as I indicated in Section 2.4.6. A good quality education (Ginzberg & Hiestand, 1968) is thus an essential anchor for the workplace-effective mobility of employees with disabilities. However, as I have explained in Section 2.4.6, the South African school system is not yet conducive to people with disabilities' development of the competence they need; and, as a result, they are often excluded from employment (Swartz & Schneider, 2007). Appropriate on-the-job training provides work-related experience, but can only benefit those already employed, and is therefore inhibited by the arbitrary exclusion of people

with disabilities by employers and workplace prejudices. According to Meerman (2001), arbitrary exclusions and prejudice limit opportunities for employees with disabilities to acquire skills and experience, thereby preventing them from entering the occupations that could provide them with the highest possible earnings.

It follows that increased access to good quality education and appropriate on-the-job training is a pre-condition for the acquisition of valuable skills, the knowledge and work habits required in the labour market (Ginzberg & Hiestand, 1968; Meerman, 2001). A good quality education, particularly a tertiary education, has a significant positive effect on overall economic mobility (Hertz, 2006) in general, and on that of employees with disabilities in particular. However, apart from access to and the availability of good quality education, the acquisition of competence through schooling also depends on an individual's ability and desire to learn (Cogneau, 2005).

The concept of self-efficacy, as explained in Section 2.3.4, is also associated with competence. Self-efficacy relates to a belief that one can successfully perform intended behaviours resulting in perceived control and mastery (Kempen *et al.*, 1999). Such perceived control represents a person's strength (Ginzberg & Hiestand, 1968) and is manifested in his or her ability to gauge the external forces and opportunities that impinge upon careers (Nicholson, West & Cawsey, 1985), which in turn enables a person to make the necessary job transition(s).

3.3.1.3 Relationships

An ability to forge strategic working relationships (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006) is essential for the attainment of workplace-effective mobility. In Section 2.3.4, the role of significant others in mitigating the stress levels of employees with disabilities was highlighted (Albrecht & Devlieger, 1999). On the basis of Brown *et al.*'s (2005) argument, I contend that

a lack of support and/or a breaking up of social relations has a negative effect on the ability of employees with disabilities to attain workplace-effective mobility. Therefore, employees with disabilities may take solace in their individual relationship with God and their faith communities. According to Kaye and Raghavan (2002), spirituality helps a person to cope with stressful situations through a relationship with God and his or her faith community.

Building relationships should, however, not create dependence (Gignac & Cott, 1998), but should allow employees with disabilities to secure and maintain employment (Beatty *et al.*, 1998), thereby enabling their attainment of workplace-effective mobility. A reputation for independent living and employability (Gignac & Cott, 1998) through perceived competence (Weiss *et al.*, 2003) is thus enabled when employees with disability attain workplace-effective mobility. The negative consequences of stereotyping and/or social neglect and stigmatization, as explained in Sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3 respectively, would thus be averted by such a sense of mastery (Wright *et al.*, 2000) or competence.

3.3.2 Physical dimension

The physical dimension of workplace-effective mobility implies an ability to change and maintain certain body postures in an effort to move about effectively (Rossier & Wade, 2001) and independently (Patla & Shumway-Cook, 1999) in one's surroundings. As has been indicated in Section 3.2, the physical dimension of mobility is associated with career transitions across organisational boundaries, which have been related to the concept of a boundaryless career (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006) in the literature.

The notion of a boundaryless career relates to mobility as a change of establishment within or between organisations (Nas *et al.*, 1998). Mobility as a change of establishment has often been viewed negatively, as a

cynical perspective sees it as a sign of individuals who are inclined to change, and who arguably tend to be less productive and receive lower wages than stayers (Davia, 2005). However, job changes generally depend on access to information about available job opportunities (Kenyon *et al.*, 2002).

The concept of workplace mobility was first defined by Van Ham (2002) as the tendency by employees to accept a job at a greater distance because suitable job opportunities are not available in the local labour market. Accepting a job at a greater distance is a better option than remaining unemployed. Accepting a job within reasonable commuting distance from their residence, even if the job requires skills that are below their level of education (Van Ham, 2002), is better for people with disabilities than not working at all.

The willingness of employees with disabilities to commute depends on the cost-effectiveness and physical comfort of the various means of transportation. Regrettably, the underdeveloped transport mobility solutions in South Africa (Venter, Rickert & Maunder, 2003) constrain the ability of people with a disability to travel to work and also inhibit their access to educational or training opportunities, limiting their life choices (Kenyon *et al.*, 2002).

Some aspects that are fundamental to the physical dimensions of workplace-effective mobility are the requirements for accessibility, reasonable accommodation and assistive devices to ensure the workplace effectiveness of employees with disabilities. These requirements are explained below.

3.3.2.1 Accessibility

Accessibility relates to the ability to move freely in and out of buildings and comfortably on built surfaces. For instance, intense mobility training

for the partially sighted is aimed at ensuring their safe movement in unfamiliar surroundings (Chatterton, 2005). Accessibility is thus a critical element of maintaining independence and is an essential determinant of quality of life for people with disabilities (Patla & Shumway-Cook, 1999). As a key aspect of accessibility, physical mobility also relates to the possibility of being able to perform a whole array of practical and, more importantly, job-related tasks (Chatterton, 2005).

Regrettably, in many countries, including South Africa, workplace-effective mobility is still restricted by inaccessible workplaces which contravene the legislative provisions aimed at promoting the rights of people with disabilities. In South Africa, for instance, accessibility to many public buildings is severely limited because of the following problems with enforcing building regulations (Makwetu, 2007; South African Human Rights Commission, 2002):

- the guidelines of the South African Bureau of Standards' (SABS) Code of Practice cannot be enforced; and
- the provision of the National Building regulations pertaining to requirements for wheelchair users is not enforced.

Employers are in fact legally obliged to assist employees with disabilities to achieve physical mobility or accessibility by performing the following actions aimed at providing them with greater accessibility (Townsend, Pande & Gorbis, 2007):

- granting them sufficient time to carry out activities without enduring bodily strain;
- ensuring proper lighting conditions to undertake work activities safely;
- providing protective clothing to mitigate adverse weather conditions;
- conducting regular accessibility audits to enhance accessibility and safe movement around buildings and surfaces;
- reducing workloads to ensure comfort with regard to employees' mental and physical resources, thereby enabling comfortable and

safe bodily movements during the performance of an assigned activity or task; and

- eliminating potentially dangerous objects to optimize safety in the workplace.

3.3.2.2 Reasonable accommodation

Reasonable accommodation, which was defined in Section 2.3.2, enables employees with disabilities to enjoy benefits and privileges of employment equal to those enjoyed by others without disabilities (Kreismann & Palmer, 2001). The enabling goal of reasonable accommodation is attained by means of the following employer interventions:

- modifying or adjusting the job-application process to ensure that applicants with a disability are considered for positions they desire (Kreismann & Palmer, 2001) and achieve full participation (Hays *et al.*, 2002) in the workplace; and
- modifying and adjusting the work environment or conditions under which the functions are usually performed (Kreismann & Palmer, 2001) to enable effective performance by employees with disabilities.

If these interventions are implemented, reasonable accommodation can be a useful mechanism for attaining equality for people with disabilities in the workplace (Ngwena, 2004) and ensuring their effective performance (Klimoski & Donahue, 1997). However, reasonable accommodation is a potential ground for unfair discrimination against employees with disabilities for several reasons (Balsler, 2000). When employers treat disability as incapacity, employers tend to neglect the different needs of employees with disabilities (Ngwena, 2004). This ignores the need of people with a disability for different environmental considerations in order to achieve the same things as their able-bodied counterparts.

According to Dossa (2005), for people with disabilities to be the same, they have to be different (Dossa, 2005). Instead of recognizing the different limitations and needs of employees (Kreismann & Palmer, 2001) and accommodating these (Ngwena, 2004), employers have generally adopted a one-size-fits-all approach to the implementation of reasonable accommodation measures. In order to achieve greater workplace equity, the legitimacy of treating people with disabilities unequally should thus be enhanced (Ngwena, 2004) by recognizing their different needs (Klimoski & Donahue, 1997).

Employers' reluctance to implement reasonable accommodation measures is often due to the perceived high costs of implementing reasonable accommodation measures, such as the costs associated with the physical adjustment of workplaces, health care and lower productivity of employees with a disability, as measured in hours and wage rates (Boni-Saenz *et al.*, 2004). The perception of high costs relating to the implementation of reasonable accommodation measures is compounded by a lack of overall rules and standards to ensure compliance in this regard (Kennedy & Olney, 2001).

Employers who implement reasonable accommodation measures often neglect the socio-cultural aspects that are necessary to support employee diversity. These socio-cultural aspects include the caring attitude of supervisors, communication to enhance adjustment to work, a participatory style of management, and support to reduce work-related stress, ensure greater well-being and enhance the self-esteem of employees with disabilities (Gates, 2000). The value of reasonable accommodation measures to enhance workplace equity in South Africa has thus often been ignored by organisations (Ngwena, 2004), with the result that workplace discrimination continues to be experienced by employees with disabilities.

The Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. To give effect to the disability equity ideals set out in the INDS and the Constitution, the Employment Equity Act, No 55 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998) was promulgated. The Act recognizes reasonable accommodation as an accessibility measure that must be applied cost-effectively. Unfortunately, the constitutional value of reasonable accommodation as a mechanism for realizing substantive equality is limited to job applicants only (Ngwena, 2004).

3.3.2.3 Assistive devices

The use of assistive devices has been explained in Section 2.3.2 as having the potential to enhance the effectiveness of employees with performance in the workplace. Therefore, assistive devices are sometimes used to supplement the physical mobility of employees with disabilities by providing them with virtual mobility, which increases their functional resources and exposes them to new ideas and new spheres of influence (Kenyon *et al.*, 2002).

Virtual mobility consists of spatial, temporal and contextual movements (Kakihara & Sørensen, 2002; Kramer, 2007). Spatial movement is the collaborative exchange of objects, symbols and space to achieve and maintain order among these elements. Temporal movement is related to individuals' synchronizing their collaboration in terms of time and the required logistics, such as a venue. Contextual movement is associated with individuals' interacting or collaborating in any context or situation without a face-to-face meeting. These contextual interactions are often enabled by information communication technologies, such as e-mail, digital tools and Internet in a virtual context (Valjus, 2002).

However, technology may also have negative effects on employees with disabilities by perpetuating their marginalization and stigmatization (Eide

& Loeb, 2005; Lupton & Seymour, 2000). Assistive devices are also sensitive to the effects of digital divide, thereby negatively affecting the effectiveness of the desired human interactions. For instance, a person's inability to access information communication technologies may increase his or her social isolation and diminish community interactions. Such devices are thus not neutral. Although assistive devices usually enhance the functional capacities of employees with disabilities, they have the following inhibiting features (Sheldon, 2003; Kenyon *et al.*, 2002):

- they depend on the financial endowment of employees with disabilities (as I indicated in Section 2.3.2, assistive devices may not be affordable to the majority of employees with disabilities in South Africa, thereby inhibiting their employment prospects);
- technology such as computer equipment usually advances at a more rapid pace than employees with disabilities may cope with; as a result, their interactions with other people are limited;
- the majority of employees with disabilities are not computer-connected and find it difficult to access very important information communication technologies as sources of information; and
- some web designs are inaccessible to employees with disabilities, thereby creating barriers to their access to information, which means that the majority of employees with disabilities remain uninformed.

Technology tends to be provided from a deficit rather than from capacity perspectives. The deficit perspective forms an intrinsic part of oppressive discourses that position disabilities as a personal problem and individual incapability for which resources must be mobilized for help and care (Goodley, 2001).

Notwithstanding the limitations discussed above, employers are advised to provide assistive devices (Townsend *et al.*, 2007). However, the provision of these devices depends on the availability of financial resources to support employees with disabilities and the extent of the physical limitations of employees with disabilities that tend to inhibit their

work performance. To overcome these barriers, organisations should also modify and adjust the work environment itself (Steinfeld, 2003; Wang *et al.*, 2004).

The positive effects of providing assistive devices to enhance the workplace-effective mobility of employees with disabilities are the following (Beatty *et al.*, 1998; Hall, 2005; Jayasooria, 1999; Philo & Metzel, 2005):

- they offer these employees accessible and suitably designed work environments, thereby expanding their functional capacities and ensuring their safety and comfort in the workplace;
- they offer employees with disabilities a position of respect and equal partnership in society, thereby allowing them to share in the resources of the majority; and
- they enhance opportunities for employees with disabilities to live independently by providing accessibility.

In summary, the physical dimension of workplace-effective mobility needs to contribute towards safety, efficiency of operations, comfort and affordability for both employees with disabilities and employers. It also provides a framework for a clear definition of the inverse relationship between the dimensionality of workplace-effective mobility and physical limitations. Assistive devices and reasonable accommodation are thus important mediators in the relationship between disability and physical mobility (Mbara & Paradza, n.d.; Patla & Shumway-Cook, 1999) in any effort to enhance the workplace effectiveness of employees with disabilities.

3.3.3 Economic dimension

The economic dimension of workplace-effective mobility emanates from the impact of economic conditions on the ability of employees with disabilities to access job opportunities and enjoy good quality life. The

impact of these conditions on access to job opportunities and quality of life is explained below.

3.3.3.1 Economic conditions

Members of minority groups such as people with disabilities make slow progress into the economic mainstream under adverse economic conditions (Meerman, 2005), because adverse economic conditions lead to job terminations and a reduction in the earning capacity of employees (Barbezat & Hughes, 2001).

Because economic advancement depends primarily on access to preferred jobs (Ginzberg & Hiestand, 1968), the state of the economy has a strong influence on the work achievement of employees in general, and on that of employees with disabilities in particular. Therefore, economic conditions are positively correlated with the growth of employment and negatively correlated with the unemployment rate (Souza-Poza & Henneberger, 2004). Thus an unfavourable economic climate means fewer vacancies, which makes it difficult for people to find a job in line with their preferences (Gesthuizen & Dagevos, 2005).

3.3.3.2 Good quality of life

Poor economic conditions have a negative influence on the quality of life of people with disabilities. Because people with disabilities are predominantly poor, worldwide (Meerman, 2001), they experience even more diminished material and non-material quality of life, as well as limited chances in life and choices, and reduced citizenship (Kenyon *et al.*, 2002) during economic downturns.

3.3.4 Social dimension

The social dimension of workplace-effective mobility is closely related to equal employment opportunities, socialisation processes and social support. These elements of the social dimension are discussed in more detail below.

3.3.4.1 *Equal employment opportunities*

As was already evident in Section 3.2, the social dimension of workplace-effective mobility is fundamental to the notion of equal employment opportunities. When people with disabilities are on equal terms with other employees socially, their workplace-effectiveness increases. Drawing on the work of Simpson (1990), I argue that a study of the social aspects of workplace-effective mobility of employees with disabilities will provide further insight into the extent and causes of workplace inequality.

Workplace inequality is a result of unfair discrimination, as explained in Section 2.4.1, which prevents the movement of minorities such as employees with disabilities into employment that is better remunerated (Meerman, 2001). In order to address equal employment opportunities as a social dimension of workplace-effective mobility, employers should equalize the primary resources, implement the rules of a meritocracy to equalize opportunities, and maintain accountability over outcomes (Cogneau, 2005). This implies that policies regulating fairness in the labour market should be applied consistently to avoid tokenism (Blair & Jost, 2003), thereby enhancing workplace equity for employees with disabilities.

3.3.4.2 Socialisation processes

Socialisation is a process of passing on rules and standards of behaviour from old to new members of an organisation in an attempt to make them effective contributors to the enterprise. Therefore, the socialisation process provides an opportunity for new members to (Feldman, 1981; Muffels & Luijkx, 2004)

- acquire appropriate behaviours;
- develop work skills and abilities; and
- adjust to work groups' norms and values.

From this perspective, the workplace-effective mobility of employees with disabilities is enhanced when a positive passing on of such rules and standards of behaviour occurs. However, when values and beliefs are transferred across generations (intergenerational mobility), such transfers are accompanied by inequalities that are beyond people's control (Swift, 2002). This exacerbates the negative effects of social stratification, which relegates employees with disabilities to the bottom of the societal ladder, while elevating and keeping the able-bodied at the top (Cogneau, 2005; Hertz, 2006). According to Meerman (2005), insufficient intergenerational mobility decreases the employment prospects for employees with disabilities because of possible social stratification.

It is essential for employees with disabilities to show their willingness and ability to deal with intergenerational mobility issues and the regulated implementation of equity norms (Cogneau, 2005; Hertz, 2006). Dealing with intergenerational mobility requires the ability to voluntarily change group membership to improve quality of life (Blair & Jost, 2003). In order to achieve success either in society or in the workplace, employees with disabilities also need to work actively towards changing cultural responses to disability (Anspach, 1979; Feldman, 2004; Hahn, 1993).

3.3.4.3 Social support

Social support, as explained in Section 2.3.4, is important for the enhancement of the ability of employees with disabilities to cope with environmental demands. It is important to optimize their ability to secure and maintain employment (Beatty *et al.*, 1998) to enhance their workplace-effective mobility. Social support is thus a very important requirement for the social dimension of workplace-effective mobility. As has been indicated in Section 3.3.1.3, social support assists in building a reputation for competence and independent living. The social support strategies indicated in Section 2.5 need to be followed to ensure effective social support through changes in social power relations.

In summary, workplace-effective mobility entails more than just moving or driving from one point to another. It is a broad concept which includes people's interactions. The social dimension of such mobility may enhance the career prospects of employees with disabilities through equity and meritocratic interventions, which include the use of well-delineated criteria for employers to make equitable employment decisions (Chatterton, 2005; Ginzberg & Hiestand, 1968; Kakihara & Sørensen, 2002; Mbara & Paradza, n.d.).

3.4 PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON IDENTIFYING CRITERIA FOR MOBILITY

As explained in Section 1.1, despite the need for criteria for the workplace-effective mobility of employees with disabilities to achieve disability equity, no previous research could be found focusing specifically on this area. An obvious explanation for this gap is that it is a new operational composite concept that was developed for the purposes of this study.

Empirical studies thus far have focused on labour mobility in general, with the emphasis on job terminations (Neal, 1999). Mobility has thus

often been defined and studied in the context of turnover, in other words, external mobility or job changes (Barbezat & Hughes, 2001), which require people to adapt to new environments (Van Vianen *et al.*, 2003). Previous research on mobility has tended to use self-reporting as a measure (Koster *et al.*, 2005).

Williams (2006) indicates that an interest in the labour market participation of employees with disabilities is growing proportionally to the imperative for employment equity and human rights protection. Also, employers are increasingly realizing the importance of effective human resources planning, focusing on the potential contributions of people with disabilities towards meeting the challenge of labour and/or skills shortages. Despite a growing interest in ensuring workplace equity for employees with disabilities, Williams (2006) found that the only 6% of employees in management positions in the United States of America are people with disabilities. In South Africa, comparatively, only 3% of employees in senior and top management levels combined are people with disabilities (Commission for Employment Equity, 2009).

Because the role of clear criteria as a mediating factor has not been empirically examined and often organisations lack well-delineated criteria (Anderson *et al.*, 1981), inconceivably, only 3% of employees with disabilities are appointed to senior and/or top management levels. This low level of the appointment of people with disabilities to senior levels occurs within an environment that largely equates disability to incapacity (see Section 2.3.1). In South Africa, 0.02% of employees with disabilities (964 out of a total workforce of 4 426 972) are at this level, compared to 1.8 % (78 124 out of a total workforce of 4 4 26 972) of able-bodied employees (Commission for Employment Equity, 2010), because of prejudice (Commission for Employment Equity, 2007). Ross (2004) therefore argues for the development of clearer criteria for promotion and access to career development. This will alleviate workplace

discrimination, unmerited and token appointments and the loss of competent and well-motivated employees with disabilities.

Established workplace-effective mobility criteria are particularly necessary at times of shrinkages in the traditional pool of flexible labour to minimize or prevent people from setting their own arbitrary criteria, informed by negative attitudes, ignorance, fear and stereotypes, which may unfairly exclude employees with disabilities (Baum, 1995).

3.4.1 Significance of previous studies on criteria development

Although they did not focus on criteria for workplace-effective mobility, previous studies on criteria development for other areas could offer significant study design information to guide the current study.

A useful study was conducted by Lahtinen *et al.* (2005) to develop quality criteria for health promotion research in Finland. Their study used the literature to identify a number of criteria and then applied the Delphi method by involving 18 health promotion experts to evaluate and comment on the identified criteria for health promotion in three rounds. The expert-evaluated criteria were then used to assess 16 health promotion research projects that had received funding from the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health on a four-point scale ('criterion is not fulfilled at all'; 'criterion is fulfilled to some extent'; 'criterion is fulfilled completely'; 'criterion cannot be assessed'). Focused research funding was subsequently achieved using the criteria identified following this approach. Their study is regarded as useful because it provides evidence of the scientific value of using the Delphi method in the process of verifying identified criteria.

Another study developed a quality criteria framework for patient decision aids in order to support patients in arriving at informed, bias-free choices on available medical options. The study also used the literature to define

quality dimensions and used two rounds of the electronic Delphi method to develop background evidence reports, produce quality criteria and rate quality criteria using experts. As patients also participated in the Delphi rounds, there was some disagreement regarding the feasibility and measurability of the criteria that had been produced (Elwyn *et al.*, 2006).

Although these previous studies did not follow the sequential mixed method proposed for this study in Section 4.3, but relied only on the available literature to achieve the intended purposes, they reveal the importance for an empirical study of involving experts in refining and categorizing criteria. The use of experts was therefore adopted in the current study.

3.5 NEED FOR WELL-DELINEATED CRITERIA

Apart from the studies indicated in Section 3.4.1, the development of criteria for employee selection has generally received little attention (Altink *et al.*, 1997). As indicated in Section 3.4, studies focusing on employees with disabilities either used medically defined criteria of pain or difficulty in performing an activity, or unspecified criteria (Anderson *et al.*, 1981; Kopec, 1995). Koster *et al.* (2005) even admitted that they used a subjective measure of physical function in their study on socio-economic differences in mobility decline and relied on self-reports. They therefore recommended that future studies should identify well-delineated criteria.

This study seeks to make a contribution towards filling these apparent gaps in the body of empirical knowledge on the topic. In an attempt to achieve this goal, the Montreal Process Working Group's (2007) distinction between a criterion and an indicator is used as a guide. The group suggests that a criterion is comprised of indicators and is thus a category of conditions or processes by which a concept may be assessed. It is characterized by a set of related indicators, which may be

either qualitative or quantitative measures or descriptors of a criterion. From this distinction, it may be concluded that criteria are groupings of indicators developed into categories that may be used to evaluate phenomena.

The need for criteria for workplace-effective mobility emanates from several organisational realities. Firstly, increased workforce diversity requires organisations to have a better understanding of measures to prevent workplace discrimination than in the past and to accommodate the needs of disabled people (Wooten & James, 2005). Therefore, the provision of well-delineated and empirically identified criteria for promotion and access to career development fosters the basic rights of people with disabilities (Baum, 1995) to work.

Secondly, organisations face increasing demands to systematize and rationalize their policies and procedures to ensure that employee transfers, promotions, and demotions do not result from a random process (Williams, 2006). This policy rationalization and systematization drive requires organisations to specify promotion criteria (Anderson *et al.*, 1981) to enhance workplace equity for employees with disabilities. The implementation of such criteria may ensure equitable income, accessible quality education and employment in senior positions (Ginzberg & Hiestand, 1968).

Thirdly, the expected substantial increases in the mobility difficulties in the coming decades require that predictors of mobility be identified (Clark *et al.*, 1998). Taylor (1993) claims that criteria may be developed either by selecting them off the top of one's head or by relying on research findings or experience or even systematically analysing the situation to develop criteria based on the best information available. While indicators suggest the kind of evidence needed to judge the success or failure of a programme (or, in this case, workplace-effective mobility), criteria

suggest how much of this evidence is needed to judge a programme (or form of mobility) a success (Taylor, 1993).

The inclusion of judges or experts, as in the studies reported in Section 3.4.1, makes it possible to investigate the face validity of scale items (Hardesty & Bearden, 2004). When criteria are assessed, it should be realized that they exist along many dimensions. Criteria can be classified as behaviour required in the job or as consequences of behaviour following two types of value judgements – firstly, the judgement made by persons who are well informed that a particular form of behaviour or results of behaviour is good or desirable and, secondly, that one behaviour or result is more or less desirable than or equally desirable to another (Guion, 1961).

The resultant process of assessing or projecting performance against pre-set criteria is referred to as a criterion-referenced approach to assessment. It provides a defensible framework for assessing performance (Burton, 2006). This approach is therefore followed in this study.

3.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter, four dimensions of workplace-effective mobility have been identified and presented, namely the personal, physical, economic and social dimensions. It is evident that these four dimensions of workplace-effective mobility focus on providing a sense of mastery and independence to employees with disabilities to give employees with disabilities a competitive edge relative to their non-disabled colleagues, thereby enhancing their ability to find employment or to be promoted.

The previous literature found on the development of criteria pointed to the need for involving experts in order to achieve the face validity of scale items. The significance of this process for the current study has

been discussed, together with the need for identifying well-delineated criteria for workplace-effective mobility.

In the next chapter, the research design and methodology for the identification and confirmation of criteria for workplace-effective mobility are discussed.