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INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

**A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE EMPLOYMENT
EXPERIENCES OF PERSONS AFFECTED BY ACQUIRED BRAIN
INJURIES (ABI) IN SOUTH AFRICA**

By

Khalida Akbar

208503254

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In Human Resource Management

School of Management, IT and Governance

College of Law and Management Studies

Supervisor: Professor Henry Wissink

2015

“In the name of God the most Gracious the most Merciful”

DECLARATION

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DECLARATION OF PUBLICATION

Details of contributions to publications that form part and/or include research presented in this dissertation (include published work, publications in preparation, submitted, in press and published and give details of the contributions of each authors to the experimental work and writing of each publication).

Peer reviewed publication:

Akbar, K. & Wissink, H.F. (2014). An exploratory analysis of the deficiencies of the South African employment equity framework to regulate the management of acquired brain injuries in the workplace, *Journal of Contemporary Management*, 11(3), 251-265.



Signed:

.....

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother

MRS SADIA AKBAR

You have inspired me

To follow my dreams

You have been my best friend,

My pillar of strength and role model

You made me believe that anything is possible

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To the Almighty who guided me and gave me the strength and wisdom to complete this project

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ABSTRACT

The rationale for conducting this study is, firstly, to encourage people with Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI) to become aware of employment prospects and, secondly, to provide organisations with recommendations on how they could assist these individuals by amending Human Resource (HR) policies and procedures. South African legislation stipulates that there is provision for employment with disabilities; however, there is a lack of literature to indicate how reasonable accommodation can be made for these particular individuals in the workplace. The study also seeks to establish the extent in which people with ABI's are aware of legislation and policies that affect their employment opportunities. Studies need to be done in order to examine the experiences of people with Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI's) regarding employment and survival in the workplace. South African organisations aim to attain diversity in the workplace; however, they lack accommodation for people with ABI's. The study thus aims to examine specific experiences of people with ABI's regarding employment so that Human Resource policies and practices can be tailor made to accommodate them in gaining and sustaining employment.

The findings of this study provide an overview of the problems experienced and barriers faced by people gaining employment following ABI's in South Africa. Thus it can be said that it is essential that the management of challenging issues should take place in terms of language and communication, promotions and development, motivation, the design of the programme and job security. The findings of this study also have several implications for future research that needs to be conducted in this area of study within the fields of Management and Entrepreneurship, Governance, Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations. In terms of research approach, the phenomenological approach used in this study may encourage other researchers to study ABI in South Africa through the lived experiences of persons with ABI, so as to understand the direct needs, challenges and success of people with this type of disability. The results of this study will provide managers with information that will facilitate early detection and strategies to assist in the employment of persons following an ABI in the South African workplace. This study responds to the numerous calls for research in the area of employment of persons following ABI's in South Africa. The empirical and theoretical findings suggest that

minimal research has been conducted in the area of the perceptions and experiences of employment of persons post ABI in South Africa. Therefore this study will contribute to the expansion of knowledge on this issue with the aid of the model of The Model of Employability for persons who are affected by Acquired Brain Injury in South African organisations, which was developed through this study. There is very little literature on employee perceptions and experiences of employment of persons following ABI in South Africa. Thus the understanding gained here on how South African employees understand and experience misfit will make a notable contribution to existing research, theory and practice in the fields of Governance, Entrepreneurship, Management, Psychology and HRM.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces a brief overview and background of the phenomenon referred to as acquired brain injuries (ABIs) in South Africa. It demonstrates the existence of a problem with regards to those affected by ABI gaining employment in the South African workplace. This chapter also provides a brief overview of what the study envisions. It outlines the background of the study, the statement of the research problem, the purpose of the study, the research method used and the significance of the study as well as providing a chapter outline.

1.2 Brief overview

Although ABI publications in this country are scarce (Hugo & Coetzer 1997:46), local epidemiological statistics indicate brain injury to be a major health problem in South Africa (Brown 2006:126). The barriers to employment for individuals affected by ABIs in South Africa have become a significant health concern. This study will bridge the gap that exists in South African literature and research with regards to the medical provision for this group of individuals and the social and practical needs of returning to the South African workplace.

Literature studies have cited aspects of legislation and the provisions related to government regulation in relation to disabilities and their impact and effects on employment in the South African labour market (Akbar & Wissink 2014); however, this study is focused on one set of the many existing disabilities, namely, ABIs. As in other developing countries, it is estimated that the prevalence of ABIs in South Africa is higher than the worldwide average and accounts for more than a third of all deaths resulting from injuries (Brown 2006:126). Of those who survive, many live with significant impairment of the brain function. Furthermore, the incidence of neurotrauma is high amongst young people, which places a considerable burden on both individuals and society in terms of attaining employment as a means of survival and

independence. In recent years investigators have broadened the scope of research to identify the needs of individuals at various stages following ABI. However, an important gap in the literature is the employment of these individuals in the post-ABI stage and the manner in which diversity management practices in the workplace affect these individuals as generally this area does not have the necessary human resource (HR) policies and procedures to assist the affected individuals (Akbar & Wissink 2014). The focus of this research project is to provide evidence that individuals affected by ABIs in the mild stage are not gaining or sustaining sufficient employment. This research project will also center on the analysis and meaning of diversity in the workplace and the impact that it has on these individuals.

1.3 Background to the research problem

One of the objectives of this study is to study the experiences of people with ABIs and how the condition impacts on their potential employment in South Africa. The rationale for conducting this study is therefore, firstly, to encourage people with ABIs to become aware of employment prospects and, secondly, to provide organisations with recommendations on how they could assist these individuals by amending HR policies and procedures. South African legislation stipulates that there is provision for employment with disabilities; however, there is a lack of literature to indicate how reasonable accommodation can be made for these particular individuals in the workplace. This study also seeks to establish the extent in which people with ABIs are aware of legislation and policies that affect their employment opportunities.

A preliminary literature search was conducted using thematic searches. The search was conducted using the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) libraries and online resources, including Google Scholar. Key words were used to search for relevant literature and construct a preliminary concept matrix, using guidelines such as authority of the author, objectivity of the work, coverage of the work and currency of the published work. In this way the researcher was able to ascertain the key authors and the credibility of the information sources.

Persons with ABI can be divided into those affected by traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) and those affected by strokes. TBI is described by McRuer (2006:2) as “usually resulting from a violent

blow or jolt to the head or body. An object penetrating the skull, such as a bullet or shattered piece of skull, also can cause traumatic brain injury.” Mild TBI may cause temporary dysfunction of brain cells. More serious TBI can result in bruising, torn tissues, bleeding and other physical damage to the brain that can result in long-term complications or death (McRuer 2006:2).

1.4 Aim

The aim of this study is to provide an overview of the problems experienced and the barriers faced by people gaining employment following ABIs.

1.5 The research problem

There is a need for studies which examine the experiences of people with ABIs regarding employment and survival in the workplace. South African organisations aim to attain diversity in the workplace, including employing those with disabilities; however, they lack accommodation for people with ABIs as this is a minority disability in terms of the types of disabilities in South Africa. This lack is problematic as ABIs are now becoming a growing concern both globally and in South Africa. It is therefore vital that research is conducted in South Africa into ABIs in the workplace, with reference to the impact and role of diversity management and accommodation of individuals affected by ABI. This study will show that, while ABIs in the workplace has been examined to only a small extent in the international literature, South Africa has achieved even less in researching and addressing the phenomena of ABI in the workplace.

The study thus aims to examine specific experiences of people with ABI's regarding employment so that HR policies and practices can be devised to accommodate them in gaining and sustaining employment in the South African workplace.

1.6 Research objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1.6.1 To understand the experiences of people affected by ABI in seeking employment in South Africa
- 1.6.2 To ascertain views held by people affected by ABI regarding the importance of employment
- 1.6.3 To determine the extent to which people affected by ABI are accommodated in the workplace
- 1.6.4 To investigate the level of contribution to diversity that people affected by ABI experience as part of an organisation
- 1.6.5 To establish the extent to which people affected by ABI are aware of legislation or policies that determine their employment opportunities.

1.7 Research questions

The main critical question in the study is: How do ABIs negatively impact on gaining and sustaining employment in South Africa? This question will be addressed by means of answering the five following research questions:

- 1.7.1 What are the experiences of people affected by ABIs with regard to employment in South Africa?
- 1.7.2 Do people affected by ABI feel the need to be employed and how would employment benefit these individuals?
- 1.7.3 To what extent do South African organisations provide reasonable accommodation for people affected by ABIs in the workplace?
- 1.7.4 Do people affected by ABI feel that their employment contributes towards workplace diversity?
- 1.7.5 Are people affected by ABI aware of legislation, including policies and procedures related to human resource management (HRM) practices that affect their employment prospects?

1.8 Research methodology

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010:76), research is the process of studying and analysing a situational factor with the objective of finding a solution to a problem. It is also defined as something that people undertake in order to find out things in a systematic way, in the process their knowledge and understanding is increased (Saunders et al 2009:16).

The research methodology to be followed in answering the research questions is briefly explained below. Due to the fact that a phenomenological study requires extensive data collection and analysis, the proposed time frame will be extended when required in order to ascertain that significant outcomes of the study are achieved. This study looks at creating a phenomenon through understanding and analysing the employment experiences of people affected by ABI in South Africa. This study therefore utilises a qualitative and phenomenological methodology.

1.9 Research instrument

The study seeks a deeper understanding of the experiences of people with ABIs regarding attaining employment in South Africa. The interest is to give meaning to the employment challenges in attaining employment as experienced in a natural setting, which could differ in practical terms from the theory. It seeks to grasp the practicalities occurring within organisations with regard to attaining diversity in the workplace. Semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were used and developed according to the research questions of the study.

The major advantage of using this methodological dimension in the proposed research study is that more in-depth and comprehensive accounts concerning changes in professional work can be produced. The measurement of attitude will be based on research question four: Do you feel the need to be employed? This answer will be further explored through the process of follow-up interviews. This research question will also explore whether people want to be employed or not post ABI. Measurement of attitudes and awareness will be gained from the experiences and perceptions shared in the interviews. Because the significance of the study is to understand

personal experiences and perceptions of respondents, it is therefore purely a phenomenological study.

1.10 Access to the sample

A major limitation of the study was access to respondents who were capable of co-operating with the researcher for the duration of the interview. Due to the fact that a majority of the members of the ABI population are currently in the process of rehabilitation and recovery and that some are severely brain damaged, communication was a challenge. Due to this possible limitation, extra ethical measures were taken, such as asking professionals in the field to assist respondents when necessary. This was due to an ethical clearance requirement by the Ethical Clearance committee of UKZN to ensure that participants were not emotionally traumatised and that, if an uneasy situation arose, professionals would be able to assist and monitor the situation.

1.11 Sampling procedure

In this study, the sample population comprises of people with ABI who form part of Hardy and Associates in Kwa-Zulu Natal (Appendix 4), Headway Stroke and Brain Injury Association (Appendix 5), and the I Can! Disability Academy South Africa (Appendix 6).

1.12 Sample size

The sample size for this study comprised four in the focus group interviews and 12 in the semi-structured interviews. A pilot study was carried out prior to the actual data collection so as to ensure that all research questions address the objectives of the study. This pilot study will also contribute towards increasing the study's validity and reliability.

1.13 Data analysis techniques

The study will made use of the data analysis software Nvivo to make sure that data analysis is accurate. The use of Nvivo has allowed the researcher to formulate precise findings though the coding of themes and the data analysis techniques that the Nvivo software systems permit. In

conjunction with analysis using Nvivo, content analysis and narrative analysis was conducted during this study

1.13.1 Content analysis

Content analysis was applied to examine any piece of writing or occurrence of recorded communication. Content analysis is currently used in a variety of fields, ranging from marketing and political science to psychology and cognitive science as well as many other fields of inquiry.

1.13.2 Narrative analysis

Narrative analysis usually involves life story research or oral history. This technique adopts a qualitative approach, using structured interviews rather than questionnaires and therefore can be said to be suitable for this study. This method of qualitative research requires accurate recordings of the stories of the research subjects and attempts to understand the relationship between the experiences of the individuals and their social framework. This would assist in achieving the objectives of the study and is in keeping with the research design of phenomenology.

1.14 Chapter outline

This study is made up of seven chapters, which are summarised below:

1.14.1 Chapter One: Introduction to the study

This chapter of the dissertation has presented the background of the study, stating the main concepts relating to the study. The problem statements, purpose of the study and research questions have been outlined. The research methodologies as well as the significance of conducting the study have also been introduced.

1.14.2 Chapter Two: Literature review

This chapter presents a comprehensive literature review concentrating on the research framework regarding barriers to employment for individuals affected by ABIs in South Africa. Some theories regarding productive and unproductive bodies in employment were considered as these notions impact on how organisations manage employees affected by ABI. Due to the fact that this study involves labour legislation, the significance of the study is to establish how HR policies and procedures will assist people affected by ABI. Leave retention policies were

analysed and described in conjunction with the Economic Design Model in the literature review of the study.

1.14.3 Chapter Three: Theories and concepts related to the study

This chapter is the theoretical part of the study and gives a review of various concepts relating to diversity in the workplace and globalisation. Some concepts explained are Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Max Horkheimer's critical disabilities theory. These theories underpin the study.

1.14.4 Chapter Four: Research methodology

This chapter explains the research methodology in the study. The study is based on qualitative research which draws from both primary and secondary data. The chapter describes the tools and procedures that are utilised in the study as well as the sampling and the research design.

1.14.5 Chapter Five: Presentation and discussion of results

This chapter integrates the presentation, analysis and discussion of the research results. The results of the semi structured interviews and focus group interviews are described to establish how ABI's impact on gaining and sustaining employment in South Africa. The experiences of employment in South Africa of people affected by ABI's, whether people affected by ABI feel the need to be employed and how employment would benefit these individuals are described. Questions dealt with also include to what extent South African organisations provide reasonable accommodation for people affected by ABIs in the workplace, whether people affected by ABIs feel that their employment contributes towards workplace diversity and whether people affected by ABI's are aware of legislation, including policies and procedures related to HRM practices that affect their employment prospects. An attempt will also be made to relate the findings to the literature in order to achieve the objectives of this study.

1.14.6 Chapter Six: Recommendations and conclusions

An attempt will be made to conclude the research based on the findings by proposing recommendations for diminishing the barriers to employment for persons affected by ABIs in South Africa.

1.15 Conclusion

In the present chapter, the researcher has introduced the topic and provided a background and motivation for this research study. The successes and the barriers to employment for persons affected by ABIs in South Africa have been outlined. In the discussion of the research methodology used in this study, primary and secondary research methods have been briefly summarised. Finally, the limitations of the study have been stated and an outline of the chapters given.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the first literature chapter of this study. In attempting to understand the importance of this research, it is essential to delineate the context within which it was initiated. This chapter therefore focuses on the phenomenon of ABI and employment in South Africa. It begins with relevant descriptions and explanations of the notion of the phenomenon of ABI and employment in South Africa, which will be covered in great detail in order to eliminate misconceptions and misunderstandings with regards to understanding and applying the phenomenon. Thereafter relevant definitions of terms relating to the emerging phenomenon will be described and aspects that directly impact on the need for this research will be highlighted. This chapter seeks to establish and bring together various concepts and prior research in order to formulate a conceptual framework that can be utilised in order to implement this developing phenomenon and to examine its impacts on South Africa.

This chapter comprises an essential basis for recognising and understanding individual experiences of post ABI and employment. The chapter will first review the limited existing research literature surrounding the phenomenon, indicating the importance of conducting research in this area, as very few South African studies have been carried out with regard to employment post ABI. The chapter will then proceed to discuss the importance of the factors that influence the phenomenon and that will be used in the research process. Thereafter, theoretical models that support this phenomenon will be described so as to understand the development of this phenomenon and the need for this research. The chapter will conclude by indicating the existing gaps in the literature surrounding this area of research and highlight the need for an understanding of this phenomenon to be developed and recognised in the South African workforce.

2.2 Representation of Chapter Two

The diagram below (Figure 2.1) is a depiction of the flow to be followed in this literature chapter in the discussion of the phenomenon of ABI in South Africa.

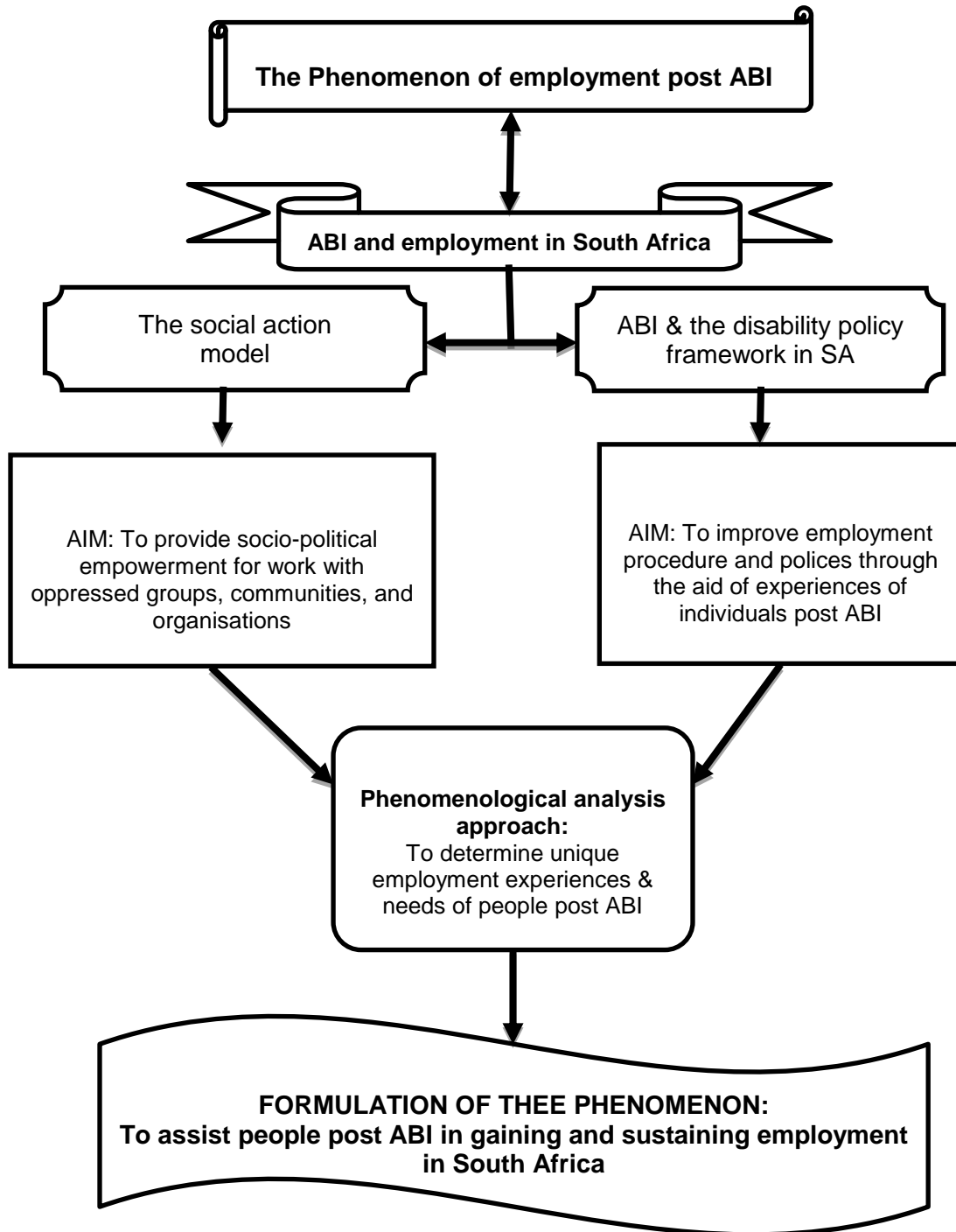


Figure 2.1: Structure of literature chapter

2.3 The definition of phenomenology

In order to discuss the phenomenon of ABI in the South Africa, the term phenomenon needs to be described. A phenomenon can be defined as “something such as an interesting fact or event that can be observed and studied and that typically is unusual or difficult to understand or explain fully” (Webber 2014). The essence of this study is research conducted on the lived experiences of persons with ABI, which is in keeping with the above definition. Thereafter a new phenomenon will emerge with regard to how the South African workplace can embrace this in their HR policies and procedures in a manner that would positively impact on the employability of persons with ABI.

Phenomenology is an approach “that involves detailed examination of the participant’s life and world... it attempts to explore personal experiences and is concerned with an individual’s personal perception or account of an event, as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself” (Smith & Osborn 2007:53). The understanding of phenomenology that forms the basis of the following research chapter 3 is influenced by the model of phenomenology formulated by the German philosopher, Edmund Husserl. Husserl aimed for a science of pure abstract thought that arrives at truth about the temporal essences of things. Kemerling (2011) explains:

“From our experience of the phenomena, Husserl supposed, we must somehow perceive the genuine, lasting character of what most truly persists through all” and furthermore: “although human consciousness remains supremely important as the unique source of our knowledge, our goal must always be to transcend the progressive limitations of ordinary experience in order to measure the timeless reality that underlies it” (Kemerling 2011). Husserl’s concept of phenomenology is important in this research study because there are limited studies and research findings available in this area of research in South Africa. Thus the use of the phenomenological model has been chosen to assist the researcher in obtaining knowledge and analysing findings based on the lived experiences of individuals post ABI in South Africa.

Various scholars have defined phenomenology. Thus:

1. “A phenomenological study is one that focused on descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience. One can employ a general

phenomenological perspective to elucidate the importance of using methods that capture people's experience of the world without conducting a phenomenological study that focuses on the essence of shared experience” (Patton 1990:71).

2. “Researchers search for essentials, invariant structure (or essence) or the central underlying meaning of the experience and emphasise the intentionality of consciousness where experiences contain both the outward appearance and inward consciousness based on memory, image and meaning” (Creswell 1998:52).
3. “Phenomenology is a tradition in German philosophy with a focus on the essence of lived experience. Those engaged in phenomenological research focus in-depth on the meaning of a particular aspect of experience, assuming that through dialogue and reflection the quintessential meaning of the experience will be reviewed. Language is viewed as the primary symbol system through which meaning is both constructed and conveyed” (Holstein & Gubrium (1994:262). This definition is an indication that the phenomenological approach is best suited for this study as “[t]he purposes of phenomenological inquiry are description, interpretation, and critical self-reflection into the ‘world as world’ ” (Van Manen 1990). This allows the researcher to understand the experiences and feelings of participants in the area of research rather than creating beliefs and assumptions regarding what contributes to the phenomenon under study. Central are the notions of intentionality and caring: the researcher inquires about the essence of lived experience (Rossman & Rallis 1998:72).
4. “Basically, phenomenology studies the structure of various types of experience ranging from perception, thought, memory, imagination, emotion, desire, and volition to bodily awareness, embodied action, and social activity, including linguistic activity” (Smith 2013). Smith’s definition of phenomenology is particularly useful in this study as it links with the current chapter’s main objective, which is to understand the experiences of people post ABI with regard to employment in South Africa and to ascertain views held by people with ABIs regarding the importance of employment post ABI.

As can be understood from these various definitions, phenomenology studies structures of conscious experience as experienced from the first-person point of view, along with relevant conditions of experience. The central structure of an experience is its intentionality and the way it is directed through its content or meaning toward a certain object in the world. We all

experience various types of experience, including perception, imagination, thought, emotion, desire, volition and action. Thus, the domain of phenomenology is the range of experiences in such interpretive-descriptive analyses of experience; we immediately observe that we are analysing familiar forms of consciousness, conscious experience of or about this or that. Intentionality is thus the salient structure of our experience and much of phenomenology proceeds as the study of different aspects of intentionality. Thus, we explore structures of the stream of consciousness, the enduring self, the embodied self and bodily action.

Furthermore, as we reflect on how these phenomena work, we turn to the analysis of relevant conditions that enable our experiences to occur as they do and to represent or intend as they do. Phenomenology then leads into analyses of conditions of the possibility of intentionality, conditions involving motor skills and habits, background social practices and often language, with its special place in human affairs (Rossman & Rallis 1998:85).

Phenomenology is commonly understood in either of two ways: as a disciplinary field in philosophy or as a movement in the history of philosophy. The discipline of phenomenology may be defined initially as the study of structures of experience or consciousness. Literally, phenomenology is the study of “phenomena”, that is, appearances of things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, and thus the meanings things have in our experience. Phenomenology studies conscious experience as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view (Patton 1990:71).

The historical movement of phenomenology is a philosophical tradition launched in the 20th century, the primary objective of which is the direct investigation and description of phenomena as consciously experienced, without theories about their causal explanation and as free as possible from unexamined preconceptions and presuppositions (Sayre 2001). A description of the differences between phenomenology and other concepts and processes of research will assist in making clear why the concept of phenomenology was adopted for this research process and how this study leads to the exploration of the new phenomenon of employment post ABI in South Africa. Phenomenology is often confused with grounded theory; however, “the difference is that phenomenology begins with a research question, and grounded theory is conducted to discover a research question for testing” (Sayre 2001). The reason why phenomenology is used in this research project rather than grounded theory is because “phenomenology describes the

meanings of lived experiences for multiple consumers about a concept or phenomenon, whereas the intent of grounded theory study is to generate or discover a theory” (Sayre 2001).

In contrast to an analytic philosophy, which substitutes simplified constructions of the immediately given in all of its complexity, phenomenology resists all transforming reinterpretations of the given, analysing it for what it is in itself and on its own terms (Sayre 2001). It can therefore be said that phenomenology in the context of the current study is research based on the pure experiences and understanding of individuals with regard to what had occurred in their lives during the process of trying to attain employment or sustain employment post ABI in the South African workplace.

Phenomenology can be said to share with linguistic analysis a respect for the distinctions between the phenomena reflected in the shades of meaning of ordinary language as a possible starting point for analysis. Phenomenology, however, is not the study of the ordinary (Holstein & Gubrium 1994:260). It can therefore be said that the root meaning of phenomenology is the study of *phenomena*, that is, literally, appearances as opposed to reality. This study focuses on the lived experiences of post ABI and employment in South Africa and therefore phenomenology is adopted as the appropriate theory.

This chapter will therefore proceed in the order set out in Figure 2.2 below. The explanations and definitions of phenomenology mentioned above will be described with regard to the Phenomenology of Acquired Brain Injury and Employment in South Africa by providing definitions of ABI, discussing the link between ABI and the workplace. Relevant models surrounding this area of research will be described and a plan on how the formulation of policies and procedures would positively impact on the phenomena will be described.

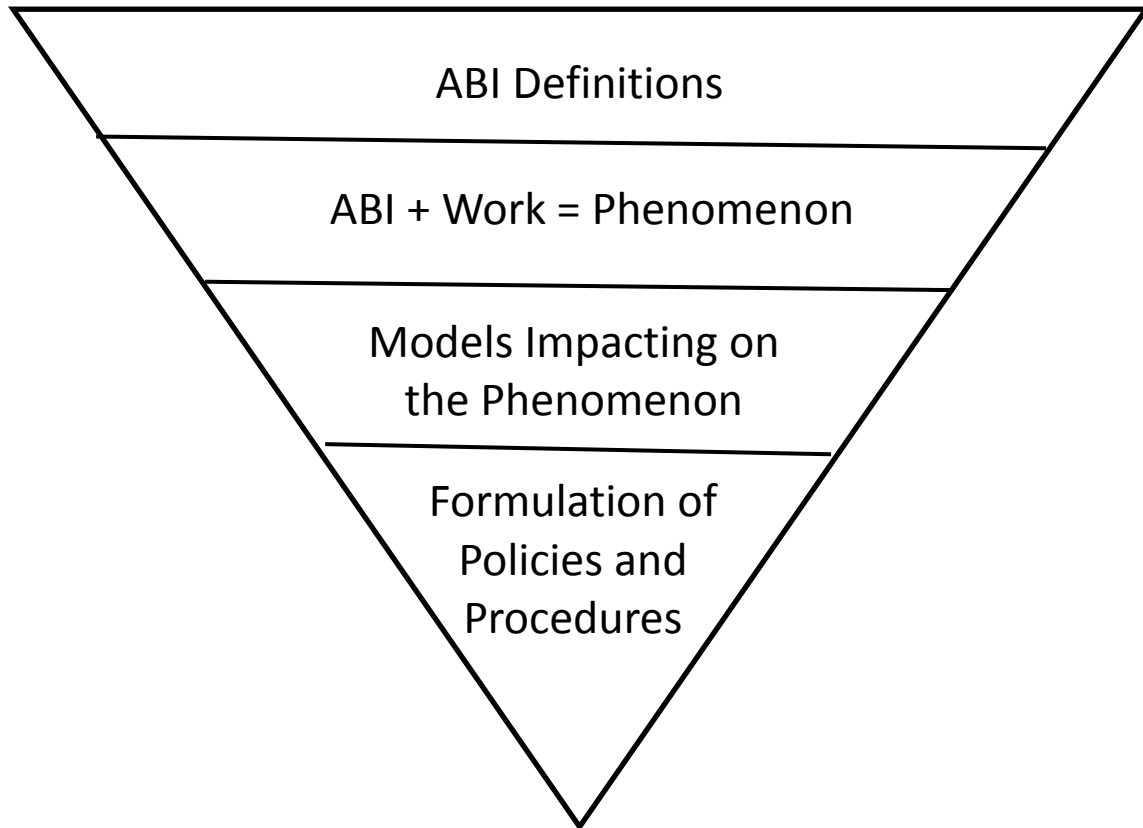


Figure 2.2: Order of discussion of literature chapter

2.4 Acquired Brain Injury as a disability

The position of the Brain Injury Network (2014) is that ABI includes TBIs, strokes, brain illness and any other kind of brain injury acquired after birth. However, ABI does not include what are classified as degenerative brain conditions, such as Alzheimer's disease or Parkinson's disease. The Brain Injury Association in the United Kingdom (UK), entitled Headway, states that “ABI covers all situations in which brain injury has occurred since birth, and includes TBI as well as tumour, stroke, haemorrhage, and encephalitis, to name a few” (Brain Injury network 2014).

2.5 The impact of change management on organisational culture and diversity post Acquired Brain Injury in the South African workplace

There can be no management without employees and organisations. For the effectiveness of the organisation, management must ensure that transfer of knowledge, skills and organisational

culture to the employees is taking place. Organisational effectiveness is highly dependent on the kind of culture, styles and attributes displayed by employees (Robbins 2001:386).

Employees are struggling to find a balance in life and to give their personal best in relation to organisational needs and goals. However, management must ensure that the critical support is provided to the employees which will enable them to find the balance in life while giving their best in the organisation. For organisational effectiveness which is characterized by a degree of social uniformity enabling organisations to work better, the management role is to ensure that responsibilities and accountabilities are clear and to inspire and communicate vision, encouraging decision making at all levels, giving greater responsibility to employees and fostering synergy and cohesion amongst and between management and employees.

Hence, Robbins (1998) contends that “we should be opposed to the manipulation of individuals for organisational purposes. At the same time, some degree of social uniformity is vital for the organisation’s success”. For organisational effectiveness which is characterised by a degree of social uniformity and which enables organisations to work better, the role of management is to ensure that responsibilities and accountabilities are clear, to inspire and communicate vision, encouraging decision making at all levels, giving greater responsibility to employees and fostering synergy and cohesion amongst management and employees. The above mentioned, indicates positive support for Robbins’ argument, in essence, this is to say “yes” to Robbins statement.

Different organisations have different processes of hiring or selecting new employees. Some organisations have exhaustive applications, screening processes and strings of assessments, induction, team building, among other procedures. However, what is common about these organisations is that they all introduce new members into their culture. The selection process, performance evaluation criteria, training and career development activities, and promotion procedures ensure that those appointed fit in with the culture, reward those who support, and penalise (even expel) those who challenge.

“Three forces play a particularly important part in sustaining a culture: selection practices, the actions of top management and socialisation methods” (Robbins, Odendaal & Roodt 2001:386).

Organisational culture has been defined in many ways by different authors and researchers. However, many would agree that “an organisational culture is a system of shared meaning and beliefs held by organisational members that determines, in large degree, how they act towards each other and outsiders” (Robbins, Odendaal & Roodt 2005:52).

The top management in an organisation is responsible for leading, giving direction and providing clear communication and motivation. In each organisation, management develops norms, expectations and responses that normally become part of the organisational culture. This culture guides how the employees in that organisation act and in what manner. Nothing communicates so powerfully to younger professionals within an organisation than having senior executives who share common qualities and who are formally or informally recognised for their outstanding performance (Belassi 2013:126).

The management strategy of innovative and supportive organisational culture create teams which perform more effectively because they can be more creative, better satisfied and more productive. This is unlike what occurred in the old bureaucratic organisation where teamwork was limited to what employees themselves could create with co-employees on the job and without the help of management. The world is changing as, for instance, can be seen in the explosion in information technology, and organisations are under pressure to adopt innovative strategies. Management is unable to bring individuals and teams into the information circle via computers and groupware without trusting and involving those individuals and teams. In real terms, how an organisation sees its culture unavoidably affects how the team sees itself. Thus, if the management cares about employees, the team will also do so (Belassi 2013:128).

Management must be mindful in ensuring that the organisational culture brings a degree of social uniformity in order to enable organisations to work better; they are to build on the three As, which are defined as follows:

- Awareness of own preferences and needs, as well as those of others
- Acknowledgement of personal responsibility in every thought and action before taking action
- Action.

The three A's allow management to become reliable in their own responses to all situations and challenges. This means that employees do not look to their managers for instructions and answers but to explain where they are going and why. In weak-culture organisations, there is no manipulation of individuals; employees expect their managers to create conditions for growing their talents, to provide motivation and clear purpose and to allow for innovation and the aligning of personal ambitions to those of the workplace and the goals of the organisation. The role of the management is to give clarity, instill commitment and translate information for employees. This approach should flow in the veins of the organisation as part of its culture. If the management commits to these responsibilities, it will be an indication that the organisation will be able to create an enabling environment which intends to develop synergistic conduct and habits, finally leading to clear accountability. According to Kandola and Fullerton (1998:24), "management commitment serves to motivate employees to work towards a common goal". Therefore, management commitment to diversity is possibly the most critical success factor in the organisation. From a management perspective, it has to do with harnessing the value which different viewpoints are able to offer with regard to challenges facing the organisation.

According to Robbins (1996:15), "workforce diversity means that organisations are becoming more heterogeneous in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity". However, employees do not set aside their cultural values and lifestyle preferences when they join organisations. The challenge of management is to make the organisation more accommodating to diverse groups of employees by addressing their different lifestyle preferences when they join the organisation. Therefore, the role of the management is to avoid treating everyone alike and to recognise differences, responding to these differences in a way which will ensure employee retention and greater productivity. If management manages diversity positively, this will increase creativity and innovation as well as improve decision making.

Different disciplines commonly provide different approaches to problem solving and a combination of approaches will offer more effective and innovative solutions to problems such as coping with diversity. Management should ensure that the organisation involves employees in matters dealing with diversity. Furthermore, they must ensure that diversity includes all members of the organisation and that no employees are disadvantaged through the management of diversity. Matters concerning organisation diversity should be communicated regularly. On-

going two-way communication will provide an indication that diversity management is inclusive of all parties and this will be an indication of the honesty of the management. The results will be an improvement in working relationships and performance within the organisation which will enable it to work better. Organisational culture is the identity of the organisation, which is made up of the underlying norms, values and beliefs which make the organisation what it is and define how the business operates. It is therefore quite central for organisations to have very strong cultures in order to increase profitability and revenue as well as the value of the shareholders.

The role of culture is evidently vital in the organization's wellbeing given the era which is characterized by globalization. The above suggests that organisations cannot operate without culture, as it gives direction or guidance towards the realization of the organizational goal.

The growth of globalisation has increased competition and organisational culture underpins and supports the organisation in creating and maintaining competitive advantage. Organisational culture then gives the organisation shared norms, values and beliefs which will promote team work in working towards the same goal, and in that way the culture will be solid. The role of culture is evidently vital in the organisation in an era characterised by globalisation. In order to maintain organisational culture and a diverse workforce, it is fundamental that an organisation monitors the performance appraisal of all employees

“When implemented well, organisational culture is one of the most important assets companies have to maintain a competitive edge” (Brewer 2011:28). Organisational culture is a vital element as organisations of the 21st century strive towards global competition and competitive edge.

Nowadays, almost every organisation embraces its organisational culture. Some make the mistake of fostering a pretence culture; having events like team-building, staff teas, lunch breaks and dinners may project the feeling of an organisational culture, but such elements are not good enough to facilitate organisational effectiveness. Promotion of organisational culture relies more on the socialisation processes. For organisations, socialisation ensures that an individual employee fits into the organisation. Therefore, most organisations achieve this fit by bringing the employees' behaviour and organisational values into congruence. Employees are expected to give up their individual behaviours and values for the common good. This may result in the heated argument.

The crux of the matter is that “we are intellectually and culturally opposed to the manipulation of individuals for the organisational benefit. At the same time, some degree of social uniformity is vital for the organisation’s success. “This implies that organisational culture could affect the success of organisations in trying to achieve its goals and objectives. While this may be true, the commitment of the people in the organisation is also essential to ensure the successful implementation of the organisational policies and plans. It is argued, that while shaping the appropriate values or culture that is important to the organisation, ensuring the necessary level of commitment among employees or managers are unequivocally important so as to ensure successful implementation of the organisational strategies and plans of actions” (Rashid et al 2002:709).

The less we rely on informal social controls, the more we must inevitably turn to formal financial controls and bureaucratic procedures. Many organisations, in aggregate, seem to depend more on formal controls. This is the reason why management often appears to be manipulative, oversteering, rigid and bureaucratic. The resistance to the socialisation process comes from the suspicion that this process is designed to manipulate people to adopt behaviours and values that are beneficial to their employers. Organisations that have a systematised socialisation process have been sustainable and prosperous. Hence, it is high time that organisations embrace the socialisation process if some degree of social uniformity is an inescapable necessity for organisational effectiveness. However, this has implications to managers who are the drivers of the organisations (Rashid et al 2002:709).

However, opposing views exist about management that is control-oriented. Studies on this matter have been conducted. Van Maanen (1978:35), cited in Taormina (2007:89), and stresses the importance of control over individual behaviours in organisation, implying that control may be more prevalent. To empirically evaluate these contrasting views, Taormina (2007) conducted a study to assess whether management/ leaders are more concerned with controlling employees’ behaviours for the benefit of the organisation than employee development. The study revealed that bureaucratic and strong culture organisations are characterised by leaders who support the use of control rather flexible behaviours. The study also confirmed that leadership or management that is control-oriented is important to organisations’ effectiveness; however,

managers need to use more flexible leader behaviour and provide more opportunities for advancement (Taormina, 2007).

The implementation of this view challenges the managers of organisation. Organisations seek out and appoint diverse individuals because of the strengths they bring to the workplace. Yet, these newly appointed employees come with different behaviours, norms and values. The major challenge is the reconciliation of the unique strengths, norms and values of the new employees. The question is how managers or leaders are to achieve this? The solution is neither mind control nor manipulation. It is not desirable to change the mind-set of the employees from the extremes of individualism to extremes of conformity.

Most organisations put considerable pressure on employees to conform. In some instances, companies spend large amount of money to put pressure on employees to change. When an organisation instills a strong organisational culture, it is effectively establishing a firm foundation of the objectives and values of the company. This allows the employees to achieve a sense of identity. Identification with common values enables the employee to reconcile personal sacrifices necessitated by their membership in the organisation. Socialisation acts as a fine tuning device; it helps employees to make sense out of the procedures and quantitative measures. Strong culture organisations have sustained themselves through a series of socialisation processes, selection practices and top management.

Globalisation is the underpinning of rapid change prompting a growing number of organisations to make changes to their organisational settings in order to survive and prosper in the turbulent business environment. In the 21st century, competitiveness is key. Merely maintaining existing operations is no longer an option for business survival. Instead, organisations undergo constant changes to reshape existing ideas and search for ways to be innovative and radically different in order to secure an advantage over their competitors (Carnall, 2003). Thus, it is inevitable that organisations formulate strategies to select individuals that will adapt to change and yet adhere to their organisational culture.

Thus, one can state that organisations have to utilise selection effectively when formulating policies and programs of diversity and sustaining organisational culture for the organisations. This is due to the fact that organisations undergo changes on a daily basis and these changes impact on the functioning of the organisation, its organisational culture and its employees.

Consistency across these steps may result in a strong organisational culture that can last the company over time.

2.6 Corporate social responsibility of persons post Acquired Brain Injury in the South African workplace

The HR profession is no longer regarded as a section which deals with aspects such as on that deals solely with the recruitment and placement of workers in an organisation, but it is regarded as a strategic business partner which has an important role in corporate social responsibility (CSR). This term refers to “the commitment by organisations to balance financial performance with contributions to the quality of life of their employees, the local community and society at large” (Shames et al 2007).

CSR activities concentrate on enhancing the social and economic status of countries, regions, and cities where the company is present. Although no annual CSR report is published, the company's web site, HR report and annual report highlight its core CSR programmes in the areas of environment, employees, charity and the local community (International Labour Organisation. 2010).

The HR department has a huge role to play in initiating CSR. The HR department must recognise that it is the heart of the organisation, as this is where policies and practices of the workplace are designed and accommodated, and that it has to drive the corporate social responsibility agenda for the success of the organisation. Thus it is HR in the South African context that has to develop the characteristics of CSR in order to enable the workplace to overcome the challenges which they face with regards to the employability of people post ABI. This will mean that the organisation has to align and articulate clearly its purpose, vision and values, which have to be consistent with responsible business practice, and also to articulate its plans for implementing policies and practices that would allow for people post ABI to be part of the employment of the organisation. The role of the HR department in organisations in this instance is to ensure that purpose, vision and values are intensely and continuously communicated throughout the organisation and beyond, so as to ensure that the assistance and accommodation of people with disabilities, such as those post ABI, are recognised and catered for by the organisation and they

impact positively on the organisation's external environment and development in terms of globalisation and international competition.

Once the purpose, vision and values are clearly defined HR is a strategic partner in the organisation and, as such, it can help drive the formulation of the strategy. Thus it can be said that the CRS of an organisation directly impacts on the strategic HR function, which is described in detail in Chapter Three, and the CRS of the organisation, which then influences diversity management in the organisation. With regard to diversity and equal opportunities, HR must ensure that all employees are treated fairly. They have to ensure that the recruitment policy will have the effect of developing and encouraging social cohesion so as to ensure that discrimination is limited and that there are employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, such as those post ABI in South Africa.

Developing a strategic approach to employing people with disabilities, under the banner of CSR, makes good business sense. People with disability have valuable skills to offer organisations and show commitment and loyalty that are unsurpassed. The employment of people with disabilities has the power to improve staff morale and customer loyalty and to enhance the reputation of an organisation (Australian Network on Disability 2014). Employing people with disabilities allows South African organisations to develop and manage diversity effectively, while abiding by legislation of the country that stipulates that companies must provide reasonable accommodation, employment opportunities and fair treatment of people with disabilities.

The idea of CSR is that business should be conducted in an ethical way and in the interest of all stakeholders. Therefore, it brings together the exclusive worlds of the business and society, society being the stakeholders such as government, environmental factors, investors, employees and shareholders and the implication is that it is the duty of the organisation to ensure the safety of all the stakeholders. The concept of CSR is closely linked with that of sustainable development, whereby it is not only financial concerns that should drive the decisions of a firm but also concerns regarding society and the environment. Thus South African organisations can use CSR as a benchmark when setting and aligning strategies that include people with disabilities in the workplace such as those who are post ABI.

2.7 The social action model theory

The social action model is a theory founded by Max Weber. Weber 2013 believed that social actions should be the focus of study in sociology. To Weber, a “social action” was an action carried out by an individual and to which the individual attached a meaning. Weber believed that bureaucratic organisations are the dominant institutions in society, consisting of individuals carrying out rational social actions designed to achieve the goals of bureaucracies (Trueman 2013). This theory is relevant to this research project as it links the individual’s needs through the experiences of people post ABI in gaining employment with the needs of bureaucratic organisations in developing policies and practices and strategically aligning these with the individual needs with the strategies of the organisation in terms of gaining and sustaining employment.

Weber views the whole development of modern societies in terms of a move towards rational social action. Thus, modern societies are undergoing the process of rationalisation. Weber 2013 argues that all human action is directed by meanings, “taking collaborative action at community level for a common purpose in order to influence life and make things better by bringing about personal and social change. It is based on a vision of empowerment, respect, equality, participation, consultation and people power” (Aontas 2014). Thus the employment of persons post ABI will assist in empowering them and provide them with a living that would allow their survival.

The social action perspective consists of examining how and why particular individuals and groups are defined as “deviant”, where deviance can be defined as “behaviour that does not follow the norms of a particular social group” (Trueman 2013). Social action theory gives researchers a better understanding of actions behind human behaviour, be they traditional, affective or rational (Trueman 2013).

Thus it will support the main aim of this study, which is to determine the experiences of people post ABI regarding employment in South Africa.

From this, there appear to be three key aspects to defining a human action as social. The action should be:

- Meaningful to the actor. Presumably things that are understandable or are of concern to the social actor, perhaps as a result of experiences, values, and interests (Webber 2013:24-25)
- Consider others. Other social actors are necessarily involved in order for an individual action to become social action, and they must be explicitly considered by the social actor (whether positively, negatively, or neutrally) (Webber 2013: 24-25).
- Oriented. There should be some direction or purpose in the action (Webber 2013: 24-25).

This model has its roots in the “war on poverty” strategy that arose out of dissatisfaction with structural inequities and the nonresponsive attitude of the “political apparatus of American society” (Seedat et al 1988:40). Another author sees this model “as a model that is more revolutionary, economic, political and socialistic in orientation” (Edwards 1998:3) where attempts are made to change the structures that bring about oppressive injustices, like the mass democratic movement whose target was to demolish the apartheid system and discrimination in the South African workplace. Therefore, in order to bring about empowerment of community members, this model seeks to change inequities like inadequate housing, overcrowding and political powerlessness (Brown 1978 and Reiff 1968, cited in Mann, 1978:40).

The social action model focuses on the use of natural support systems or the use of services of “indigenous” non-professionals within the workplace as these non-professionals emerge from the same social background and are therefore seen as being “fairly” sensitive to their employees’ needs. In this way it tries to activate the users of these services to adopt control of the programme and this results in their interacting with a stronger degree of therapeutic effectiveness (Seedat et al 1988:44). These authors also emphasise that Carl Rogers used similar terminology related to the concept of empowerment; however, these terminologies are maintained only through the medium of language that serves to pacify the oppressed but does not actually pose a physical threat to the regime.

2.8 Acquired Brain Injury and stigma in the workplace

In the workplace ABI is a form of disability of which there is little awareness. This lack of awareness results in a stigma being attached to it, such that persons post ABI feel that they will not be given the opportunity of employment or that they will be treated differently if they disclose that they have had an ABI. According to a study by Priory, “over 79% of the people we spoke to without a mental health condition worried that they wouldn’t be able to tell their employer if they did have one, highlighting the stigma around mental health in a work setting” (Priory 2015). These are people that do not have an ABI, but fear that, if they did have an ABI or mental illness, that disclosing this to an employer would definitely impact negatively on their job opportunity. This stigma is also seen as a drawback to the accommodation of people post ABI in the workplace because, if employees are not aware of a disability, it becomes very difficult for the organisation to make the necessary accommodation for the individuals. This would then negatively impact on the job performance of employees with ABI as they would not be able to complete tasks as expected of a “normal” person and the company would not be able to recognise the challenges that they face in order to assist them. This will then lead to a lack of employment sustainability of individuals post ABI in South Africa. In Priory’s study, one respondent with ABI stated “but people either decide that I’m ‘crazy’ or that I’m a bit nervous about something. They do not understand, or try to understand, the condition. I have had employers think that this means I can’t do my job, despite doing it fine when they didn’t know” (Priory 2015). This is a clear indication that there is a lack of research in the area of ABI in the workplace that has resulted in minimal awareness about this form of disability in the workplace.

Headway, the brain injury and stroke rehabilitation center, found that people who survived brain injury believe society will view them negatively because of their brain injury, and that this was associated with low confidence. It is important that the public, healthcare providers and policy-makers are educated about people’s experiences after their brain injury. Often brain injuries manifest only in certain situations and tasks and until that situation is actualised, there may be no tell-tail signs. So, based on Respondent 10’s premise that if they do well in the interview, he does not see a problem with placing them, it is disconcerting and raises questions around education and understanding of brain injuries in the workplace. This lack of understanding can further lead to poor accommodation and lack of overall acceptance, thereby exacerbating difference. This

results in a stigma in reluctance of persons with ABI to apply for employment as they are afraid out the outcome or the challenges that they would face in the workplace due to their ABI. It can therefore be said that there is a need to raise awareness and educate people. Education is associated with increased acceptance. With acceptance and understanding comes a decline in stereotyping and stigma. ABI sufferers should be allowed a space within which they can act independently while also imparting to colleagues the awareness of what the ABI involves so that they can help and assist them where necessary. Creating this type of accepting culture and environment helps the ABI sufferer to gain a sense of belonging.

In addition, according to the findings in Chapter Five, if ABI sufferers are perceived to be still recovering, they will most likely not be employed. This further exacerbates the stigma around brain disability as an undesirable trait that will result in discrimination and disappointment. For example Respondent 5 stated that he is aware of the stigma (“some people might be affected, it wouldn’t worry me”) if the company checks up on them. However, there is little chance that that a person with a brain injury will be employed when the company has the option of other potential candidates who do not have a brain injury. This is a subtle form of discrimination and perhaps illustrative of a lack of understanding regarding the capabilities of people who have been subject to brain injuries.

2.9 Challenges faced on returning to work post Acquired Brain Injury

Shames et al (2007:1393) state: “Given that TBI affect primarily young individuals in their most productive years, it is crucial that rehabilitation includes efforts to successfully return to work.” This highlights people’s need to be educated about the repercussions of brain injuries - especially because they thought that her fatigue was attributable to the lack of sleep, and that she had fully recovered by virtue of the fact that she was no longer relying on crutches. This perception is further evident by the act of her company “getting a bit twitchy about not having me around”. Shames et al (2007:1393) agree that persons who are post TBI should be considered for employment: “A significant proportion of TBI patients, including those who are severely injured are able to return to productive employment if sufficient and appropriate efforts are made.”

The awareness of the stigma associated with ABI will be further described in the subsequent section. It is essential for challenging issues to be managed at whatever point in the programme they occur; such issues may include language and communication, promotions and development, motivation, the design of the programme and job security. According to the international labour organisation 2010, many companies realise that people with disabilities are productive, reliable employees who bring benefits to the workplace. A diverse workforce, inclusive of people with disabilities, is seen by many as important. Some companies also engage in developing products and services for people with disabilities, their families and friends and, as companies engage with the communities in which they work, many pay specific attention to disabled persons. There is, however, a lack of identification of the different types of disparities in the workplace and there are minimal guidelines as to how companies can assist in the accommodation of different disabilities, such as the persons post ABI. There is a need to understand that different people will be more capable of performing particular duties than others and it is advisable to get them into positions where there is a good job–person fit. This will not only benefit the company but the individual too as they will not feel disempowered, especially given the fragile nature of their self-esteem to start with. Nevertheless, key to understanding the individual nature of ABIs is education. Thus there is a need for proper guidelines and policies, especially HR policies, in order adequately and appropriately to deal with people suffering from ABIs. In this way they can be given the structure and support needed for them to thrive and they can build their confidence and harness their strengths within a supportive and understanding environment.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented the first literature survey of this study. In attempting to understand the importance of this research, it is essential to delineate the context within which it was initiated; this chapter therefore focused on the phenomenon of ABI and employment in South Africa. An amalgamation of various concepts and prior research was established in order to formulate a conceptual framework that can be utilised in order to implement this developing phenomenon and its impacts on South Africa. It was established that an essential aspect of the study is recognising and understanding post ABI and employment through the experiences of individuals. The review of the limited existing literature regarding the phenomenon established the

importance of conducting research in this area, as there very few South African studies have been carried out with regard to employment post ABI. The chapter then described the importance of models and factors that influence the phenomenon and will be referred to during the research process. The incidence of ABI generally places a considerable burden on individuals in gaining both a means of independence and employment. South African legislation stipulates that there is provision for employment for people with disabilities; however, there is a lack of application as well as a lack of existing research and literature showing that reasonable accommodation is being made for these individuals in the workplace. The following chapter will raise awareness of the failure to establish policies, procedures and guidelines in order to facilitate the management of ABI integration and employment practices.

CHAPTER THREE

WORKPLACE DIVERSITY AND PEOPLE WHO SUFFER FROM ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY

3.1 Introduction

In the context of the rapid changes that took place in South Africa after apartheid, particularly politically and socially, many aspects of our society needed attention. In the drafting of a new constitution that secured the protection of human rights, and in particular employment rights and employment equity, an important aspect still remains largely unchanged, namely, the manner in which people with disabilities, particularly those who suffer from ABIs, are accommodated in the workplace. This chapter explores the lack of proper policy guidelines and procedures as well as the failure to implement what is already in existence. Examples are drawn from legal precedents and the global context, and the provisional evidence leads to the understanding that there are deficiencies in both the legal framework and policies regarding this particular issue in South Africa. The role of specific employment strategies, such as generic skill and learnership programmes needs to be further explored and developed for this specific category of disability. Continued research in this field is proposed, and in particular the development of a more comprehensive policy framework and of policy guidelines and procedures for organisations in South Africa to accommodate persons with ABI in the work place.

3.2 Acquired Brain Injury in the workplace in South Africa

Since the advent of the new constitution in South Africa Act No 6 of 1996, a new paradigm has evolved within the South African workplace regarding the management of people with disabilities because preparing employees to function successfully and to contribute to the achievement of organisational goals, both nationally and internationally is imperative. This paradigm forms part of the comprehension and alignment of the new constitutional requirements and the policies crafted to enable organisations to manage people effectively in the workplace by coordinating efforts of individuals inside and outside the organisation. There has been extended

debate regarding the legislation related to disabilities and its impact on employment in the South African labour market (Hardy 2010:30).

As in other developing countries, it is estimated that the prevalence of ABI in South Africa is higher than the worldwide average and accounts for more than a third of all deaths resulting from injuries (Brown 2006:124). Harrison and Hancock (2010:1) note that “the incidence rate of Traumatic Brain Injury in South Africa has been estimated at 1.5 to 3.5 times that of the estimated global rate”. Of those who survive, many live with significant impairment of brain function. The major theme of this chapter relates to the specific area of concern, namely, ABI, which is one element of disabilities, with particular focus on persons suffering from TBI and strokes.

Furthermore, the incidence of neurotrauma is high amongst young people in particular, which places a considerable burden on society and, in turn, affects these young people’s ability to become independent through attaining employment (Hardy 2010:2). Traditional perceptions of disabilities view these individuals as paraplegic or their disabilities as limited to physical characteristics; however, these are not the indicators of a person with ABI as a disability. In recent years, investigators have broadened the scope of research to identify the needs of individuals at various stages following ABI. However, a significant gap in the literature that has yet to be addressed relates to the employment of these individuals following ABI and the manner in which diversity in the workplace affects these individuals. Thus it follows that companies and employees lack awareness and education about this type of disability in the workplace, resulting in a decline of equality and diversity in South African organisations.

There are two distinct categories of ABI sufferers, namely, those with long established brain injury, who have not worked for many years, and those who have relatively recently suffered ABI (Japp 2005:59). Organisations do not have the necessary HR policies and procedures to assist affected individuals. The focus of this chapter is to analyse the existing provisions and actions within organisations that provide evidence of the fact that individuals who have been affected by ABI are not gaining employment in sufficiently high numbers, both globally and in South Africa. With the publications that were reviewed, no conclusive information regarding persons with brain-injuries could be established. The only brain-injury focused study found was

that of Nell and Ormond-Brown (1991), whose data were collected before 1994 with the data collection being limited to Johannesburg. In another South African study, Schneider et al (1999:4) found that, following ABI, individuals “experience difficulties such as access to social welfare services, education, transport and most of all employment. This chapter will also centre on the importance of diversity management in the workplace and the impact that it has on accommodating ABI suffers in the workplace. Finally, in the conclusion, possible solutions and recommendations will be described.

3.3 Global trends

“Globalization can...be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (Hoogvelt:120). There is an evident link between the nation state and globalisation as the latter deals with social issues, as mentioned above, and the development of countries is based on local, political and economic growth. Belcourt and Mcbey (2010) note that “... business is becoming increasingly global in its scope and operations, and work and job analysis procedures help organisational HR planners compare and contrast the degree of similarity and difference between geographically diverse operation units”

Globalisation plays a key role in the creation of training and development programmes in organisations, as HR needs to set up programmes that will achieve a diverse and competent workforce at a global level. South Africa has advanced strategically in the workplace due to the transformation of labour processes and legislation. The influence of the new system of labour process has created a dramatic shift to the form of the management of work in South Africa. The statement by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Article 23 is that everyone has the right to work, to a free choice of employment and favourable conditions of work, as well as the right to protection against unemployment (UNHR 2008). However, in the current phase of globalisation, labour markets have been evolving in the direction of greater economic insecurity and greater levels of inequality, adversely affecting the opportunity of people to live a life of decent work and satisfactory employment.

Person who have suffered brain injury and seek to return to work are affected by the situation in labour markets also. Such as a division of disability in South Africa consists of individuals with ABI, which can be defined as “all types of traumatic brain injuries and also brain injuries caused after birth by cerebral vascular accidents commonly known as stroke, and loss of oxygen to the brain hypoxic brain injury (Vandiver 2003:445). The term ABI is more suitable than TBI (described in 1.3) for this study as it seeks to understand the challenges and success faced by individuals returning to the workplace as it covers TBI, strokes and brain injury caused through child birth. Thus it can be said that this study focuses on all types of mild ABI of individuals that are capable of returning to the workplace. This study therefore aims at understanding the experiences of individuals with mild ABI returning to the South African workplace.

Most samples show about a 30 percent return to employment although a 2003 study by Kreutzer and his colleagues found that 42 percent were employed and 34 percent were stably employed three years after their injury date (Kreutzer et al 2003:128-138). “[Brain injury] affects spouses who become caregivers; and it affects work colleagues and companies who have to either adapt to the brain-injured or find and train a new staff member” (Smallhorne 2011:1). South African organisations need to provide more employment opportunities, but additionally need to actively promote and seek to employ post-ABI employees so that they can enjoy sustainable employment.

3.4 Problems associated with gaining and sustaining employment in South Africa

The current business atmosphere requires organisations to become accustomed to progressively more complex technological, political, economic and legal frameworks. Employers are required to adhere to stringent legal stipulations that pertain to the workplace, such as the Employment Equity Act of South Africa (EEA) and legislation that promotes equality and reduces discrimination in the workplace. Regardless of efforts to make certain that employment associations remain sound and that the fit between the parties adds significance to the organisation’s pursuit for achievement, the employment relationship between the employee and the employer will inevitably have an impact on the management of people with ABI in the workplace. Examples of organisations like this in South Africa are Headway and the I Can! Disability. Thus, management needs to make sure that employees are well aware of the

challenges and problems that people with this specific disability are faced with, so that they are able to accommodate and manage them affectively. Organisations need to be made aware that reasonable accommodation for people with ABI differs from that of other disabilities in the workplace. This is due to the specific challenges with which people with ABI are faced.

Problems that need to be considered when accommodating individuals with ABI are difficulties with physical changes and affected mental abilities, such as challenges with problem solving and memory, which can be managed through mentoring by supervisors in the workplace (Vandiver et al 2003:446). One of the major aspects that need to be taken into consideration during the employment of individuals with ABI is behaviour and social skills as these can delay the success of post-acute treatment (Vandiver et al 2003:446). These issues must be addressed in order to promote and ensure employability; this can be achieved with team building workshops in the organisation. Addressing these challenges with occupational and speech language therapy sessions can promote greater ease of transition into the work place (Vandiver et al 2003:446). Research points to the importance of addressing deficits using a supportive rehabilitation team approach which focuses on assessing the wide range of physical, cognitive and functional variables (Vandiver et al 2003:445). Returning to work is an important aspect of brain injury recovery and rehabilitation. The ability to achieve successful employment not only leads to financial stability and independence, it also provides a sense of purpose, well-being and social status. For individuals lacking the necessary work skills, supportive therapies and interventions by trained professionals can help survivors reach employment goals.

Therapists can help individuals with brain injuries match their skills with meaningful jobs and help them acquire new skills or regain abilities. Assistance is often necessary in order to return to work and attain employment goals. During the management of ABI in the workplace, it is vital that the organisation makes other employees within the organisation aware of this form of disability so that co-workers are conscious of how they should accommodate these individuals. This allows the organisation to implement “organisational fit” for employees with ABI and other employees to understand the difficulties of the people in their workforce, which will result in a developed and diverse workforce. This is my own view. Organisational fit is derived from the concept of organisational culture. Organisational culture has been defined in many ways by different authors and researchers. However, it would generally be agreed that “an organisational

culture is a system of shared meaning and beliefs held by organisational members that determines, in large degree, how they act towards each other and outsiders” (Robbins 2005:52).

Organisational culture is also defined as the identity of the organisation, the underlying norms, values and beliefs which make the organisation what it is and define how the business operates. It is therefore quite central for organisations to have very strong cultures in order to increase profitability, revenue, as well as the value of the shareholders.

Organisational culture can either be weak or strong and the fundamental strength of the organisational culture is determined by how strong and how weak it is. Weak culture is organisational culture in which employees do not subscribe to shared norms, values and beliefs. If they find it difficult to identify with the organisation’s strategic intent, each section in the organisation will uphold different beliefs that are not in line with the strategic goals of the organisation. A weak culture may encourage individual thought and contributions and it could be valuable in a company that requires growing through innovation. By contrast, a strong organisational culture could be characterised by the majority of employees holding the same norms, values and beliefs; they follow the basic procedures and rules of the organisation and these need not be announced by the organisation. New entrants are easily indoctrinated into the same culture. Robins (1996) notes: “One specific result of a strong culture should be lower employee turnover. A strong culture demonstrates high agreement among members about what the organization stands for. Such unanimity of purpose builds cohesiveness, loyalty and organizational commitment.” Furthermore: “A strong culture will have a great influence on the behaviour of its members because the high degree of sharedness and intensity creates an internal climate of high behavioural control. For instance Seattle-based Nordstrom has developed one of the strongest service cultures in the retailing industry. Nordstrom employees know in no uncertain terms what is expected of them and these expectations go a long way in shaping their behaviour” (Robbins 2005:576).

3.4.1 Equality in the work place: Discrimination and affirmative action

The concepts of discrimination and affirmative action (AA) will be used to support the description of how the phenomenon of ABI has been managed. This section will describe the objectives and aims of AA and often the concepts of discrimination that impact on the management of ABI in the workplace. This will be followed by a description of what the law

prescribes with regards to discrimination and AA in respect to disability in the workplace and aspects that pertain to the employability of people with ABI.

To analyse and describe equality in the workplace in terms of discrimination and AA without reference to the Constitution of South Africa would be problematic. This is because the Constitution offers a foundation, guidelines and parameters for the establishment and maintenance of human rights in South Africa. It is the Constitution that provides measures that foster protection and the advancement of people who have been disadvantaged by unfair discrimination in South Africa (Dupper & Garbers 2019:16).

3.4.2 Equality in the workplace in relation to the stipulations of the constitution

Section 9 of the Constitution provides the basis for employment equality by asserting that:

- Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefits of the law.
- Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination, may be invoked.

Section 9(3) of the Constitution further declares: “The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.”

This section plays a pivotal role in South African organisations and links legislation to the management of diversity in the workplace which entails the management of an organisation’s workforce diversity in a manner that will result in the eradication of discrimination against any form of disability and diversity, including disabilities like ABI. Govender (1998:338) asserts that to understand the relationship between the right not to be unfairly discriminated against and the right to equality before the law is central to the appreciation of the right to equality. It is also vital to point out that it is impossible to talk about equality without mentioning the concept of discrimination. The Constitution sets an equitable foundation for the new South Africa based on the values of human dignity, achievement of equality, the promotion of human rights and

freedoms, non-racism and non-sexism (McGregor 2007:6). Organisations employing persons with ABI should understand that they are not only implementing the Constitution in terms of human rights, but are also allowing individuals the right to human dignity, as returning to work improves the recovery process of a person with ABI.

3.4.3 The Employment Equity Act

McGregor (2007:5) argues that when the final Constitution was completed, it paved the way for a transition to democracy in that it included equality as a value and a substantive human right, thus confirming a formal approach to equality and outlawing unfair discrimination. The South African workplace is protected by the EEA and, while this act does not on its own prohibit discrimination, unfair discrimination is prohibited (Dupper & Garbers 2009:38-45). One reason for the concern about organisations' ability to manage diversity is the suspicion that women and minorities, such as individuals with ABI, are not growing in their in their careers to a degree commensurate with their own talents (Callan 2008:4). It is essential that organisations evaluate and monitor the progress of women and minorities so as to ensure that they are given equal opportunity and not discriminated against, when it comes to aspects such as promotion, for example. Callan (2008:4) asks: "If women and minorities have faced substantial obstacles in reaching the upper echelons of their organization in the past, how can organisations be expected to manage an increasingly diverse group of employees in the future." This indicates that there is an essential necessity for organisations to implement HR strategies and for government to implement policies that will assist all employees in attaining a diverse and positive environment. According to Cho (2011:22), "[t]he idea of workplace diversity is nothing new, but its progress in the engineering and construction world is well, diverse". However, while diversity in the workplace is not a new diversity should be seen as including all types of disabilities, such as ABI, in relation to managing diversity and promoting equality in the South African workplace.

Section 6(1) of the EEA declares: "[N]o person may unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against an employee, in any employment policy or practice, on one or more grounds including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth." Having thus highlighted what is regarded as grounds for unfair discrimination, it is also necessary to define and describe the forms of unfair discrimination and

illustrate them by using appropriate examples. Dupper & Garbers (2009:46) argue that, in understanding unfair discrimination, it is important to look at the differences between differentiation, discrimination and unfair discrimination. Moreover, an understanding of these terms is increased by differentiating between direct and indirect discrimination.

According to Dupper & Garbers (2009:46) differentiation in the workplace entails the employer treating employees or applicants differently by excluding certain groups, such as those with different disabilities; this is done by having policies that exclude certain employees. They provide the example of an employee who may apply for a position and be excluded, even in cases where he or she meets the minimum criteria. Differentiation may be regarded as a precondition for discrimination, which has negative intentions (Dupper & Garbers 2009:46).

It is also possible to allege discrimination on the grounds that are not listed under employment equity as the list in the EEA is not exhaustive (Basson 2009:86). An example of this is the case of *IMATU and Another v City of Cape Town* (2005:11) in which the court was prepared to recognise unlisted grounds for discrimination, namely diabetes, even though diabetes could be controlled through medication. The case of *Hoffman v SAA Airways* (2000:21) is also a good example. Hoffman was not offered a job by SAA because of his HIV status. The Constitutional Court ruled in favour of Hoffman, recognizing that HIV status is listed on the EEA although it is not listed in the Constitution. When discrimination is based on unlisted grounds, this is referred to as the *Harksen test* and the applicant must prove to the court that discrimination and unfairness prevailed (Dupper & Garbers 2019:48).

These cases examine the discrimination against employees due to a medical condition. However, not many disputes have been taken to court with regards to ABI as most individuals do not pass the recruitment phase. However, discrimination against this group can be seen as similar and it is due to the inaccurate management of this disability type in the workplace.

The EEA was put in place in South Africa to redress past discrimination and injustices. The act uses AA as an instrument to correct the injustices that were part of the past dispensation. The United States of America (US) was one of the first proponents of AA. However, the distinction between that country and South Africa is that, in the US, black people were a minority, while it was minority, the whites, who were the perpetrators of discrimination in South Africa. The South African Constitution and the EEA both ensure that there is equality in the workplace and prohibit

direct and indirect discrimination. Direct discrimination is easy to recognise because here the differentiation between the employees is clear. In *Teamsters v United States* (1977:431), the US Supreme Court described direct discrimination as ‘disparate treatment’

Undoubtedly disparate treatment is the obvious evil (Dupper & Garbers 2009:46). The employer simply treats some people less favourably than others because of their race, colour, religion, sex, disability or national origin. Another example may be denying contract workers benefits whereas fulltime employees are fully covered in terms of benefits like medical aid and pension. Higginbotham (2000:188) argues that, during apartheid, the legal system and the judiciary was operating in unison to oppress blacks in society; this was especially evident in the workplace and other structures of society, where inequality was regarded as the norm and employers used preferential treatment for white people. This also meant that black people were excluded in the workplace, educational institutions and in broader society. By contrast, indirect discrimination may be more difficult to identify because the policies may be neutral and may seem accommodative to all (Basson 2009:86).

Thus AA was needed as a policy to diminish racial inequality, especially in the workplace. This was also to ensure diversity in the workplace, to promote a strong economy (Higginbotham 2000:187). “Affirmative Action (AA) can be defined as policies and programmes seeking to provide economic and educational benefits to persons based upon their membership in a racial or gender group that has been discriminated by law” (Higginbotham 2000:187). Nevertheless, a politicised judiciary can lead to the misinterpretation and reinterpretation of AA policies (Higginbotham 2000:187). It can therefore be said that, in South Africa, AA policies have been likened to reverse racism by opposition political parties. This can deter the implementation of such policies. The ruling party, therefore, needs legislative and governmental commitment. With these constitutional checks and balances in place to support the legislature, the implementation of AA is less likely to be deterred.

While AA has achieved a certain measures of success, what is evident is the elevation of middle class people, leaving the majority of poor and powerless people in poverty. Moreover, while AA has effectively started reducing inequalities in the workplace, there is still much to be done with respect to disabilities such as ABI. “This approach goes beyond ‘meeting the numbers’ of affirmative action by attempting to encourage awareness and respect for diversity in the

workplace” (Callan 2008:342). This approach is imperative as it allows the policy of AA and diversity to be put in to practice. Though “various types of educational and training activities , the valuing-difference approach attempts to improve interpersonal relationships in a diverse organization by achieving goals of equality and improved working relationships” (Callan 2008:342). This assists overcoming barriers of women and minorities, such as ABI individuals, in an organisation as it increases communication among employees and managers.

Section 6 of the EEA protects an employee against unfair discrimination and defines an employee as any person other than an independent contractor who:

- Works for another person or for the State and who receives, or is entitled to receive, any remuneration
- In any manner assists in carrying on or conducting the business of an employer (Section 1 of the EEA).

Dupper & Garbers (2009:50), states that some of the inclusions of the EEA are for the protection of the applicant of a position. This is where the person applying for employment is protected against unfair discrimination regarding who gets appointed, while the employee is protected against discriminatory policies and practices of an employer. This protection of the prospective applicant also ensures that applicants are not unfairly discriminated against in the workplace. This can be difficult to uphold as many employers put a disclaimer in all adverts that, if applicants are not contacted within a certain period, they must assume that their applications were not successful. This can result in applicants not having recourse, particularly when it comes to people with disabilities, such as ABI.

3.5 Diversity and discrimination in the workplace

Discrimination is still deep and widespread in the workplace. There is an increase in black middle class employees, but at the same time more and more people are being discriminated against and cannot access the workplace. Legislation needs to support and protect these employees. Such legislation includes the Labour Relations Act, the EEA and AA policies. The South African community needs to learn from the lessons learned by the US and other countries in ensuring that discrimination is diminished in all forms and against all minority groups.

Diversity in the workplace can be managed effectively by implementing these existing laws and utilising current HRM strategies in the workplace.

Workforce diversity has become a key management strategy for many organisations because it increases the rate and effectiveness of productivity (Kleynhans 2006:21). According to Robbins (1996:15), “workforce diversity means that organisations are becoming more heterogeneous in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity.” However, employees do not set aside their cultural values and lifestyles preferences when they join the organisations. The challenge of the management is to make the organisations more accommodating to diverse groups of employees by addressing their different lifestyle preferences when they join the organisations. Therefore, the role of the management is to run away from treating everyone alike but recognise differences and thereafter responds to the differences in the way which will ensure employee retention and greater productivity. If management positively managed diversity, this will increase creativity and innovation as well as improvement on decision making.

It is common that different disciplines tend to provide different approaches to problem solving, therefore, a combination of approaches will offer more effective and innovative solutions to problems. Management should ensure that organisation involve employees in matters dealing with diversity. Furthermore, they must ensure that diversity includes all members of the organisation and that no employees are set to lose from the management of diversity. Matters concerning organisation diversity should be communicated regularly. The on-going two-way communication will provide an indication that diversity management is inclusive of all parties and this will be an indication of the honesty by the management. The results will be the improvement of working relationship and performance within the organisations which will enable them to work better.

A diverse workforce enables the organisation to gain a competitive advantage by enabling it to meet the needs of the customers and clientele, effectively progressing in terms of globalisation. Managing workforce diversity includes the formation of an open, encouraging and responsive organisation, where diversity is recognised and valued. “Workforce diversity encourages employers to manage and retain workers who differ, but still need to work together to achieve a common goal” (Kleynhans 2006:21). A workforce can be said to be diverse if it accepts the different cultures, norms and values of the people who are employed and also reasonably

accommodates those who have special needs. People with disabilities such as ABI still experience barriers and challenges in obtaining employment because managers simply focus on the disability of an individual rather than focusing on methods of strengthening and assisting all the capabilities of the employee.

3.6 The attitudes of employers towards people with disabilities

Employers are apprehensive that employing people with disabilities will incur additional costs within the organisation. Employers generate jobs for disabled people rather than thinking more broadly in terms of accommodating people who are talented and qualified for the job (Peter 1989:77). Regardless of the legislation that has been passed by the government, employees with disabilities, such as ABI, are still facing challenges in gaining employment and in adapting to the working environment. This is due to the fact that managers in South Africa have a lack of understanding of the different types of disabilities that exist and that each type of disability has to be treated differently according to the individual's needs. This has led to unaccommodating and inaccessible working environments for people with disabilities and a general lack of employment of these individuals.

3.7 The experiences of South African organisations in implementing effective employment strategies for people with Acquired Brain Injuries

One of the ways in which South African organisations can assist people with ABI is through the notion of 'reasonable accommodation' because a person with a 'moderate' ABI may need assistance with a return to work as part of a facilitated programme. Ghaemi (2006:22) describes how such a programme would operate. "Typically [the sufferer] would have some post-acute rehabilitation, either in-patient or on an intensive out-patient basis at a clinic near home"; this may be done in tandem with taking learnership courses at a college, which gets the person back into a learning mode and lets them take chances without the dishonour or economic consequences of job failure. At some point, Ghaemi notes, a vocational assessment will be done to determine what the person is qualified to do. If it is believed he can return to the previously

held position with support, it is common to see a 'job coach' hired to make this happen (Ghaemi 2006:22). The assessment that is carried out by professionals in the field of assessing people following ABI, such as occupational therapists and neuropsychologists, would, according to Ghaemi, be sufficient and accurate enough to prove that the individual would be proficient to return to the workplace; the assessment by the professional would also include a report for the organisation, including ways for the specific individual to overcome challenges in the workplace and methods that the organisation could use to assist the individual at work in order to improve efficiency and accuracy, such as the job coaching mentioned above. It can therefore be said that this is much more involved than merely having a supervisor or co-worker look in on the person from time to time. The job coach is involved on a daily basis with the injured worker, getting him readjusted to the workplace, and troubleshooting problems for him until he grows comfortable.

Another approach to assisting disabled employees is to establish sound HRs practices and policies. This aspect can be identified as lacking in the case of people with ABI, as there are no existing studies of people with TBI and stroke, and a subsequent lack of theory and research literature. Such studies would need to utilise the experiences of respondents as well as findings from interviews in order to build a knowledge base in this key area. Employment is the right of citizens and a social determinant of health, but employment rates remain low for persons with disabilities.

Due to the fact that ABI accounts for only a fraction of the disabilities in South Africa, it is vital to draw on studies that were conducted on a wider basis. A study was carried out by Chau in 2001, aimed at examining the principles and practices guiding work integration within the fields of intellectual disability, brain injury and mental illness and at identifying best practices to support transitions to employment. The study used an occupational perspective to analyse the current literature (Chau 2001:164). The findings reveal that the needs and benefits of work for disabled people are recognised across disability groups but that philosophical perspectives guiding work integration differ. This suggests that all types of disabilities have to be viewed individually in the workplace and not as simply representing the concept of "disability". In order for organisations to manage diversity effectively and to implement current legislation as well as to minimise discrimination in the workplace, they need to become aware of the fact that each

type of disability has to be treated according to its own needs. This can be achieved through the structuring of HR policies and procedures in the organisations. Thus it may be argued that processes within HR in an organisation that are able to be tailor-made to accommodate these different types of disabilities are strategic human resource management (SHRM), reasonable accommodation, management of workplace diversity and training and development within the organisation.

Chau's study (2001:164) emphasises work as important in the recovery of the mentally disabled patient. Thus: "In the area of mental illness, recovery is seen as a process within which work plays an important role, and work is viewed as a planned outcome that is part of the developmental process, and in the field of brain injury, outcomes of employability and employment are emphasized." A common theme across the three disability groups is that in order to facilitate work integration, the person, the job and the work environment are important factors in need of examination. This is where organisations can assist these individuals within their reasonable accommodation strategies, which will be cost-effective and would assist the organisation in attaining workplace diversity. Chau's (2001) study provides evidence of the effectiveness of the supported employment model across these three populations; a framework for guiding the development of further research and for promoting changes to support work integration is presented in the study. Chau's framework indicates that there is a need for further research and development in the area of disabilities in the workplace and the employment of people with different types of disabilities in the workplace, such as those individuals post ABI who are capable and willing to return to the workplace.

Another framework for the analysis of disability is critical disability theory (CDT), which focuses on disability and challenges the assumptions which shape society. "CDT is derived from the critical social theory first outlined by Max Horkheimer which has today become a diverse family of critical theories which offer various approaches to social inquiry" (Shallice 2002:943). This theory is relevant to this study as it depicts the importance of the employment of people with disabilities and the impact that it has in society. This theory also indicates that even though there is a need for employment of these individuals, such as those suffering from ABI, there would be challenges that would have to be managed by the organisation (Shallice 2002:943).

The components of CDT are often approached within an interdisciplinary disability studies framework, but by grounding CDT within the critical theory tradition, it is possible to adopt philosophical approaches which are not necessarily encompassed within the idea of disability studies (Hosking 2006:2). This theory is significant to understanding the employability of persons from an ABI background as it provides literature and an understanding of disabilities in the workplace and allows the researcher to clearly distinguish the need for assisting ABIs in employment, although they make up only a fraction of disabilities.

3.8 The impact of training and development on return to the workplace following Acquired Brain Injury

A major challenge for people who have ABI is gaining employment that result in a sense of purpose and adds value to their recovery process. As Japp (2005:48) states: “For many of us, our social life revolves around our job, our friends are our work colleagues and often we describe ourselves by what job we do.” Thus, “[t]he ultimate aim of most brain-injured clients is to return to employment, preferably to their previous job” (Japp, 2005:62). Employment within organisations may be problematic, however. McCalla and Conrad (2007:3) note that “challenges that need to be considered when accommodating individuals with ABI are difficulties with physical changes and affected thinking abilities, such as challenges with problem solving and memory, which can be managed by mentoring by supervisors in the workplace.”

A major aspect of the implementation of HR policies and practices in organisations stems from the training and development strategies within the actual company. Training and development can be defined as “[t]he practice of providing training, workshops, coaching, mentoring, or other learning opportunities to employees to inspire, challenge, and motivate them to perform the functions of their position to the best of their ability” (US Department and Human Services 2014). Companies can utilise the training and development strategies that are already in place within the organisation to accommodate and develop employees with ABI. In addition, organisations need to recognise that there are different types of disabilities that exist in the workplace and that they need to be accommodated for differently.

Thus, the notion of diversity in the organization is important. According to Brewer (2011), “[d]iversity is an understanding and value of the unique ways in which people differ from one another” (Brewer 2011:28). Most organisations have already implemented diversity as part of their HR functions and strategies. If diversity has not been established as part of the organisational culture, these policies need to be amended according to the needs of the organisation, as all organisations differ from each other and, therefore, their requirements for diversity will differ. Companies can use this flexibility to their advantage to assist people with disabilities and specifically those with ABI when integrating them into the South African workplace.

One of the components of HRM that can be used to monitor the performance of individuals with ABI employed in an organisation is performance appraisals. “Performance appraisal can be defined as the process through which an organisation gets information on how well an employee is doing his or her job” (Hollenbeck et al 2010:351). This concept is essential in HR functions to determine if an employee is competent and carrying out their duties correctly; the process of job analysis assists HR divisions in obtaining results in this regard. In order to maintain organisational culture and a diverse workforce, it is fundamental that an organisation monitors the performance appraisal of all employees and gains (Hollenbeck et al 2010:351). Feedback on the levels of job satisfaction of employees and reasons as to why job satisfaction is higher among one group compared to another can be seen as a primary key to identify this ‘glass ceiling’ so that policies and programmes can be implemented or altered in order to rectify this problem before major harm is caused to the growth of the organisation, employees and achieving organisational goals.

The organisation needs to identify the exact challenges and strengths of individuals with ABI that are placed within it. This allows the organisation to train and develop these individuals so that they can perform their jobs with accuracy and efficiency. This would not require extra cost for the organisation as performance appraisals have to be carried out for all employees and followed by training and development in areas with challenges. Therefore it can be said that the organisation would be utilising its current HR strategies of training and development and tailoring it so as to accommodate people with ABIs in the workplace.

Performance management is seen as the process through which managers ensure that employees' activities and outputs are congruent with organisational goals. There are three significant stages of a performance management appraisal and each can be related to assisting people with ABI in the workplace. First, "a performance management system specifies which aspects of performance are relevant to the organisation, primarily through job analysis that is carried out by the Human Resource function in an organisation" (Hollenbeck et al 2010:351). This would function as a technique that organisations can use in the early stages of employment of people with ABIs as it would assist in identifying early challenges that may exist so that the organisation can develop methods to reduce these challenges via training and development to improve efficiency and productivity for both the organisation and the employee. The second stage is the measurement of "aspects of performance through performance appraisal, which is only one method for managing employee performance" (Hollenbeck et al 2010:351). This stage would allow management to distinguish if employees post ABI are efficient in their jobs or are falling behind. The last stage of performance appraisal is the provision of "feedback to employees through performance feedback sessions so they can adjust their performance to the organization's goals" (Hollenbeck et al 2010:351). During this stage, managers, supervisors and employees provide comments on individual employees and how they have carried out their jobs.

What follows performance appraisal is appropriate training and development. Training means to "bring to desired standard of performance or behaviour by instruction and practice" (Cowling & Lundy 1996). Organisations are able to strengthen employees with ABI by providing the opportunity of training so that they meet the standard expected by the workplace and challenges in the workplace are minimised. Development means to "make or become bigger or fuller or more elaborate or systematic, bring or come to achieve or visible state or to maturity" (Cowling & Lundy 1996).

These concepts form part of strategic HR planning and are strongly influenced by job analysis. Hollenbeck et al (2010:87) emphasises job related skills in his definition of training as "a planned effort to facilitate the learning of job related knowledge, skills and behaviour of employees". Development, on the other hand, entails "acquiring knowledge, skills and behaviour that improve employees' ability to meet the challenges of a variety of existing jobs and ones that do not exist as yet" (Hollenbeck et al 2010:87). This aspect of HR functions is related to the

structure and design of organisations, and the results that are acquired from job analysis will allow HR managers to clearly see the need for training and development in their structuring of the organisation. There is, thus, a direct link between the strategic functioning of an organisation and training and development. As Cowling & Lundy (1996) notes: “Strategic training and development has a central part to play in bringing about the alignment of organisations Human Resource capability with strategies.” Thus, in research into the impact of training and development on the employment of individual post ABI, it is vital that the strategic functioning of HRM is not omitted.

In today’s social media-driven world the way in which training can be delivered is much more varied and cost-efficient than in the past. For example, webcasts, webinars and computer-based training are the order of the day to ensure maximum participation in a cost-effective manner. These methods of training and development allow South African organisations to develop in terms of globalisation, as employees trained to utilise technology will add momentum to the advancement and competitive edge of the organisation. Another aspect of a modern training and development approach within a system of care is that all events give participants the ability to evaluate and offer feedback (US Department and Human Services 2014). Thus, if organisations develop training and development strategies that include technological training of employees with post ABI, both the organisation and the employee would benefit. Such technological advancement would improve efficiency and reduce time taken for tasks completed by people post ABI, which will positively impact on the functioning and management of the organisation. A study conducted by Westerberg et al (2007) on the use of technology in training and development provides some evidence that, “one to three years after a stroke, intensive training can improve an individual’s Workplace Management and attention performance and that training effects can be generalized to cognitive functioning in daily living” (Westerberg et al 2007:28). This study serves as an indication that employment post ABI is beneficial and can assist individuals with ABI in their recovery, allowing them to become part of society and to lead normal lifestyles again. These results are also consistent with the effect of workplace management training in previous studies that were carried out to prove that training and development post ABI plays a vital role in the management of the workplace (Westerberg et al 2007:28).

Most organisations see training and development as a major cost and therefore resist employing people post ABI as it would cost them more to train and develop these individuals. However, if organisations effectively manage the training and development strategies that they currently have, such as by means of technology, then employment of individuals with ABI would not be so great a challenge.

3.9 The impact of effective Strategic Human Resource Management on reasonable accommodation for Acquired Brain Injury in the workplace

The future direction of an organisation is set by Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) with the fundamental aim of generating strategic capabilities by ensuring that it is equipped with the skilled, committed and well-motivated employees necessary to achieve a sustained competitive advantage (Armstrong et al 2003:82). The concern of SHRM is how an organisation's business strategy can be achieved through its people with regard to three factors. Firstly, human capital serves as a major source of competitive advantage. Human capital can be defined as "an approach to employee staffing that perceives people as assets (human capital) whose current value can be measured and whose future value can be enhanced through investment" (Rousem 2012:52). Thus it can be argued that human capital encompasses the succession planning of the future of the organisation, with the aid of its employees and labour and through equipping employees with the correct training and development.

Secondly, it is the employees of the organisation who implement the strategic plan and work towards the attainment of business goals. This aspect of HR strategic functioning indicates that the development of a company is dependent on the employees and thus the future of the organisation's growth is dependent on the employees who are trained and developed accordingly. Thirdly, a systematic approach is needed in determining the long term direction of the organisation and what strategies will be implemented in order to reach the desired state of operation (Armstrong et al 2003:86). This segment of SHRM makes provision for the organisation's future plans and visions that will result in growth, globalisation, workforce diversity and a competitive advantage through employing the correct individuals and abiding by existing legislation. Relevant legislation includes the EEA and regulations pertaining to the

minimising of discrimination in the workplace and the achievement of equality for all employees, including those with disabilities; organisations can use their SHRM planning to make sure that they implement and follow such legislation by strategically planning ahead and making room for people with disabilities in the workplace, such as people with ABI.

Strategic HR planning is directly related to SHRM because knowledge regarding the strategic direction of the organisation is needed in order to forecast future labour needs that are in alignment with the overall business strategy (Haasbroek et al 2004). Strategic planning allows the company to manage the succession profile of employees occupying management positions (Wells 2011). Armstrong et al (2003:90) notes that SHRM provides an understanding of the success factors related to the human resources in an organization, that is, the people strategies which need to be consistently reinforced in order to retain employees and secure their motivation in contributing to the sustained competitive advantage of the organization. Armstrong's statement suggests that, while HR functions and relevant legislation exist, South African organisations are not employing them effectively for strategic planning and for managing accommodation in the workplace for people with disabilities, such as those with ABI. It is imperative that SHRM accounts for the needs of the organisation and the individual interests of the workforce (Armstrong 2006:90).

In order to address competitive challenges facing an organisation, SHRM commences by analysing the current competitive climate, developing organisation-wide strategic goals and devising a plan of action to ensure attainment of such goals and the effective utilisation of its human resources (Armstrong 2006:88). The HR strategies used to achieve the organisation's strategic goals can either be general in nature, relating to the overall management of human resources, or more specifically, being used to make adjustments to the people policies of the organisation, which include intentions for the long run, looking at how the organisation will continue to ensure that employees are motivated and rewarded appropriately and planning strategies that facilitate continuous innovation in terms of training and development and retention of key employees (Armstrong 2006:88). Key positions that will become available are identified and labour needs are forecast accordingly (Wells 2011). Potential candidates are evaluated to identify developmental needs and their readiness to take on the position, which allows the company to organise the training resources needed to satisfy those developmental

needs (Wells 2011). The company's HR planning has necessitated that all divisions are constantly aware of what competitors are doing in order to achieve a sustained competitive advantage through its human resources (Wells 2011). It can be argued that, if companies implement SHRM, then persons with ABI will be given more opportunities for employment, based on labour needs. SHRM places emphasis on human resources and human relations in respect of the management of people, the continuous development of employees, communication, employee involvement, job security, quality of working life and aiding employees in obtaining a work-life balance (Armstrong 2006:90), as well as allowing organisations the advantage of tailoring their current HR policies and procedures to accommodate for people with disabilities in the workplace.

Due to the fact that many types of disabilities exist in the South African workplace, organisations need to ensure that, when they strategically plan for the development of the organisation of the future, the specific needs of persons with disabilities are accommodated, including the particular requirements of persons with different types of disabilities.

3.10 The impact of Strategic Human Resource Management on the practice of employment of persons with Acquired Brain Injury

There are a number of people policies and strategies existing within organisations that govern employment relations and are crucial to the effective functioning of the overall business. Resourcing strategies refers to recruitment and selection in an organisation. A correct match between employees and the strategic and operational needs of the organisation is ensured by SHRM (Armstrong 2006:96). It follows that when organisations implement the correct procedure of selection and recruitment, they can evaluate the capabilities of employees post ABI before they become part of the organisation and can decide during this process if applicants will meet the expectations and criteria of the organisation; they can also follow up on the recovery process of individuals post ABI from references and medical practitioners' motivations, as mentioned above.

The acquisition, development and retention of talented employees who can deliver superior performance, productivity, flexibility, innovation and high levels of personal customer service

and who fit the culture and the strategic requirements of the organisation is facilitated by SHRM (Armstrong 2006:87), which therefore impacts on the accommodation of the needs of individuals as employees of an organisation and can be used to accommodate people with disabilities in the workplace. This would enable the organisation to win the “war of talent”, as many organisations compete to acquire employees from the same labour pool. Talented and well-motivated employees are effectively recruited and retained in order to meet current and future organisational needs (Armstrong 2006:88). Through SHRM an organisation is able to obtain employees with the best fit and talent for the benefit of the growth and development of their organisation, without discriminating against the disabled. A healthy work environment can be said to be one that is secured in terms of the vision and the integrated values of the organisation, making the organisation an attractive place to work (Armstrong 2006).

In terms of job and work design, strategic HRM ensures a match between employees and jobs, thereby providing individuals with stimulating and interesting work and giving them the autonomy and flexibility to perform their jobs well (Armstrong 2006). This would assist employees post ABI as their jobs would be designed to accommodate them in the organisation and to minimize the challenges that they experience due to their disabilities; this in turn would enhance job satisfaction and flexibility, encouraging high performance and productivity (Armstrong 2006:96). Growth and development opportunities provided allow for skill acquisition, broadening the skill base, and develop the levels of competence required in the workforce (Armstrong 2006). Therefore it appears that SHRM plays a key role in the accommodation of individuals post ABI in the workplace.

Various laws concerning disabilities, such as the EEA, the Disability Act of South Africa and the Labour Relations Act have been promulgated in order reasonably to accommodate employees with disabilities in the workplace. Such legislation has put more emphasis on the importance of equality and diversity within South African organisations. Employees experience different types of disabilities in the workplace and such disabilities require special attention. It is therefore the responsibility of the employer to ensure that there are policies in place to meet the needs of employees with specific disabilities.

3.11 Reasonable accommodation for people post Acquired Brain Injury in the workplace

As described above, the EEA states that people with disabilities must be reasonably accommodated in the workplace and it is therefore the duty of the employer to ensure that such employees have access to the resources in the organisation. Section 1 of the EEA defines reasonable accommodation as “[a]ny modification or adjustment to a job or the working environment that will enable a person from a designated group to have reasonable access to or to participate or advance in employment” (Employment Equity Act). The above definition opens the way for the working environment to also be modified for those who are already defined by the EEA as designated groups (Snyman 2009:55).

The Code of Good Practice plays a pivotal role in the employment of people with disabilities. The Code of Good Practice on the employment of people with disabilities was issued in terms of Section 54 (1) of the Employment Equity Act on 19 August 2002. The Code is intended to assist employers and employees understand their rights and obligations in respect of the employment of people with disabilities. The Code provides guidance for the development and adoption of disability policies that South African organisations have to put in place, therefore ensuring that people with disabilities enjoy and exercise their rights at work (Clark 2003:141). The Code plays a crucial role in ensuring that the rights of people with disabilities are recognised in the corporate world, where they face high levels of redundancy and frequently remain in lower job levels or not employed at all (Dupper & Garbers 2004:319).

According to Section 6.3 of the Code of Good Practice on the employment of people with disabilities, reasonable accommodation requirements apply to applicants and employees with disabilities who are substantially qualified for the job and who may require such accommodation during the recruitment and selection process and in the working environment. This relates to the way work is usually done, evaluated and rewarded as well as the benefits and privileges of employment (Department of Labour 2014). Section 6.4 of the Code states that the need for reasonable accommodation may only arise if the applicant or the incumbent voluntarily discloses the fact that the disability requires suitable accommodation or if a need is reasonably self-evident to the employer. During a disability conference, an individual with a disability stated that “[d]isabled people are capable, all what we need is for you to remove all the obstructions, help

and support us through internal training and probations to perform our duties to the best of our ability” (Muship 2007:87).

Section 6.9 of the Code of Good Practice on the employment of people with disabilities explains which types of accommodation might be reasonable; the list, however, is not restricted to only these measures. Reasonable accommodation thus may include the adaptation of facilities to make them accessible, the adaptation of existing equipment or the acquiring of new equipment, the reorganisation of work stations, the adaptation of training and assessments, the restructuring of jobs, the reassigning of non-essential functions and the adjustment of working hours and leave, as well as the provision of special supervision, training and support in the workplace. Reasonable accommodation could also possibly be needed with regard to the employment policies or practices of the organisation (Dupper & Garbers 2004:54-55).

3.12 Conclusion

The incidence of ABI generally places a considerable burden on individuals in gaining both the means of independence and employment. South African legislation stipulates provision for employment for people with disabilities; However, there is a lack of applications for posts as well as a lack of existing research that indicates that reasonable accommodation available for these individuals in the workplace.

This chapter has raised awareness of the failure to establish policies, procedures and guidelines in order to facilitate the management of ABI integration and employment practices. The extent to which people with ABI are aware of legislation and policies that affect their employment chances and opportunities is another issue to be explored. There is limited research literature on the employment of people with ABI in South Africa. It is proposed that methods be established, both globally and locally, to aid organisations to implement effective employment strategies for people with ABI. Due to the growth and impact of globalisation on organisations, it is important that management takes heed of practices and experiences in other countries, as well as the differences between contexts in the workplace, in order to devise strategies that will assist in the management of workers with ABI.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The aim of the study, as set out in Chapter 1, is to examine, using the phenomenological approach, the specific experiences of people affected by ABI regarding employment so that HR policies and practices can be tailor made to accommodate them in gaining and sustaining employment. In this chapter the methodology and data collection methods used in this study will be described.

The research tools that form part of this study will be described. The various research methods are explored and the research methodology, which has provided the basis for collecting and analysing the data required for satisfying the objectives of the study, is described. In the first section, the research questions are highlighted. The reasons why specific data collection methods were selected will be explained and their suitability to the process of the study will be highlighted. This will be carried out in the order as depicted below in Figure 4.1.

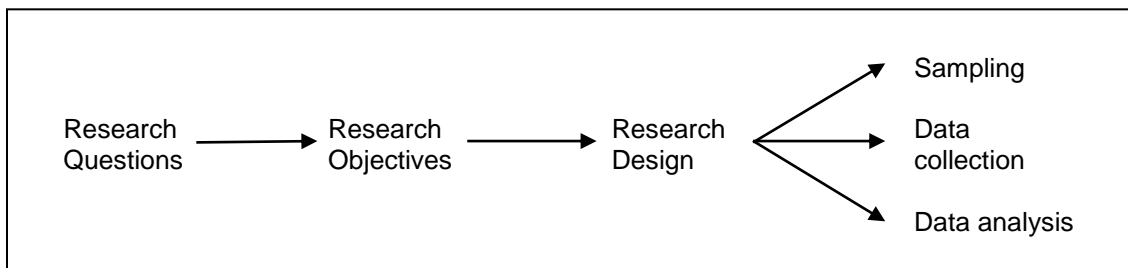


Figure 4 1: Order of discussion of research tools (Layder, 2013:11)

4.2 Research methodology

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), research is the process of studying and analysing a situational factor with the objective of finding a solution to a problem. It is also defined as something that people undertake in order to find out things in a systematic way and in the process increases their knowledge and understanding (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). As

such, the research methodology to be followed in answering the research questions is briefly explained in 4.4 below.

4.3 Research questions and objectives

4.3.1 Research questions

The following research questions guide the research study and influence the research methodology used:

1. What are the experiences of people affected with ABIs with regard to employment in South Africa?
2. Do people affected by ABI feel the need to be employed and how would employment benefit these individuals?
3. To what extent do South African organisations provide reasonable accommodation for people affected by ABIs in the workplace?
4. Do people affected by ABI feel that their employment contributes towards workplace diversity?
5. Are people affected by ABI aware of legislation, including policies and procedures related to HRM practices that affect their employment prospects?

4.3.2 Objectives of the study

1. To understand the experiences of people affected by ABI in seeking employment in South Africa
2. To ascertain views held by people affected by ABI regarding the importance of employment
3. To determine the extent to which people affected by ABI are accommodated in the workplace
4. To investigate the level of contribution to diversity that people affected by ABI experience as part of an organisation
5. To establish the extent to which people affected by ABI are aware of legislation or policies that determine their employment opportunities.

These research questions and objectives will drive the data analysis and assist the researcher to develop recommendations as to how HR policies, practices, regulations and codes of conduct should be altered to accommodate individuals with the above mentioned conditions.

4.4 The phenomenological approach

Understanding human experiences is the basis of phenomenology, a concept introduced by Husserl in the early 1900s (Jones 2001). Husserl's stance was developed into a more interpretive form by Heidegger and Gadamer (Koch 1999). According to Fleming et al (2003), the word "phenomenology" is derived from the Greek for "to bring into the light" and the current definition encourages an approach that looks beyond initial appearances. Jones (2001) describes this as allowing a researcher "to go beyond factual accounts to look at common life experiences" (Pringle et al 2011:18). Phenomenology can be defined as "the exploration and description of phenomena, where phenomena refer to things or experiences as human beings experience them" (Seamon 2010:2). Thus phenomenology is an approach that studies the lived experiences of people in order to understand a phenomenon based on human experiences. As Creswell (1998:13) states, "[p]henomenology is a research strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants." Because this study seeks to understand the experiences of individuals pursuing employment post ABI, the phenomenological approach is a suitable research strategy. Thus the main purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study is to investigate as a phenomenon persons post ABI in South Africa and their experiences of working toward achieving employment. The study uses a semi-structured interview protocol process to identify perceptions and explore the insights and beliefs of the participants. A pilot study was carried out prior to the actual participants being interviewed on their experiences of employment in South Africa post ABI.

4.5 Application of phenomenological study methodology

In order to understand a phenomenon one has to first understand phenomenology as a research methodology. This has been described above in the history of phenomenology, and in Chapter Two. Phenomenology can refer to a philosophy or a research method (Tuohy et al 2007). In this

context it needs to be understood as a methodology. Phenomenology, as a family of methodologies, can address a variety of topical research questions that consider subjective experiences and meanings. Max van Manen (2007) stated that phenomenology should stir the reader by directing his or her gaze to where meaning originates.

The need for the study of persons post ABI in South Africa must be understood before the actual methodological approach of phenomenology can be applied to the phenomenon. This need is expressed by Nornam and Yvonna (2013:477) who indicate the significance of disability in these words: “Disability no longer resided in their bodies or minds, it was framed as a problem of social oppression and disabled people described themselves as an oppressed minority”.

The application of the phenomenological approach can be broken down into seven steps as stated by Aspens (2004:6):

1. Define the research question
2. Conduct a pre-study
3. Choose a theory and use it as a scheme of reference
4. Study first order construct (themes and brackets)
5. Construct second order constructs
6. Check for unintended effects
7. Relate the evidence to the scientific literature and the empirical field of the study

4.6 Rationale of the research approach

As qualitative studies have not adequately allowed access to an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of ABI, the rationale for this study is therefore to qualitatively address the lived experiences of South Africans regarding employment post ABI. The statement, “[i] we are to understand the social world and meet the demands of phenomenology, we must produce explanations that are grounded in the subjective experiences of real people” (Aspens 2004:5), indicates that the use of the phenomenological approach would assist in understanding the phenomenon of challenges faced by persons post ABI in the South African workplace. The process and integration of the phenomenological approach enriches the significance of this study as “[t]hrough this process of communication, experience and interpretation that ego and alter are

involved in, one reaches the meaning level of the other actors and understands the way they construct ideal types, theories, codes and words of aspects of their daily life” (Aspers 2004:5). Thus phenomenology will enhance the understanding of this phenomenon as well as assist in the development of HR policies and practices so as to minimise the challenges faced by persons post ABI in South Africa with regard to employment.

Seamon (2010:2) states: “The ultimate aim of phenomenological research, however is not idiosyncratic descriptions of the phenomenon, through such descriptions are often an important starting point for existential phenomenology.” Thus it is vital that this study carries out this research approach accurately and avoids any form of generalisability, bias and characterisation from the researcher’s personal input. In order to avoid this, validity and reliability tests are carried out throughout the study so as to ensure that all data gained and utilised forms part of an accurate and valid phenomenon. This is in accordance with Seamon’s (2010:6) explanation: “the phenomenologist pays attention to specific instances of the phenomenon with the hope that these instances, in time, will point out towards general qualities and characteristics that accurately describe the essential nature of the phenomenon as it has presence and meaning in the concrete lives and experiences of human beings.”

This research project will, together with the implementation of the phenomenological methodology, employ a qualitative approach to ensure that data obtained regarding experiences are coded and categorised in a meaningful manner as regards the phenomenon. Seamon (2010:3) notes that “[p]henomenology...can be identified as one style of qualitative inquiry but involving a particular conceptual and methodological foundation.” Thus the approach adopted in this study may be claimed to be justified in terms of suitability.

Little is actually known about the daily challenges that people post ABI are faced with respect to employment. Given the unique nature of the South African context, a phenomenological study into the challenges experienced regarding employment post ABI in South Africa will provide a deeper understanding faced, and would hopefully facilitate the development of HR policies and procedures that will ameliorate as many of these employment challenges in South Africa as possible.

4.7 Qualitative vs quantitative research

As opposed to quantitative research, qualitative research requires that we find meaning in what we do. Qualitative research enables one to find deeper meaning in the response of participants, since it is an interactive process of analysis occurring during the collection of information (Brijball 2011). This analysis is essential as it allows the researcher to identify the relationships that exist between variables that have emerged during the process of gathering data (Brijball 2011). This assists the researcher in identifying any gap or topic that needs to be addressed in greater depth and that was not previously visible. This emerging information then assists the researcher to adjust the study and the questions according to the appropriateness of the facts that were discovered. Thus this process of qualitative research is seen as an interactive process (Brijball 2011).

4.7.1 Quantitative research

The research design of a study can use a qualitative or quantitative method. According to Brijball (2011), in the quantitative approach:

- Data is based on meaning derived from numbers
- Collection of results is conducted in numerical and standardised data
- Analysis is conducted through the use of diagrams and statistics.

By contrast, according to Brijball (2011), in the qualitative approach:

- Data is based on meaning through words
- Collection of data is not standardised
- Analysis is conducted through the use of conceptualisation.

Qualitative data was thus more suitable for this study as it did not require the use of standardised data, statistics and diagrams, but rather a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of post ABI and employment in South Africa through the understanding of words.

4.7.2 Advantages of qualitative research

The advantages of conducting qualitative research are captured by Ospina (2004:2) in an article entitled *Qualitative Research*, which applies specifically to issues relating to leadership and which may be deemed relevant to misfit:

- “Flexibility to follow unexpected ideas during research and explore processes effectively,”
- “Sensitivity to contextual factors,”
- “Ability to study symbolic dimensions and social meaning,” and
- “Increased opportunities”
 - “to develop empirically supported new ideas and theories,”
 - “for in-depth and longitudinal explorations of leadership phenomenon and in this case misfit issues,” and
 - “for more relevance and interest for practitioners”

4.7.3 Qualitative research in the study

“Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive and includes a description of the individual, setting, analyzing data for themes and eventually drawing conclusions about its meaning” (Soeker et al 2011:2). This is in keeping with the research methods adopted in this study, which will be described in greater detail through this chapter. “Phenomenology places emphasis on discovery and description rather than on speculation or causal explanations” (Soeker et al 2011:2). This allows the researcher to understand the experiences of individuals pursuing employment post ABI in South Africa through interviews and analysis of the phenomenon. This is in line with Fade’s (2004:1) claim: “[W]hat is really there in the world can be understood by perceiving it in a manner that is uncontaminated by an individual’s past experiences and viewpoint.” Thus, it may be concluded that a qualitative approach is the most suitable approach as a methodology for this research study. Phenomenology is both a philosophical movement and a family of qualitative research methodologies (Gill 2014:2).

4.8 Validity and reliability in qualitative research

The instruments of validity and reliability are acceptable concepts in qualitative research. Obviously the methods of testing differ from that of quantitative research, but in the case of qualitative research researchers need to define how they will operationalise them, and convince their examiners of their application. In essence the researcher needs to ensure that the questions produce the “valid” (correct or accurate) response as was intended, and that the “reliability” can be related to theory construction and testing, and is to be determined by how “trustworthy” or consistently the results correlate if the same survey is done in contexts with subjects exposed to the same circumstances or across the centers that perform similar functions where the interviews are held, unless there are factors that determine why different responses are gained (Golafshani 2003).

Validity can be defined as a test that is conducted when a topic is being researched that requires determination if a property is significant to the study (Sekaran & Bougie 2010). This is done to avoid measuring the wrong concepts. Reliability can be defined as a test that is conducted in order to determine the consistency of the aspects that are being researched (Sekaran & Bougie 2010). Saunders et al (2009:86) define reliability as “a measurement of the consistency of the data with the research background, and...also a measurement of the suitability of the data for analysis”. Validity has to be secured first then reliability, as it is aimless to conduct a reliability test to determine consistency if one has not proven the property valid. If it is invalid, it would mean that research has already taken place on a property that does not have significance or research has been done on the wrong aspect (Saunders et al 2009:78).

For this study participants will be screened and selected by professionals from the institutions listed in the attached gatekeeper’s letters. This will also ensure that participants meet the criterion that the brain injury is not a severe case, as the participant has to be capable of employment. Due to the fact that these participants are capable of employment, none of them will be on any form of medication that would affect the validity and reliability of any of the research instruments used, including the focus group interviews.

It is generally accepted that the concept of validity addresses the nature of reality and thus is a fundamentally epistemological and philosophical issue, and a question of measurement. So in

this case validity assists in ensuring that the researcher uses methods that are not only ethical and cost-effective but that truly measure the idea or construct in question. Using phenomenology, the forms of validity that would be primarily used are construct and face validity. According to Creswell (1988), validity plays a significant role in a qualitative study in that it is a powerful source used to determine the accuracy of the study's findings. To increase the validity of this study, triangulation will be used. Validity and reliability involve checking the status of the data collected to determine if they are valid and reliable

Martin Heidegger, a student of Husserl, developed his own type of phenomenology that differed in terms of both subject and method, inspiring “hermeneutic” or “interpretive” phenomenological methodologies (Gill 2014:4). Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) is the data analysis approach used in this research, drawing on the accounts of a small number of people (not usually more than 15) and approached from a position of flexible and open-ended inquiry, where the interviewer adopts a stance which is curious and facilitative (rather than, say, challenging and interrogative). IPA usually requires personally salient accounts of some richness and depth, and it requires that these accounts be captured in a way which permits the researcher to work with a detailed verbatim transcript. Data collection does not set out to test hypotheses, and this stance is maintained in data analysis. IPA is therefore seen as a suitable means of analysis for this study, as the sample size of this project focuses on a small group of individuals, which was less than 15.

The analyst reflects upon his or her own preconceptions about the data and attempts to suspend these in order to focus on grasping the experiential world of the research participant. Transcripts are coded in considerable detail, with the focus shifting back and forth from the key claims of the participant to the researcher's interpretation of the meaning of those claims (Gill 2014:4). IPA's hermeneutic stance is one of inquiry and meaning-making, and so the analyst attempts to make sense of the participant's attempts to make sense of their own experiences. Thus, one might use IPA if one had a research question which aimed to understand what a given experience was like (phenomenology) and how someone made sense of it (interpretation) (Gill 2014:4). Analysis in IPA is said to be “bottom-up”. This means that the researcher generates codes from the data, rather than using a pre-existing theory to identify codes that might be applied *to* the data. IPA

studies do not test theories, then, but they are often relevant to the development of existing theories (Gill 2014:4).

Phenomenological exploration can help us better uncover and understand the disabling effects of life-changing illnesses from the lived experiences of the patients and their families (Greenfield & Jensen 2012:5). Phenomenology as a research methodology and approach to patient-centered care can illuminate psychosocial issues such as biographical disruptions and identity shifts, meaning of stigma, barriers to recovery, changes in temporal and spatial relationships and the nature and scope of family support (Greenfield & Jensen 2012:5). A pilot study was conducted in which the professionals that deal with individuals post ABI were interviewed so as to gain an understanding of the need for this area of research. This allowed the researcher to identify the shifts, barriers and stigmas that are attached to the developed phenomena in this study. This pilot study has also had the significant advantage of adding to both the significance and the validity and reliability of the study as will be described later in this chapter.

An interpretive phenomenological approach is thus suitable for research that aims to understand and interpret participant's experiences. "Interpretative Phenomenological analysis offers an adaptable and accessible approach to phenomenological research intended to give a complete and in-depth account that privileges the individual" (Pringle et al 2009:3). Therefore this study adapts IPA in order to enhance the validity and reliability of the study.

4.9 Research approach

To date, ABI researchers have used quantitative methods in an attempt to establish casual explanations for challenges faced during the gaining and sustaining of employment post ABI globally. By contrast, in accordance with the nature and aims of this study, this study will attempt to view the employment phenomenon from a pre-reflective stance. The research design is described below.

Research design processes comprise two main classes, namely, exploratory and descriptive. The researcher undertook a descriptive research design as this proved to be the most suitable in consideration of the variables and the research questions of this research study. Descriptive

research is structured and well understood (Strydom et al 2002). The main purpose of descriptive research is to describe the characteristics of the population or phenomenon.

The study is conducted through the implementation of the phenomenological approach as a design structure. As Keller (2013:114) states, the phenomenological structure relates to the fact that discourses, in the constitution of the themes that emerge through the data analysis of research instruments, designate a variety of elements and combine them into a specific form of a phenomenon, a structure of a problem area that needs to be addressed through research.

This section focuses on significant issues handled by the researcher in selecting an adequate research design for this study. The research design informs the reader about the nature of the study. De-Vos et al (2010:134) state that “the research design may serve as a master plan of the procedures and techniques which are utilised to collect and analyse the data required by the researcher.” It is the glue that holds the research together.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010:76), research is the process of studying and analysing a situational factor with the objective of finding a solution to a problem. It is also defined as something that people undertake in order to find out things in a systematic way. In the process their knowledge and understanding is increased (Saunders et al 2007:16). Ghauri et al (1995:26) state that “the research design is the overall plan for relating the conceptual research problem to relevant and doable empirical research.” Cooper and Schindler (2008:146) define research design as “the plan and structure of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions”. They go on to state that the essentials of research design are as follows:

- The design is an activity and time-based plan;
- The design is always based on the research questions;
- The design guides the selection of sources and types of information;
- The design is a framework for specifying the relationship among the study’s variables
- The design outlines procedures for every research activity.

“Phenomenological methodologies may also support research that adopts a more dynamic view of organizational identity” (Gill 2014:15). Due to the fact that this study researches the phenomenon of employment post ABI in South Africa, it can be said that the research design adopted are that of the essentials of a phenomenological research design.

4.10 Sample and sample design

In this study, the sample population are the people post ABI who form part of Headway, a stroke and brain injury rehabilitation centre, Hardy and Associates in Kwa-Zulu Natal and the I Can! Disability Academy South Africa and who face challenges in gaining and sustaining employment.

There are many types of sampling that can be utilised in a research process to name a few probability, on-probability and purposive sampling. “Probability sampling is where the population elements have a known chance or possibility of being selected as subjects for the research” (Brijball 2011:21). Non-probability sampling can be referred to as a sampling method whereby the elements do not have a known or predetermined chance of being selected as subjects. Purposive sampling can be defined as “[a n]on-probability sampling procedure in which elements are selected from the target population on the basis of their fit with the purposes of the study and specific inclusion and exclusion criteria” (Daniel 2012:259). Gorard (2013:84) suggests that “[n]on-probability samples can...be used when the population of interest is very small and we are approaching cases as expert informants”. In this study the purposive sampling technique was utilised as participants were screened and selected by professionals from the institutions listed.

4.11 Sampling procedure

4.11.1 Sampling selection criteria

Selection criteria and categorisation of participants by the professionals listed on the gatekeepers attached were as follows:

Criterion One:

Individuals with severe brain injury and disabilities, on medication and not recommended for employment;

Criterion Two:

Individuals with brain injury and disabilities with minimal function and mobility, in rehabilitation programmes and on medication, not ready for recommendation for employment;

Criterion Three:

Individuals with mild to moderate brain injury, have completed rehabilitation programmes and are not on any medication, are ready for employment or are already in part-time employment positions.

For the purpose of this research project professionals recommended only participants who had been screened and had met the requirements of Criterion Three. Participants were selected in this way to ensure that none of the participants were on any medication or fell into the category of severe brain injury and disability.

The researcher has acknowledged that participants are from a vulnerable group. Thus provision was made for additional support and guidance from professionals within the field. Thus, gatekeeper's letters were provided stating that professionals from the various institutions would be present throughout the interviews and would be capable of assisting in a situation where the need for counselling arose.

4.11.2 Sampling technique

Non-probability sampling was used. The convenience sampling method was chosen because it is the least expensive and least time consuming of all sampling methods.

4.11.3 Sample size

This study made use of 12 participants due to accessibility and ability limitations. "Sanders argues that a phenomenologist should probe a limited number of individuals as sufficient information may be collected through the intensive interviewing of approximately three to six individuals" (Gill 2014:6).

4.11.4 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling makes sense when the sample is very small and the researcher can choose typical elements. Purposive sampling is sometimes necessary because there is no feasible probability-based alternative (Ornstein 2013:82).

4.12 Data collection

Data collection can be carried out in the following ways:

4.12.1 Processing

The main reason for editing is to detect omissions and errors and to ensure that they are corrected. Arranging the schedules for tabulation is known as “editing”. As indicated by Perumal (1988:143), it is essential for the editor to ensure the data is:

- reliable and accurate
- as complete as possible
- consistent with other facts secured
- uniformly entered
- suitable for tabulation
- arranged to facilitate coding and tabulation.

4.12.2 Research instruments

Interviews were held in Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town at the institutions listed in the attached gatekeeper’s letters. They consisted of semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews, each of which will be described in turn below. The major advantage of using these methods is that in-depth and comprehensive accounts concerning changes in professional work could be produced. “As with observations, direct interviews are not as constrained in advanced as structured interviews” (Layder 2013:83). Due to the fact that the study aims to understand experiences of individuals, semi-structured interviews are preferable as they do not have predetermined absolute questions. Thus: “There is some leeway for the researcher to ask questions that arise out of the conversational exchange of the interview itself” (Layder 2013:83). Because of personal style and interviewing skills, interviews will never be completely standardised. A good interviewer must have a fair amount of emotional intelligence. The flexibility of directed interviewing results from the fact that when the interviewer finds that the interviewee is particularly forth coming, revealing or informative about a topic is by flexibility around the fact.

In the interviews the attitude of the interviewee is important. “To enter into a phenomenological discourse with patients, we must help them develop a phenomenological attitude. A phenomenological attitude can best be understood in distinction to an individual’s natural attitude.” Husserl suggests that the natural attitude is the everyday default position of individuals’ tacit understanding of the world. “Perhaps this can best be understood if we think about the routine of our daily activities of getting up in the morning, getting ready for work, and driving to work” (Greenfield & Jensen 2012:3).

4.12.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews have the following disadvantages:

1. The interviewer does not enter the interview setting with a planned sequence of questions. This may hinder the quality of the data should the interviewer forget key questions or overlook certain important aspects depending on the flow of the conversation.
2. Since the interviewee is given the freedom to talk openly about events in the organisation, personal feelings may create a bias and render the data inaccurate.
3. Due to the fact that semi-structured interviews lack formality, there may be a situation where the interviewee is not responsive and the interviewer indirectly leads and influences the answers of the interviewee. This has negative impacts on the results and data obtained.

4.12.2.2 In-depth interviews

The possible disadvantages of in-depth interviews include the following:

1. In-depth interviews are formal and structured with a list of questions and a sequence. Following this strictly could result in areas of interest being overlooked and also restrict the answers of the interviewee, which would affect the quality of the data.
2. When conducting in-depth interviews, a team is usually required as these interviews are time consuming. Should the interviewers not have proper interviewing technique or adequate knowledge of the content of the study, the results and data obtained might be affected by interviewer bias.
3. Although formal interviews allow the researcher to gain insight into what is happening, the formality of the interview could be detrimental. Interviewees might feel intimidated.

Also, with structured questions, their answers could be coached and prepared. Instead of open and honest answers, the researcher might be faced with guarded practiced answers that would have a negative impact on the reliability and quality of the data collected.

4.12.2.3 Data quality issues

Data quality issues to consider in both semi-structured and in-depth interviews are related to:

- Reliability – Will alternative researchers reveal similar information? Joppe (2000) defines reliability as the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study; if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered reliable.
- Forms of bias – Is there a possibility of interviewer bias or interviewee, or response, bias?
- Validity and generalisability – Validity can be defined in several ways, each of which entails a different view of what makes a detected problem “real”. In one view, problems are real only if they demonstrably lead to incorrect data in field data collection. By extension, a reported problem is valid if it is probable in any given interview. A problem will rarely affect all respondents; most will affect only some portion of respondents. However, if a potential problem detected in a cognitive interview does not affect any respondents in field administration of the questionnaire, it cannot be considered valid. Yet another sense of problem validity is severity – how large is the measurement error produced by the problem?

4.12.2.4 Justifying the use of in-depth, semi-structured and face-to-face interviews

A qualitative technique that has been underutilised in fit or misfit studies thus far is the in-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured interview. This is somewhat surprising considering the fact that face-to-face interviews have long been the preferred interview technique in the field of qualitative research (Opdenakker 2006). This study uses qualitative, in-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews as its primary data collection tool. Kvale (1983), as cited in Opdenakker (2006:2), describes a qualitative research interview as “an interview, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of

the described phenomenon.” Opdenakker (2006:5) states that face-to-face interviews “are characterised by synchronous communication in time and place” and lists several advantages as follows:

- Due to this synchronous communication, face-to-face interviews can take advantage of social cues such as voice, intonation and the body language of the interviewee.
- These social cues can provide additional information that can be added to the verbal answers of the interviewee to a question
- In face-to-face interviews, there is no major time delay between question and answer.
- Consequently, the interviewer and interviewee can directly react on what the other says or does.
- It is noted that an advantage of this synchronous communication is that the answer of the interviewee is more spontaneous, without an extended reflection
- With the permission of the interviewee, face-to-face interviews can be digitally recorded. Using a digital recorder has the advantage that the interview report may be more accurate than writing out notes
- In a face-to-face interview, the interviewer has the opportunity to create a good interview ambiance
- The termination of a face-to-face interview is much easier than other interview methods.
- During the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee, a large number of clues (for example, shuffling of papers or switching off the recorder) can be given to indicate that the end of the interview is near.

4.12.2.5 Focus groups

A focus group can be defined as “a discussion-based interview that produces verbal data generated via group interaction” (Millward 2012:3). The use of focus groups is seen as appropriate for this study as the study main aim is to gain an understanding of experiences. The use of focus groups allows the researcher to establish links and commonalities that have surfaced through the data collection and data analysis up to this phase. It also allows the researcher to confirm the validity of themes that were established through the data analysis of the study. According to Millward (2012:6), focus groups are appropriate in the following situations:

- To develop and/or test constructs as a first step in developing a questionnaire, for instance
- To check the validity of conceptual models
- To invite a uniquely different perspective on an issue.

The sample size of the focus group utilised for this study ranged from six to eight participants as this was seen as an appropriate sample size given the nature of the study. “A systematic review of recent focus group research in psychology yields an average of nine participants per session as conventional, with a range of six to twelve” (Millward 2012:15).

The use of focus groups assists in improving the validity of the study as this study utilises the IPA method described earlier in this chapter. The use of the IPA method also assists in the data analysis of focus groups. As Millward (2012:21) states: “Two methods of interpretation applicable to the analysis of focus group material, are interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and discourse analysis.” The former can be defined as “a form of qualitative analysis which explicitly acknowledges that the process of analysing experiences and the meaning of these experiences will necessarily involve ‘interpretation’ on the part of the researcher” (Millward 2012:15). Bradbury-Jones et al (2008:7) argue “for the place of focus groups in descriptive and interpretive phenomenology and [suggest] that focus groups might enhance the quality of a phenomenological study”. Thus it is clear that:

- Focus group interviews can be congruent with phenomenological research
- Individual, lived experience can be preserved within a focus group setting.

4.13 Pilot study

In a quantitative study, a survey instrument that is researcher designed needs a pilot study to validate the effectiveness of the instrument and the value of the questions in eliciting the right information to answer them. In a phenomenological study, a pilot study may precede the main observation to correct any problems with the instrumentation or other elements in the data collection technique.

Before posing the phenomenological question to the research group in this study, a pilot study was conducted on four professionals who deal directly with the rehabilitation and recovery of persons post ABI in South Africa. This session was audio taped and transcribed. The interview was found to be an adequate and insightful description of the experience of persons post ABI since the interviewees were able to describe in detail the types of injuries and ABI encountered, the problems that had been experienced in communicating with persons post ABI and what they could possibly learn from participating in a counselling training programme.

Although the question posed seemed difficult since it was a rather open-ended question with no limitations imposed, the interviewee expressed that her responses were automatically guided by her knowing that this exercise would assist in the formulation of a counselling training programme. The context and reason why this question was asked (that is, for purposes of formulation of a training programme) were thus known to the interviewee and elicited the intended type of responses.

This process assisted in formulating the final phenomenological question and related sub-questions needed for clarification of relevant issues due to the fact that these professionals were the ones who were going to deal with the participants of this study. Question one is thus a means of understanding the employment experiences of persons affected with ABI through the sessions and understandings of professionals that deal with this type of individual.

4.14 Data analysis

Following the actual data collection, the analysis was carried out through the research period. The goal of qualitative phenomenological research is to describe the “lived experience” of a phenomenon. As this is a qualitative analysis of narrative data, methods to analyse the data are quite different from more traditional or quantitative methods of research. The various stages of such research are described below.

Firstly, during the initial stage of analysis, the researcher obtains an instinctual understanding of the data collected by bracketing personal preconceptions and judgements. This is done to make sure that the researcher does not include personal emotions and beliefs in writing up the study.

Following this stage is the actual transcription of interviews from a recorded format to a word document. Once the transcriptions are complete, the data is read and re-read. A confidentiality agreement form is drawn up by the researcher and signed by the transcriber to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

The third stage in the analysis is the dissecting of the data into layers of expression. During this phase the researcher obtains a description of the phenomenon (Creswell 1998). This allows the researcher to establish consistencies and recurring emerges in the data gathered. In the fourth stage, the researcher formulates themes from the emerging consistencies that were obtained in the third phase. This is done in a manner that allows the researcher to reflect on the pattern of the participant's experiences obtained over the period of data collection. During this phase irrelevant data obtained through the data collection is removed. The data is then synthesised to the focus groups formulated under themes. This is done to ensure that meaningful units of data can be formulated from the experiences of the individuals who form part of the study.

Themes were then formed, these themes are then coded. This is the identification of passages of text (or other meaningful phenomena, such as parts of images) and applying labels to them that indicate they are examples of some thematic idea. At its simplest, this labelling or coding process enables researchers quickly to retrieve and collect together all the text and other data that they have associated with some thematic idea so that they can be examined together and different cases can be compared in that respect. Finally the data is organised and interpreted in the form of a summary to each of the tables and diagrams that are attained through the data analysis process.

The data analysis process can be carried out using a range of procedures and process. Most commonly data analysis with qualitative research is carried out using one of two methods, namely manually or using computer software. The manual system requires content analysis and narrative analysis of data that is collected.

4.14.1 Content analysis

Content analysis can be used to examine any piece of writing or occurrence of recorded communication and is currently used in a dizzying array of fields, including marketing, and political science, psychology, cognitive science and many other fields of inquiry. Additionally,

content analysis reflects a close relationship with socio- and psycholinguistics, and is playing an integral role in the development of artificial intelligence.

The following list (adapted from Berelson 1971) offers more possibilities for the uses of content analysis in the context of this study:

- Reveal differences in communication content
- Detect the existence of misinformation
- Identify the intentions, focus or communication trends of an individual, group or institution
- Describe attitudinal and behavioural responses to communications
- Determine psychological or emotional state of persons or groups

The reliability of a content analysis study refers to its *stability*, or the tendency for coders to consistently re-code the same data in the same way over a period of time *reproducibility*, or the tendency for a group of coders to classify categories membership in the same way; and *accuracy*, or the extent to which the classification of a text corresponds to a standard or norm statistically. Gottschalk (1995) points out that the issue of reliability may be further complicated by the inescapably human nature of researchers. On the other hand, the validity of a content analysis study refers to the correspondence of the *categories* to the *conclusions*, and the *generalisability* of results to a theory.

4.14.2 Narrative analysis

Narrative analysis usually involves life story research or oral history. This technique adopts a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews rather than questionnaires and there can be said to be suitable for this study. This method of qualitative research in which the researcher listens to the stories of the research subjects, attempting to understand the relationships between the experiences of the individuals and their social framework this would assist the researcher in achieving the objectives of the study and is in keeping with the research design of phenomenology.

According to Keller (2013:124), different approaches in narrative research emphasise the role of experiences, through common themes, plots or narrative patterns by means of individual components of an utterance are bound a smaller narrative sample to gain understanding of a phenomenon.

4.14.3 Analysis

The following themes were used in order to organise the data that emanated from the interviews in the study:

- a) The various specific challenges and successes (anecdotal experiences) that the respondents had when seeking or pursuing employment
- b) The ordering and organising of views that respondents have on the importance of being employed
- c) The views and perceptions of respondents on being accepted and accommodated within the workplace
- d) Whether respondents see themselves as persons that can contribute towards diversity within organisations, rather than disabled people that can be employed in terms of employment equity policies.
- e) The understanding and in-depth knowledge of the legal and regulatory frameworks that govern the right to employment of disabled persons (ABI affected persons).

NVivo 8 (QSR International) software was used to analyse the content of the collected data. The analysis identified patterns or similar ideas relevant to the participants' experiences and perspectives about the effectiveness of the current practice as it relates to employment post ABI in South Africa. The interpretation of results, limitations, individual and independent insights, and generalisations of the study are described in Chapter Five.

4.14.4 Processing the data

4.14.4.1 Secondary data

Secondary data was gathered from reports released from research organisations, vendors and national computer emergency response teams. As with the document analysis above, subscriptions to the relevant newsletters and vendor notifications via email and social networking

websites provided a method of monitoring latest developments in information security related-topics, releases of research reports and surveys, and incidents as they developed. The secondary data was re-analysed in order to identify trends or specific vulnerabilities that contributed to security incidents. This monitors the changing threat and vulnerability landscape and can predict possible future developments.

4.14.4.2 Transcribing the interviews

A high quality Sony Digital Voice recorder was used to record all interviews. Transcription of interviews was undertaken promptly by a professional transcriptionist. The transcriptionist had a good track record and was highly recommended by colleagues of the researcher. To facilitate the transcription process, tight deadlines were set for task completion. The recorded interviews, together with the digital voice recorder, were personally delivered to the transcriptionist by the researcher. On receipt, the transcriptionist downloaded the recorded interview data and then proceeded to transcribe these recordings. Thereafter, the transcriptions were delivered back to the researcher for final verification.

4.14.4.3 Using computerized software for data analysis

The searching tools in NVivo allow the researcher to interrogate her or his data at a particular level. This can, in turn, improve the rigour of the analysis process by validating (or not) some of the researcher's own impressions of the data (Welsh 2002). However, the software is less useful in terms of addressing issues of validity and reliability in the thematic ideas that emerge during the data analysis process and this is due to the fluid and creative way in which these themes emerge (Welsh 2002). Of course, details can be checked on the content of particular nodes and this could affect the inter-relationships of the thematic ideas, but in terms of searching through the thematic ideas themselves in order to gain a deep understanding of the data, NVivo is less useful simply because of the type of searching it is capable of doing (Welsh 2002).

The advantages, however, of working with NVivo Software are as follows:

1. NVivo handles virtually any data, including Word documents, PDFs, pictures, database tables, spreadsheets, audio files, videos (imported video files and YouTube content), social media data and web pages.

2. As you work through your information, highlight key points, allowing for quick recall or analysis later. Take this a step further with NVivo 'nodes' - like virtual filing boxes they allow you to see all information on a theme summarised together.
3. Interchange information between NVivo and other applications like Microsoft Word and Excel, IBM SPSS Statistics, SurveyMonkey, EndNote and Evernote.
4. NVivo lets you work with information in any combination of languages, allowing for true global collaboration.
5. Store your project database and research materials as a single file, making your project completely portable. Or store large media files separately and link them to your project.

4.15 Ethical issues

The ethical clearance process conducted at UKZN is to ensure that the candidate understands and adheres to ethical principles while conducting the research. The form to apply for ethical clearance and the relevant documentation was submitted to the Faculty, who then approved the application and submitted it to the UKZN Ethics Committee, which provided the final ethical approval. As part of the ethical clearance, respondents for the interview process were identified and gatekeeper's letters were obtained for permission to interview the respondents. Each participant was aware that participation in this study is voluntary and confidential. For the application for approval of the study, copies of informed consent forms, the interview schedule and draft surveys were provided. Some of the organisations that were providing gatekeeper's letters required ethical clearance prior to providing approval; as a result, provisional ethical clearance was obtained. This was then submitted to the organisations so they could provide gatekeeper's approval. Final ethical clearance was obtained thereafter. See Appendix 4 for copies of the ethical clearance letters.

Due to the fact that participants form part of a vulnerable group, additional gatekeeper's letters were provided as mentioned previously, indicating that professionals from the institutions, able to provide counselling if needed, would be present at the interviews.

Due to the fact that these participants will be capable of employment, none of them were on any form of medication that would affect the validity and reliability of any of the research

instruments used. This will ensure that all participants are capable of being interviewed. This also ensured that participants met the criteria of the professional recruiting them for the interview in terms of ensuring that the brain injury is not a server case, as the participant has to be capable of employment.

Due to the fact that these participants will be capable of employment, none of them will be on any form of medication that would affect the validity and reliability of any of the research instruments used inclusive of the focus group interviews. All interview data is being treated in the strictest of confidence. The names of the participants are known only to the researcher and are not disclosed in any of the findings and documents presented in this thesis. Each of the respondents was allocated a code for ease of identification and these codes were used in the transcripts as a mechanism to ensure anonymity. All data collected was be shared with the supervisor of this study and will be securely stored at the School of Management IT and Governance for a period of five years, after which it will then be deleted from computers flash drives and printed copies will be shredded.

4.16 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has identified and described all the elements in the research process for this study. The main purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study is to investigate the phenomenon associated with persons post ABI in South Africa and their experiences working toward achieving employment. The research tools that have been described are suitable as a means of achieving the objectives of the study. The research design and methods that were used to carry out the study and obtain relevant and precise data were also referred to in this chapter.

Chapter Five will focus on the presentation and discussion of results. The results of the investigation, pertaining to persons post ABI in South Africa and their experiences working toward achieving employment, are examined to answer the questions of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of the results obtained from two aspects of the qualitative research undertaken in this study, namely, the literature review and interviews with people post ABI, who are either seeking or trying to sustain employment in South Africa. The presentation of results will be followed by an analysis and discussion. The results, analysis and discussion will be integrated to achieve the objectives of this study, which are: To understand the experiences of people affected by ABI in seeking employment in South Africa; to ascertain; to determine the extent to which people affected by ABI are accommodated for in the workplace; to investigate the level of contribution to diversity that people affected by ABI experience as part of an organisation; to establish the extent to which people affected by ABI are aware of legislation or policies that determine their employment opportunities.

A total of 12 were completed out of 12 interviews administered. Therefore, the response rate achieved was 100%. The interviews schedules are attached as Appendix 1. The findings from the main study report on the inductive thematic analysis conducted. Themes emerged from the data throughout the analysis through an iterative process of reading, re-reading, coding and re-coding. Nvivo 10 software was used to code and analyse data, create word frequency queries, word trees, and matrix queries. These queries were used to broadly explore the data, and allowed for a preliminary exploration of potential themes and patterns across the data.

of
8 of the
previously
numerous
some
ABIs at a
therefore
history of
Some have
strengths to
choices.

Three
never been
they even
job:

Researcher:
Respondent

Again,
replied: *No, I
to get a job
I, I'm sitting*

There were
have changed
subsequent to

now pursuing
consistent

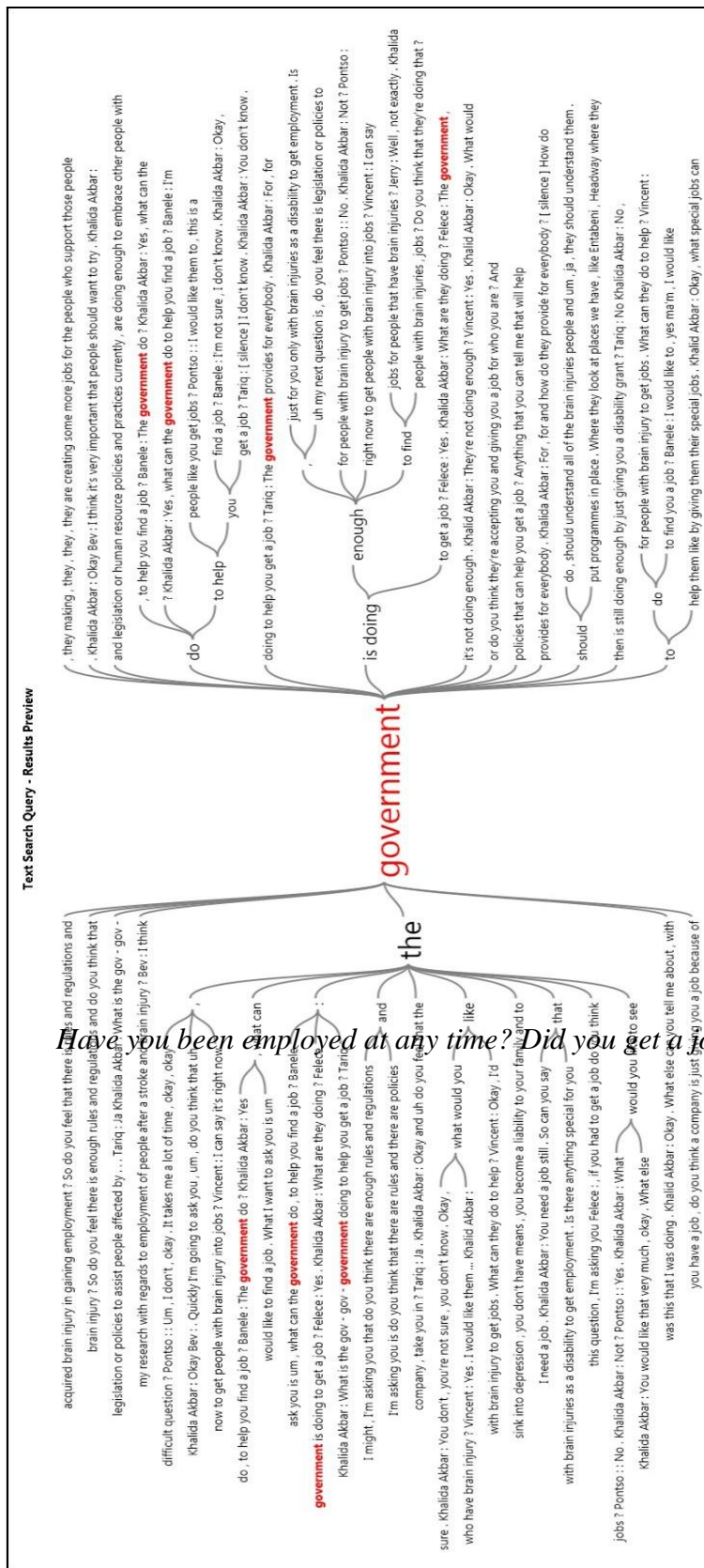


Figure 5 2: Text search query - results preview

for example:

Respondent 8: ...started my own business, I'm studying now with my degree.

Researcher: Okay, what business have you done?

Respondent 8: Basically what I do is photography, um, we just did it afterwards, we just found that I was very creative.

Other respondents had returned to the original positions, with additional support from their company to accommodate any challenges they might experience as a result of their ABI. For example:

Respondent 11: She had her job, had the incident and went back to the same place so she was dealing with the same people. And the people were very good when [Respondent 11] went back.

Researcher: Very supportive.

Respondent 11: From day one.

However, other respondents were not as fortunate and did not return back to work post their acquired ABI:

Respondent 12: I was doing metal work.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 12: Ja, and then my accident happened and then I just stopped work, it was my N7.

Researcher: Okay, and since the incident have you been employed yet?

Respondent 12: No.

Despite these varied accounts of employment histories, there seems to be a common thread amongst respondents, as not only did they express a desire to work, but they also felt that they were just as capable, if understood, of working. This desire to work was common to all participants. Thus:

Respondent 12: Okay, let's say I want to work.

Again:

Researcher: Okay. Do you want a job?

Respondent 14: Yes.

Researcher: You do want a job.

Respondent 14: Yes.

Another respondent:

Researcher: No, why didn't you try? Did you not want to work?

Respondent 18: I wanted to work.

Researcher: Okay. What would you like to do instead?

Respondent 18: To work.

Researcher: And what kind of job would you like to do?

Respondent 18: Anything.

Researcher: Anything? Why anything? Is it because you need the money only or is it because you want to do something?

Respondent 18: Ja, because I want to do something.

And another respondent added to this:

Researcher: Do you want to be employed?

Respondent 15: Yes.

From the above data, it is evident that respondents suffering with ABI really do wish to work, and this desire seems to stem from the perceived importance of getting a job:

Respondent 12: Uh, yes, very important.

In addition to perceived importance, ABI sufferers deemed it beneficial too:

Respondent 7: Ah, I think they would benefit big time.

This is expanded upon by the following respondent, who believed it is imperative that people suffering with ABIs have jobs:

Respondent 13: They should, they should get jobs.

Seeing having a job as important stems partly from the perception that it offers some type of help and benefit to the person afflicted with an ABI. Thus:

Respondent 15: I think they should have a job... Oh, it will help, it will help, it will help them.

Again:

Respondent 11: I think it's very important that people should want to try....Benefit by, from employment? Yes, a lot.

Both the benefits and need to work were summarised by the respondent in the following answer:

Researcher: Okay, and how do you think individuals affected by acquired brain injury would benefit from employment?

Respondent 9: Um, from employment. Oh definitely. Like, everybody needs to work, you don't just have to be discounted because you've got a traumatic brain injury.

Therefore, it is evident that persons suffering with an ABI desire to have a job, perceiving it as important and beneficial. In the next section the perceived reasons of persons suffering with an ABI that they are able to be employed are described.

5.4 Reasons to employ someone with an Acquired Brain Injury

5.4.1 Equally as capable

Respondent 10: But you know what, that person has absolutely got nothing wrong with their brains. I mean I just have to think about the one chap who's also acquired a traumatic brain injury, and he was in high school when he got it, but his brain is still functioning 100 percent correct. He's um, an absolute mathematical genius, like he was wanting to go to university and study actuarial science and hopefully get a job from gaining that degree as well. And, I see absolutely no reason why just because he's got a brain injury and he's in a wheel chair and he's a little bit more disabled than the normal person, why he shouldn't be granted the same opportunity as an able bodied person.... It's something that can be looked at and people can actually, no matter what the case may be, they can actually still be normal and um, work

a normal 9–5 job and be there, and be productive, and do the job that is required of them.

The above provides evidence that people suffering from an ABI feel the need to be employed. They also felt as if they are being discriminated against as they are not being treated like other individuals in South Africa. This is an indication that persons post ABI feel that their opportunities for career development is limited once the incident has occurred. They felt that people need to be understanding and aware of the fact that they are still as capable as a “normal person”. This is exemplified below:

Respondent 15: Yes, I can work.

Researcher: Can you work as well as anyone else, or not?

Respondent 15: Yes I can, I can work like anybody else....I would want them to understand me. And thirdly I would want them to know that I could do the job perfectly....

This statement hints at the fact that not only are ABI sufferers equally as capable as other employees but that also perhaps it requires that the employer gets to know them, which, as will be described in the following chapter, there does not seem to be much evidence of.

5.4.2 Hard working

Respondents indicated that they are able to work hard. For example:

Researcher: So why should I give you a job [Respondent 15]?

Respondent 15: Because of, it's because of I'm a hard worker and I, and I am responsible of what I'm doing.

One respondent said that just because there might be a slight impairment, they are still fully-fledged human beings, with emotions, and should not be overlooked just because they have experienced an ABI. Thus:

Respondent 10: People are there and this has happened to them, but just because that has happened to them they do not need to be discounted for that. They do not need to be viewed in a negative aspect because they are still people, they do

still have feelings, they do still have a fully functional brain, they just have these slight little mistakes that they do make because their cognitive functioning isn't perfect.

From this statement a core theme starts to emerge. This is that of ABI patients wanting to be seen as “normal” individuals, fully-fledged beings with a holistic sense of identity and completeness. This explains why they want to do activities that are deemed as creating this sense of whole self, like working, and actively participating and contributing to society. They want to come across as “normal” as possible, but they also need people to understand that, while they have ABI, this in no way should detract from their being this whole, ideal self.

5.5 Perceived benefits of being employed

There were numerous reasons offered by respondents as to why people suffering with ABIs would benefit from being employed. Amongst these are assisting with routine and purpose, helping to overcome apparent differences, improving confidence, keeping themselves occupied, receiving an income, self-actualisation, gaining a sense of purpose and utility, and assisting with a speedy recovery.

What will follow is a deeper exploration of these reasons offered by respondents.

5.5.1 Routine and purpose

Respondent 10: ...it gives them a routine in their life. They can get used to a routine again. I've always been told, ever since I had my brain injury that that is my one big main thing for me as a person with a brain injury is that I need routine in my life, I need that alarm clock to go off at 8 o' clock and coffee to be poured at half past, whatever the case may be. I need to have my lunch at X time, I need to go to the gym at X time, I need to know exactly what I'm doing day in and day out. To get into that routine, to not fall out of it and then to not, then sort of proverbially go off the rails so to speak. Got to have structure, got to have routine. So, employment, there's structure, there's

routine and it's the best medicine for ABI as far as I know, and that's what I've been told so that's what I can say in response to that question.

5.5.2 Overcome apparent differences and improve normalisation

One of the main themes emerging from this study is the expressed desire not to be seen as different to non-ABI persons. This theme will be explored further later in the chapter. One of the benefits of work is that it allows the ABI sufferer to become absorbed in the task at hand and immerse themselves in the workplace, thereby creating a distraction and allowing them to think of tasks and life aside from their limitations and the changes they have undergone as a consequence of their ABI. Thus:

Respondent 17: You see sometimes we come when we are busy on workplace you can forget about your...

Researcher: Your injuries.

Respondent 17: Ja, your injuries, some few things that happen your past.

This extends into the realm of acceptance, and coming to see the person as a “normal” person, with an ABI. Thus:

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 15: Yes.

Researcher: And how would it help you do that?

Respondent 15: I really help me, like encouraging me, or let me say...

Researcher: Encouraging is a good word.

Respondent 15: Ja, by encouraging me that, that, that I must, I must see myself, I must not see myself as a person who is, whom, who has a brain injury, but I must see myself as like everyone else.

This offering of support and understanding by peers facilitates a sense of acceptance and immersion into “normal” working life and helps to minimise the difference felt by respondents.

Another manner in which sufferers of ABI were able to minimise this difference and gain a sense of normality was through returning to some aspect of one’s self prior to acquiring the ABI. By doing so, it allowed the respondent to feel a little like they are returning to “normality”, a sense

of identity that they had prior to acquiring the ABI. This is evident in the statement below:

Respondent 11: I think that was [Respondent 11's] motivation, in getting uh, where she is now, her recovery is that she didn't want to sit where she was, she wanted to go as far back to normality as she can be. So she wants to get back to where she was before.

This want to return to a prior sense of self, an identity with which they were familiar, will be explored later in the chapter.

5.5.3 Improving confidence

One of the reasons presented by a respondent suffering with ABI for the importance of work was that it led to an increase in confidence. It was explained that, if you manage to hold down and effectively perform a job, your confidence increases. Associated with this increase in confidence is, again, the diminishing of difference. This reiterates the need to feel accepted and minimise differences between ABI and non-ABI sufferers.

Respondent 11: ...because one of the problems you have is confidence in yourself. If you're working, and they set you in the workplace or that, your confidence would increase and I think that's, that's one of the biggest things, because you get to a stage when you, like I'll walk out of here and I'll ask [Respondent 7], "Did I do alright?" You know, you haven't got the confidence in your ability and I think by doing work and being accepted in the workplace your confidence in yourself and your self-esteem will increase. I think it's a big thing.

This statement highlights the impact that low self-esteem and poor confidence impacts on the self-image of the ABI sufferer. In essence what the person has lost as a result of the brain injury is a sense of self, as previously mentioned by the respondents who expressed to the desire to return to prior states of being. What the ABI sufferer yearns for is to be accommodated, in order to demonstrate their self-worth but, at the same time, not be treated differently. This expressed wish to be accommodated in the face of a lack of accommodation and consideration of their needs, especially in the workplace, opposes their wish not to be treated any differently.

Respondent 7: So, you know, that's not necessarily an indication that you have a problem. But ja, I think to be treated equally and fairly and that's all really you can ask for. And that too, you know, um, as soon as they start treating you differently, your confidence goes again.

Researcher: That's true, yes.

Respondent 7: I think that's one of the big things, confidence. That you can do it.

One of the results of being treated differently is a serious drop in confidence. One of the respondents cited confidence as being one of the reasons why people with brain injuries should be introduced slowly back into the system as well as to compensate or rationalise why they may not be as capable. He said that he tired easily so it was difficult for him to concentrate. This clearly demonstrates the rationalising that happens in the minds of people with brain injuries. They are acutely aware of their difficulties but try to rationalise their behaviour by saying things that will normalise their inability, for instance, citing a lack of opportunity or of confidence, and trying to play down difference. The tendency for ABI sufferers to rationalise, contradict themselves and sublimate those aspects of themselves that transmute this difference into socially acceptable actions and behaviours will be described further under another core theme later in this chapter. However, what is clear at this point is that minimising difference in the workplace and being offered the opportunity to express equal worth is key to bolstering confidence and regaining a sense of control and identity. Thus:

Researcher: So it will help you feel equal and it will help you increase you confidence?

Respondent 15: Yes.

This statement highlights the close link between work not only as a means of building confidence but also as a place where ABI sufferers can make others see that they are equally as capable and willing, and so minimising stigma and the stereotypes associated with brain injuries, thereby reducing difference.

5.5.4 Keeping themselves occupied

Coupled with gaining a sense of identity is the notion of having a purpose. One ABI sufferer believed that people with brain injuries should be employed because they need to keep themselves occupied. Thus:

Respondent 14: To do something, you can't just sit at home.

This was reiterated by another respondent:

Researcher: You need a job because you want something to do?

Respondent 14: Yes.

And furthermore:

Respondent 15: It's because, so that their brains they, so their brains could be trained so that they not forget easily.

Researcher: Okay, by train you mean...

Respondent 15: So that, so that they can have something that's keeping them, something to do.

Having something to do, in other words, having a purpose creates meaning for the ABI sufferer and thereby empowers them, helping to build their confidence.

5.5.5 Sense of purpose and utility

Respondent 8: So I think that definitely people affected by or individuals affected by acquired brain injury would benefit greatly from employment because it also helps them, um, in whatever they are going through as a person, whatever challenges they are facing, whether they may be dealing with depression or whether they may be dealing with other sorts of stuff within their mind, it gives them a reason to get up in the morning, it gives them a routine in their life.

Respondent 9: I still wanted to work and it gave me purpose and you know, since I've retired I sorted, even now, I sort of think oh, let's just go back to work for a day or so every now and again. So you do, you actually don't want to give up work, you feel that you are needed, you have to do something, you know.

This statement is an indication that there is a need for a sense of belonging, purpose and routine once again for persons post ABI. This also proves that individuals post ABI feel the need to be employed.

5.5.6 Receiving an income

Receiving an income emerged as a major factor when considering reasons why respondents wished to work. There were numerous reasons why they desired money, some to pay their way, others to do what they wanted to do, and others to be able to contribute to and support their families. One respondent mentioned the need to help put food on the table:

Researcher: ...let us say you or anybody else that had a brain injury, how do you think getting a job will help them?

Respondent 18: They can put food on the table.

Researcher: 'Cause they'll have money?

Respondent 18: Ja.

Another respondent mentioned that money will allow them some degree of freedom to do what they wish to do, on their own terms:

Respondent 15: And and give you, to go out with, money to go out with.

Another respondent expressed the will to be able to financially provide for his family:

Respondent 13: To, I would like it to help maybe at home and...

Researcher: Financially you need to help your family.

Respondent 13: Yes.

This expressed need was further reiterated by another respondent who stated:

Respondent 10: It will help me to, to help me, to help my family.

Another respondent expressed this need but built on this by saying that not only would he be providing for his family but in doing so he would create a sense of purpose and identity and become a “somebody”.

Respondent 8: No, in fact it [inaudible] get some money, it can help by assisting my family, you see. You see, build my own future. One day I can be someone and that.

This statement demonstrates a common thread running through these stated desires and tied in with previously explored reasons; by being self-sufficient, the respondents would have successfully reduced the difference between them and non-ABI individuals and created a sense

of purpose and meaning. Coupled with this, they would have achieved a sense of fulfilment as societal norms were satisfied.

This sentiment was reiterated by another respondent, who saw a job as a means of income and therefore a means by which he could establish his own individuality by standing on his own feet and paying his own bills. He saw this ability as being able to develop his sense of self, individuality and identity:

Respondent 8: Yes, I think so because I, I am, I am really really really really need a job, so I can [inaudible] so I need to build my own bills, so when it comes I can, job I can, I can make some developments.

His words indicate that a job is seen as a means to “make developments” in his life. These developments could be seen by non-ABI persons as being mundane, everyday activities. However, to an ABI sufferer, these “mundane” activities help them create a sense of identity in society and create the impression that they are developing, and mostly, minimising difference. Thus:

Respondent 8: To run your life, your everyday needs. Supplies and stuff like that... Because you're getting money, firstly. Then having to run their life, like buy food, clothes, lights, water, run their house, for travelling, paying their taxi fares, or paying for petrol, things like that.

5.5.7 Self-actualisation

As mentioned in previous sections, one aspect of having a job is to contribute to self-actualisation, and the realising of one's dreams, aspirations, being who one wants to be and doing what one wants to do.

Respondent 15: If I could get a job it would help me and...

Researcher: In what way, what way would it help you?

Respondent 15: It would help me to, 'cos I would do things that I wanted to, I wanted to do before I had a brain injury.

Researcher: What were those things?

Respondent 15: Like, I wanted to see myself as, 'cos I like writing books, I like writing books. I wanted to see myself as an author. A well-known author like TD Jakes.

Researcher: But you think now you can write?

Respondent 15: Yes, I can still write.

Researcher: Okay, so how would employment help you, let's just say to give you a job, how would it help you, what would it give you? In life.

Respondent 15: It will help me like to focus on my goal, on what I wanted to do.

Some people saw helping others as realising themselves.

Respondent 14: Um, okay, find a place and helping others like me find, um, their place in the job.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 14: And find their place in society.

This is an important statement and clearly illustrates what has been highlighted in previous discussions, the sense of creating purpose and identity and of finding one's place in society. Without a sense of purpose, there can be no meaning. Without fulfilling societal norms of what constitutes being a "person", an individual will fail to establish their own sense of personhood. By satisfying societal norms of what defines being a person in society, one is able to establish a sense of belonging and identity. By regaining this sense of self, the ABI sufferer is able more readily and quickly to recover.

5.5.8 Assist with speedy recovery

By becoming a "normal" member of society, by participating in those actions, behaviours and activities deemed "normal" and part of everyday life, an ABI sufferer starts to feel integrated with society again. Thus:

Respondent 9: I think it makes you want to recover and be a part of society again, not feel that you are disabled. And it also builds up your confidence and how you cope with life.

This statement illustrates how, becoming an active and participating member of society again allows ABI sufferers to regain their sense of personhood; their confidence increases, their sense

of difference when compared to non-ABI persons decreases and, as a result, their coping mechanisms increase. This illustrates accelerated recovery. This link between feeling accepted and integrated and speedy recovery is reiterated below:

Respondent 7: I agree with that, I think, um, giving somebody the opportunity to get back into the workplace will help recovery, speed up recovery as well, because the biggest factor is lack of confidence.

Therefore the discussion above has ascertained the paramount contribution of working to the ABI sufferer is the ability to perform daily, mundane tasks deemed by society to be considered “normal” and thus contributing to a sense of what it means to be “normal” and integrated in society. Once these expectations are met and integration into society has been achieved, a person is perceived to gain a sense of belonging and acceptance and thereby a sense of identity. When this sense of wholeness is challenged, the person loses confidence and adopts a victim mentality. This might also explain why ABI sufferers tend to avoid situations that may detract from this sense of wholeness. This is linked also with an awareness of the stigma associated with ABI, which will be described in the next section.

5.6 Stigma and stereotyping

The stigma associated with having an ABI may be driven by stereotypes. ABI sufferers want to fulfil particular stereotypes, such as what constitutes being a man, but they also want to avoid fulfilling stereotypes associated with ABI. Such stereotypes exist when people lack information about ABI, as they are used to make sense of actions when there is no other information available.

An example of a stereotype in action is presented in the statement below:

Respondent 16: Because it's not right to just sit at home and do nothing.

What is striking about this statement is that, while the respondent has had his needs seen to by the Road Accident Fund (RAF), there was something telling him that it is “not right” to stay at home. This can be understood as the operation of a stereotype. A stereotype is defined as “something conforming to a fixed or general pattern such as a standardised mental picture that is

held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment” (Webbster 2015:38).

Such stereotypes push you to action, feeling like a pressure that, if not fulfilled, creates a sense of dissonance, explained as a push towards what is deemed socially appropriate. Thus:

Respondent 15: Now can you imagine I was here in South Africa, they put a lot of pressure on you, push you, stuff like that.

There are certain expectations on people, linked to their gender roles that require them to act in certain ways. Only once these societal pressures to act in a certain way are fulfilled is a sense of identity, contentment and purpose created. Thus in the statement below, it is clear that the respondent had a desire to fulfil all he deemed to be important and what he perceived to give life meaning:

Respondent 10: But, I want to still be the one who's in the driver's seat of my marriage and of my family. I want to be the one who's doing what the typical stereotypical man out there in the world is doing. I don't just want to be a charity case, here's your however X amount of million pay out from the RAF, put that in investment and live off the interest for the rest of your life. That's not enough.

Such stereotypes are also evident in the following statement:

Respondent 10: You know, because people need to work. You know, it even goes back to the bible where the bible says you know, a man that doesn't work in his life is a fool, if I'm quoting it correctly which I'm probably not, but anyway. You know, or a man that doesn't work a full day is not a man, or whatever.

Again, the respondent highlighted the belief that unless you can fulfil particular requirements, like getting a job, providing for your family, being the head of the household, and so forth, you cannot be considered to be a man. These activities are listed in the statement below:

Respondent 8: Then having to run their life, like buy food, clothes, lights, water, run their house, for travelling, paying their taxi fares, or paying for petrol, things like that.

The type of stereotype people with ABIs believe are applied to them is illustrated as follows:

Respondent 10: Where you can actually have a person who's got brain injury but through to his synapses where his brain's actually working fine, it's amazing, 'cos you've got that kind of person who's got multiple scolio, like scoliosis. That's like, they're actually perfectly fine. But people just go 'cos you can't speak right, you can't do that. It's just because the information's going a lot slower across his neurons, but inside he's a perfectly fine person and like, a lot of them are actually way more intelligent than a lot of us.

Respondent 9: I didn't really want to go back to just being a receptionist you know and that was almost impossible to actually try get into.

Researcher: Okay, why is that?

Respondent 9: Well, the minute they knew that you have some sort of affliction or brain injury they wouldn't think that you could cope with it, the job.

Another respondent concurred:

Respondent 10: Ja, I definitely think that like this one little friend of mine who also went to [Respondent 4]. He had a bad car accident on his matric dance night or something. His mind is completely perfect but he's got this trap now that's caused by the brain. So he, even though his mind's perfect, he, he now is a store man, and he, he got a fantastic matric pass and whatnot, but he just couldn't carry on working in that environment. He first of all wanted to become a pilot, obviously he couldn't do that, and he realised that. But, for somebody like that, it's I think it's imperative to find, I mean, he's a young man, he's got 40 years of work ahead of him and he'll never be able to actually get what he wants to get because of this stigma of having a brain injury.

As previously described, there data showed that there was tendency for respondents to want to be accepted and to try to hide their ABIs. This is linked with the concept of stereotyping. As soon as people are confronted with a situation that they do not fully understand, they resort to stereotypes in order to make sense of it. So, when they are confronted with a person with ABI, they

stereotype them accordingly, despite their being a capable person. This tendency is evident in the statement below:

Respondent 10: Where you can actually have a person who's got brain injury but through to his synapses where his brain's actually working fine, it's amazing, 'cos you've got that kind of person who's got multiple scolio, like scoliosis. That's like, they're actually perfectly fine. But people just go 'cos you can't speak right, you can't do that. It's just because the information's going a lot slower across his neurons, but inside he's a perfectly fine person and like, a lot of them are actually way more intelligent than a lot of us. It's the same with somebody with, um, like your autistic children and stuff like that, their IQ's are actually quite amazingly high, but nobody knows how to actually use them or control them or what to do with them, that's the problem. Same concept with brain injury.

Thus, it can be concluded that people have stereotypes when it comes to trying to understand a person with ABI, and these often result in their making assumptions about such a person that are not true. This may explain that, even though ABI sufferers need assistance and understanding in adapting to particular work situations, they also do not wish to be seen as different, as such an assumption is often accompanied by stereotypical fallacies. This stereotyping functions like an umbrella grouping and inadvertently detracts from their being seen as individuals, so that they are labelled in terms of a generic understanding of being “brain injured”.

5.7 Poor sense of identity and personhood

As previously mentioned, there is a tendency for sufferers of ABIs to feel incomplete. They generally have little sense of wholeness and perceive that others fail to see them as people:

Respondent 8: Or just put it into a trust fund. Where are your trust funds, they're not going to think of you as a person, you're a number on the charts. I've already had problems with my trust fund already. Where I've recovered fully but they'll go and say, oh you [inaudible] one's we've got. So if you look at it that way, it's um, they don't actually see us as a person as well and they're putting

you into your own group field. So if they want to put us into our own group there, why can't we be disabled then?

The respondent further indicated, that because they are not seen as people but rather as dislocated members of society, they are not considered in terms of their wants, just their basic needs:

Respondent 8: That's what I'm trying to say. Basically like you look at that, for me with my trust fund money that I got and everything like that, I got what I needed, not what I wanted, so don't get me wrong. As long as you get what you need you're okay.

Again, and this resonates with a previous point regarding the current legislation, the respondent went on to say that even though ABI sufferers are not seen as people, they are not grouped as disabled either, and this may cause problems regarding where they fit in:

Respondent 8: So if they want to put us into our own group there, why can't we be disabled then?

Thus there is a perception of a degree of displacement and of lack of identity and recognition in the world. As such, the government and others treat them according to what they need, without taking the time to consider what is that they really want.

This approach to dealing with people with ABIs is a finding reflected throughout the analysis in this chapter. In essence, what people with ABIs have lost is their sense of belonging, place and identity in the world. They are attempting to regain this sense of identity. This is inherent in their language as they speak of nobody taking the time to consider not only their needs but also what they really want. It appears that there is no attempt on the part of companies to acknowledge them as people, considering them rather as a stereotypically identified group of people with mental problems. Moreover, there is no legislation that pertains specifically to them, and they do not even belong to the group considered "disabled".

ABI sufferers are unable to find their identity through work, if colleagues and managers do not take the time to get to know their strengths and their weaknesses, coming to understand the impact of the ABI whilst still acknowledging their "human" element. Nevertheless, ABI sufferers are often merely treated as a statistic born of another accident. What exacerbates the

feelings of inadequacy and displacement of ABI sufferers is that they seem physically “normal” and are expected to behave accordingly, but when they do not people chastise them. Often, because there is the tendency to behave in accordance with this appearance of normality, people with ABIs tend to use only those skills that are their strengths and neglect the use and development of their weaker abilities. Thus:

Respondent 8: Basically what I do is photography, um, we just did it afterwards, we just found that I was very creative. So I decided let's go do that...because of front temporal lobe brain injury, how you going to get anything done in the workplace because everybody's like a shark in your workplace if you think about it. Imagine if you went into sales, you wouldn't work there you know what I mean, or marketing or sales or something like that. So we just thought let's just go into photography.

What helps to create a sense of being seen as a person is when the ABI sufferer feels supported. Respondent 8 mentioned the importance of support in creating a sense of identity, a sense of being a person who is not limited to a being an ABI statistic. She went on to mention that it is good for persons with ABI to be employed, provided that they have the desire to be employed. She also mentioned that people should not treat her any differently, because she is still the same person, despite what happened. Thus:

Respondent 8: I think it's also my attitude. I think if you're going to go and be a victim you know, with that victim's syndrome, you're going to remain a victim. I'm not willing to be a victim of things that are beyond my control...I don't see why people should treat me differently.

She also reasserted the notion that employment is important as it gives a sense of being somebody in society, thus bringing the argument back to this inherent need to find a sense of self, after losing it.

Part of creating this identity is also returning back to your sense of previous self, the person you were before the incident

Respondent 2: I think that was [Respondent 7's] motivation, in getting uh, where she is now, her recovery is that she didn't want to sit where she was, she wanted to

go as far back to normality as she can be. So she wants to get back to where she was before.

As previously mentioned, those mundane activities like paying one's own bills are perceived to be creating your own life. Again it can be deduced that the stereotype of fitting into society is emerging here in terms of trying to fit the stereotype to create a sense of identity.

Respondent 11: No, in fact it [inaudible] get some money, it can help by assisting my family, you see. You see, build my own future. One day I can be someone and that.

Going to work, supporting one's family and earning money are all very stereotypical roles. The respondent was saying that by fulfilling these roles, he is gaining personhood, an identity, being a "somebody".

Another respondent reiterated this saying that the things he battled with most were the things that are most valued when it comes to being successfully employed. Again, by earning money, one gains control over one's life and everyday needs and by doing that one fulfils the stereotype of everyday life, thereby gaining a sense of self and personhood:

Respondent 12: Because of you getting money, you need money to live.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 12: To run your life, your everyday needs...and having to run their life, like buy food, clothes, lights, water, run their house, for travelling, paying their taxi fares, or paying for petrol, things like that.

Respondent 12 concurred that there needs to be some sense of purpose in life, often relating back to working, that gives them a sense of self, and personhood. The activities mentioned are part of the stereotype of purposeful life, perceived to give people meaning:

Respondent 16: Uh, let's say, okay let's say they must, they must do something for their life.

Researcher: It gives them a purpose in life. Is that what you're saying?

Respondent 16: For their good life.

Respondent 14 even mentioned the need for companies to take the time to understand them as a person. Again this need to be seen as a person, with unique characteristics and idiosyncrasies comes through strongly in this interview:

Respondent 14: Firstly, company see me as a person...Want them to see me.

He noted that currently companies are not doing this. They are not taking the time to learn about people with ABIs, and coming to see them as people separate from their ABI, with their own relative strengths and weaknesses:

Respondent 14: And secondly, I would want them to understand me. And thirdly I would want them to know that I could do the job perfectly....

Again, obtaining a job and thus fulfilling that stereotypical requirement for success and a place in society will, Respondent 14 believed, help him create an identity for himself:

Researcher: If I had to give you a job today, how would this help your life?

Respondent 14: Um, I will find my place, okay, and um, yes, I will find my place.... Um, okay, find a place and helping others like me find, um, their place in the job.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 14: And find their place in society.

Researcher: Okay, they want a place in society?

Respondent 14: Yes.

Another respondent went on to explain this:

Respondent 13: Because it's not right to just sit at home and do nothing.

This demonstrates that there is something in society dictating to him the norms and requirements of what constitutes “normal” and, therefore, “right”. Again this demonstrates the role of socialised norms and stereotypes.

This drive to want to be perceived as normal and feel as “whole” and as integrated into society as possible led to the tendency to want to avoid particular behaviours that would interfere or disrupt this sense of internal harmony and create dissonance.

5.8 Avoidance techniques

There is a tendency for ABI sufferers to present themselves as normal:

Respondent 10: So, they just saw, like I said before, a well-dressed guy, a well groomed guy, and everything on the outside looked fine.

They try their best to act accordingly:

Respondent 10: I must say also from a personal perspective I really didn't want to make it known, I didn't want to, just straight come out and say to everybody, look I've got a traumatic brain injury and x, y, and z has happened to me, would you like to employ me.

However, in so doing, they inadvertently set themselves up for failure, and this in turn becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. This tendency to try to sublimate inappropriate for socially appropriate actions and behaviours often means that they avoid those acts which may give their disability away. An example is provided by one of the respondents, such as Respondent 10, who said that he faced some challenges at work. As a result, he focused only on his strengths at the detriment of other areas required of his job and that he was not good at coping with at the time.

This shows that people with ABI tend to focus on those tasks that avoid the possibility of failure and therefore the admission of their limitations – a protective mechanism. The tendency to avoid those behaviours that may give their limitations away could be effective primarily because brain injuries are not physical and can often not be seen. The only tell-tail signs of an ABI are the inability to perform a particular task. This inability to visually conceive of an ABI and the tendency of ABI sufferers to avoid the tasks that betray their lack of “normality” may explain why employers do not accommodate them in the workplace as well as they expect to be treated.

Some respondents even went so far as to avoid actually applying for jobs, despite expressing a desire to have one, thereby possibly avoiding the disappointment they think will result being turned down as a result of their ABI. For those who did not apply - perhaps they did not do so out of fear of rejection. So by not applying, they do not set themselves up for disappointment. Again, however, there are numerous contradictions around this question; it may be that they are trying to hide the fact that they have applied and been rejected, most likely on the basis of their ability since the ABI.

Researcher: What do you feel, why did you not get those jobs?

Respondent 13: Because, ma'am, I think maybe it's because when I'm doing something and I, I'm shaking, maybe I don't, if maybe I'm packing things, maybe in shops.

Researcher: Are you shaking? Because I can't see you shaking.

Respondent 13: Maybe in that, in that place they thought that, that's why.

Coupled with this phenomenon, perceptions emerged regarding what the role of companies should be in creating, sustaining and ensuring jobs for people with ABIs.

5.9 The role of companies

Multiple perceptions and experiences emerged regarding working for companies. They are varied and hint at inconsistency in over-arching policies and regulations when it comes to employing, and the procedures for incorporating, ABI sufferers into organisations.

One respondent mentioned that companies do sometimes accommodate and work around their needs:

Respondent 11: The job I did before, because they have customised slightly because I can't drive, so the new portfolio I've got is still a lot of responsibility but I'm not doing the job I was doing before, exactly.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 11: Because I can't drive, I can't go to meetings because I can't travel, so how do I get to the other side, how do I drive in different cities.

Respondent 11: [inaudible] she needs assistance with certain things, then I help.

Respondent 11: You know, there's certain parts I can't put my bra on yet, so [Respondent 11] has to help me. So for me to go away for three days is a problem.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 11: So who is going to dress, and he helps me in and out of the bath, if I have a bath, because I lift up with one arm, you know, I need a mat in the bath. So there are small things where I have got a impairment at the moment which does affect some of the things that I used to do.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 11: The company works around that.

In addition, another respondent mentioned that there is a distinction between companies, some of whom are more open to having people with ABIs working for them than others.

Respondent 5: I think that there are definitely people that are open to it. I can unfortunately not necessarily say that they would embrace the whole idea of it, but I think that there are organisations and there are employers out there who would be open to the possibility of having a traumatic brain injury, um, rehabilitant, or however you would call it, or person, working for them.

However, despite the perceived acceptance of workers and employers themselves, as previously mentioned, there were several respondents who counter this perception. Thus:

Respondent 7: I don't know that the companies today would take the time to do that. Because there's so many people looking for work they already have got more people to interview than they really want to. But if they know that that person has that problem, or has had that problem, they may not be that keen to interview or take it further than somebody, you know, that comes and is completely 100% healthy. On the other hand if they didn't know that there had been a problem and that person impressed them, they may have another interview or something and when they then find out the background, then maybe they would look at it. But initially straight off, I don't think they do today...

Researcher: Do you think organisations embrace and accept people that are affected by Acquired Brain Injury into the work place?

Respondent 7: No, I don't think so. I think they'd be a bit wary.

Another respondent echoed this sentiment, saying:

Respondent 5: I don't think that there is any accommodation for it at the moment.

In addition, there are certain expectations of companies that respondents perceived are unrealistic and yet required in order for them to be accommodated:

Respondent 5: I wish I could incorporate a little better, that I could actually find ways of doing it. It's like, how many companies do you find that actually bring in an

industrial psychologist to go and see what's the potential of this person and what they can do. But they don't really do that even for normal people.

Further to this, another respondent flatly believed that ABI sufferers are not accommodated for in organisations:

Researcher: Do you feel that there is adequate accommodation in the workplace available to individuals affected by acquired brain injury?

Respondent 8: I think I sort of covered that on the last...

Researcher: Ja.

Respondent 8: But it's not a problem, but basically I'll just say it in one word for you. No... Um, basically for organisations, to friends, to family, it's basically just for me as a whole the market and e-range doesn't really accommodate properly.... A lot of those parents, they came in, they didn't have a clue where to go, what to do, so just using like the parent like and friend thing, it's like an example for you. It's like, I'd sit down there and the parents would be like, I'd have to use my cellphone for example, this is where I got to, we can't promise that yours will get there and what can happen or something like that. Now if you have to go do that with a company, the company's going to go this is a lot of trouble, couldn't be bothered.

Even the most accepting companies sometimes miss the mark, and have unrealistic expectations of employees:

Respondent 8: I spent a month in hospital, operations and whatever, and when I came out of hospital I worked from home for a while because I was in a buying department and, PA buying department function at that stage and I could do a lot of my spreadsheets and whatnot at home. Um, I worked for about three months like that and then had to return to work because I think they were getting a bit twitchy about not having me around.... With the brain injury I suffered a lot of fatigue, so by the time I'd done a couple of hours work I would be finished, absolutely finished and they didn't understand, they just thought, oh well, she's tired, she's not sleeping, or whatever. They didn't quite understand that with a brain injury you do suffer from these funny

little idiosyncrasies and with the result I just couldn't cope in the afternoons, I would be absolutely finished... As I say, the company didn't quite understand.

These are the types of experiences that exacerbate the need to want to hide disabilities, to fit in and not seem any different. Again, one has to ask why they would want to do this, if there existed this perception that people and employers would understand their afflictions and accommodate them accordingly. A theme that emerges when trying to understand this phenomenon is that the lack of physical affliction of sufferers of ABI, as they often have no visual scarring of afflictions, makes it harder for companies and other people in general to conceive of the full impact of ABIs.

Respondent 9: My head cut is under my hairline so you can't, you couldn't see any physical injuries...

Researcher: Injuries.

Respondent 9: Injuries. So with the result they sort of said fine you're okay now you can carry on with this full day's work and it was just totally impossible... You know, once they find out that you have a brain injury, unless they've known you before and you are employed by a friend, I don't think they're very sympathetic to, for, you know, brain injury. I think they think you're a bit weird. And you know, they have maybe that sort of thing where maybe we steer clear of this person, ja.

Again, another respondent highlighted the lack of the physical nature of their injury:

Respondent 5: Maybe I'd have to wear a cap to hide this, but I don't think they would know I have a brain injury, but I don't know.

Another echoed this sentiment:

Respondent 9: Because you, especially a person who's not like physically damaged, or who doesn't look injured, that then they don't understand at all, they say you look absolutely 100% so you must be 100% and that I don't think they understand, um, the implications. The, the, especially brain injury, the mental implications like um, frontal brain, I've got frontal lobar damage,

you suffer from short term memory loss. So my last boss, she used to rattle off a number of instructions and I used to forget it like two minutes later, and she used to get quite annoyed because she said, but I've just told you that, but I couldn't remember it. It comes back three days later but the thing is, that's the time that she needed it done and I used to forget. So with the result I'd have to write everything down and adapt in that way. So I don't think people understand brain injury at all.

These statements clearly indicate that in the absence of physical injury, people often misconceive the impact of the ABI and therefore expect sufferers to act “normally” and, when they pick up certain idiosyncrasies as a result of the ABI, instead of coming to know the person and their afflictions, they label them under the umbrella term “brain damaged”. As a result, and in effort to preserve their own confidence (a theme that emerged so strongly from the primary data), ABI sufferers try to downplay the resultant effects of the ABI and do their best to come across as capable and fit in with everybody else. As mentioned by Respondent 8, there are certain behaviours that are inherent to ABIs that are inconsistent with desired workplace behaviour.

Again, Respondent 8 reiterated that people often ignore ABIs because there are no physical markers of the disease and perceived that people, employers especially, see ABI as an excuse to find employment or sympathy towards gaining employment

Respondent 8: Specially companies, won't really believe you've got brain injury if you walk in there with two legs, two arms, and you can work like that. They'll go like, you're trying to use an excuse of disability. But if you go in in a wheelchair they will feel sorry for you.

He further mentioned that the current focus of companies is to meet other requirements like BBBEE, at the expense of coming to learn about and cater for people suffering with ABIs.

Strangely, however, despite wanting to be treated with the required accommodation and respect so as to capitalise on their strengths and downplay their flaws in effort to allow the person to fit into the workplace, respondents also did not want to be seen as different. This need to feel accepted, without being treated differently, was explored previously and emerges under this theme again.

Respondent 7: I think that's a very hard question because one of the things that you don't want, I don't want, I don't want to be treated any different.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 7: So I don't want anything special.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 7: I want to be treated like you in the workplace, or like Respondent 7. I don't want to be treated any different.

This statement reiterates that if it is possible to hide their affliction, to avoid all those markers of ABI and to present themselves as “normal” members of society, then their confidence will increase, recovery will be prompter and, ultimately, absorption back into society will ensue.

Respondent 7: I agree with that. I think that you need to be treated as an equal, um, and I don't think anybody else need know that you even had a problem if you are capable of... doing the job and not showing that you have a problem.

By trying to hide any signs of injury or trying to avoid any acts that would make them perceived as inept, there is a large amount of dissonance that arises from the internal struggle that persons suffering with ABIs experience.

5.10 Rationalisation and contradictions of Acquired Brain Injury in the workplace

The misconceptions regarding brain injuries described above, such as, if you cannot physically see the wound, then you must be fine, hint at a need for increased awareness and understanding of brain injuries in the workplace. The converse of this, however, is that persons suffering from brain injuries do not want to be treated any differently. Difference makes them feel inept in one way or another, a feeling that they wish to ignore at all costs.

Despite the brain injury, a lot of respondents still reported that they desired to return to work, but they acknowledged that their ability was in fact retarded. This frustrated them, as they knew they no longer had the opportunity to work and this impacted on their confidence, their sense of being needed and their sense of purpose and place in society. The stigma associated with the lack of

understanding often results in a lack of accommodation, and the inability to do what they want to do. It hampers their ability to become what they want to become and, inadvertently again, makes them feel inept. This feeling associated with the stigma then is internalised, and becomes a harsh reality. They try to rationalise this reality, almost removing it from themselves as people and putting it down to circumstance. They want and almost expect the government, legislation and companies to pay ABI sufferers special attention to allow them to fit in and become active participants both in the workplace and in life in general. This creates great tension as they long to fit in but at the same time do not want to be treated any differently. This struggle between reality and perception as the respondents try to protect themselves creates a conflict and this is evident in the contradictions in the interviews.

One respondent noted that not enough has been done by the government, especially when it comes to job provision. He then went on to say that the government does enough as it provides for everybody, but that he still needs a job and the government has not helped him out. Another respondent first mentioned that companies do not do enough to accommodate people with needs, but then went on to say that they do assist with helping with needs, finally stating that they have to help and accommodate them. He then contradicted himself when after saying that he wanted a job for various reasons went on to say it was not important to have a job. He said that he would not be concerned about a person's history of brain injury. This is disconcerting in two ways. One is that a person's capability in context of their ability to perform the job needs to be wholly and fully understood. The second is that there is obviously no attempt made by businesses to take cognisance of these matters – perhaps because workplaces do not consider it important if the person seems fine outwardly. The respondent went on to mention that it is only if red flags are raised during interview stage that the company might check up on them.

Often brain injuries manifest only when exposed to certain situations and tasks. And until that situation is actualised, there may be no tell-tail signs. So if, based on this respondents premise that if they do well in the interview, he doesn't see a problem with placing them, it's disconcerting, and raises questions around education and understanding of brain injuries in the workplace. This lack of understanding can further lead to poor accommodation and overall acceptance.

One respondent validated his ability to perform just like everybody else by saying that the person would not be hired if there was not a degree of ability and position fit. He based this on an interview only, which is a rather superficial test of ability. This seems to suggest that persons suffering from brain injuries may have a tendency to look towards certain mechanisms, however superficial, as a means to validate their lack of difference compared to non-brain injured individuals. They turn to mechanisms of validation that help to underplay their perceived lack of ability and any associated stigma. In this instance, he believed that if one passes the interview, then one is deemed capable and the company will accept and embrace you. However, there are hints of underlying insecurities and doubts about the ability to “fit-in”, as suggested by the need for a cap.

One respondent also mentioned that overall her organisation had been supportive, but there had been clashes with her general manager (GM) that she attributed to a lack of understanding. Instead of attributing her depression to the effect of the ABI on her serotonin levels, she attributed it to her GM:

Respondent 10: And I got to the stage where I actually got very emotional, very depressed, and felt that I couldn't cope and it wasn't the fact that I couldn't cope which was pointed out to me by a colleague, it was the person that I was battling with that was giving me tasks to do that even the people in those portfolios couldn't do.

It can be said that she took no personal responsibility for the altercation, instead blaming it on hormones and her GM, thus relinquishing any personal role in the altercation.

5.11 Experiences at work

5.11.1 Acceptance and understanding at work

Despite the perception that companies hold stereotypes regarding the abilities of ABI sufferers, most respondents were of the belief that the company and the people working for the company will be understanding and accepting of their situation:

Respondent 15: No, they won't, they will understand my situation.

Researcher: You think they will understand your situation.

Respondent 15: Yes.

They expected that people at work would indeed accept them and assist them:

Respondent 13: They will, they will help them if, if they maybe, their friends they treat them, they treat them well, they don't treat them...

Researcher: Different?

Respondent 13: Yes, they sit in their corner and help them.

Another respondent concurred and said that he hoped that others in the workplace would treat them the same:

Respondent 15: According to my own understanding, they will, should treat him or her the same.

Researcher: Treat them the same?

Respondent 15: Yes.

Researcher: Okay. Do you know of people that are being treated the same or is that something you hope for?

Respondent 15: It's something that I'm hoping for.

5.12 Experience of discrimination

One respondent reported that he had experienced discrimination before; however, he had different expectations when thinking about work. He believed that, if he discloses his brain injury, then he will be treated with the same respect. However, he had no experience of being treated with respect before.

A second respondent believed, despite only having a standard six and applying only to only three companies, that they refused his application due to his brain injury. He reported having experienced discrimination before:

Respondent 15: Oh, what I, okay, it's that, what I like mostly in my street where I live. I don't like people like to discriminate me because of my disability.

Researcher: Do you think they do that to you?

Respondent 15: Yes.

One respondent initially denied having a brain injury and tried to hide it. Later on in the interview, he mentioned why he initially denied having an ABI:

Respondent 13: No I don't, I didn't tell them.

Researcher: You don't tell them, and why don't you tell them? Tell me why you don't tell them, I'm not going to be upset with you.

Respondent 13: Because ma'am if they know they won't give, give me a job.

Another respondent also mentioned the felt need to hide his ABI:

Respondent 10: I must say also from a personal perspective I really didn't want to make it known, I didn't want to, just straight come out and say to everybody, look I've got a traumatic brain injury and x, y, and z has happened to me, would you like to employ me.

Lastly,

Respondent 5: I agree with that. I think that you need to be treated as an equal, um, and I don't think anybody else need know that you even had a problem if you are capable of...

Respondent 7: Doing the job and not showing that you have a problem.

This statement clearly illustrates that respondents feel the need to hide their ABI as they are laboring under the perception that employers will not give them a job if they know about the ABI. Again, this hints at the existence of stigma and the stereotypes, culminating in particular behaviours.

5.13 Reasons provided for unemployment

Thus, it would appear that the first reason provided for being unemployed is due to the ABI, or the disability itself. In the following exchange, the respondent states that he applied to numerous

places but received no call back. This seems to be a common occurrence for those respondents who did apply for jobs.

Researcher: Why do you think you have not got a job?

Respondent 14: Because of my, uh, no.... Yes because of my disability.

Researcher: Okay, do you have a brain injury or a stroke?

Respondent 14: Um, my doctor says um, brain injury.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 14: But, I'm just somebody I'm say, no. I have a brain injury and my left hand, my right hand side doesn't work properly.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 14: And I have epilepsy.

This hints at the tendency of employers to view all ABI sufferers equally as “unable” to work. This tendency of people to “group” all sufferers under the same umbrella hints at a stigma around ABIs as perceived by ABI sufferers. It is evident in the statement proffered below:

Respondent 6: Some people might be affected, it wouldn't worry me.

The respondent would not have said this without prompting unless there had been some subconscious element at play in his mind. Using the words says “affected” and “worry” hints at something affecting and worrying ABI sufferers. I suggest that this thing is the stigma surrounding ABIs and the ability to work.

This stigma is evident in the following statement:

Respondent 5: Ja, concentrate harder to cover it up, and I think a lot deeper before I speak to you where before it would be just natural and you say to yourself, if you don't like me as I am...

Researcher: Take what you get.

Respondent 7: Ja, take what you get, but when you've been, gone through what I've been through, you are worried that people are going to look down at you and say, I feel sorry for him, he's brain damaged.

Another respondent spoke of this stigma:

Respondent 5: ...There is a slim chance that that a person with a brain injury will be employed when the company has the option of a pool of other potential candidates who do not have a brain injury.

Again, the respondent said that he thinks that the organisation would be wary when taking on people with brain injuries, suggesting an implied stigma or stereotype regarding the ability and difference of ABI sufferers compared to non-ABI persons. However, the same respondent later said that he thinks that they will accept and embrace ABI sufferers into the organisation. He reported a belief that he would be accepted but mentioned the need to wear a cap to hide his injury if accepted into the organisation? He explained why he felt this to be a necessity when he said that he believed that people would not be aware of his brain injury if he wore a cap, unless Respondent 7 slipped them a note. This raises an interesting question: why would Respondent 7 need to slip them a note if there was no need for an explanation regarding the behavior of the ABI sufferer? If the behaviour was perfectly normal, there would be no need for an explanation. What could be at play here are those protective mechanisms previously mentioned, mechanisms that the sufferers of ABI put in place in order to protect themselves from criticism and that detract from a complete sense of self and identity.

This further exacerbates the stigma around brain disability as an undesirable trait that will result in discrimination and disappointment, especially if ABI sufferers are not afforded the opportunity to enter the workplace and demonstrate the contrary.

These stereotypes and the stigma associated with ABIs are further reinforced by the current gap and general lack of knowledge informing the current legislation.

5.14 The role of government and current legislation

The general consensus amongst employees is that they are either not aware of current legislation or feel that it is insufficient, lacking or unclear. Thus:

Respondent 7: I don't think there's legislation.

Respondent 5: I can actually ask you and say, because I can honestly tell you that I don't know, so I would like to ask you and say, is there legislation and or policies that are in place?

Another respondent reiterated the belief that there is not sufficient legislation because people cannot decide whether or not ABIs can be considered a mental disability:

Respondent 7: The disability, ja [inaudible, all speaking together] but I don't know that they actually consider a brain injury as part of that disability.

In addition:

Respondent 8: Because it's still not decided if it's a disability or not.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 8: They tried to state that it is, but it hasn't been decided fully if it is a disability...That's a big problem for me. It's like, it's hard to specify it as a disability as well because it's so many different forms of brain injury that you get.

But the same respondent went on to say that even though they are not seen as normal people, they are not grouped as disabled either and this may cause problems regarding where to fit in:

Respondent 8: So if they want to put us into our own group there, why can't we be disabled then?

The problem here seems to be that, according to respondents, due to the diversity of brain injuries and their resultant impact on various parts of the brain and functioning, being able to arrive at an umbrella term and definition of persons with ABIs, and therefore the necessary guidelines, is impossible. This lack of definition even prohibits the categorisation of persons with ABIs.

Many of the respondents commented that there is a lack of legislation specifically pertaining to their injuries. As a result, the line is blurry. Even the RAF Fund has not sufficiently grappled with the realities of ABI, perhaps due also to a lack of understanding of the total consequences and repercussions of brain injuries. In addition, because of a poor understanding of phenomena surrounding brain injuries, poorly defined legislation and therefore inappropriate processes,

people awaiting pay out from, for example, the RF, are forced to go back to work before full recovery has taken place in order to survive. This suggests that, because there is no current concrete definition of ABIs and, therefore, appropriate legislation, there has been a greater emphasis on physical disabilities, which as previously described, ABI sufferers very often do not have. Thus:

Respondent 6: Personally I think they are supporting people with physical disabilities or other types of disabilities but I don't think they're doing enough for acquired brain injury.

This is further reiterated by the following respondent who stated:

Respondent 10: I didn't actually come across any legislation or policies at all that were relevant to me, you know, where they'd say okay, you are suffering from fatigue or memory loss, so we will allow for that sort of thing. I didn't find any sort of policies or legislation to actually alleviate that sort of thing.

Even the spouse of a respondent with brain injury seemed to have adopted the same protective and defensive mechanisms; she denied brain injury as being comparable to other physical disabilities and therefore questioned the applicability of the laws. Given the inconsistencies in the law and legislation pertaining to ABI sufferers, one has to question the overall awareness, knowledge and level of companies, government and society in general with regard to the issues.

5.15 Misconceptions as a result of a lack of awareness and understanding of brain injuries

There was a general consensus amongst participants that there is a lack of awareness and understanding of ABIs amongst non-ABI persons. This is inherent in the following statements:

Respondent 7: No, but I think one of the, people have got to understand that because a guy's had brain damage he hasn't changed, he hasn't lost his ability...

Researcher: And do you think that people actually understand that?

Respondent 7: I don't think so.... I don't think there's enough information out there for people to understand.

This statement demonstrates not only the shortage of information and the fact that people do not take the time to be informed, but also that, as a result, they cannot understand people with ABIs for what they are, including their capabilities and their individual merits. This then often leads to stereotyping.

The respondent continues to comment on the lack of awareness:

Respondent 7: For me, the biggest thing is awareness. I don't think there is awareness in the workplace. Like [Respondent 11], for instance, until it happens, then it's: Oh, geez, this person had a stroke or this person's had this done or whatever, then it's aware, but before that, nobody is really aware of it. The awareness in the workplace is not that great really, you know, so they don't know about it until it happens.

The statement of another respondent resonates with this lack of awareness and understanding:

Respondent 9: With the brain injury I suffered a lot of fatigue, so by the time I'd done a couple of hours work I would be finished, absolutely finished and they didn't understand, they just thought, oh well, she's tired, she's not sleeping, or whatever. They didn't quite understand that with a brain injury you do suffer from these funny little idiosyncrasies and with the result I just couldn't cope in the afternoons, I would be absolutely finished.

The manner in which people made sense of her behaviour was to attribute it to factors deemed characteristic of non-ABI persons, instead of seeing her case as unique and understanding it within the context of the ABI.

The problem is reiterated by another respondent:

Respondent 6: So I don't think people understand brain injury at all...Um, I think I've mentioned everything before, that people just don't understand what it's all about.

Another respondent comments on the lack of knowledge of the general population:

Respondent 5: I don't think that there are, not even a percentage of people out there in the world that really have the know-how, I mean, I think it would be a very very good idea for all employers across the board, no matter what industry they're in, to read a book on brain injury and read a book that's been written about, or from somebody's perspective about somebody that has.

He then continues to say that, as a result of this lack of knowledge, people never fully understand or come to manage ABI sufferers in an appropriate manner:

Respondent 10: There's just a few little niggles and snags that might be apparent but you just need to have that little bit of knowledge so that you know how to handle the person because I think that's where possibly, um, the big problem comes in, is that people don't handle you properly. They possibly don't even understand you properly, and um, there's a little bit of a misunderstanding.

What exacerbates the tendency not to actively go out and become more informed is the lack of physical injuries evidenced by ABI sufferers:

Respondent 5: I basically had to give up a very good career because of brain injury. As I say, the company didn't quite understand. They thought, okay, she went to hospital, she's out of hospital, she's recovered, um, I had to walk on crutches for 6 months, but I mean after that my bones and everything sorted themselves out. My head cut is under my hairline so you can't, you couldn't see any physical injuries... they didn't quite understand the sort of, the impact of the brain injury.

5.16 The researcher's discoveries

One respondent (Respondent 10) reports that he has experienced discrimination before but that he has different expectations when thinking about work. He believes that, if he discloses his brain injury, then he will be treated with the same respect. However, he has no experience of being treated with respect before. Another respondent believes that he was not employed, despite only having a standard six and applying only to three companies, due to his brain injury.

Respondent 5 believes that people with brain injuries should be employed because they need to keep themselves occupied. In addition, it would help them do what they have always wanted to do and also to help see themselves as being the same as everyone else.

One respondent (Respondent 10) mentions the need for raising awareness about companies that are good with people with disabilities. This suggests that there is a lack of awareness of companies that do accommodate people with brain injuries. Perhaps this is a lack of awareness in general or perhaps it infers that there are not many companies that are accommodating of people with brain injuries. He continues to mention that there has been a slight shift towards raising awareness and training people regarding the need for dealing with brain injuries but that this has been limited to schools. The respondent notes that he believes that not enough has been done by the government, especially when it comes to job provision.

Another respondent (Respondent 4) first states that companies do not do enough to accommodate people with needs, but then goes on to say that they do assist with needs, following this up with mentioning that they should help them and accommodate them. He then goes on to say that the government does enough as it provides for everybody but that he still needs a job and that the government has not helped him out. He then contradicted himself again, saying that he wants a job for various reasons and then then that it is not important to have a job.

Often brain injuries manifest only when exposed to certain situations and tasks and, until that situation is actualised, there may be no tell-tail signs. So, based on this respondent's premise that, if they do well in the interview, there is no problem with placing them, this is disconcerting and raises questions around education and the understanding of brain injuries in the workplace. This lack of understanding can further lead to poor accommodation and overall acceptance, thereby exacerbating difference.

This further exacerbates the stigma around brain disability as a less than desirable trait that will result in discrimination and disappointment. Respondent 10 is aware of the stigma ("some people might be affected, it wouldn't worry me") if the company checks up on them. However, there is little chance that that a person with a brain injury will be employed when the company has the option of a pool of other potential candidates who do not have a brain injury. This is a subtle

form of discrimination and is perhaps illustrative of a lack of understanding regarding the capabilities of people who have been subject to brain injuries.

Again, Respondent 7 says that he thinks that the organisation would be wary when taking on people with brain injuries, and then later says that he thinks that they will accept and embrace them into the organisation as a whole. Yet even when he reports that he thinks that he will be accepted, he mentions the need to wear a cap to hide his injury. Respondent 7 further says that he believes that people would not be aware of his brain injury, especially if he wears a cap, unless Respondent 7 slips them a note. Why would Respondent 7 slip them a note if there was no need for an explanation regarding behaviour? If the behaviour was perfectly normal, there would be no need to slip the person a note offering an explanation. He validates his ability to perform just like everybody else by saying that he would not be hired if there was not a degree of ability-position fit. He bases this on an interview only, which is a rather superficial test of ability. This indicates that persons suffering with brain injuries have a tendency to look towards certain mechanisms, however superficial, as a means to validate their lack of difference compared to other, non-brain injured individuals.

In this instance, if you pass the interview, then you are deemed capable and the company will accept and embrace you. However, there are hints at underlying insecurities, and ability to “fit-in”, as suggested by the need for a cap. Even the spouse of a respondent with brain injury seems to have adopted the same protective and defensive mechanisms; thus, she denies brain injury as being comparable to other physical disabilities.

One of the reasons presented by Respondent 7 for the importance of work is that it increases confidence. If one manages to hold down and effectively perform a job, one’s confidence increases. Associated with this increase in confidence is the diminishing of a sense of difference. Again, it appears that their reasoning is firmly rooted in the need to feel accepted and to minimise differences.

The respondent wants to be accommodated and suggests there is a lack of accommodation and legislation and of consideration of ABI sufferers’ needs, indicating that they also do not wish to be treated any differently. One of the results of being treated differently is a drastic drop in confidence. Respondent 7 cites confidence as being one of the reasons why people with brain injuries should be introduced slowly back into the workplace, as well as the need to compensate

or rationalise why they may not be as capable. Thereafter, he says that he tires easily so its difficult to concentrate. This clearly demonstrates the rationalising that is happening in the minds of people with brain injuries. They are acutely aware of their difficulties but try to rationalise them by saying things that will normalise their inability, for example, lack of opportunity and lack of confidence.. They try to play down difference and to rationalise their behaviour.

Respondent 9 mentions that her company did not understand the effect and extent of her brain injuries and the immense fatigue experienced as a result. She says that, because the company could not see any visual and physical signs, they were not accommodating, to the extent where they even offered her a package to leave. This suggests that people need to be educated about the repercussions of brain injuries, especially because the company thought that her fatigue was attributable to the lack of sleep only and that she had fully recovered by virtue of the fact that she was no longer relying on crutches.

These misconceptions regarding brain injuries hint at the need for increased awareness and understanding of brain injuries in the workplace. However, persons suffering from brain injuries do not want to be treated any differently. Difference makes them feel inept in some or other manner, a feeling that they wish to ignore at all costs.

Despite the brain injury, many of respondents still reported that they desired returning to work, but acknowledge that their ability is in fact retarded. This frustrates them, as they know they no longer have the opportunity to do so, and it impacts on their confidence, their sense of being needed and their sense of purpose and place in society.

The stigma associated with the lack of understanding often results in a lack of accommodation and the inability to do what they want to do. It hampers their ability to become what they want to become and, inadvertently again, makes them feel inept. The feeling associated with the stigma then is internalised and becomes a harsh reality. The struggle between reality and perception as the respondents try to protect themselves creates a conflict, and this is evident in the contradictions present in the interviews.

Many of the respondents commented that there is a lack of legislation, specifically pertaining to their injuries. Even the RAF have not sufficiently grappled with the realities of ABI, perhaps also due to a lack of understanding of the total consequences and repercussions of brain injuries. In

addition, because of poor understanding of phenomena surrounding brain injuries, poorly defined legislation and therefore inappropriate processes, people awaiting pay out from, for example, the RAF, are forced to go back to work before full recovery has taken place in order to survive.

Another pragmatic concern is the continuous check-ups and tests required by people with ABI, and the impact and accommodation of work to these needs. Again, this suggests a strong need for further education on ABI and the repercussions thereof. It suggests a strong need to align legislation and processes, with practical solutions stemming from an in-depth understanding of ABIs.

Respondent 8 reiterates how people underscore people's appreciation of brain injuries because again, they are not physical, and can often not be seen. This may explain why people do not accommodate them as well as required.

Respondent 8 says that he faced some challenges at work as he focused on his strengths at the detriment of required areas of his job that he was not good at. This again shows that people with ABI tend to focus on those tasks that avoid the possibility of failure, and therefore the admission of their limitations, a protective mechanism if you must. They try to present themselves as normal ("So, they just saw, like I said before, a well-dressed guy, a well-groomed guy, and everything on the outside looked fine") and try their best to act accordingly ("Because I must say also from a personal perspective I really didn't want to make it known, I didn't want to, just straight come out and say to everybody, look I've got a traumatic brain injury and x, y, and z has happened to me, would you like to employ me"), but in doing so, they inadvertently set themselves up for failure, and this in turn becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

For example, having admitted that to others, he felt that "having said that I would put myself in a negative perspective already, that it wouldn't work out well for me at all". However, by denying that, he set himself up for failure and the fulfilling of that exact prophecy.

Even if ABI sufferers manage to negotiate the job interview successfully, when it comes to sustained employment, there seems to be a problem. By creating these unrealistic expectations in order to avoid being separated from the crowd, they create unnecessary and unrealistic expectations of themselves and on the part of the employer and, because they initially did not

disclose the information and the employers are largely ignorant, it becomes a problem when it comes to sustained performance and job security.

5.17 Focus groups

Two focus group sessions were carried out during the study. One was carried out with participants who already formed part of the main participant sample. The other group were participants who were new to the study and had had no involvement with the study prior to the focus group session.

This discussion within the focus group was carried out in order to understand the following outcomes:

1. In the context of improving HR Policies and practices in South Africa, experience(s) in gaining or sustaining employment of or people affected by ABI
2. What are the present feelings with regard to employment of people affected by ABI?
3. Is adequate accommodation in the workplace available to individuals affected by ABI?
4. Do organisations embrace people affected by ABI in the workplace?
5. Are there laws or policies that assist people affected by ABI in gaining employment?
6. Would individuals affected by ABI benefit from employment?

The discussion and findings to the above mentioned questions are as follows:

Respondent 19: I think the other thing looking at the overall picture is that those who have their brain injuries at a later date, at an older age have a big advantage. Having, because they would have already developed their career and they would have already worked with a company for many years. I mean, I'm in that situation and it would have been like I had already developed a reputation and people knew who I was having worked for one company for 40 years. So I was fairly well known in the community and in my particular case, um, a company and people who knew me have re-employed, or have offered me employment because of my expertise and their knowledge having

worked with me before. So although there are some disadvantages and fatigue and your ability to do, and also your ability not to do physical things to the same extent as you used to be able to do is a bit of a disadvantage. But uh, the area that I find is useful, I've gone into mentoring which means I can assist students who don't have that knowledge and they, they, so whatever I've forgotten, they're still having to learn. So also it means that you're making a contribution back to the community and you are helping those who are less fortunate than yourself.

By working, ABI sufferers gain a sense of purpose and feel that they are making a positive contribution to society rather than merely being “locked up” and hidden or marginalised from society. Only when people do not stigmatise or discriminate against people with ABIs are they able to appreciate the potential contribution they can make to society and it is only by making this contribution and being accepted as an individual with their own respective strengths and competencies, that they gain a sense of normality and their own unique identity.

Respondent 20: Can I say something? I've never had, I've never been given any opportunity to work in a job in a workplace or go to university and be, make something of my life. That was taken away from me when I was born with my brain injury. Um, and I feel sometimes in life, it's not fair. I feel I can't, I can't contribute to any society. I can't go out to movies like normal people do. I can't drive, I have to be home all the time where my parents are and be around them 24 hours a day and I feel I'm just going nowhere in my life. I'm not really wanting to do anything, I feel like totally giving up, I don't see the point in wanting to work in a job and being part of society, because what's the use, what use is there? There's no, there's nothing there for me. I can't get in a car and drive to A, B, or C, or D, or anything like that and sometimes it's very hard to understand, sometimes when people say to me why don't you want to do anything worthwhile with your life, there's plenty opportunities out there, but I was never given the opportunities like other people have been given.

Again, because of the individual differences between the resultant effects of the ABIs, a blanket definition of TBI and any resultant laws or decisions on this definition is problematic. This respondent articulated this very well. Because she cannot, for example, drive, go to movies, hold a job, study, she feels that she is not “normal”. She sees herself as having no place in society nor able to make a contribution, which makes her feel as if she has no purpose, no personhood and no place. She mentioned the need to feel normal.

Respondent 23: They actually look at you, people like us who are very lucky I would say, and they think you look perfectly normal, you look great and they don't understand what a head injury is about. They basically say well you're fine, you look great, you shouldn't have any other afflictions, you shouldn't suffer from short term memory, you should, you should be perfect and I don't think there's much understanding in the workplace when you've got a brain injury.

In order to feel normal, it is important that every person with a TBI be treated as an individual case and for it to be accepted that they are equally as capable to perform a job and to immerse themselves successfully into society as others are.

References are made indicative of stereotypes and again this relates to the lack of awareness. One example is a ship's captain who said that she has frontal lobe damage which has affected her short term memory. However, people keep thinking that all of the knowledge gained prior to the acquired TBI is still intact. This shows how people are misinformed and this misinformation leads to generalisations and stereotyping, thus a view of the sufferer as incompetent. Such misconceptions act as a barrier to employment. Again, the issue of the lack of physical markers of injury exacerbates people's lack of understanding of the full picture and also prevents them educating themselves further regarding TBIs. Thus:

Respondent 9: Well, basically when I started a new job a couple of years ago, I didn't, when I went for my interview, I didn't go and say well here's my CV and I've had a brain injury. I didn't mention it at all. It was something that I ... it actually didn't enter my head to actually mention that I had a brain injury. But just along the way with like short term memory loss and what not, it was noticed and um, like my boss kept on saying well you know, I asked you to

do something like ten minutes ago and now I've compensated for all of that because I walk around with a little notepad the whole time. So whenever anybody says something or asks me to do something, I write it down. So, but I, because they didn't know I had a brain injury, um, I just had to compensate along the way and after a couple of times I ...

Researcher: But you didn't tell them?

Respondent: No I didn't.

Researcher: But do you think if you'd told them they would have not given you the job or treated you differently as in assisted you?

Respondent 9: Um, I think it would have had a bearing on it because ja, I worked for a constructural engineer and there was a lot of um, work that I had to remember and I think it could have had a bearing on getting the job originally.

In relation to this, there is a perception that dealing with a person with actual physical injuries, for example, one who is in a wheelchair, is much easier to deal with as employers know exactly what the problem is and how best to accommodate for it.

Again, and as highlighted in the second focus group, there is a need to feel a sense of purpose and to enjoy a feeling of utility, without which, there is a tendency to feel as if the sufferers are no more than mere victims of circumstance, what every misinformed person believes them to be. One respondent even said that she knew of several people who are employable but had not been employed; she attributed this to the lack of knowledge of TBIs and consequent employability. This indicates that there should be a strong emphasis for the need to educate employers on the markers and phases of healing so that they can better understand the behaviour of employees and be optimally placed to deal more effectively with ABI employees.

Respondent 5: I can't speak for everyone but I know that the people that I've met, have been through here, are certainly employable and I just feel there's not enough being done to educate the people out there about brain injuries. I mean I for one didn't know anything about brain injury. So, if somebody

who's in a coma and had a smack on the head I'd also be very wary about employing him. I'd be very wary about contracting with a person like that because I didn't know anything about it. But having been through it I think I can honestly say that the employment sector needs to be educated as to...

Respondent 19: I think, in the current topic, I think the question is, there are, I was very fortunate that, uh, um, I was medically boarded because the department said that because I couldn't drive a car I wasn't allowed to be employed. I said well I can, because I have a driver to take me around, otherwise I can do the job. But I think at the time it was a very un, instability in a journey of race and colour and things like that and they wanted to down, get rid of the old regime as it were and I was in that environment, highly qualified and I was a white person with like 24 years' service so it was easier just to let me, board him. But after that I was here, spent a year in hospital recovering from my injuries, physical injuries and mental injuries. Um, the physical injuries, they didn't expect me to be able to walk and I am able to walk with a walker. The one problem we had at the work was that it was upstairs. The office was on the first storey, 20 steps for me to get up to the office and um, going up wasn't too bad but coming down was a nightmare. You know, it was very scary. And I did also on one occasion when I needed to go to the bathroom I walked out the office across the little courtyard and into the gents and I tripped over the carpet rail, the aluminium strip and similar to what I nearly did this morning, today and I landed, I went from standing onto my knees and I hurt my right leg. So I went another four months in hospital. So everything I'd already done had to be redone again which of course made me very happy. I was a little peeved off you know, once bitten twice shy.

One respondent mentions that the people at work have been very accommodating and friendly, and have not treated him any differently; however, this is contradicted later when he states that he hides his condition from them out of fear of being treated differently.

Respondent 6: Ja. Like I can remember like when we were talking in the interview I said that ja, there's nothing that's being done and I don't think that there's enough attention paid um, to the actual legislation and um, the human rights procedures that there are available for people like us because like I said to you, it's not that we want to just sit back and relax and not do anything, you know, we are more than capable. You know, it's only our frontal lobes that are damaged, the rest of our brain is perfectly fine. We can still function as a good employee and do our jobs. It's just we need that bit of cotton wool and extra guiding along the way and we just need that little bit of extra help that doesn't really cost you as the employer so much to just read up a little bit about it, know what it's about and know how to um, handle us as traumatic brain injury, ja.

The lack of company understanding of ABIs and the requirements to support sufferers means they become complacent; they do not take the initiative prior to exposure to an employee suffering with a TBI. The poverty of available, applicable and accurate resources available to educate readers about TBIs exacerbates the lack of awareness and understanding, leading to further stereotyping and generalisations.

Respondent 10: Ja, and in saying that maybe have a traumatic brain injury organisation that forms itself and every year, roundabout, I don't know, June, July or January, February they have a week long seminar and all companies, no matter who you are, black white pink blue yellow, you're invited to go there for the week. You don't have to be there the whole week, you can be there for a day, two days, but just have to attend a day session or you can attend the whole week's session and there's informative talks and there's discussions and there's frequently asked questions and there's group sessions and there's TBI people there that can assist you, that can educate you, that can speak to you. Something like that I think would be something that would help.

There are numerous challenges to employment, which include physical limitations (fatigue, speech), interpersonal communication and relations, lack of physical conditions supportive of

injuries, injuries preventing sufferers from meeting the requirements of the job, quota systems not working (they would rather employ an unemployed person than a disabled person) and subconscious behaviours that are inconsistent with forming, maintaining and promoting the interpersonal relations which is necessary at work. There are certain factors in place that enable and facilitate employment, such as having contacts and having already developed a reputation. Even though it was argued by respondents that companies accommodate people with brain injuries, this appears to be at a minimum as brain injured individuals often do not return to work. The onus seems to lie still predominantly on individuals, rather than companies, schools and so forth, when it comes to accommodating disabled individuals. This seems to indicate that there is generally a lack of awareness and knowledge regarding the requirements of accommodating TBI sufferers; it is only when confronted with a TBI sufferer that thought is given to how to accommodate them and this is indicative of a lack of initiative.

5.18 Pilot interviews

Pilot interviews were carried out with regard to the present views of professionals in the field of ABI and their understanding of the need for employment of people suffering from ABI in South Africa. Whereas the respondents themselves mentioned it to be an advantage to have previous employment, one of the professionals felt that there is a lack of opportunity, especially as ABI sufferers are unable to return to their previous jobs.

The respondents in the pilot suggested multiple reasons for why there are limited opportunities. These include:

- Long recovery times
- Loss of previous employment
- Lack of new opportunities
- Quotas that need to be filled
- Selecting those ABI sufferers with limited physical abnormalities
- Prolonged recovery time
- Lack of work fitness

- Family perceptions that they are incapable (this of course is linked to the expectation that they cannot work, and are incapable of doing so)
- Competing directly with able bodied individuals
- Companies want to have to make as little effort to ensure integration as possible
- Transport
- Stigma
- Their own selves
- Programmes (lack thereof is indicative of the lack of understanding of ABI)
- Legislation (lack of follow-through) - leads to general lack of awareness and support
- Lack of physical markers of the injury
- Lack of understanding of ABIs.

Lack of understanding of ABIs leads to stigma, stereotyping and fear of ABI sufferers as employers do not understand what the ABI person is going through, and do not know what to expect. –As a result, often people do not know how to react to them or treat them, with the end result that they try to avoid them completely or they act inappropriately. As a result they offend an already sensitive individual. This type of behaviour is self-perpetuating confirming the ABI sufferer’s already fragile sense of self, self-esteem and self-confidence.

Other reasons for limited employment opportunities that were mentioned include changes in ABI sufferers’ behaviours, cognitive functioning and the emotional aspects that render them unsuited to the work environment, relationships and requirements. Finally, there may be a lack of incentives; because there are so many accommodations that a company has to make in order to foster and create an environment supportive of people with ABIs, there needs to be some type of incentive to do so. Currently, there is a lack of incentives to make it worth the required effort. This has the end result that ABI sufferers are not hired nor are the programmes, support groups and whatever else is necessary to harness their inherent strengths created. Professionals in the field also mention the individual nature of ABIs in that one cannot clearly define what constitutes the disability because all individuals vary so greatly. This means that in order to make the correct placement to ensure job-person fit, ensuring success and maintaining self-esteem, it is imperative that each ABI sufferer be individually assessed.

Just like the study respondents, the professionals mentioned the need for mentoring, especially because the self-esteem of ABI sufferers is already so fragile. This goes hand in hand with the need for, and acknowledgement of, the importance of support. They also acknowledged the importance of work for numerous reasons:

- It provides an improved quality of life
- It prevents their becoming institutionalised so they become dependent and burdensome to society
- They earn a salary (although one professional refutes this by saying that its less financial, and more about living a productive life)
- They engage in work related tasks
- They enjoy social interaction (thereby preventing institutionalisation, further demotivating them as they lose initiative and worsening already shaky self-esteem)
- It gives them a sense of purpose
- It decreases the cost of disability
- There are cognitive benefits (it helps to normalise them)
- It gives them structure and routine; with this comes purpose and meaning, leading to a sense of identity and personhood. Where there is no meaning, often the person's self-esteem decreases dramatically to a state where they become depressed and essentially institutionalised, offering no benefits to society. Routine also helps to deal with the pathology of a lack of motivation, helping to keep them going even when they do not feel motivated
- Many ABI sufferers are still young, and possess the ability to contribute meaningfully, for many years.

The professionals also concurred with the fact that, if they were to meet quotas and employ people with disabilities, companies would tend to search for those individuals with the least problematic affliction, where not much would be required on the part of the company itself to accommodate them. They felt that there is not enough incentive to make the necessary changes to accommodate disabled individuals.

They concurred that many of the respondents with ABIs are employable; all that it requires is a little mentoring, coaching and individual assessment to ensure a good fit and successful integration. However, companies are not willing to make this initial investment and when companies fail to do this, often ABI sufferers fail to successfully integrate and this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, further lowering their self-esteem. Ultimately, their own low self-esteem and poor confidence is a major barrier to success. It was generally agreed that the programmes that are put in place for different levels of functioning have not experienced much success in getting people employed. This is in line with what the post ABI respondents said in terms of the need for further efforts in supporting them, securing employment and thereafter assisting them to sustain employment.

There is also an acknowledgement and perception among the professionals of the need to educate employees and organisations regarding ABIs. Again, complacency on the part of organisations emerges here in that one of the professionals stated that it would be unrealistic to expect organisations to take the initiative themselves, but rather that this should be outsourced to an external organisation who would educate employees regarding ABI, including how to support and accommodate sufferers. One of his suggestions was that there needs to be an optimal and suitable time to recommend an ABI sufferer for potential employment. If this suggestion is made too soon, there is a risk of failure, with self-confidence issues and the worsening of self-esteem. If it is done too late, there is a risk of the ABI sufferer developing a victim and institutionalised mentality.

Some of the requirements seen by the professionals as necessary for successful integration into the workplace include:

- Possessing appropriate work habits
- Work hardening and vocational rehabilitation (reiterated by several professionals)
- A middle man who can facilitate the transition into employment post vocational training and work readiness

- The raising of awareness and education. Only once employers have been educated do they come to see associated increased acceptance. With acceptance and understanding, comes a decline in stereotyping and stigma.
- Education, not only to raise awareness but also to normalise the behaviour of ABI sufferers. By explaining and getting employees to understand how and why certain behaviours and responses occur, they will be able to understand and thereby normalise their behaviour.
- An understanding that some people will be more capable of performing particular duties than others and that it is advisable to get them into positions where there is a good job-person fit; this will not only benefit the company but also the individual as they will not feel disempowered, especially given the fragile nature of their self-esteem to start with. But key to understanding the individual nature of ABIs is education. The following need to be created:
 - An understanding of the person, their individual needs and strengths, so as to find ways to innovatively and practically accommodate them
 - Allowing the ABI sufferer a space within which they can not only act independently but also impart to fellow colleagues the appreciation and awareness of what the ABI involves so that they can help and assist them where necessary. Creating this type of accepting culture and environment helps the ABI sufferer to feel as though they fit in, and to gain a sense of belonging
 - Guidelines and policies to address the needs of ABI sufferers so that the necessary structures and support can be put in place
 - Taking account of some of the side-effects of ABIs, for example, the lack of inhibition, especially if, for example, the person is diabetic, ensuring that they do not have access to sugary things
 - Setting up peer and organisational support groups; this gives ABI sufferers the chance to express their frustrations and share their lived experiences but –also allows for an increased understanding of this lived experience by their peers and superiors.

Strangely even the professionals were acutely aware of stereotypes around ABIs, almost subscribing to them themselves. Thus, they all mentioned inappropriate behaviours, for instance.

However, not all ABI sufferers manifest in this manner. One of the professionals mentioned motivation and the wavering nature of this in ABI sufferers. However, the manner in which she phrased it pathologised it, although it does not necessarily have a pathological cause but could be circumstantial; another professional mentioned that sometimes there are cognitive, circumstantial, behavioural, emotional or social factors acting as barriers to successful employment. Thus:

Respondent 1: I think in a little way it might also sometimes be motivation from the client. They want to go back to work, yes, but the amount of effort that it would take from them, unfortunately with brain injury your motivation centre can get affected, so it's not just a laziness thing, its actual pathology, so to work around that and to keep them motivated to do it, because you can have an interview with them and they want to work now, I'm ready to do this and then the next day when you actually start with it then they're like hmmm, don't really want to do this. So, it's to get them into that routine and, ja.

Although the recommendations made by the professionals were sound and were derived directly from the problems experienced by ABI sufferers, their associated fears and the frustrations of their peers and superiors, it has to be inquired whether they are they feasible and whether they would actually be embraced by organisations. Especially in today's environment, where there are so many able bodied people, who are more likely to adapt and fit into the organisation, and given the vast lack of incentives and legislation around how to define and effectively deal with and accommodate ABI sufferers. This is further exacerbated by the elusive nature of ABIs; ABI sufferers do not display obvious physical problems where the solution is evident. In fact, ABIs manifest in multiple ways that are unique to the individuals themselves. There is a need to understand this but this is rare and unless exposed to an ABI sufferer, most people will not make the time or effort, let alone take the initiative to educate themselves accordingly. This makes the elusive nature of ABIs even more evident, and fuels stereotypes, stigma and over-generalisations, which are largely not fact based.

For example, there are already specialised agencies that place disabled people; however, these have shown little or no success. This is due to factors like the quota system and BEE. One professional mentioned that there is not such a huge need for employment for financial reasons;

nevertheless, the respondents in the study nearly all mentioned the want of money. Furthermore, while the professionals talked in general about the lived experiences of ABI sufferers, it is noticeable that they did not mention all of the wants expressed by the respondents themselves. They did not indicate what is inherently different about those companies that are accommodating people with ABIs compared to those who are not or discuss whether they are really accommodating them.

5.18.1 Workplace accommodation

One of the themes that emerged was the need for workplace accommodation for people with ABI's and the effect that workplace accommodation would have on the employability of persons with ABI.

Respondent 2: Luckily for X, he's an engineer and they need someone to supervise in inverted commas, the unprofessional engineers because they first have to work a few years to gain experience and then either have an interview I'm not exactly sure, but they need a professional engineer to sign off on their hours, to check that their work is correct so that's basically what he is doing. So he doesn't have any original work he is just checking up on the other guys. So that's actually quite a big accommodation that the company have made for him.

Researcher: And a big responsibility as well they have placed on him.

Respondent 2: Ja.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 2: And also, he's working half day.

Um, well, I know that the Department of Health has a kind of buddy support system for all their employees, um, where if no matter what you're going through there is a system for you to go through to be in touch with a person to counsel you and help you through whatever it is that's going on. So there are companies that have that. I know Transnet as well, they, um, if they pick up that one of their employees are going through a difficult time then they send them to an outside counsellor to help them through it. So there's definitely companies that do have support systems.

Also for managers you know, not to be so hard on them or to maybe to lighten their work load if it's possible or to give them an assistant, you know, some companies do that. A lot of companies, you know, I mean, I'm only talking about the negative. But I've also heard of a lot companies who've been incredibly supportive of their employees, you know, sending them for rehab, um, giving them opportunities, uh, giving them assistance, you know, um, lightening their work load, that kind of thing.

But um, education is a big thing, um, and also the other thing is that it is job specific so, if someone is doing something that is physical to take that kind of pressure away from them, to maybe try them out in more of an administrative capacity or answering phones, um, I interviewed a lady the other day who was working as a general orderly at Prince Mtsheni when she had her brain injury and afterwards she just physically wasn't able to keep up with her work, it's a stressful job that, physically. So her management made her answer phones at switchboard, you know, and they found that she was much more capable of doing that

5.18.2 Employability

Respondent 2: After a couple of years they become more aware of it and they're able to correct their behaviour but it does take quite a bit of time and not everyone is able to do it unfortunately, but it doesn't mean that they can't do the actual job. They can still be very effective in the actual work, it's just that interacting with other people.

Respondent 10: They also have a look at ... in my sessions, I completely understand how he can cope in the workplace and five days a week

Respondent 9: Some do have that, ja. And they might just surprise you, they are quite amazing.

Respondent 1: They don't actually realise that this is what's so frustrating a lot of it gets down to, you know, their own understanding of a client's injuries, but your acquired, your client's with acquired brain injuries, or a lot of them, if

initially they take a lot of work, or some work to get integrated into a specific job, but once they are in, they can become really reliable employees for a very long term basis, ja so they can be very successfully re-employed,

Respondent 5: And also, I mean look, you get clients with acquired brain injuries that really have got the ability to go far in terms of work

Respondent 1: They're ready for open labour market, they just need the initial bit of understanding and job fit analysis making sure that it is a successful process. So it's not actually going to end up breaking down their self-esteem further by having too low expectations of what they're capable of. Ja.

Respondent 1: So basic ability to kind of follow work habits, expected work habits, so not specific to any one job, but in general in the open labour market, what are the general expectations in terms of how someone that is employed they should be able to go to the bathroom, they must be able to work two hours before needing a break, you know, just general work habits. So to actually allow for a little bit of assessment of work habits.

Respondent 3: If someone has a brain injury and they are staying on in the company, to hold like a support group, or you know, one or two sessions just to educate people on the nature of brain injury. But I've also heard of a lot companies who've been incredibly supportive of their employees, you know, sending them for rehab, um, giving them opportunities, uh, giving them assistance, you know, um, lightening their work load,

Respondent 2: Um, obviously when your client, most of the clients that we have here they've had a severe, moderate to severe injury where they need 6 months plus of therapy, um, so for them, that recovery period is very important and to um, go through therapy in that time, just keeps them focused and then to regain the skills.

Respondent 2: So it's to get that physical mobility back and then in terms of occupational therapy, your um, self-care, just being able to go to the toilet alone. If you're at work and you can't go to the loo, you're going to have quite a bit

of problem. One of my client's problem was he couldn't fasten his pants zipper and his button and his belt, so to relearn those skills, um, and then your cognitive therapy is very important especially for guys, it's not in the physical labour then they need to learn how to focus on a task again.

Respondent 2: Some people need to relearn how to simply use objects, um, and visual perception training, um, most of these clients have quite a big visual perception loss, um, so they struggle read, they struggle to find the keys on the keyboard, some people miss out on the entire one half of their body, so sometimes that improves but not then the need to learn how to adapt to that. In that sense, therapy is very important. Um, I haven't encountered other programmes or services apart from I-Can!, but I Can! is also not able to help all our clients.

Um, a lot of the guys that was previously employed, previously trained, they don't really lose a lot of that, um, it's more call it your occupational performance component, so it's your basic skills like your motor skills, your cognitive skills, emotional skills. It's more those things that need to be adjusted and that's done through therapy.

Respondent 1: The fact that they would normally not be employed for a period of sometimes up to four or five years because of recovery, um, work hardening is essential... together with a bit of work hardening so getting them into, it's called vocational rehabilitation so the opportunity to become rehabilitate in terms of work ability.

5.18.3 Stereotypes

Respondent 3: Whereas brain injured people are unique and a lot of fun, but they come with challenges

Not in terms of altercations to the building, in terms of productivity that your employee is going to deliver, you might have to hire two people instead of one because the one person might not be able to do the full job.

Respondent 2: I think a lot of people are rather scared of disabled people, because they don't know...

Respondent 1: Attitude of fellow employees, of management, stigma attached to someone with a disability. Especially when they have a disability that might affect how they look. So like your spinal injuries, everyone's comfortable with a wheel chair now, because they look normal and they're sitting in a wheel chair and it's all fine, but when you've got an acquired brain injury you can have a disability that makes you look a little bit different.

We've got guys here that are super, super intelligent, that are, that have incredible ability to work but if you were introduced to them you would actually on initial ... you would think that they were much lower functioning than they actually are.

First impressions are not how they actually are, you know. First impressions of a lot of your injured clients, um, are very incorrect. The company might get put off by just that initial.

Researcher: Outer look.

Respondent 1: Outer look of a person

Respondent 3: Look I think, um, the, the thing that I can think of is education because um, the stigma is such a huge thing and especially in the black culture, in the black population. Not only in, or work is one thing, but just in the community setting when they hear that you've had a brain injury they think you're crazy. They often have these uh, and they, they are ostracised for it and when we interview them, they cry about it you know, that people are talking about them behind their backs saying they are crazy, workers are saying they're crazy, you know, when they make a small mistake, or if they forget about doing something at work, it becomes a huge joke among the workers and um, it affects them psychologically so, I think the biggest thing that we could do is educate our workers.

Respondent 4: And, if I think about the place that we visited in Mauritius, um, this was [inaudible] Craft Care. They employed about 160 disabled people. Most of those people had either been born with a brain injury like cerebral palsy or they had mental retardation like Down's Syndrome, um, very few with acquired brain injury and when I asked the manager why he avoided traumatic brain injury he just said because they give me problems and they are difficult to manage behaviourally and they just upset the equilibrium in the work force. So now I just avoid them and go for the other disabilities. He also employed a lot of deaf individuals.

Respondent 4: Headway are very active in the UK and there seems to be a lot more acceptance of disability in the UK than we have here. In this country it's almost as though once you have a brain injury or you are disabled in anyway, you know, that's your lot and you're going to get your disability grant.

5.18.4 Challenges

It can therefore be said that the paramount to working is the ability to perform daily, mundane tasks deemed by society to be considered “normal”, and that contribute to a sense of what it means to be “normal” and integrated in society. Once these expectations are met, and integration into society has happened, a person is perceived to gain a sense of belonging and acceptance, thereby, gaining a sense of identity. When the pursuit of this sense of wholeness is challenged, the person loses confidence, and adopts more of a victim mentality. This might also explain why they tend to avoid situations that may lead to creating, or detracting from this sense of wholeness. This awareness of the stigma associated with ABI will be further described in the subsequent section. However long it takes on the programme, it is essential for the management of challenging issues to be handled in terms of language and communication, promotions and development, motivation, the design of the programme and job security.

Respondent 2: I don't think there's enough incentive for the companies, um, they need to, obviously they would sometimes have to make physical alterations to the building, so for them there's a financial barrier. Not in terms of alterations to the building, in terms of productivity that your employee is going to

deliver, you might have to hire two people instead of one because the one person might not be able to do the full job.

Ja. I think just another thing as well is if they can be a some or other incentive for the companies to do this, because it's, it's a great deal for them to give up, it's a lot of adaptation that they have to make from their side and if they're not going to get much in return, other than abiding with the legislation or, so, it's not going to be enough for those just to get quality of life to a person in a wheelchair.

Respondent 1: Opportunities, from the companies perspective, if there was more of a absolute incentive to employ people with disabilities, I think they would actively engage with institutions where there are people that are of employable age with disabilities and look at reasonable accommodation. But I think at the moment, it doesn't appear like there's urgency to employ people with disability and if they do, it's kind of like, let's try and find someone with the least disability who'll have the least impact on my company. Not going to require any additional kind of infrastructure or support or mentoring so with the least effort to integrate into the company.

Ja, so they can be very successfully re-employed, it's just that initial investment I think that maybe, ja, puts companies off.

Respondent 3: Um, the other thing is that it could be perceived as hazardous I suppose to employ someone who has a brain injury because you're always thinking of if this person injures themselves on the job that the company is liable, so, you know, they have to put added security measures in place and things like that and a lot of people don't want that responsibility, um, so often I have found that people are prejudiced in getting new jobs because of that and people who are in jobs already, um, are told, you know, that they're not allowed to do certain functions. If they're not dismissed then their functions are limited.

So it can be done, it's just that, you know, business comes first as they always say, so that's something.

Respondent 1: You don't want to leave it too long that they become kind of institutionalised and start regressing in that sense you don't want to do it too soon, because we know that in the first six months to a year there's a lot of recovery

Also, family expectations. Because often families will think, oh, shame they've had a brain injury, the last thing we want to do is now make them go back to work, you know they make it sound like they actually torturing the person whereas it's actually giving them quality of life back again to get the opportunity, especially if they of the employment age. So, ja, family expectations play a huge role.

The above quotations provide evidence that there are many challenges that people post ABI are faced with in the workplace. The recommendations to overcome these challenges will be described further in Chapter Six.

5.19 Interviews with professionals

In order to understand the need for employment post ABI and to find out if employment for people post ABI is necessary, interviews were carried out with professionals in the field who deal with people post ABI. The following themes emerged from the interviews:

5.19.1 Lack of accommodation

Professionals in the field stated that they felt as if there was a lack of accommodation in the workplace for people post ABI. They felt that this contributed towards challenges of employment and the sustainability of employment of these persons. Thus:

Respondent 2: They're not being treated as clients with acquired brain injury that require special support and reasonable accommodation and they're not, they're not seen as highly valued, I guess.

Um, I approached his company, a big South African packaging company, asking if they could give me a facilitator who could work with Ian as his

surrogate frontal lobe while he was being reintegrated into the work place and they wouldn't consider it. I asked if they could reduce his travelling, he was the National Sales Manager and again it wasn't considered. So, there was no real flexibility. He either had to come in and sink or swim. Um, and that is not realistic with a traumatic brain injury. You have to factor in, um, things like fatigue and so forth. Um, especially if somebody is um, returning to a work place and they only had their accident fairly recently, um, you've got to make those kind of allowances.

5.19.2 Lack of awareness and understanding

Respondent 2: I think it's also, um, they employers understanding, they, a lot of people have, don't know about people with brain injuries, some of them might think it's a person in a coma, or a person that cannot talk, or a person that can't move around, or it's a person with severe spasticity with physical disfigurement.

Researcher: So it's a misconception in terms of a lack of knowledge of what an acquired brain injury is?

Respondent 2: Yes, they don't realise that even though this person has limitations, they can still do a pretty fine job.

Respondent 2: I don't think people realise how that limits a person.

Respondent 2: I think a lot of people are rather scared of disabled people, because they don't know...

Researcher: Why would you say that?

Respondent 2: They don't know what to expect.

Researcher: So it's a lack of knowledge?

Respondent 2: Ja.

Respondent 2: I forgot what I was saying last time. Oh, it was about the general public that's uneducated as to people with a disability and they don't know how to treat them so that could easily upset them, upset the disabled for some.

Respondent 2: We don't always realise it, but our guys often struggle emotionally. Um, they have to face their challenges quite often, now this is more for your

more severely disabled, especially physically disabled people, um, so it's just a space for them to kind of debrief on what they are being challenged with and sadly sometimes your managers or CEO's kind of add to that frustration because they don't understand your situation or they don't think that you belong here because of your injury or your disability

Respondent 2: I think that there's a lack of understanding of traumatic brain injury, um, that, um, because they don't have, um, things such as work hardening programmes, um, the ABI patient population is almost set up to fail from the word go.

And I think that there is a need that how one actually goes about um, creating that awareness, I think it's a mammoth task, um, because there is a lack of understanding in industry when it comes to brain injuries. And, if I think about the place that we visited in Mauritius, um, this was [inaudible] Craft Care. They employed about 160 disabled people. Most of those people had either been born with a brain injury like cerebral palsy or they had mental retardation like Down's Syndrome, um, very few with acquired brain injury and when I asked the manager why he avoided traumatic brain injury he just said because they give me problems and they are difficult to manage behaviourally and they just upset the equilibrium in the work force. So now I just avoid them and go for the other disabilities. He also employed a lot of deaf individuals.

5.19.3 Lack of definition

Respondent 4: I think also um, because traumatic brain injured clients are so individual you can't really group them, you can say this is generally what's going to work for every brain injured person, I mean, there's such a, you get such different pictures or ... in terms of people with brain injuries that they need individual assessment in placements.

5.19.4 Lack of opportunity

Respondent 3: So, just to give them the opportunity to try and they might surprise you, ja.

Researcher: And that's somewhere where made me think they are lacking because they're just not getting opportunities.

Respondent 3: This is especially important for your guys that was employed, um, because a lot of people what we've seen, like patient X, he is, he's so poor in therapy in terms of concentration and in actually delivering, but he's doing a stunning job at work, he's doing absolutely perfectly there. Ja, so, that's the big thing from me is just to give them the opportunity if they can have like a trial run. Right, I think major challenges that I've noticed with clients I've been involved with um, have been this lack of opportunity.

Ja, so definitely um, ja, one of the major challenges is just opportunity

Let me just see, ja, so I think basically, I mean, there's a struggle to be employed, ja.

...achieving employment in the experiences of people affected by, I think it's more opportunity, it's opportunity, I think if they were given the opportunity, if they got passed that stage then definitely

I think that there's a lack of understanding of traumatic brain injury, um, that, um, because they don't have, um, things such as work hardening programmes, um, the ABI patient population is almost set up to fail from the word go.

5.19.5 Competition with able bodied individuals

Respondent 4: Because I think they are having to apply for positions, um, that they are competing directly with completely able bodied or um, individuals without a disability. They're not being treated as clients with acquired brain injury that require special support and reasonable accommodation and they're not, they're not seen as highly valued, I guess. They're just seen as one of the many applicants and they come with more baggage, so it's more difficult to actually, to take them on board.

5.19.6 Discontinuation of previous employment

Respondent 1: So for example they were previously employed prior to the injury because of the nature of the traumatic brain injury, there's often quite long recovery

time, so they normally get put onto temporary incapacity or eventually their position is made redundant, they're no longer able to continue working in their previous capacity so returning to their previous work, that door just seems to close.

5.19.7 Lack of work fitness

Respondent 2: They're not ready to get back into work or to fill a post kind of, let's say a full day post, they might be able to slowly grade it.

Researcher: Like part time employment?

Respondent 1: Ja, kind of part time going into, kind of building up to full time. So to take on a post there's no reasonable or lack of reasonable accommodation in terms of their disability or their, ja, lack of work fitness.

When they sustain a brain injury it's critical for them, you know, often times it can be physically demanding and difficult for them to get back to work because of pain and so on and so forth.

Another thing is that what accompanies brain injury or what often accompanies brain injury is that a physical manifestation, you know, like a person who has a stroke will now have to walk with crutches or will have some sort of physical manifestation of that stroke. And that's huge.

A particular patient I'm thinking of who had his own business, multi million rand business and um, now when he goes into these board meetings and he sits with his board of directors he feels ashamed and embarrassed because he's coming there with a crutch and physically his appearance isn't what it was. Um, you know, and his speech is not what it was, he's not as fluent as before, he can't think on his feet as he used to, you know he can't make these fast decisions and all of that, it's a huge barrier.

5.19.8 Minimal abnormalities

Respondent 1: Successfully employed have got very, very minor traumatic brain injuries where they actually appear normal, there's no abnormality in terms of their

appearance which is often the thing that can put people off in employment because of just, ja, um, being uncomfortable with disability.

But I think at the moment, it doesn't appear like there's urgency to employ people with disability and if they do, it's kind of like, let's try and find someone with the least disability who'll have the least impact on my company. Not going to require any additional kind of infrastructure or support or mentoring so with the least effort to integrate into the company.

Um, the other thing is that it could be perceived as hazardous I suppose to employ someone who has a brain injury because you're always thinking of if this person injures themselves on the job that the company is liable, so, you know, they have to put added security measures in place and things like that and a lot of people don't want that responsibility, um, so often I have found that people are prejudiced in getting new jobs because of that and people who are in jobs already, um, are told, you know, that they're not allowed to do certain functions. If they're not dismissed then their functions are limited.

5.19.9 Prolonged recovery times

Respondent 2: Um, obviously when your client, most of the clients that we have here they've had a severe, moderate to severe injury where they need 6 months plus of therapy, um, so for them, that recovery period is very important and to um, go through therapy in that time, just keeps them focused and then to regain the skills. Some people can't walk after 6 months.

There's often quite long recovery time, so they normally get put onto temporary incapacity or eventually their position is made redundant, they're no longer able to continue working in their previous capacity so returning to their previous work, that door just seems to close and then looking for new employment opportunities.

Looking at the fact that they would normally not be employed for a period of sometimes up to four or five years because of recovery, um, work hardening is essential.

5.19.10 Quotas

Respondent 1: There's very little interest in them as individuals and even going through um employment agencies that do so, there's one or two that we do work with, they say that to work with disabilities, people with disabilities. We find that it's a very limited percentage of clients that we refer on to them that we find to successfully employed, and it's normally those, because of employment equity, for example your females that they want and race specific race, and also those that are eventually successfully employed.

5.19.11 Lack of physical markers

Respondent 3: Uh, a lot of the time the person themselves won't tell you that, it's family members and when you interview their managers and colleagues that's when that kind of thing will come up but it is definitely, er, a barrier that they face in getting back to work and often people in the work don't understand that because, you know, physically they may look fine and they may not have scars and they may not have, you know, a plaster cast or something, but the cognitive, the behaviour changes are very real and it does cause a huge barrier.

5.19.12 Legislation

Respondent 2: I completely understand how he can cope in the workplace and five days a week...and after...I don't think our legislation allows enough for disabled people to be employed.

Researcher: Would you say that?

Respondent 2: Ja, and I think, I don't know the legislation very well, but it doesn't specify whether it should be blind or deaf, or ja, so...What exactly does the legislation say?

Researcher: Uh, legislation specifically states that two percent of the workforce should be of disabled employees, but it does not specify or say what type of disabled.

Respondent 2: Ja, that's so vague and two percent is so little. I think that the reality is that things are very tough in South Africa and that although what we see in terms of the various Bills and so forth that have gone before Parliament, um, there's no real follow through.

5.19.13 Limited efficacy of specialised agencies

Respondent 3: As individuals and even going through um employment agencies that do so, there's one or two that we do work with, they say that to work with disabilities, people with disabilities. We find that it's a very limited percentage of clients that we refer on to them that we find to successfully employed.

5.19.14 Loss of purpose

Respondent 1: That's what they do a specific routine and they become institutionalised and with institutionalisation you get the demotivation and you know, they just lose that initiative and self-esteem and they...

Researcher: Lost.

Respondent 1: Ja, they completely lose their self-esteem and they really frustrated and feel like they don't actually, like there's no um, there's no point in actually even trying to achieve anything in life really. They just feel like they just go along with whatever you tell them to do, they'll just do. They lose their own initiative. I think it's just extremely frustrating for the youngsters who have acquired brain injuries. Um, in being accepted, um, as somebody who can contribute in a meaningful way, um, to a work environment.

5.19.15 Poor behavioural/cognitive/emotional job fit

Respondent 2: So ja, I think for themselves the first thing is, then the next is one that was that they do, they bring the work and someone else is taking over the workload, so it kind of demotivates. For the people the back into the work things are memory and concentration. It doesn't go back to what it was, so we do a lot of exercises and compensate but um, in that same regard your hire a manager that now has got, a bit of a memory a bit of a social ... is

there as well and they were having a ... yes I am, his reaction was just too slow to step in.

They can still be very effective in the actual work, it's just that interacting with other people.

Hmm, he, I think he, um, no, he's not back, his previous company was working for the Department of Roads, something like that. Um, Howard fatigues very easily, he has sleep apnea, so he wakes up 400 times a night, um, so I think he can doze off quite a bit, so work productivity is a big thing for him and I think that's why he's only in a consulting position, that's why he's not actually managing and running a project.

Some people can't walk after 6 months they can walk again which is very important when you're moving around in the office, because with a brain injury, um, if you can't walk then it's the entire one side of your body that's not working, it's not only your neck, so it's difficult to move around in a wheelchair as well, um, and I don't think people realise how that limits a person.

So it's to get that physical mobility back and then in terms of occupational therapy, your um, self-care, just being able to go to the toilet alone. If you're at work and you can't go to the loo, you're going to have quite a bit of problem. One of my client's problem was he couldn't fasten his pants zipper and his button and his belt.

Um, it's, that's a bit of a tricky question because I think it's very, er, it's job specific. Um, you know we've had people who've had er, their own businesses and who've had strokes because of stress and who've struggled to get back into their daily routine and I think, um, usually, or generally what people complain of is the cognitive problems that they, that they have as a result of the brain injury. So typically you'd be looking at memory problems, um, difficulties paying attention and focusing on a task, um and these problems are particularly or, it's more prolific in those who have higher positions, you know, who have, to use a lot of executive skills to um, do their job.

Managers, um, people who do admin, you know you have to juggle balls in the air, um, you know, secretaries who have to answer the phone and remember this message and do that and do this, those are the ones who struggle and who have um, specifically the cognitive barriers. There are also, um, other things like emotional and behaviour changes that people struggle with, um you know, mood changes and conflict with the workers and uh, not being able to take instruction from supervisors being um, aggressive and things like that.

Uh, a lot of the time the person themselves won't tell you that, it's family members and when you interview their managers and colleagues that's when that kind of thing will come up but it is definitely, er, a barrier that they face in getting back to work and often people in the work don't understand that because, you know, physically they may look fine and they may not have scars and they may not have, you know, a plaster cast or something, but the cognitive, the behaviour changes are very real and it does cause a huge barrier.

As far as I know most of the individuals who work at St Giles and Challenge are not traumatic brain injuries, they are other disabilities that are catered for and there's nothing for ABIs. So you might find the odd ABI at Challenge or St Giles, but it would be an exception, not a rule. I think again it's because of the behavioural challenges um, that they are just very very difficult to manage without having that entry level work hardening um, programme, and so things fall apart before they even get off the starting block.

5.19.16 Preference for hiring people with physical injuries

Respondent 1: Ja, so a lot of the companies would rather employ a deaf or a blind or a paraplegic person because they don't have any cognitive depth and they can be quite, they can work more or less at the same and the same productivity as the abled bodied person whereas brain injured people they are very unique and a lot of fun, but they come with challenges. So whilst somebody

may be employed, um, first of all the focus is on people who have physical disabilities because they are observed, and they are seen. So from a window dressing perspective that's so much easier.

5.19.17 Programme availability and failure

Respondent 2: Um, I haven't encountered other programmes or services apart from I Can!, but I Can! is also not able to help all our clients.

Researcher: Why would you say I Can! couldn't assist?

Respondent 2: Um, the members that we thought could be applicable to them they did the exam and they failed. So, I think I Can! is maybe, but also I Can! is more of a physical labour type of thing, like cleaning and small tasks not necessarily administration and, ja.

Okay, I think with your clients with severe brain injuries, um, severe brain injuries, meaning that they need sheltered employment. I think like your challenges has been useful for them and it kind of is like a programme, they assess them and they've integrate them into a task that's realistic for them to do, but in terms of your high functioning ABI clients, I would say I Can! has been success with about one candidate of about 50. Yeah, so, that's the stats that we're working with and at the moment, if I can think on the top of my head with how many guys, I mean, we've had, we currently sit with probably 10 clients here at Headway, young guys between the ages of like 20 and probably 40, um, even, ja, even younger than 40 maybe 35 that are completely employable in the open market but they can't, they can't find employment. So, um, it's not a very successful, it hasn't been very successful in terms of services that we've experienced.

In terms of this question there is not sufficient programmes, services and support mechanisms that have been helpful.

Respondent 1: No not at all, no. not that I've experienced and I think to the huge frustration, as I say I've got clients coming here and over a long period of time actually becoming institutionalised.

Ja, that is a tough one because in this country there's not a lot social, socially there's not a lot of programmes that I can think of. Really from my experience the only help that's, that people with acquired brain injury have is, we have cognitive rehab, occupation therapy, uh, speech therapy, physiotherapy. Again obviously it depends on the nature of the work but er, that's the only support that I have seen that people have and it's such a shame because a lot of people can't, don't have the resources to have that kind of support. Um, even if it's psychological support, you know, a person going back into the workplace, more often than not they don't understand the changes in themselves either, you know. So, to deal with all of these um, this new person that you are with the new challenges and, er, working your way around that and then on top of that to try and hide it, because some people hide it from their bosses, or to fake that everything is okay, it's a huge stress. So, um, society, South African society is really lacking in social structures to assist with that kind of thing, um, ja.

5.19.18 Stigma

Respondent 2: Whereas brain injured people they are very unique and a lot of fun, but they come with challenges.

Not in terms of altercations to the building, in terms of productivity that your employee is going to deliver, you might have to hire two people instead of one because the one person might not be able to do the full job.

I think it's also, um, they employers understanding, they, a lot of people have, don't know about people with brain injuries, some of them might think it's a person in a coma, or a person that cannot talk, or a person that can't move around, or it's a person with severe spasticity with physical disfigurement.

They don't realise that even though this person has limitations, they can still do a pretty fine job.

Respondent 2: I think a lot of people are rather scared of disabled people, because they don't know...

Researcher: Why attitude?

Respondent 1: Attitude of fellow employees, of management, stigma attached to someone with a disability. Especially when they have a disability that might affect how they look. There are other things that can make you look different, and I think, ja, stigma attached to that, I mean look, we've got guys here that are super, super intelligent, that are, that have incredible ability to work but if you were introduced to them you would actually on initial ... you would think that they were much lower functioning than they actually are. so first impressions are not how they actually are, you know. First impressions of a lot of your injured clients, um, are very incorrect.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 1: So I think that's a huge barrier because if you think of an interview someone coming in looking like some of our guys do they, you know, the company might get put off by just that initial.

Researcher: Outer look.

Respondent 1: Outer look of a person. Um, I think, ja, there is definitely first of all a stigma, I think that's the main barrier that people with brain injury faces when in interview if it happens to come up, you know, if they're questioned on their medical history and they reveal that they've been involved in an accident, and the minute you hear brain injury it's very difficult to convince people that, you know, you are employable and uh, a lot of people will tell you that outright.

Look I think, um, the, the thing that I can think of is education because um, the stigma is such a huge thing and especially in the black culture, in the black population. Not only in, or work is one thing, but just in the community setting when they hear that you've had a brain injury they think you're crazy.

They often have these uh, and they, they are ostracised for it and when we interview them, they cry about it you know, that people are talking about them behind their backs saying they are crazy, workers are saying they're crazy, you know, when they make a small mistake, or if they forget about

doing something at work, it becomes a huge joke among the workers and um, it affects them psychologically so, I think the biggest thing that we could do is educate our workers.

5.19.19 Need for employment

Respondent 1: Some of our clients are very young, basically they still have their entire lives, less financial for a lot of them. Is there a need for employment? Oh my goodness yes, definitely.

Researcher: So that's a major, major need for employment.

Respondent 1: Definitely, a huge need for employment. Um, I think especially in this country. Um, whereas some people would have the luxury of being able to stay at home or having that choice, a lot of people in South Africa don't. So there is definitely a need, um, you know. If on the flip side from a societal point of view it can be useful to employ people who have brain injury because, um, I mean you are from Headways, a perfect example, you know, I think she does such good in the brain injured population simply because she knows the people she can identify with them, you know. She's been through it, she's lived through it. She's gone through the challenges of getting her degree after a brain injury and sustaining a practice or, you know, seeing patients, juggling all those balls in the air with a brain injury. So ja, I think it's, there is definitely a need.

5.19.20 Cognitive benefits

Respondent 4: I think it would challenge them cognitively, it would actually remediate a lot of their cognitive issues instead of going backwards and all the cognitive decline that comes with that you'll actually get stimulation and they'll actually make progress in terms of their disability and um, probably, ja, be able to lead a more normal life. I think it's so premature that a person with brain injury mustn't work because working gives them such purpose and in a way it's therapy in itself, it's rehab in itself because you're constantly having to use your brain, and your brain is a muscle and it needs routine to work.

5.19.21 Decreasing the cost of disability

Respondent 3: The cost of disability is enormous. If you look at clients that are requiring assistive devices not that they all do, but those that do require assisted devices. In our country, clients don't get those, you've got to pay for them and our families are now having to support someone who was actually an income earner, now having to support them and their assistive devices and their medical um, needs and all the extra costs that come with having an injury.

5.19.22 Improved quality of life

Respondent 3: ...a huge impact on quality of life as well where they just don't achieve their potential, even close to where they, ja, could get to and in terms of how it would benefit them, I think it would just give them quality of life, it would give them self-esteem, it would give them, ja, just sjoe! It would help them.

5.19.23 Income and being bread winners

Respondent 4: Firstly they've got absolutely no income of their own so maybe they've got a small disability grant if they qualify. Um, I think especially in this country, er, and in the work that we do with the Road Accident Fund, we see a lot of people from the rural setting who are the bread winners at home, and um I mean even young people, even women who have to support kids because their, er, husband or their boyfriend won't pay child support, that kind of thing. They are the only ones who are bringing in the money.

5.19.24 Preventing actualised dependency

Respondent 1: Okay, so the major thing that frustrates me is that you get, you get young people and they're economically productive years, becoming completely institutionalised because of lack of employment so they, they absolutely actually end up becoming, it sounds so horrible, but a burden on society because they require, because they often require supervision during the day, so they either come to respite centre like Headway or they are being taken care of by a carer at home, whatever, they're not left on their own.

5.19.25 Social interaction

Respondent 1: They have some leisure, they lack social integration, because work is partially social interaction, or opportunities of social interaction um, they don't leave whatever, their home environment or their respite care environment it's kind of Monday to Friday, that's what they do a specific routine and they become institutionalised.

5.19.26 Improved and alternative methods to educate and increase awareness

Respondent 2: So to give them the opportunity to do it themselves but also to give them the opportunity to ask for help in case they struggle with something.

Researcher: So you're also saying that apart from the managers and the actual individual being employed, it's important to also educate the co-workers?

Respondent 2: Yes.

Researcher: And colleagues as well in terms of communication?

Respondent 2: Ja.

Researcher: For them to have this organisational sense of belonging and fitting in and being part of the workplace.

Respondent 2: Yes. You also get some that present with slightly inappropriate behaviour so there needs to be quite particular kind of expectations and um, kind of instructions that this is what is acceptable and this is what's not acceptable that needs to be laid out quite clearly to make sure that that doesn't become a problem within an work environment um, so that behaviour is regulated quite carefully because your employees are not going to know how to handle that unless they're educated specifically around that client.

Look I think, um, the, the thing that I can think of is education because um, the stigma is such a huge thing and especially in the black culture, in the black population. Not only in, or work is one thing, but just in the community setting when they hear that you've had a brain injury they think you're crazy. They often have these uh, and they, they are ostracised for it and when we interview them, they cry about it you know, that people are talking about them behind their backs saying they are crazy, workers are

saying they're crazy, you know, when they make a small mistake, or if they forget about doing something at work, it becomes a huge joke among the workers and um, it affects them psychologically so, I think the biggest thing that we could do is educate our workers. If someone has a brain injury and they are staying on in the company, to hold like a support group, or you know, one or two sessions just to educate people on the nature of brain injury.

5.19.27 Improved incentives to employ disabled persons

Respondent 1: And then the incentives that we mentioned earlier, to give a company incentive to hire these people and a nice thing from the government could be to have some or other subsidy for these clients, or, I'm not an economic person. But obviously financial incentive would go a long way. Other thing is, I think, ja, opportunities, from the companies perspective, if there was more of a absolute incentive to employ people with disabilities, I think they would actively engage with institutions where there are people that are of employable age with disabilities and look at reasonable accommodation. ...it would be nice if there was some incentive to actually, or understand the nature of the injury that's traumatic brain injury that they do need six months at least, to go through the rehab process and then to look at reasonable accommodation after that, that door to returning to previous employment, even if it is in an alternative capacity is not closed, um, because it does tend to be closed in most cases where it's just not even an option to return to your previous employment. So that would, ja, that would be nice if there was, more return to work as opposed to finding new employment but just in different capacity.

5.19.28 Improving job-person fit

Respondent 4: Also the other thing is that it is job specific so, if someone is doing something that is physical to take that kind of pressure away from them, to maybe try them out in more of an administrative capacity or answering phones.it gives them structure you know, to get up in the morning to have a

purpose. I get ready, I go to work, I come back at a certain time, as opposed to living this meaningless life where depression sets in and all sorts of other problems happen, ends up being society's problem in the long run as well, so I think if we can find ways to accommodate them in the workplace as opposed to just firing them or writing them off, yeah, I think that's a better solution.

5.19.29 Individual assessment

Respondent 1: In terms of people with brain injuries that they need individual assessment in placements. They don't, they need to be seen, need to be assessed as individuals in terms of their work capacity. And their work ability and they need to make sure their job fit is correct otherwise their saleability is not, is not possible. For example if someone hasn't properly understood their ability and they've placed him into a position just, out of the kindness of their heart, often there isn't successful integration, or sustainable employment because there isn't a match in terms of sustainability or accommodation in terms of the work. So I think it's got to be done carefully. Such those who have got a specific disability and then the same kind of you can then outsource the initial integration of the person into the company so there's accurate job analysis, there's accurate, um client assessment and there's that kind of smoothing over of the process between until they are successfully reintegrated into the position. So, not just throwing your open air market into the deep end saying there's your candidate now make it work, I think they do need that initial support to make sure it's going to be successful and I think that's a process that needs to be done by an expert. You also get some that present with slightly inappropriate behaviour so there needs to be quite particular kind of expectations and um, kind of instructions that this is what is acceptable and this is what's not acceptable that needs to be laid out quite clearly to make sure that that doesn't become a problem within an work environment um, so that behaviour is regulated

quite carefully because your employees are not going to know how to handle that unless they're educated specifically around that client.

5.19.30 Mentoring and support

Respondent 2: ...so they kind of try to work it out so it's just a place where they can get support from that and how to interact with their colleagues.

Researcher: Mentors and supervisors, okay that's a very good way to look at it as well. So they would always have somebody who'd guide them in the workplace as well.

Respondent 2: Ja, it would have to be someone they can feel comfortable with and build a relationship with to be able to trust, to trust you to give you a good job. I think a lot of your brain injured clients have got a low self-esteem, they are insecure, they need a lot of support, a lot of encouragement um, they need a lot of kind of coaching or mentoring as they go back into the workplace, they can't just be kind of thrown in the deep end, because it won't be successful in a lot of cases. So, I think it's just like needing more support than is probably out there to make sure that it is a successful process.

You know they need to be built up, they need to realise that they are capable and in order to be able to get into a person to the point that they feel confident in themselves, they need that support and that kind of external motivation.

Um, ja, they, sjoe, absolutely, support and that's from the families side, that's from the therapist side, support is absolutely essential and I think, um, ja, I think if they, if yes, if they had family support it would definitely make employment more successful because then it would really fall on the families or someone else's back to really try and to do that extra work because there isn't a service that's doing it most kind of effectively at the moment to really kind of find their place you know in an open labour market or in a position somewhere, so support would make an enormous difference.

Also for managers you know, not to be so hard on them or to maybe to lighten their work load if it's possible or to give them an assistant.

5.19.31 More definitive guidelines and Human Resources policies

Respondent 2: Possibly, I mean, if there's legislation you have to keep to it, if not then you can do whatever is easiest for you, so it will be good if there is something to, I don't want to force, but to put proper guidelines out to companies on how to treat our people, because they're wonderful and they're able to do a great lot, they just need the structure.

Researcher: Okay, in terms of Human Resources in a company, what do you think they could do to overcome these barriers? In terms of their policies and regulations within a specific company because they would obviously run according to that.

Respondent 2: Um, I think specifications, no wait, if they can split up their administrative tasks, things like filing, or getting the mail, or those simple, simple tasks, those are excellent employment opportunities for our clients, so if they can have a policy to break down one person's job into maybe two or three aspects then they can create the opportunity there and ja, supervisors.

5.19.32 More government involvement

Respondent 2: Um, funding. We need government funding, um, in order to achieve that goal.

5.19.33 Need for more specialized recruitment

Respondent 2: He can do a wonderful, he can follow your instructions perfectly well, but the fact that he can't exactly communicate with you. That is a big hindrance to get him employed again. So, um, ja, I think if there can be more institutions like halfway, not halfway houses, but a middle man for our guys to go to before they enter into the....

Researcher: Can we say in my understanding that maybe there is the lack of recruitment agencies.

Respondent 2: Ja.

Researcher: Could there a recruitment agency in terms of therapy and company so that we have that communication and that would help?

Respondent 2:

I think that would be such a great idea and I think that's kind of what I Can! is trying to do and they're doing a marvellous job but they're kind of more working on your mentally impaired clients and ja, I think if there can be an agency specifically working with people with acquired brain injuries it would be marvellous.

So vocational rehab, after vocational rehab has been done, um, then I would say you need, you need an agency, a middle man involved who now says, that agency has contact with many companies out there, there no positions that need to be filled and they basically act as a middle man between now the client who has had some vocational rehab, some work hardening and is now ready for the open labour market and that agency then helps to place and provide the service to support until that successful rehabilitation takes place. Um, and I think, I don't think it would be achievable without that, I think that is essentially, it's vital, it's absolutely vital and it think there is number one a lack of vocal rehab in .. and number two there is a lack of agencies that are really willing to....

Ja, it's exactly that, we just need a middle man, in effect a middle man that's willing to look at clients and we can refer clients onto. We can start the voc rehab side that's within our expertise but to then refer clients who are now ready for employment onto somebody out there who can then take it forward because at the moment we're having to kind of scratch for opportunities and it's really hard and I must say, as I say, one placement we've had successfully here of about through I Can!. I know a lot of clients who've given up with frustration because they can't find employment. So to have a company that we can develop a relationship with that we can actually put reports, or do our voc rehab, do our work assessment, hand over reports to and for them to have that relationship with the open labour market and then be able to oversee the process would be absolutely amazing, it really is essential it's just a complete tragedy that it's not already there. That's about it....unless they're educated specifically around that client. It's not generic, it's very difficult to, you've got to really look at your clients.

Researcher: That middle man again.

Respondent 1: Can't do it, ja, you can't do it, it's a very difficult process, and also the other thing is, it's the, it would be lovely if legislation could somehow, I'm sure exactly how it works, but I know if you haven't been, if you haven't returned to work within three months, or something, your work contract is terminated.

5.19.34 Need for organisational support groups

Respondent 2: Um, counselling, peer support

Researcher: Why counselling and peer support?

Respondent 2: We don't always realise it, but our guys often struggle emotionally. Um, they have to face their challenges quite often, now this is more for your more severely disabled, especially physically disabled people, um, so it's just a space for them to kind of debrief on what they are being challenged with and sadly sometimes your managers or CEOs kind of add to that frustration because they don't understand your situation or they don't think that you belong here because of your injury or your disability so they kind of try to work it out so it's just a place where they can get support from that and how to interact with their colleagues. If someone has a brain injury and they are staying on in the company, to hold like a support group, or you know, one or two sessions just to educate people on the nature of brain injury.

5.19.35 Providing opportunities for independence

Respondent 3: So, a lot of people with brain injuries are very sensitive to how you approach them and how you speak to them, they don't appreciate their abilities being ... they want to do it themselves. So to give them the opportunity to do it themselves but also to give them the opportunity to ask for help in case they struggle with something.

I think it might, no there was a lady that told me about a gentleman, he either had a brain injury or stroke, um, and his multi-tasking is ridiculously poor and his memory is beyond repair and he still works in a high executive

post, simply by the adaptations that they've made, like if he's busy with a meeting, his secretary knows that they cannot send a phonecall through or another person is not allowed in there, um, he can drive himself from home to work, but he can only do that one route. So his planning, um, so this is where it's ridiculous because he's like some or other financial planner, so he can do the intensive financial planning of his job, but he can't do a sudden change planning if there's roadworks on his way from home to work, then he's going to get lost. So, just to give them the opportunity to try and they might surprise you, ja.

5.19.36 Technological innovation

Respondent 1: Ja, that's really important. I think you've got some classical things that your TBI clients present with and you'd have to look very carefully around those specific areas and how you'd accommodate the client because, like for example, a short term memory deficit there are so many ways to compensate for that and it's going to be as simple as you know a little cell phone or an iPad with reminders on it that enable the patient or the client to work successfully. It can also be things like noise and distractibility like they might be able to do a task perfectly in a quiet office but they won't be able to do it at all in an open office plan. So things like that accommodation around, so ja, like memory, attention, concentration, their mental endurance is a huge thing so that's why I say to have a middle man involved that says okay, we understand your mental endurance at the moment is 45 minutes to an hour, lets over the next four months we're going to slowly increase that and to really regulate the breaks and make sure that realistic expectations are being made.

Researcher: You mentioned that with the memory factor there's so many ways to overcome and you spoke about the iPad and so forth. Do you think technology itself can be utilised by companies and in terms of employability to assist people like this?

Respondent 1: Well there are a lot of TBI clients that have got absolutely, that's the basic line, but there's a lot of clients that don't have the physical ability to perform a task but with one of the patients, they for example with the use of a telephone you just use technology and they're able to use it perfectly. Um, there are some clients who have, I mean, I know it's a bit extreme where they have better use of a foot than they do of a hand and technology bridges that gap and they're able to do a computer task perfectly but definitely technology plays a role but it's individual and unfortunately it's expensive because it's not going to be something you can say each one, your TBI clients going to need and lets assess you, let's look at your ability.

5.19.37 Training

Respondent 3: But for younger guys definitely, most definitely, guys who have not had the opportunity to go through the ranks in a company and to build their skills they most definitely will need training. Um, it's wonderful if they can, company can do in service training. Our guys will learn a lot better from physical training, like doing the job than academic.

5.19.38 Trial runs

Respondent 1: Ja, so, that's the big thing from me is just to give them the opportunity if they can have like a trial run.

Researcher: Okay, so something, that maybe companies could offer is a trial run before employment, rather than just saying outright, no, I can't employ you.

Respondent 2: Ja.

Researcher: So a form of interview and selection of something in recruitment that could assist them.

Respondent 2: Ja, or like a probation period.

5.19.39 Vocational rehabilitation and work hardening

Respondent 1: The fact that they would normally not be employed for a period of sometimes up to four or five years because of recovery, um, work hardening

is essential. They're not ready to get back into work or to fill a post kind of, let's say a full day post, they might be able to slowly grade it.

Researcher: Like part time employment?

Respondent 1: Ja, kind of part time going into, kind of building up to full time. ...vocational rehabilitation so the opportunity to become rehabilitate in terms of work ability. So I think you know that can happen on the job but I would say it's probably best to do it before you look at employment. Um, and I think, I don't think it would be achievable without that, I think that is essentially, it's vital, it's absolutely vital I think that overall employment experience of people affected with brain injury, ja, and I think also, also just incentivising employment of people with disability more.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 1: So, so that there is more kind of drive out there to kind of find people with disabilities otherwise they just won't, companies just won't, I guess there is some corporate responsibility but it's not enough to really probably provide for half the needs we've got. So, ja, definitely a need for that.

5.20 Recommendations

5.20.1 Raising awareness

Respondent 4 mentioned the need for raising awareness around companies that are good with people with disabilities. This suggests that there is a lack of awareness of companies that are accommodating of people with brain injuries. Perhaps it is a lack of awareness in general, or it implies that there are not many companies that accommodate people with brain injuries. He continued to mention that, although there has been a slight shift towards raising awareness and training people regarding the needs for dealing with brain injuries, this has been limited to schools.

Respondent 9 mentioned that her company did not understand the effect and extent of her brain injuries and the immense fatigue experienced as a result. She said that, because the company

could not see any visual and physical signs, they were not accommodating, to the extent where they even offered her a package to leave.

These findings highlight the need for education about the repercussions of brain injuries. This is especially so because, in the last example, the company thought that her fatigue was attributable to the lack of sleep and that she had fully recovered by virtue of the fact that she was no longer relying on crutches. In addition, her company was “a bit twitchy about not having me around”.

Another pragmatic concern was the continuous check-ups and tests required by people with ABI and the impact and accommodation of work to these needs. Again, this suggests a strong need for further education on ABI and its repercussions. It also suggests a strong need to align legislation and processes with practical solutions stemming from an in-depth understanding of ABI. Thus:

Researcher: You want people to come to know about it, because you think enough people know already?

Respondent 15: No.

Researcher: So you would like people to become aware of it.

Respondent 15: Yes.

5.20.2 Additional support programmes

Respondent 1: I think government should put programmes in place. Where they look at places we have, like Entabeni, Headway where they see what sort of positions they can put into place where they can then integrate people slowly back into the work place.

5.20.3 Sustained employment

Respondent 3: Even if they manage to nail the job interview—when it comes to sustained employment, it seems to be a problem. By creating these unrealistic expectations, in order to avoid being separated from the crowd, they create unnecessary and unrealistic expectations on themselves and on the part of the employer, and because they initially did not disclose the information, and employers are largely ignorant, it becomes a problem when it comes to sustained performance, and job security.

Thus it can be said that it is not about the initial impression and appearance, especially because the challenge faced by the ABI sufferer is often not a physical injury, it is about sustained performance and employment.

Reasons further complicating sustained employment is that issues get blown out of proportion when it comes to misunderstandings in the work place, especially when employers and fellow colleagues are uncertain about to how to handle the person. All these problems ultimately stem from a poor understanding and lack of education concerning people with ABI.

Respondent 10: Um, the big problem comes in, is that people don't handle you properly. They possibly don't even understand you properly, and um, there's a little bit of a misunderstanding.

Researcher: Exactly.

Respondent 10: And people get, you know, the wrong end of the stick so to speak and then problems get bigger and bigger and people get more and more irritated, and then the eventual end point is that that person's employment is terminated, or whatever the case may be.

As a result, Respondent 10 suggests that there perhaps be increased mentorship. Even though, overtly, the person seems fine, there needs to be a little guidance and increased effort to correct any inappropriate behaviours or performance.

Respondent 10: You know, we all have different milestones in our recovery, so there needs to be some sort of integration programmes where they can build up slowly and get their confidence back.

Researcher: What could they do to help you in your job to do it better?

Respondent 14: They should explain slowly.

Respondent 17: That's why they can help me by showing me some, showing me some, some explanation how to do the things so I can see that I'm doing that everything...

Researcher: They support you, you want them to support you.

Respondent 17: Yes, to support me they show me some information, this thing be like this, like this, like this.

5.20.4 Mentorship

Respondent 10: Throughout all the jobs that I've had, I have definitely lacked that mentorship. I haven't had somebody that was constantly watching over me and constantly making sure that I'm not bumping my head so to speak, or that I'm not making the same mistakes twice or whatever.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 10: There was never somebody that was there to help.

Researcher: Supervise and assist.

Respondent 10: Ja, supervise and just be a guiding hand, you know, to help me along my way... not just talking about myself personally, um, but we need to, you know, help the guy and we need to just give him that little bit of extra guidance. Yes, it's going to take a bit of extra time out of your day or a little bit of extra effort out of you as a person, but you know what, it's going to pay off in the end, because where's that guy going to be if you don't help him?

The codes that have been made mentioned of in the discussion chapter provide an indication that in order to create sustainable development in the South African workplace for persons following ABI, organisations need to become more aware of how to deal with people with this type of disability. When it comes to a person post ABI, as stated in the recommendations, it is pivotal that work hardening programmes are made available to these individuals during the workplace accommodation strategies of the organisation or in the induction stage of employment of these individuals.

5.20.5 Need for increased support to improve progress and recovery

Respondent 8: That would be amazing, if they actually had a support wing that actually helped with people, doesn't just have to be head injury... but that would be something amazing that could be there but there's no support base in companies really anymore. It's like a good example being in my mother's company she just had new people that took over, they went and just fired tons of people because they felt there were too many. So now everybody's doing too many jobs at once. Everybody's struggling, they're just panicking

now having gotten rid of all the staff and that company's sort of falling apart. But, there's no support for anybody to talk to so they can say you can go speak to the bosses but the bosses [inaudible]. Ja, it's normally your CEO's and your GM's and stuff that are difficult these days, ja, 'cos they've just got a lot of work on their plate as well so....

The above statement and discussion around the need for assistance and support by companies described in Chapter Five is evidence that there is a need for companies in South Africa to assist persons with ABI by supporting them in the workplace. As evidence in the analysis chapter suggests, South Africa is lacking when it comes to companies' assisting and supporting individuals with this type of disability.

5.20.6 Need to define what qualifies an ABI as a disability

Evidence suggests that there is a lack in the understanding of ABI as a disability in South Africa. This will be described further in the policy implications of the study.

Researcher: Do you think that there is legislation and policies that assist people with affected Acquired Brain Injury in gaining employment?

Respondent 18: No. Not properly.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 18: Because it's still not decided if it's a disability or not.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 18: They tried to state that it is, but it hasn't been decided fully if it is a disability.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 18: That's a big problem for me. It's like, it's hard to specify it as a disability as well because it's so many different forms of brain injury that you get.

5.20.7 Need to raise awareness and understanding

A major theme that has emerged throughout the study is the need to raise awareness and understanding about ABIs. Most respondents believed that the major cause of workplace challenges and problems regarding ABI is the absence of knowledge about ABI in South Africa.

This can be addressed by academic publications, disability awareness campaigns, improved legislation to support this type of disability and the use of media and conferences. Thus:

Respondent 8: It's just, it's very complex to the world and I'm glad you're doing what you're doing on it because it needs to be put across, so people can see it in a bit of a different way.

Maybe just a little bit more understanding and, and just knowing that a person can, with a little bit of understanding and, and um, communication, they can carry on a completely perfectly normal life in a working environment.

Um, I think I've mentioned everything before, that people just don't understand what it's all about.

I just think that awareness just needs to be made and people just need to realise that especially even in South Africa with, unfortunately the state that our roads are in and just the overall driving sense and driving ability on the roads in South Africa with car accidents being so, um, horrific and rife as what they are, for people to realise that you know what, this is not just something that is a little bit out there, there's a lot of it out there and we need to make adequate, um you know, means and measures that you got to put in place and we need to be aware of this, we can't just sort of just sweep it under the rug and think that nobody's going to look at it or nobody's going to remember about it.

Researcher: And how would you like to make people become aware of this brain injury so that they give people jobs?

Respondent 14: I would like them to read a lot more about the brain injuries people and um, like uh, like um, like uh, helping, okay about me, I say that uh, I would like uh.

5.20.8 Realistic solutions

Respondent 9: ...money's not the correct way to do it anyway, they should actually try and find, help them find a lifestyle.

Researcher: And do you think that the Road Accident Fund or disability grant would actually mean that somebody may actually not want to be employed?

Respondent 9: I do think so, because my Road Accident was, they work it out, what I could see, is mostly on loss of income.

Researcher: Okay.

Respondent 9: So because I was 52 years old or whatever it was, I didn't get a tremendous pay out because of loss of income in eight years, or whatever. But I think younger people might be put off going back to work because they've got a, a 2 million or whatever...

Researcher: Would you think that's sufficient to live for the rest of their lives?

Respondent 9: No, I wouldn't say so, I would say that they would have to go back and find a job. That money wouldn't last forever especially going into old age and I don't think young people actually realise how much it costs to carry on until you're 90 years old, you know.

Respondent 9: Um, I, I also, um, when I was still working I had to still go for a lot of the reports, I had to take time off. I still went to neuro psychologists, um, every, at first it was every week then it was every month and then it was just group sessions that I went to but you had to take time off work and that wasn't understood as well, you know. People would say but your accident was four years ago why do you still have to take time off work, why do you still need this therapy but it was invaluable to recover, to go for that therapy, ja.

Respondent 9: I did just pick up a hell of a lot of flack because at that stage of my life, the Road Accident Fund pay out had also come to the forefront and um, I had to be away from work quite a lot to try and finalise and set up my trust that I had to put in place for my pay out from the RAF and so on as well. And um, I must say that even my sessions and stuff for rehabilitation and stuff started affecting my work negatively because my boss kept on feeling that I wasn't really going to work, for work. I was going to work but I was also wanting to leave work and go to my sessions where I don't think that he understood the importance of my rehabilitation and the fact that that would help me in that way.

Respondent 9: Yes, there are pay outs from the Road Accident Fund and whatever the case may be, but you know what, life goes up, prices go up, inflation goes up, property goes up, petrol goes up, food goes up, everything goes up and that little bit of pay out that you get only earns X amount of interest, you know, you can't go and drop that pay out in a never ending gold mine that's just going to produce you 20, 30, 40 percent returns or whatever. That's unheard of, and I think if you go to, um the guy's that do investing and the investors and you want to maybe try and ask them for a better return rate for a traumatic brain injury pay out, they're going to laugh at you, because that's completely unheard of.

5.21 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results of the study that were obtained using the interview schedules attached in Appendix 1. Themes emerged from the data throughout the analysis through an iterative process of reading, re-reading, coding and re-coding. Nvivo 10 software was used to code and analyse data, create word frequency queries, word trees, and matrix queries.

The findings of this study provide an overview of the problems experienced and barriers faced by people gaining employment following ABIs in South Africa. Thus it can be said that, it is essential for management of challenging issues to take place in terms of language and communication, promotions and development, motivation, the design of the programme and job security.

CHAPTER SIX

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter of the study approaches all aspects that related to the aims of the study and all the experiences and challenges regarding persons post ABI in the South African workplace which emerged through the use of a qualitative phenomenological method of approach. This chapter begins with a summary of the key findings of the study, which link up with the original objectives that the study set out to achieve in Chapter One. Thereafter, the study is evaluated in order to create clarity regarding the findings, the literature and the objectives of the study. This is followed by a discussion of the limitations of the study, an outline of the implications of this study, recommendations for future research and a discussion of the significance of the study.

6.2 Summary of the key findings

Objective One: To understand the experiences of people affected by ABI in seeking employment in South Africa.

Key Findings: A range of pilot, individual and focus group interviews were carried out in order to understand the experiences of persons following ABI in seeking employment in South Africa. The findings suggest that a number of respondents had previously been employed in numerous capacities, while some experienced their ABIs at a young age and therefore have no prior history of having worked; some have capitalised on their strengths to follow new career choices to the challenges and lack of opportunity for returning to their original careers. Some respondents have returned to the original positions with additional support from their company to accommodate any challenges they may experience as a result of their ABI, whereas other respondents were not as fortunate and did not return to work following their acquired ABI.

Objective Two: To ascertain views held by people affected by ABI regarding the importance of employment

Key Findings: Despite the varied accounts of employment provided by the respondents, the findings suggest that there is a common thread; they not only expressed a desire to work but also felt that they were just as capable, if understood, of working as others are. This desire to work was common ground amongst all participants. ABI patients wanted to be seen as “normal” individuals, fully-fledged beings with a holistic sense of identity and completeness. This explains why participants want to do activities that are deemed to create a sense of a whole self, like working and so actively participating and contributing to society. While participants want to come across as “normal” as possible, they also need people to understand that they have ABI but that this in no way should detract from being this whole, idealistic self. There were numerous reasons offered by respondents as to why people suffering with ABIs should be employed. Amongst these were assisting with routine and purpose, helping to overcome apparent differences, improving confidence, keeping themselves occupied, receiving an income, self-actualisation, ensuring a sense of purpose and utility and assisting with a speedy recovery.

Objective Three: To determine the extent in which people affected by ABI are accommodated in the workplace.

Key Findings: Multiple perceptions and experiences have emerged with regard to working for companies. These varied perceptions hint at inconsistency in over-arching policies and regulations when it comes to employing and incorporating ABI sufferers into the organisation. The inability to visually conceive of an ABI and the tendency for ABI sufferers to avoid those tasks that betray their lack of “normality” may explain why people do not accommodate them in the workplace as well as required. However, findings suggest that companies do not reasonably accommodate individuals with ABI in the workplace.

Objective Four: To investigate the level of contribution to diversity that people affected by ABI experience as part of an organisation.

Key Findings: Despite the perception that companies hold some stereotypes regarding ABI sufferers’ abilities, most respondents were of the belief that the company, and the people working for the company, would be understanding and accepting of their situation. However, respondents indicated that companies did not take the time to learn about people with ABIs and did not come to see them as persons separate from their ABI, with their own relative strengths

and weaknesses. Thus they were not treated as a means of contribution to the level of diversity in the workplace.

Objective Five: To establish the extent to which people affected by ABI are aware of legislation or policies that determine their employment opportunities.

Key Findings: Most of the respondents commented that there was a lack of legislation particularly and specifically pertaining to their injuries. The Road Accident Fund (RAF) seems not to have grappled sufficiently with the realities of ABI, perhaps also due to a lack of understanding of the consequences and repercussions of brain injuries. In addition, because of poor understanding of phenomena surrounding brain injuries, poorly defined legislation and therefore inappropriate processes, people awaiting pay out from, for example, the RAF are forced to go back to work before full recovery has taken place in order to survive.

6.3 Limitations of the study

- The sample size was relatively small, due to the nature of the study and the use of the phenomenological approach. This makes it difficult to generalise about the situation of ABI sufferers and employment in South Africa as a whole. However, the aim of such a study is not to generalise to the population as a whole but rather to begin a process of understanding the phenomenon of employment following ABI in South Africa.
- There were participants who have severe speech problems due to their injuries ,that presented a major language barrier and could not understand me, who were not willing to participate and who were not really interested or motivated towards thinking about their lives for some reason. These interviews are of really bad quality.
- Some participants did not meet the selection criteria that were proposed and were actually not capable of talking. This made it difficult to ensure collaboration during interviews.
- The study originally set out to have a balance of participants from Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg but, due the fact that participants had to come to institutions for the interviews as professionals had to be present throughout interviews, they were not capable of attending due to financial constraints. This resulted in the securing of interviews with participants in other locations.

- Due to the fact that the sample of the study formed part of a vulnerable group, ethical constraints indicated that professionals within the field had to be present during all interviews. This had financial implications as professionals had to be remunerated for their time and appointments with participants had to coincide with their availability. This negatively impacted on data collection time periods.
- Many participants were unemployed and therefore did not have financial means to attend interviews.
- There was limited access to guidance and training for the data analysis software, Nvivo, which made the process of analysis challenging.
- Participants with mild ABI suffer from temporary memory loss, which led to much repetition during interviews.

6.4 Implications of the study

The findings of this study have several implications for future research that needs to be conducted in this area of study within the fields of management and entrepreneurship, governance, HRM and industrial relations. In terms of research approach, the phenomenological approach used in this study may encourage other researchers to study ABI in South Africa through the lived experiences of persons with ABI, so as to understand the direct needs, challenges and success of people with this type of disability.

The understanding of the challenges and success of persons post ABI in the South African workplace in this study will make a substantial contribution to the phenomenon of employment following ABI in South Africa. From the perspective of the theory, experiences and findings of this study, it can be said that this study has the potential to assist South African companies in formulating HR policies and practices and implementing these in a manner that would assist both the development of the South African workplace with this form of disability and individuals post ABI.

6.5 Policy implications

Since the advent of a new constitution in South Africa, there have been many changes in the South African workplace that have impacted on the management of people with disabilities. Preparing employees to function successfully and contribute to the achievement of organisational goals, both nationally and internationally, is imperative. This forms part of the comprehension and alignment of the new constitutional requirements and allows policies to be crafted so that organisations can manage people effectively in the workplace, by coordinating efforts of individuals inside and outside the organisation. There has been an extended debate regarding the legislation related to disabilities and its impact on employment in the South African labour market (Hardy 2010:30).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Article 23 states that everyone has the right to work, to a free choice of employment and favourable conditions of work, as well as the right to protection against unemployment (UNHR 2008). Employers are required to work within strict legal frameworks. It is the Constitution in South Africa that provides measures that foster protection and the advancement of people who have been disadvantaged by unfair discrimination in South Africa (Dupper & Garbers, 2010:16).

As described in Chapter Three, the Employment Equity Act (EEA) states that people with disabilities must be reasonably accommodated in the workplace and it is therefore the duty of the employer to ensure that such employees have access to the resources in the organisation. Section 1 of the EEA defines reasonable accommodation as “[a]ny modification or adjustment to a job or the working environment that will enable a person from a designated group to have reasonable access to or to participate or advance in employment” (EEA). The above definition highlights that the working environment can also be modified for others who are already defined by the EEA as designated groups (Snyman 2009:55).

The Code of Good Practice plays a pivotal role on the employment of people with disabilities and formed form the EEA (Employment Equity Act 1998). The Code of Good Practice on the employment of people with disabilities was issued in terms of Section 54 (1) of the EEA on 19 August 2002. However, there is a need for the legislative framework around disabilities in South Africa to be amended according to the different types of disabilities that exist in the country. As empirical and theoretical evidence in this study suggests, there is a need for governance to

identify ABI as a disability, to create a definition of what distinguishes ABI sufferers as disabled and to provide guidelines as to how companies should support employment of individuals post ABI in South Africa.

6.6 The model of employability for persons who are affected by Acquired Brain Injury in South African organisations

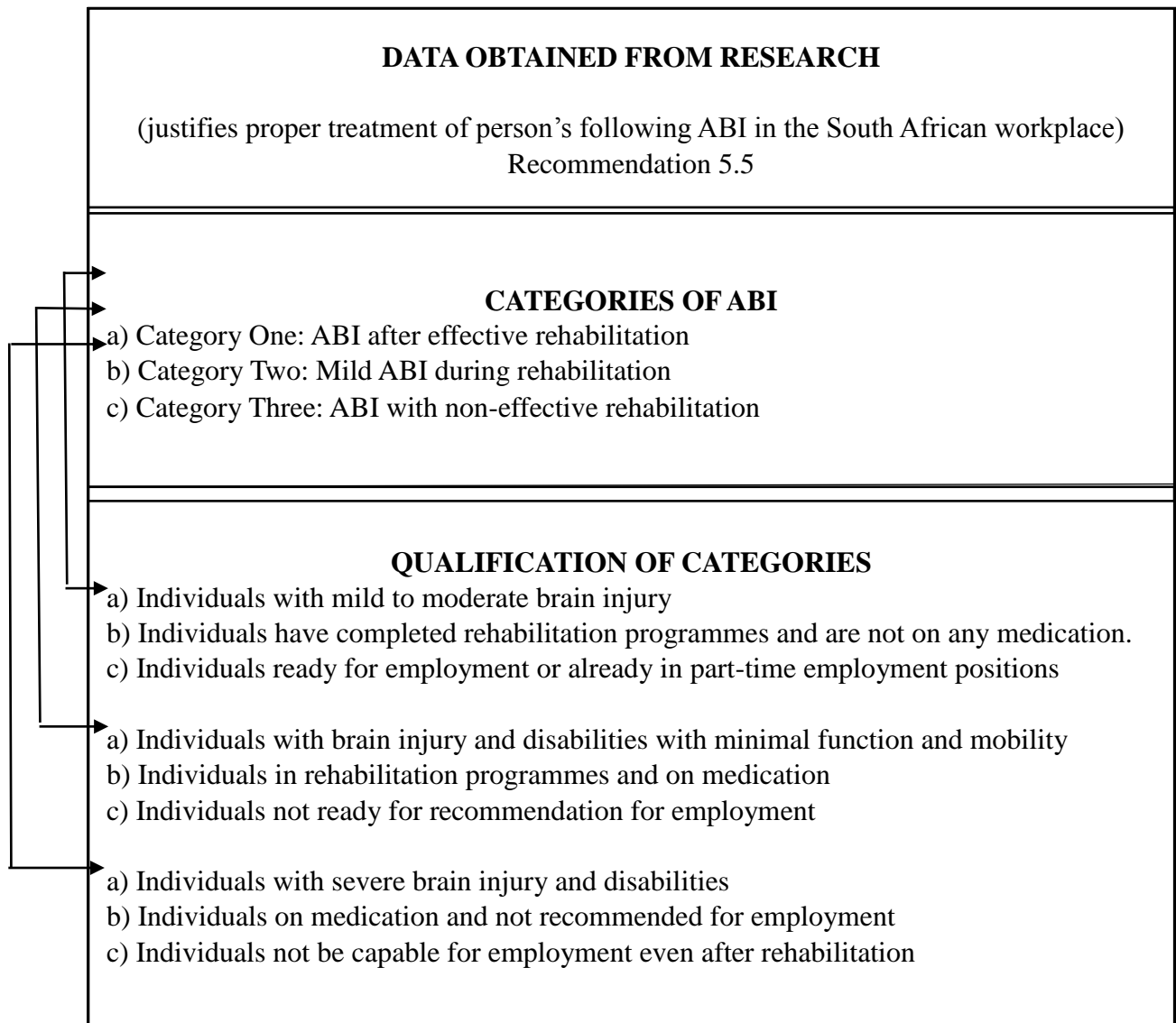


Figure 6.1: Model of employability for persons who are affected by Acquired Brain Injury in South African organisations

The model above has been derived from the data analysis reported on in Chapter Five of the study. The following categories have been formulated in order to assist companies in the employment and sustainability of individuals with ABI in South Africa: Category One consists of ABI after effective rehabilitation; Category Two consists of mild ABI during rehabilitation; and Category Three consists of ABI with non-effective rehabilitation.

There are multiple perceptions and experiences that have emerged from respondents' working for companies. They are varied and indicate inconsistency in over-arching policies and regulations when it comes to employing persons affected by ABI and the procedures for incorporating them into the organisation. This model will therefore serve as a guideline to organisations that are willing to employ people following ABI into their organisations. Without this guideline, it can be said that South African companies appear to have a tendency to view all ABI sufferers equally as "unable" to work. The tendency of people to "group" all ABI persons under the same umbrella hints at a perceived stigma in relation to persons affected by ABI. This can be further reiterated in Chapter Five in section 5.13.

6.6.1 Category One

This can be understood as a category that relates to individuals with mild to moderate brain injury. Individuals have completed rehabilitation programmes and are not on any medication. They are ready for employment in both full-time and part-time positions. Data that related to this category provided evidence there is a need for raising awareness in companies about the existence and accommodation of this category of ABI in the workplace. This evidence is stated in Chapter Five in section 5.5.1. A major theme that emerged throughout the study was the need to raise awareness and understanding about ABIs. Most respondents believed that the major cause of workplace challenges and problems regarding ABI is the absence of knowledge about ABI in South Africa. This can be addressed by academic publications, disability awareness campaigns, improved legislation to support this type of disability and the use of media and conferences to increase awareness of this disability.

The data analysed highlights the need for people in South African organisations to be educated about the repercussions of brain injuries. Another pragmatic concern is the continuous check-ups and tests required by people with ABI and the impact and accommodation of work to these

needs. The lack of education and awareness surrounding ABI in the workplace results in persons with ABI not obtaining employment.

6.6.1.1 Problems and barriers faced by people gaining employment

The following problems and barriers faced by people gaining employment following ABIs in South Africa were found to be the most predominant in this category when themes emerged in the analysis of data collection in the study:

- History of employment
- Reasons to employ someone post ABI
- Perceived benefits of being employed
- Stigma and stereotyping
- Poor sense of identity and personhood
- Avoidance techniques
- The role of companies
- Rationalisation and contradictions
- Experiences at work
- The role of government and current legislation
- Misconceptions as a result of a lack of awareness and understanding of brain injuries.

These barriers to employment following ABI have been described in Chapter Five. These barriers bring about challenges in sustaining employment for those who have been given the opportunity of employment following an ABI. Further complications regarding sustaining employment are misunderstandings in the work place which are blown out of proportion, especially when employers and fellow colleagues are uncertain as to how to handle the person. All of these problems ultimately stem from a poor understanding and lack of education regarding people with ABI. In order to minimise the identified problems, challenges and barriers to employment following ABI in the workplace, it is essential that companies implement strategies that would assist these individuals in successful workplace integration. This can be achieved through the organisation's understanding and promoting appropriate behavior in the workplace. Work hardening (such as training and development to assist people post ABI in the workplace) and vocational rehabilitation (reiterated by several professionals) can be developed and

implemented. A middle man can facilitate the transition into employment post vocational training and work readiness. This can be done by management in an organisation, human resource personnel or outsourced to recruitment agencies. The findings of this study have also indicated that there is a need to raise awareness and educate people. Only once people have been educated is there associated increased acceptance. With acceptance and understanding comes a decline in stereotyping and stigma. This need to educate people is not only to raise awareness, but also, in doing so, to normalise the behaviour of ABI sufferers. By explaining and getting people to understand how and why certain behaviours and responses occur, you get people to understand, and thereby normalise their behaviour.

In conjunction with the need to educate people around the topic of ABI in the workplace, there is a need to understand that different people will be more capable of performing particular duties than others – and it is advisable to get them into positions where there is a good job-person fit; this will not only benefit the company, but also the individual as they will not feel disempowered, especially given the fragile nature of their self-esteem to start with. However, the key to understanding the individual nature of persons affected by ABIs is education. Before one can obtain this job-person fit, it is necessary to understand the person, their individual needs and strengths, and find ways to innovatively and practically accommodate them. Coupled with the need to educate fellow employees, one should allow the ABI sufferer a space within which they can act independently, but also impart to colleagues an appreciation and awareness of the nature of ABI, and that they would need to assist them where necessary. Creating this type of accepting culture and environment helps the ABI sufferer to feel as though they fit-in and thus to gain a sense of belonging. There is a need for proper guidelines and policies, especially HR policies, in order to adequately address and appropriately deal with people suffering from ABIs – in this manner, they can be given the necessary structure and support they need to thrive, to build their confidence and harness their strengths, within a supportive and understanding environment. By setting up peer and organisational support groups, the ABI sufferer is given the chance to express their frustrations and share their lived experiences, but by the same token, they allow an increased understanding of their lived experience by their peers and superiors too.

6.6.2 Category Two

This can be understood as a category that relates to individuals with brain injury and disabilities associated with minimal function and mobility. These persons are in existing rehabilitation programmes and on medication. They are not ready for recommendation for employment, as stated in the recommendations. It is pivotal that work hardening programmes are made available to these individuals during the workplace accommodation strategies of the organisation or in the induction stage of employment of these individuals. Often brain injuries manifest only when exposed to certain situations and tasks. Until that occurs, there may be no tell-tail signs.

Organisations responding to people who fall into this category can provide counselling, support groups and mentors in the workplace to assist in the integration of these individuals. The fact that they would normally not be employed for a period of sometimes up to four or five years because of recovery means that work hardening is essential. They are not ready to get back into work or to fill a full post but they might be able to slowly develop into it, by coming to work and following the routine of daily tasks in the workplace at a gradual pace.

6.6.3 Category Three

This can be understood as a category that relates to individuals with severe brain injury and disabilities. They are on medication and not recommended for employment. Individuals that fall within this category cannot be considered for any type of employment in a company due to the severity of their injuries.

The data analysis had led to the recommendation of the theory above which constitutes the significant impact of this study. This study had made reference to the deficiencies of existing legislation in South Africa that can be used to assist people with disabilities, such as those suffering with ABI in South African organisations. This is described extensively in Chapter Three of this study. A significant contribution to legislation in South Africa regarding people suffering with ABI in the workplace can be achieved by implementing the recommendations of this study on including the management of these categories in legislation.

In order for organisations to overcome the lack of legislation regarding the management of persons with ABI in the South African workplace, existing legislation can be used in conjunction with the model of employability for persons who are affected by ABI. Existing policies with

regards to employment, such as the concept of Affirmative Action (AA) described in Chapter Three, refers to specific measures undertaken by an employer to ensure that suitably qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equally represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workplace. Such measures include providing reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities so as to provide an enabling work environment. However, organisations need be aware that the reasonable accommodation for people with ABI differs from that of other disabilities that are managed in the workplace. This is due to the specific challenges with which people with ABI are faced.

In terms of existing legislation that assists with understanding the need for employment, Section 9 of the constitution provides the basis for employment equality by asserting that:

- Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefits of the law.
- Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms.

To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination, may be invoked.

Section 9(3) of the Constitution further declares: “The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.” This declaration guarantees people post ABI employment.

This section plays a pivotal role in South African organisations and links legislation to the management of diversity in the workplace, regulating the management of an organisation’s workforce diversity in a manner that will result in the eradication of discrimination against any form of disability and diversity, including disabilities like ABI. Govender (1998:338) asserts that to understand the relationship between the right not to be unfairly discriminated against and the right to equality before the law is central to the appreciation of the right to equality. It is also vital to point out that it is impossible to talk about equality without mentioning the concept of discrimination. The Constitution sets an equitable foundation for the new South Africa based on

the values of human dignity, achievement of equality, the promotion of human rights and freedoms, non-racism and non-sexism (McGregor 2007:6). Organisations employing persons with ABI should understand that not only are they implementing the Constitution in terms of human rights but are also allowing individuals the right to human dignity, as returning to work improves the recovery process of a person with ABI.

The code of Good Practice and the legislation that has been made mention of in the discussion chapter are an indication that, in order to create sustainable development in the South African workplace for persons post ABI, organisations need to become more aware of how to deal with people with this type of disability. For people post ABI, it is pivotal that work hardening programmes are made available during the workplace accommodation strategies of the organisation or in the induction stage of employment of these individuals.

6.7 The importance of education and awareness and the role of people with disabilities

The only way to overcome fears, myths and negative attitudes about the abilities of employees and applicants with disabilities is through vigorous education and training within the private and public sectors. Furthermore, experience has shown that people with disabilities are the best qualified persons to be the drivers of such education and awareness programmes.

6.8 Guidelines for people with disabilities

The following guidelines for people with disabilities have been developed as a result of the findings of this study, in order to assist people with ABI in the workplace in terms of reducing challenges that they face in gaining employment:

- Play a lead role in creating awareness in the workplace
- Guide the development of all awareness programmes in the workplace
- Consider becoming members of trade unions and any representative structure within the workplace in order to create hands on disability awareness training.

The above guidelines and legislation can be used in conjunction with the proposed model of employability for persons who are affected by ABI in South African organisations in order to minimise discrimination in the workplace regarding this type of disability. This will also assist people suffering of ABI in South African in gaining and sustaining employment.

6.9 Significance of the study

This study responds to the numerous calls for research in the area of employment of persons following ABI in South Africa. The empirical and theoretical findings suggest that minimal research has been conducted in the area of the perceptions and experiences of employment of persons post ABI in South Africa. Therefore this study will contribute to the expansion of knowledge on this issue. There is very little literature on employee perceptions and experiences of employment of persons following ABI in South Africa. Thus the understanding gained here on how South African employees understand and experience misfit will make a notable contribution to existing research, theory and practice in the fields of governance, entrepreneurship, management, psychology and HRM.

As highlighted above, the South African organisational context represents fertile ground for the development of policies and procedures in the workplace that would assist employment of persons post ABI in South Africa. This dynamic area represents major opportunities for scholarly research into the phenomenon since no research has specifically examined employment of persons following ABI in the South African organisational context.

The findings of this study have the potential to significantly contribute to South African practices and policies of HRM research by providing a local country-contextual theoretical understanding of what the employment of persons with ABI in South Africa means to both individuals and organisations and its causes and consequences.

This study further has the potential to contribute to the governance, management, entrepreneurship, psychology and HRM literature by exploring an employee perspective on how organisations currently deal with employment of persons following ABI in South Africa and how they can creatively assist, support and sustain employees, rather than encouraging them to exit or

increasing challenges in the workplace. This study has the potential to make a meaningful contribution in this regard by developing a model of employment of person's following ABI in South Africa based on South African employees' perceptions and experiences of the phenomenon. The data generated from this study is likely to stimulate greater interest and substantially improve the interpretation of results of employment of persons following ABI in South Africa

The findings of this study will also have several important implications for governance, management, entrepreneurship, psychology and HRM practice. With the number of ABIs steadily increasing in South Africa and in different parts of the world, it is imperative that managers develop a deeper understanding of what employment of persons following ABI in South Africa means, its causes and resulting behavioural reactions so that they can effectively deal with this phenomenon in the workplace. The results of this study will provide managers with information that will facilitate early detection and strategies to assist in the employment of persons following ABI in South African workplace.

6.10 Concluding remarks

This study has clearly indicated that there is a need for the employment of persons post ABI in South Africa. This study has also indicated the significant need of future research in the area of ABI in South Africa as the findings have proved that there is a major absence of research around ABI in South Africa. It is anticipated that this study will lead to the creation of awareness in the South African workplace of this type of disability and that companies will use this study as a benchmark when formulating and implementing their HR policies and practices when integrating persons affected by ABI into the workplace.

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APPENDIX 1:INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARTICIPANTS POST ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY

WELCOMING REMARKS (RESEARCHER: Khalida Akbar)

I will first greet the respondent and introduce myself and then invite him or her to do the same as well.

PURPOSE OF THE DISCUSSION (MODERATOR)

The respondents will be told that all issues to be described are of great importance for and understanding of the specific experiences of people with ABI regarding employment so that human resource policies and practices can be improved to accommodate them in gaining sustainable employment in South Africa.

I will encourage respondents to feel free to express their views. I will remind them that there are no right or wrong answers hence their views are very important. Then I will tell respondents that they are entitled to their opinions. All respondents will be informed about expected duration of the interview and a request will be made to record the whole interview.

INTERVIEW

I will set the ball rolling by posing a general question on experiences of people post ABI regarding employment. I will then move to more specific questions.

The following are some questions that will be posed to respondents:

1. In the context of improving Human Resource Policies and practices in South Africa, explain in your own words “your experience (s) in gaining or sustaining employment post acquired brain injury”?
2. What are your present feelings with regard to employment post acquired brain injury?
3. Do you feel that there is adequate accommodation in the workplace available to individuals post acquired brain injury?
4. Do you think that organisations embrace people with post acquired brain injury in the workplace
5. Do you feel that there is legislation or policies that assist people post acquired brain injury in gaining employment?
6. How do you think individuals post acquired brain injury would benefit from employment?

APPENDIX 2:INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PROFESSIONALS DEALING WITH PATIENTS POST ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY

WELCOMING REMARKS (RESEARCHER: Khalida Akbar)

I will first greet the respondent and introduce myself and then invite him or her to do the same as well.

PURPOSE OF THE DISCUSSION (MODERATOR)

I will tell the respondents that all issues to be described are of great importance for and understanding of the specific experiences of people post ABI regarding employment so that human resource policies and practices can be improved to accommodate them in gaining sustainable employment in South Africa.

I will encourage respondents to feel free to express their views. I will remind them that there are no right or wrong answers hence their views are very important. Then I will tell respondents that they are entitled to their opinions. All respondents will be informed about expected duration of the interview and a request will be made to record the whole interview.

INTERVIEW

I will set the ball rolling by posing a general question on experiences of people with Acquired Brain Injury regarding employment. I will then move to more specific questions.

The following are some questions that will be posed to respondents:

1. What are the lived experiences of people post acquired brain injury on employment in South Africa?
2. Do you think that there is a need for employment of people post acquired brain injury and how would employment benefit them?
3. What are the primary perceived barriers to achieving employment in the experience of people post acquired brain injury in South Africa?
4. What programmes, services and supports are perceived by people post acquired brain injury as having been helpful in improving their employment experience and achievement?
5. How can the systemic barriers identified by the respondents be more effectively addressed in order to improve the overall employment experience of post acquired brain injury?

APPENDIX 3: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARTICIPANTS POST ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY

WELCOMING REMARKS (RESEARCHER: Khalida Akbar)

I will first greet the respondent and introduce myself and then invite him or her to do the same as well.

PURPOSE OF THE DISCUSSION (MODERATOR)

I will tell the respondents that all issues to be described are of great importance for and understanding of the specific experiences of people with ABIs regarding employment so that human resource policies and practices can be improved to accommodate them in gaining sustainable employment in South Africa.

I will encourage respondents to feel free to express their views. I will remind them that there are no right or wrong answers hence their views are very important. Then I will tell respondents that they are entitled to their opinions. All respondents will be informed about expected duration of the interview and a request will be made to record the whole interview.

INTERVIEW

I will set the ball rolling by posing a general question on experiences of people with Acquired Brain Injury regarding employment. I will then move to more specific questions.

The following are some questions that will be posed to respondents

1. In the context of improving Human Resource Policies and practices in South Africa, explain in your own words “your experience (s) in gaining or sustaining employment post acquired brain injury”?
2. What are your present feelings with regard to employment post acquired brain injury?
3. Do you feel that there is adequate accommodation in the workplace available to individuals post acquired brain injury?
4. Do you think that organisations embrace people with post acquired brain injury in the workplace?
5. Do you feel that there is legislation or policies that assist people post acquired brain injury in gaining employment?
6. How do you think individuals post acquired brain injury would benefit from employment?

APPENDIX 4: LETTERS OF APPROVAL



Hardy & Associates

Dr R M Hardy
Regd Health Professions Council of S A
Practice No: 8645442
Psychologist (practicing exclusively in the field of neuropsychology)
Tel: (031) 3121248
Fax: 088 031 3121248
Email: rhardy@iafrica.com
VAT No: 4650245303

The Manor House
14 Nuttall Gardens
Morningside
Durban
4001

10.09.2013

Professor H F Wissink
Dean and HoS
University of Kwa-Zulu Natal
Private Bag X54001
Durban
4000

Dear Professor Wissink

Re: Khalida Akbar
Student Number: 208 503 254

This serves to confirm that Miss K Akbar is welcome to access information which she may need for her dissertation at this practice, with the permission of my patients. She will be under my supervision during her time spent here.

If there is anything further you wish to confirm, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Rosanne Hardy
FULL MEMBER: SA Clinical Neuropsychological Association



20 August 2013

Professor HF Wissink
Dean and HoS
University of Kwazulu-Natal
Private Bag X54001
Durban
4000

Dear Professor Wissink

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AS PART OF THE PhD QUALIFICATION

Name: **Miss K Akbar**
Student No: **208503254**
Dissertation Topic: **A phenomenological study of the barriers to employment for post traumatic brain injury and stroke patients in South Africa**

This letter serves to confirm that Miss K Akbar is welcome to attend Headway-Natal to access information for her dissertation topic. During her time spent at Headway-Natal she **will** report to me.

Yours sincerely

Ian Vowles
MANAGER

11 Menston Road,
Westville, 3629
Tel: 031 266 2709 /
031 266 0045
Fax: 031 266 2713
Email: headway@
dbn.stormnet.co.za
www.headway.org.za

Fr 001-305NPO

A NON-PROFIT
ORGANISATION TO
ACQUIRED BRAIN

Professor HF Wissink

Date: 20 October 2014

Dean and HoS

University of Kwa-Zulu Natal

Private Bag X54001

Durban

4000

Dear Professor Wissink

Re: Khalida Akbar

Student Number: 208 503 254

This serves to confirm that Miss K Akbar is welcome to access information which she may need for her dissertation at I Can!, with the permission of our current and previous learners. The learners will be chosen by myself so as to ensure that all participants that will be interviewed are capable of participating in the research project and that no harm will be caused to them. She will be under the supervision of a dedicated facilitator during all interviews and if a need arises for counselling of participants during the interview, the facilitator will be present to address the situation.

Kind Regards



Madre Human

General Manager

07 November 2014

Ms Khalida Akbar (208503254)
School of Management, IT & Governance
Westville Campus

Dear Ms Akbar,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1108/014D

Project title: A phenomenological study of the employment experiences of persons affected by Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI) in South Africa

Full Approval Notification – Committee Reviewed Protocol

This letter serves to notify you that your response received on 07 November 2014 in connection with the above was reviewed by the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, has now been granted **Full Approval**.

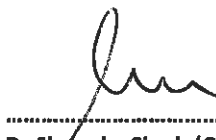
Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach/Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. Please quote the above reference number for all queries relating to this study.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol

Yours faithfully



.....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Professor H Wissink
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Brian McArthur
Cc School Administrator: Ms Angela Pearce

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximban@ukzn.ac.za / snymnm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



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