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# CHAPTER 2

## JOB SATISFACTION OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN INTEGRATED AND SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT: AN EXPLORATION OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter is based on:

Akkerman, A., Janssen, C.G.C., Kef, S., & Meiningier, H.P. (2016).  
Job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities in integrated and sheltered  
employment: an exploration of the literature.  
*Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*, 13, 205-216.

### **ABSTRACT**

*Background* Paying attention to job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities, in either integrated or sheltered employment, is important in order to increase individual as well as organizational functioning and well-being. Nevertheless, little is known about job satisfaction of employees with intellectual disabilities and the factors related to it. The aim of this study was to explore existing research evidence regarding job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities in integrated and sheltered employment settings and its associated factors.

*Method* A systematic and comprehensive literature search revealed 13 relevant studies that were examined.

*Results* Results indicated that people with intellectual disabilities both in integrated employment and sheltered employment generally report satisfaction with their jobs. Satisfaction levels appear to be higher in integrated employment. Furthermore, it was found that both characteristics of the employee and of the employment setting were associated with job satisfaction, as well as social relations, support and the fit between the employees' needs and the work environment.

*Conclusions* Advancements can be made with respect to policy and practice of employment of people with intellectual disabilities. In order to increase chances of improving their job satisfaction, we suggest an integrative approach, taking into account that job satisfaction may result from an interplay between personal, situational and social-cognitive characteristics. This is reflected in current theoretical frameworks in general job satisfaction literature. Future research on job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities could profit from developments in general job satisfaction literature and in addition take account of factors particularly relevant to people with intellectual disabilities, the possible impact of comparison processes, and the development of sound measurement methods. Finally, we advocate for greater involvement of people with intellectual disabilities in career related matters, which might enhance their self-determination and motivation and increase satisfaction.

## INTRODUCTION

Employment is a valuable domain of life for most adults. People often devote much time to their work, and it may provide an income. What's more, employment can contribute to personal identity and serve as a means to connect with others, develop oneself and feel useful (Jahoda, 1981; Judge & Klinger, 2008). For people with intellectual disabilities employment may be even more important as it provides access to a socially valued role and opportunities for social integration (Hall, 2009; Lysaght, Cobigo, & Hamilton, 2012; Novak, Rogan, & Mank, 2011; Tyree, Kendrick, & Block, 2011). Considering the significance of work in people's lives, awareness for their job satisfaction is essential. In this article we will contribute to the knowledge on job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities by presenting an exploration of the empirical research literature on job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities, and of the factors associated with it.

Job satisfaction is one of the most studied subjects in organizational psychology and sociology (Judge & Church, 2000). Paying attention to job satisfaction is important for both disabled and nondisabled workers. From a humane point of view its significance is beyond dispute. It reflects good treatment of the employee (Chiocchio & Frigon, 2006; Spector, 1997). Moreover, job satisfaction is relevant for the enhancement of individual well-being of both individuals with and without disability. Theory suggests one's job experiences may spill-over into other aspects of life and affect satisfaction with life (Cummins, 2005; Judge & Klinger, 2008; Judge & Watanabe, 1993; Heller, Watson, & Ilies, 2004; Schallock, Bonham, & Marchant, 2000). Job satisfaction also merits attention for its effects on organizational functioning. It has been associated with various individual attitudes and behaviours, such as job performance, counterproductive behaviour, absenteeism and voluntary turnover (Spector, 1997; Judge & Klinger, 2008; Fritzsche & Parrish, 2005). Particularly for workers with intellectual disabilities, associations have been found between job satisfaction and job retention (tenure) and satisfaction in the work environment (Chiocchio & Frigon, 2006; Fornes, Rocco, & Rosenberg, 2008). For people with intellectual disabilities awareness of their job satisfaction and the factors that are associated with it may be particularly important. It enables service providers and employers to provide them with adequate support, optimize employment situations, and to ensure that work is indeed a successful experience enhancing their overall well-being. This may also be beneficial for the success of vocational rehabilitation programs and increase employment rates, which currently tend to be low for people with disabilities (Van Hal, Meershoek, de Rijk, & Nijhuis, 2012). Nevertheless, even though work and feelings of satisfaction about the job are important to workers with intellectual disabilities, little research has been devoted to job satisfaction of people with (intellectual) disabilities (McAfee & McNaughton, 1997; Moseley, 1988).

Job satisfaction has been described as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience" (Locke, 1976, p.1300). This influential definition stresses the affective nature of job satisfaction, while incorporating cognitive elements. This is also expressed in the consensus definition provided by Cranny, Smith, and Stone (1992, p.1) who define job satisfaction as "an affective (that is emotional) reaction to one's job, resulting from the incumbent's comparison of actual outcomes with those that are desired (expected, deserved, and so on.)". Others have emphasized the attitudinal nature of job satisfaction, defining it as "an internal state that is expressed by affectively and/or cognitively evaluating an experienced job with some degree of favor or disfavor" (Brief, 1998, p.86) or as "a positive (or negative) evaluative judgment one makes about one's job or job situation" (Weiss, 2002, p.175).

Overall job satisfaction is generally determined by either assessing a global feeling about the job, or by measuring satisfaction with various aspects of the job, which are then summed up to determine overall job satisfaction, such as rewards (e.g. pay and fringe benefits), other people (e.g. co-workers, supervisors), the nature of the work itself, and the organizational context (Spector, 1997). There is however no 'gold standard' that indicates which job facets should be taken into account when job satisfaction is measured (Roelen, Koopmans, & Groothoff, 2008; Van Saane, Sluiter, Verbeek, & Frings-Dresen, 2003). Also, various theories exist explaining how job attitudes are formed, and many variables have been associated with job satisfaction (e.g., see Fritzsche & Parrish, 2005; Loscocco & Roschelle, 1991; Spector, 1997; Judge & Klinger, 2008). Research among non-disabled workers indicates that job satisfaction is associated with situational characteristics (e.g. the employment setting, job characteristics, and the social or physical work environment), personal characteristics (e.g. dispositions, expectations and demographics), and the fit between the employee and his work environment (Fritzsche & Parrish, 2005; Judge & Klinger, 2008; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Loscocco & Roschelle, 1991; Spector, 1997). Current theoretical models recognize that job satisfaction is likely to be determined by the interplay among multiple factors. These models point to the importance of taking an integrative approach to job satisfaction, that accounts for both personal and situational characteristics, as well as the interaction between the two (e.g. Brief, 1998; Judge, Bono, & Locke, 2000; Lent & Brown, 2006).

It has been suggested that people with disabilities like their jobs for many of the same reasons as nondisabled employees (Goode, 1989; McAfee, 1986; Moseley, 1988; Parent, Kregel, & Johnson, 1996). As Moseley (1988, p.217) points out: "workers with severe disabilities and their nondisabled co-workers are more alike than different. The aspects of a job that are important to one are important to the other." The personal and situational characteristics that have been found to affect the job satisfaction of nondisabled workers, may therefore very well be relevant for people with intellectual disabilities as well. On the other hand, their

disability, and hence particular characteristics, background and experiences may also affect job satisfaction, creating additional variables to be analysed (McAfee & McNaughton, 1997).

What's more, people with intellectual disabilities work in various settings, each with their own specific characteristics and with potentially different effects on their job satisfaction. The employment settings in which people with intellectual disabilities work can broadly be categorized as either sheltered or integrated employment. Sheltered employment can be described as "employment in a facility where most people have disabilities, with on-going work-related supports and supervision" (Metzel, Boeltzig, Butterworth, Sulewski, & Gilmore, 2007, p.151), and includes sheltered workshops, day centres, and vocational rehabilitation centres (Metzel et al., 2007; Migliore, Mank, Grossi, & Rogan, 2007; Open Society Institute, 2005; Verdonschot, De Witte, Reichrath, Buntinx, & Curfs, 2009). Several forms of sheltered employment exist, which may vary in for example aims, activities, requirements, wages and benefits, conditions of work, opportunities for advancement and level of community involvement (Migliore et al., 2007; Visier, 1998). Integrated employment on the other hand, takes place in a community setting, "(...) in the general labour market where the proportion of workers with disabilities does not exceed the natural proportions in the community (...)" (Migliore et al., 2007, p.7), and includes competitive employment, individual supported employment, entrepreneurship and self-employment, transitional employment, and group supported employment (Metzel et al., 2007).

Over the years there has been an increasing emphasis on offering integrated employment opportunities to people with intellectual disabilities, largely motivated by the idea of social inclusion (Moseley, 1988; Van Hal et al., 2012). Integrated employment has been associated with many advantages over sheltered employment, such as better financial outcomes, increased opportunities for personal growth, fulfilment of the preferences of people with disabilities and their families, and greater social integration (Migliore et al., 2007). Some concerns have been raised about integrated employment as well, amongst which concerns regarding complexity of the jobs, availability and adequacy of support, transportation, personal safety, risks of discontinuity, fear of losing benefits and services, and concerns regarding social relationships with co-workers, which might be less frequent as compared to those developed in sheltered employment (Migliore et al., 2007; Migliore, Grossi, Mank, & Rogan, 2008).

Considering the wide variety in employment settings, and the emphasis on integrated employment for people with intellectual disabilities, it is important to investigate to what extent these different settings provide the elements that are related to job satisfaction. Moreover, it is important to examine what constitutes a good job for workers with an intellectual disability; what are the elements that may provide job satisfaction for someone who has an intellectual disability? There are many theories and ample research on the antecedents of job satisfaction of non-disabled employees, yet for people with intellectual

disabilities a well-researched and integrated view on job satisfaction seems to be missing currently. We know little of factors that may increase or hinder their job satisfaction.

The primary purpose of this article was therefore to explore existing research evidence regarding job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities in integrated and sheltered employment settings, and its associated factors. Therefore, in this literature review the following research questions will be answered: What is the level of job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities in integrated and sheltered employment and is there a difference between these settings? Which factors are associated with the job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities in integrated and sheltered employment?

### METHOD

Publications were selected from Medline (1990-2011), ERIC (1990-2011), PsychINFO (1990-2011), and Cinahl (1990-2011) databases. The following search terms were used: (intellectual disability OR mental retardation OR developmental disability OR learning disability) AND (employment OR work OR vocation OR job) AND (quality of life OR well-being OR satisfaction OR job satisfaction OR quality of work life OR well-being at work). The search was on title and/or abstract and for peer-reviewed articles. The broader concepts of quality of life, satisfaction and well-being have been included as job satisfaction is often studied in the context of general subjective well-being, life satisfaction or quality of life (Lent & Brown, 2008).

The relevance of the references was assessed in three phases. In the first phase studies were selected on title and abstract by the first author. Articles were included that met the following criteria: English language; in title or abstract intellectual disabilities (or a related keyword); the concepts employment, work, vocation or job and/or (indicators of) job satisfaction, satisfaction, quality of (work) life, well-being (at work). Articles were excluded that focused exclusively on people without intellectual disabilities (e.g. studies on individuals with psychiatric disorders or physical disabilities, studies on staff working with people with intellectual disabilities). In the second phase the full text articles were assessed. Studies were screened for inclusion based on the following criteria: sample included individuals with intellectual disabilities (DSM-IV-TR 317; 318.0; 318.1; 318.2; 319) or borderline intellectual functioning (DSM-IV-TR V62.89); data on level of job satisfaction and/or factors contributing to job satisfaction is presented. Studies on related concepts like quality of (work) life and well-being (at work) were included only when the operationalization of the concept was in accordance with common definitions of job satisfaction or when specific results for job satisfaction were described. Excluded were studies not outlining the group of people with intellectual disabilities in the population characteristics; studies not describing separate results for individuals with intellectual disabilities; studies focusing (exclusively) on outcomes

other than job satisfaction (e.g. job performance, job retention), or focusing (exclusively) on a single job satisfaction facet (e.g. pay, co-workers). Other articles were gathered by searching the reference lists of the selected articles by screening on title, limited by year of publication (1980-2010). Furthermore, since many articles on job satisfaction that were found so far were from the 1980s or early 1990s a forward citation search was conducted on relevant studies, using Web of Knowledge, to find more recent publications.

## RESULTS

### Description of studies

Based on the search terms, the search in PsycINFO, ERIC, MEDLINE, and CINAHL revealed a total of 1130 hits, of which 848 were peer reviewed articles. Based on the in- and exclusion criteria 9 studies were marked as relevant for this study. Bibliographic search of the included studies resulted in 3 more studies, and forward citation search in 1 more study. This resulted in a total of 13 studies identified for inclusion in this review (see Table 1).

Most studies specifically focused on the concept job satisfaction, sometimes described as work satisfaction. One study on quality of working life was included, as operationalization was in accordance with the concept of job satisfaction. Most of the selected studies (n=7) investigated the job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities working in integrated employment settings, mainly described as supported or competitive employment. These studies generally focused on individual placements, although this was not always explicitly described, and two studies are known to have included group placements (enclaves). Four studies included both integrated and sheltered employment settings, the latter mainly described as (sheltered) workshops and two studies focused solely on sheltered employment settings. All studies included people with intellectual disabilities, however a clear definition was seldom provided. In several studies an indication of the level of intellectual disability is given, sometimes supported with IQ-scores, however in several other studies this information is lacking and it remains unclear how a diagnosis has been established.

The selected studies applied a variety of theoretical frameworks. The Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) was applied in two studies, one study was based on the Job Demands-Resources model (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001), and one study used Herzberg's motivation to work model (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). Most included studies did not describe a theoretical framework, nor did they give a definition of job satisfaction.

The majority of studies made use of structured questionnaires. Eight of these studies adopted a facet approach to job satisfaction, together assessing a wide range of job satisfaction facets.

**Table 1.** Articles included in the review

Authors, year & origin	Design & data collection	Sample*	Employment setting*	Measurement: job satisfaction instruments	Factors studied in association with job satisfaction
Chioccio & Frigon (2006) Canada	Cross-sectional Interviews based on questionnaire	N = 53 candidates with mental retardation (IQ 50-55 to 70-75: 84.6%; IQ 35-40 to 50-55: 15.4%) Mean age women 34.7 years, mean age men 30.23 years	Integrated (53 natural work settings: supported employment programs and jobs in the community)	Six item questionnaire	Person environment fit
Flores et al. (2011) Spain	Cross-sectional Interviews based on questionnaire	N= 507 workers with a primary disability of mental retardation (n.s.) Age: 22-30 years: 27%; 31-40 years: 36.1%	Sheltered (11 sheltered workshops, 87.6%) Integrated (6 supported employment initiatives, 12.4%)	Quality of working life measure, including one item on quality of working life and 5 items from the Survey on Job Satisfaction (Flores, 2008),	Characteristics of the employment setting (the work itself, promotional and developmental opportunities) Social relations and support
Fornes et al. (2008) USA	Cross-sectional Questionnaire	N=100 working adults with mild to moderate mental retardation (which suggests an IQ ranging from 50 to 67) Age: >18 years	Integrated (supported employment)	Job-in-General (JIG) Scale (Ironson et al., 1989)	Employee characteristics (dis-)ability, dispositional and cognitive characteristics)
Griffin et al., (1996) USA	Cross-sectional (group comparison) Questionnaire	N=200 subjects with mild mental retardation (IQ 50-49) Age: 21-40 years	Sheltered (workshop, n=100) Integrated (supported employment, n=100)	Vocational Program Evaluation Profile (Rosenberg, Cheyney & Greenberg, 1990)	Employee characteristics (demographic variables, dispositional and cognitive characteristics)
Jiraneck & Kirby (1990) Australia	Cross-sectional Interviews based on questionnaire	N=44 subjects with a borderline or mild intellectual disability (n.s.), n=29 nondisabled young adults Age: 20-25 years	Sheltered (sheltered employment, n=15) Integrated (competitive employment, n=15) Unemployed (n=14)	Job Satisfaction Scale (Warr et al., 1979)	Employee characteristics (duration and mobility)
Lam & Chan (1988) USA	Cross-sectional Interviews based on questionnaire	N=50 clients of sheltered workshops (n=49 diagnosed with mental retardation, n=1 with epilepsy). (IQ range: 35-93, Mean IQ: 58, SD 13.29) Mean age 35 years	Sheltered (two sheltered workshops)	Job Satisfaction Scale, rating scale adapted from Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss et al., 1967)	Employee characteristics (demographic variables, (dis-)ability)

Table 1. (continued)

Authors, year & origin	Design & data collection	Sample*	Employment setting*	Measurement: job satisfaction instruments	Factors studied in association with job satisfaction
Lysaght et al. (2009) Canada	Cross-sectional Semi-structured interviews	N = 25 persons with intellectual disabilities (n.s.) Mean age 32.6 years, range 21-55 years	Integrated (paid (n=16) and unpaid employment (n=9) in the community)	-	Characteristics of the employment setting (the work itself, promotional and developmental opportunities, pay, physical work environment)  Social relations and support
Melchiori & Church (1997) USA	Cross-sectional Interviews based on questionnaire	N=45 supported employees with mental retardation (12 mild, 11 moderate, 3 severe, 19 undocumented) (n.s.) n=45 nondisabled co-workers Median age 32 years, range 21-58 years	Integrated (supported employment)	Modified Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ; Weiss, Dawis, England & Lofquist, 1967)	Person environment fit
Petrovski & Gleeson (1997) Australia	Cross-sectional Interviews based on questionnaire and semi-structured in-depth interviews	Questionnaire: n=31 workers with a mild intellectual disability (n.s.), in-depth interviews: n=30 Mean age 24 years, range 18-41 years	Integrated (competitive employment)	Job Satisfaction Scale (Warr et al., 1979)	Employee characteristics (demographic variables, dispositional and cognitive characteristics, promotional and developmental opportunities, social relations and support)
Reiter et al. (1985) Israel	Cross-sectional Interviews based on questionnaire	N=83 mildly and moderately retarded subjects (mean IQ 59, range 38-80) Mean age 32.7 years, range 19-56 years	Sheltered (a residential facility)	Single item	Employee characteristics (dispositional and cognitive characteristics)

\* The concepts, terms and specifications as used in the original studies are reported in this table. N.s. = not specified.

**Table 1.** (continued)

<b>Authors, year &amp; origin</b>	<b>Design &amp; data collection</b>	<b>Sample*</b>	<b>Employment setting*</b>	<b>Measurement: job satisfaction instruments</b>	<b>Factors studied in association with job satisfaction</b>
Seltzer (1984) USA	Cross-sectional (group comparison)  Interviews based on questionnaire	N=65 mentally retarded persons (3 borderline, 14 mild, 39 moderate, 9 severe mental retardation) in 4 employment groups (group 1 mean IQ=68, group 2 mean IQ=54, group 3 mean IQ=69, group 4 mean IQ=63)  Age 8-29 years: 35.4%, 30-45 years: 40%, 46-55 years: 12.3%; >55 years: 7.7%, unknown: 4.6%	Sheltered (sheltered workshop, n=33; of which n=11 once competitive, n=11) Integrated (competitive jobs, n=21) Unemployed, once competitive (n=11)	Job Descriptive Index (Smith et al., 1969)	Employee characteristics (duration and mobility, (dis-)ability)  Characteristics of the employment setting (the work itself, promotional and developmental opportunities, pay, physical work environment)  Social relations and support
Test et al. (1993) USA	Cross-sectional  Semi-structured interviews based on questionnaire	N = 34 workers with developmental disabilities (mild MR: 47.1%; moderate MR 35.3%; other label: 17.6%)  Age 18-19 years: 2.9%; 20-30 years: 82.4%; 31-40 years: 11.8%; 41-50 years: 2.9%	Integrated (supported employment; individual, n=22, workstation, n=12)	Job Satisfaction Questionnaire	Characteristics of the employment setting (the work itself, pay, promotional and developmental opportunities, physical work environment)  Social relations and support
Test et al. (2000) USA	Longitudinal  Interviews based on questionnaire	N = 32 supported employees (mild MR: 50%; moderate MR: 28.2%; severe MR: 3.1%; other label: 18.7%)  Age 20-29 years: 53.1%; 30-39 years: 31.3%; 40-49 years: 12.5%; 50+ years: 3.1%	Integrated (supported employment; individual, n=30, workstation, n=2)	Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (Test, et al., 1993)	Employee characteristics (duration and mobility)  Characteristics of the employment setting (the work itself, promotional and developmental opportunities, pay)  Social relations and support

\* The concepts, terms and specifications as used in the original studies are reported in this table. N.s. = not specified.

Most frequently assessed facets are work content, pay, co-workers, promotion, and supervision. Four of these studies also applied a global measure of overall job satisfaction, two other studies solely made use of a global job satisfaction measure. One study included only a single question measuring global job satisfaction, which is supposed to produce acceptable, albeit lower levels of reliability than multiple-item measures of global job satisfaction (Judge & Klinger, 2008).

Various job satisfaction instruments were used, that have been developed for people without disabilities, including the Job-in-General (JIG) Scale (Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, & Paul, 1989), the Job Satisfaction Scale (Warr, Cook, & Wall, 1979), the Job Descriptive Index (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969), and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967). An advantage of using existing instruments is their known validity and reliability, and the possibility of comparison of job satisfaction of disabled and nondisabled workers. They do however appeal to verbal and reading skills, which has been put forward as a potential problem interviewing people with intellectual disabilities (e.g. McAfee, 1986; Moseley, 1988). Researchers have attempted to overcome this problem by simplifying questionnaires, e.g. by reducing it from a 7-point scale to a 5-point scale, by using visual aids like pictures of facial expressions representing the alternatives, by reading the questions to the participants instead of self-administration, by allowing the interviewer to explain or reword items, or by omitting items. Although these modifications may affect reliability and validity of the instruments used, only one study reported data on test retest reliability, which was marginal to fair, and one study reported the alpha coefficient for the adapted scale, which was good. Researchers report good experiences using existing, self-report measures. Particularly participants with mild intellectual disabilities did not appear to experience cognitive difficulties with the instruments used (Petrovski & Gleeson, 1997). Melchiori and Church (1997) noted the global job satisfaction measure may have been too abstract for some workers (their sample included individuals with mild, moderate and severe intellectual disabilities).

A summary of the major findings is given in the following paragraph. First the results for the first research question 'What is the job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities in integrated and sheltered employment and is there a difference between these settings?' will be presented, followed by the results for the second research question 'Which factors are associated with the job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities in integrated and sheltered employment?'

### **Job satisfaction**

Studies on job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities in integrated employment generally reported moderate to high levels of overall job satisfaction (Flores, Jenaro, Orgaz,

& Martin, 2011; Jiranek & Kirby, 1990; Melchiori & Church, 1997; Petrovski & Gleeson, 1997). To compare job satisfaction results, the scores were converted to a percentage of scale maximum (%SM). This represents the conversion of the scale scores into a standard form, using the formula  $[\text{Likert score} - 1 / \text{Number of points on the Likert scale} - 1]100$  (Cummins, 2000). Results varied from 73% of scale maximum (SM) to 83%SM on faceted measures, and from 78%SM to 93%SM on global measures of job satisfaction. Test, Hinson, Solow, and Keul (1993) and Test, Carver, Ewers, Haddad, and Person (2000) found that the majority of participants in integrated employment settings appeared to be satisfied with their jobs.

For individuals in sheltered employment moderate levels of overall job satisfaction were found (Lam & Chan, 1988; Griffin, Rosenberg, Cheyney, & Greenberg, 1996; Jiranek & Kirby, 1990), varying from 65%SM to over 75%SM on faceted measures and 75%SM on a global measure of job satisfaction. Studies that compared job satisfaction levels in integrated and sheltered employment revealed significantly higher levels of job satisfaction for individuals with intellectual disabilities in integrated employment on a facet measure of job satisfaction (Jiranek & Kirby, 1990; Griffin et al., 1996), but not on a global measure of job satisfaction, using a single question (Jiranek & Kirby, 1990). Furthermore, it was found that the majority of people in integrated employment, who had previously worked in a sheltered workshop, preferred their job in integrated employment (Test et al., 1993; 2000).

It is worth mentioning that studies indicated that, despite reported job satisfaction, people with intellectual disabilities put forward negative feelings as well, like boredom, feeling unappreciated, experiences of loneliness and feeling uncomfortable amongst colleagues, particularly in integrated employment (Jiranek & Kirby, 1990; Petrovski & Gleeson, 1997). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that some studies indicated that, despite the high levels of satisfaction, many respondents would still rather work somewhere else (Petrovski & Gleeson, 1997; Test et al., 1993, 2000). Test et al. (2000) found that the longer people worked somewhere, the more likely they were to consider working someplace else.

### **Factors associated with job satisfaction**

A number of factors were identified, which will be described below, categorized in four themes: employee characteristics, characteristics of the employment setting, social relations and support and person-environment fit.

#### *Employee characteristics*

Three studies reported on the relationship between various demographic variables and job satisfaction. No significant associations were found between gender and job satisfaction of people with an intellectual disability in open employment (Griffin et al., 1996; Petrovski & Gleeson, 1997) and neither between gender, age or years of education and job satisfaction in

a sheltered employment setting (Lam & Chan, 1988). Griffin et al. (1996) found an association between job satisfaction and living situation (semi-independent, intermediate care, group homes or family), with higher levels of job satisfaction for respondents living in more independent settings. The study did not report whether this was a significant difference and did not indicate which (personal or situational) characteristics might have contributed to the difference found.

Another three studies investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and variables associated with (dis-)ability, such as skills, performance and cognitive capacities. Seltzer (1984) reported that performance of workers with intellectual disabilities was associated with job satisfaction. Particularly social skills and communication skills, which were found to be positively related to the job satisfaction facets co-workers and supervision. Fornes et al. (2008) on the other hand, found that job performance, including performance on work-required daily living activities (self-care, personal behaviour), interpersonal and social skills needed for employment and job duties, was not a significant predictor of job satisfaction for those in integrated employment. Lam and Chan (1988) described that IQ was negatively associated with overall job satisfaction, and that those with mild/borderline intellectual disabilities in sheltered employment reported lower levels of job satisfaction than those with moderate/severe intellectual disabilities. Apparently the relationship between variables associated with (dis-)ability and job satisfaction is not straightforward. Different skills and capacities are possibly related to job satisfaction in different ways, and other variables might moderate or mediate the relationship. Lam & Chan (1988) for instance suggested that persons with lower IQ-scores may have preferences that are less well defined, resulting in higher job satisfaction levels. Or that people with higher IQ scores are more likely to compare their job with those of non-disabled workers scores, have higher expectations about it and hence see their sheltered work environment as less desirable, resulting in lower job satisfaction scores (Lam & Chan, 1988).

Three studies reported on the relationship between job satisfaction and job mobility. Jiranek and Kirby (1990) found no relationship between time in employment and job satisfaction for either individuals in integrated or sheltered employment. People with intellectual disabilities did not get more or less satisfied as they stayed in the same job for a longer period of time. It should be remarked that these results should be interpreted with caution, considering the limited length in employment of the participants in integrated employment and the small sample size. Test et al. (2000) indicated, based on a longitudinal study, that people with intellectual disabilities in their study appeared to be consistently satisfied with their jobs in integrated employment over a five year period, yet they were more likely to consider working somewhere else. Seltzer (1984) reported a relationship between job mobility and job satisfaction. Downwardly mobile sample members – those who were

unemployed but previously held competitive jobs and those who attended workshops but previously held competitive jobs – were generally less satisfied than those who were not downwardly mobile – those who only attended workshops and those who were competitively employed at the time of the research. The author pointed out that job satisfaction apparently is not just a reaction to objective characteristics of the job. It was suggested job satisfaction involves cognitive processes, and is influenced by someone's frame of reference, which is consistent with the suggestion by Lam and Chan (1988) described above. Qualitative results indicated that people with intellectual disabilities do indeed make (social) comparisons, comparing their job with the jobs of others, with previous experiences and with their own aspirations, and comparing their own characteristics with those of others (Lysaght, Ouellette-Kuntz, & Morrison, 2009; Petrovski & Gleeson, 1997). Comparison processes appeared to affect satisfaction with characteristics of the job and affect (their perception of) their own characteristics (e.g. competencies, self-esteem), and appeared to be related to the desire to change jobs. These cognitive processes may also affect overall job satisfaction, yet this cannot be concluded from the studies in this literature overview.

Finally, four studies investigated the relationship between dispositional and cognitive characteristics and job satisfaction. Griffin et al. (1996) reported higher levels of self esteem as well as job satisfaction for those in supported employment than for those in sheltered employment. The authors concluded that there was a significant relationship between self-esteem and job satisfaction for both workers in sheltered and supported employment, yet data is not provided. Petrovski and Gleeson (1997) on the other hand found no relationship between job satisfaction and self esteem in persons with mild intellectual disabilities working in integrated employment. Petrovski and Gleeson (1997) also reported no association between job satisfaction and aspirations in life (e.g. driving a car/motor and earning more money). Fornes et al. (2008) found that self-determination was the most important predictor of job satisfaction of people with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities in integrated employment, accounting for 21 percent of the variance of the job satisfaction scale. Reiter, Friedman, and Molcho (1985) described that the factors underlying motivation could discriminate satisfied from dissatisfied subjects. They concluded that an overemphasis on hygiene factors (e.g. working conditions, supervision) could result in disappointment and lower job satisfaction, whereas an emphasis on intrinsic motivation (advancement, recognition, achievement, interest in the work) might enhance satisfaction.

### *Characteristics of the employment setting*

The work itself is frequently mentioned by workers in integrated and sheltered employment in relation to job satisfaction, and as something they particularly like or dislike about their job (Lysaght et al., 2009; Test et al., 1993, 2000). Seltzer (1984) reported a significant positive

correlation between satisfaction with tasks and overall job satisfaction. Flores et al. (2011) found a significant negative relationship between job stressors (rotating work shifts, work load, excessive responsibility, repetitive tasks, lack of training, daily production, reduced breaks, relationships with supervisor, relationships with co-workers, lack of feedback on performance, absence of rotation at job place) and job satisfaction (in their study called quality of working life), both in integrated and sheltered employment, as well as a significant negative correlation between psychological demands (quantitative or qualitative work overload) and job satisfaction and between physical demands and job satisfaction. Reduced job stressors helped explain variance in job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities in sheltered employment, whereas in integrated employment reduced psychological demands (quantitative or qualitative work overload) helped explain variance in job satisfaction.

Studies also reported on developmental opportunities in relation to job satisfaction. Flores et al. (2011) found that skills discretion (i.e. opportunities for skills development, learning, utilize capabilities) was significantly correlated with job satisfaction of workers in sheltered employment, but not with the job satisfaction of workers in integrated employment. Skills discretion was not found to be a significant predictor of job satisfaction in regression analysis, either in integrated or sheltered employment. The authors noted that skills discretion shared common variance with social support from supervisor, which could indicate an overprotective attitude by the supervisor, which in turn, "could reduce the opportunities of these employees to develop decision-making or problem solving skills" (Flores et al., 2011, p.139). Seltzer (1984) reported no significant relationship between satisfaction with promotions and overall job satisfaction. Interviews pointed out however that workers with intellectual disabilities did express the desire to change jobs, do new things, and do better for themselves (Lysaght et al., 2009; Petrovski & Gleeson, 1997; Test et al., 1993; 2000). This has led to the suggestion that more active attention to personal development, goals and preferences would contribute to increased satisfaction (Lysaght et al., 2009).

Four studies reported on the association between job satisfaction and pay. Seltzer (1984) found that the least liked jobs were in companies that paid the best, and satisfaction with pay was not significantly correlated with overall job satisfaction. Lysaght et al. (2009) noted there appeared to be little distinction in the job satisfaction of paid and unpaid workers, indicating the affect of pay on job satisfaction may be limited. Nevertheless, for some participants pay was a significant incentive, emblematic of social status and success, and lack of pay did reduce their satisfaction (Lysaght et al., 2009). Also money earned is among the variables people consistently mention both when asked what they like best or what they don't like about their job. It also makes them prefer their integrated job over their sheltered job (Test, 1993; 2000). Individual differences may exist in the relevance of pay in relation to job satisfaction. For instance Test et al. (2000) found that people appeared to get

less satisfied with their wages as they worked longer in their jobs, perhaps as they became more knowledgeable about possibilities of increased wages and different careers. The actual influence of pay on job satisfaction may also be obscured by lack of understanding of financial issues and (mis-)perceptions concerning government benefits (Lysaght et al., 2009).

Finally, aspects of the physical work environment (e.g. cleanliness, temperature, noise) were mentioned in relation to job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities (Lysaght et al., 2009; Test et al., 1993). Seltzer (1984) reported that job satisfaction was significantly higher among people with intellectual disabilities who work in smaller work settings (i.e. workshops and companies with fewer employees).

### *Social relations and support*

Various aspects of social relations at work have been associated with job satisfaction. Subjective appraisals and perceptual aspects of the relations with co-workers, as liking or disliking them and getting along have been put forward distinctively as a contribution to job satisfaction, and some relations with co-workers were described as friendships (Lysaght et al., 2009; Petrovski & Gleeson, 1997; Test et al., 1993, 2000). Seltzer (1984) found that satisfaction with co-workers was positively related to overall job satisfaction.

The presence of other people in the workplace is considered important as they provide opportunities for social interaction. Seltzer (1984) reported that job satisfaction was significantly higher among people with intellectual disabilities who work in smaller work settings, and indicate these work settings possibly provided greater possibilities for social interaction. More distinctively however, qualitative results pointed to the importance of feelings of belonging, social recognition and appreciation for job satisfaction (Lysaght et al., 2009; Petrovski & Gleeson, 1997).

Petrovski and Gleeson (1997) found a significant negative correlation between job satisfaction and perceived stigma and between job satisfaction and feelings of loneliness and social dissatisfaction at work, indicating that workers with the most job satisfaction felt the least stigmatised and perceived less loneliness at work. Their study also showed that there are still many people with intellectual disabilities in integrated employment who feel "different" from their co-workers, who feel left out, or feel that they are treated differently, and are uncomfortable with this.

Flores et al. (2011) reported that elevated social support from coworkers and from supervisors predicted higher job satisfaction. Seltzer (1984) described that satisfaction was higher in those instances where there was more communication and direct feedback from the supervisor.

### *Person environment fit*

Three studies have investigated person-environment fit in relation to the job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities. Melchiori and Church (1997) found a modest relation between need-reinforcer correspondence (i.e. the correspondence of the workers' needs and available reinforcers) and job satisfaction, and only when a facet measure of job satisfaction was used. Chiocchio and Frigon (2006) reported that job satisfaction was a mediator of the relationship between satisfaction in the work environment and the fit between employees' abilities and the job requirements, indicating that job satisfaction is a consequence of reinforcement. Employees with intellectual disabilities appeared to be more satisfied if their work environment fulfilled their needs. Fornes et al. (2008) on the other hand, found no significant association between person-job congruency (i.e. the match between a person's interests, skills and abilities with the job requirements) and job satisfaction.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study presents an exploration of literature on job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities. Paying attention to job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities, in either integrated or sheltered employment, is important in order to enhance their employment situations, to provide optimal support, and to increase individual as well as organizational functioning and well-being. In this study we were interested in the job satisfaction levels of employees with intellectual disabilities and the factors that may increase or hinder their job satisfaction.

The thirteen articles included in this study of the literature addressed a variety of both integrated and sheltered employment settings and covered people with different levels of intellectual disabilities (from severe to borderline). The included studies firstly indicate that people with intellectual disabilities both in integrated employment and sheltered employment, generally report satisfaction with their jobs. Satisfaction levels appear to be higher in integrated employment. This supports the emphasis of government and organizational policies on participation and integrated employment.

Secondly, this literature study also allowed the identification of factors associated with the job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities. It was found that both characteristics of the employee and of the employment setting were associated with job satisfaction. Particularly the employees' level of (dis-)ability, previous experiences (e.g. mobility) and certain dispositional and cognitive characteristics (e.g. self-determination, motivation) were found to be relevant to the level of job satisfaction, as well as characteristics of the work itself (tasks, job stressors and psychological demands) and of the physical work environment (e.g. number of employees). Furthermore, possibilities for social interaction,

and especially feelings of belonging, recognition, appreciation, lack of stigma and elevated social support from co-workers and supervisors positively relate to job satisfaction, as well as the fit between an individual's needs and the work environment. Results are to a large extent in accordance with results regarding the job satisfaction of non-disabled workers, which also point to the significance of both personal and situational characteristics for job satisfaction (Fritzsche & Parrish, 2005; Judge & Klinger, 2008). No clear correlation was found between job satisfaction and demographic variables. Also, results for opportunities for growth and development and pay, factors that have been found to be important for job satisfaction of non-disabled workers, were ambiguous. Qualitative studies, however, do point out that opportunities for growth and development and pay are important to employees with intellectual disabilities. The influence of these factors on job satisfaction may be obscured by the fact that they are possibly not equally important to all employees, or because, as was noted, employees with intellectual disabilities often have limited insight in (promotional) opportunities and financial issues.

Although many hits were found, only 13 articles met the inclusion criteria for this study. It can be concluded that, despite the vast amount of research on job satisfaction in Industrial and Organizational psychology in general, and the increased recognition of the significance of employment to people with intellectual disabilities, research on job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities is still fairly limited, as was indicated previously by others (e.g. McAfee & McNaughton, 1997; Moseley, 1988).

Some limitations of this study can be identified, and therefore data should be interpreted with caution. The databases Medline, ERIC, PsychINFO, and Cinahl were searched carefully for the period 1990-2011 using a combination of search terms. Some additional studies were found by searching the references of the selected articles and by forward citation search. Nevertheless, other relevant publications or reports, not included in the searched databases, could exist. Furthermore it should be remarked that the lack of (shared) theoretical backgrounds, conceptual frameworks, and descriptions of the job satisfaction concept, made comparison among studies challenging. A complicating finding was the lack of shared instruments, often unknown levels of reliability and validity, and frequently limited description of sample characteristics. Moreover, not all studies have directly tested the difference in job satisfaction between sheltered and integrated settings and most factors associated with job satisfaction were studied in a rather exploratory way. This makes generalization of results difficult.

It is important to continue job satisfaction research, in the light of ongoing developments in employment situations and support of people with intellectual disabilities. We greatly encourage further research on this important topic. Based on the results of this study, some recommendations can be made for future research.

The included studies provide insight into the factors that may contribute to job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities and that are worth taking into consideration in further research. Besides the factors identified in this study, other factors may be relevant as well. For instance personal and situational characteristics that are particularly important to workers with intellectual disabilities, such as adaptive behaviour, vocational skills, executive functioning, workplace culture or typicalness, the degree to which job characteristics are the same as those of co-workers without disability in the same company. Also, certain personal characteristics that have proven to be important determinants of job satisfaction of non-disabled workers, such as positive and negative affectivity and the Big Five personality traits (e.g. Ilies & Judge, 2002; 2003; Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002), could be studied more extensively in job satisfaction research of people with intellectual disabilities. Furthermore, it has been put forward by others that the high levels of job satisfaction amongst people with (intellectual) disabilities actually may have more to do with low expectations, than with the actual characteristics of the job (Moseley, 1988; Parent et al., 1996), as has been suggested for other groups with poor positions in the labour market (Clark, 1997; Pagán & Malo, 2009). In line with this, results indirectly indicate that people with intellectual disabilities do indeed compare their work experiences to previous work experiences, to other people and to personal aspirations and expectations (Petrovski & Gleeson, 1997; Seltzer, 1984; Lam & Chan, 1988). The precise impact of these social cognitive processes on job satisfaction has yet to be empirically investigated.

To gain a better, more comprehensive understanding of job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities, it is necessary to understand how various types of variables (e.g. situational characteristics, personal characteristics, social-cognitive characteristics) interact and what may be the nature of the relations among them. In order to do so, research on job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities could profit from developments in general job satisfaction literature. These point to the importance of taking an integrative approach to job satisfaction, which recognizes that job satisfaction is determined by the interplay among multiple variables, and specifies more precisely the psychological processes through which particular determinants translate into particular outcomes. We suggest future research should make use of existing theoretical frameworks, and/or incorporate key components from different, yet complementary, research perspectives, such as the job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), the self-determination theory (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and the social cognitive model of job satisfaction (Lent & Brown, 2008).

Also, more research is needed on how to measure job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities. Existing job satisfaction instruments have been developed for people without intellectual disabilities, whose experiences, interests and capabilities may differ from those of people with intellectual disabilities. Although clearly it has advantages to

use existing instruments, these instruments may not fully tap into the relevant facets and/or may be too difficult. Modifications made on existing instruments may have an effect on reliability and validity. More research on methods for assessing job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities could be beneficial for both research and practice.

In terms of practical implications of this exploration of literature, it is apparent that people with intellectual disabilities are well able to report on their job satisfaction. In order to provide them with optimal support in their employment situation and career development it is important to discuss their job satisfaction on a regular basis, so that improvements can be made timely. Self-report measures can provide useful tools for this, yet it should be advised to take into account qualitative accounts of perceptions of work experiences as well, as these may provide valuable additional information (e.g. Akkerman, Janssen, Kef & Meininger, 2014; Petrovski & Gleeson, 1997). In order to improve job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities, policy makers as well as those giving support should take into account that job satisfaction appears to be a matter of customization and an interplay between personal, situational and social characteristics. Furthermore, we suggest more attention should be paid to personal choice and subjective job preferences of people with intellectual disabilities, as was also pointed out by Nota, Ginevra and Carrieri (2010). Increased insight in financial issues, in job opportunities and possibilities for growth and development, in their own capabilities and interests and expansion of work experiences could enhance self-determination and motivation of people with intellectual disabilities and might increase satisfaction with the job.

Advancements can be made with respect to transition and employment of people with intellectual disabilities, both in research and practice (see also Lysaght, 2010). Increased attention for job satisfaction can provide a valuable contribution to this.

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