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Akkerman, A.

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# CHAPTER 6

WORK MOTIVATION OF PEOPLE WITH  
INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN INTEGRATED  
AND SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT AND ITS  
ASSOCIATIONS WITH JOB SATISFACTION. AN  
EXPLORATIVE INVESTIGATION

### ABSTRACT

*Background* Quality of motivation might be associated with work-related well-being of people with intellectual disabilities, yet knowledge on this topic is limited. Using self-determination theory (SDT), we explored quality of motivation of people with intellectual disabilities in integrated and sheltered employment and associations between motivational quality and job satisfaction.

*Method* A matched sample of 25 participants in integrated employment and 25 in sheltered employment was interviewed, using open-ended questions on motivation and a job satisfaction questionnaire. Qualitative analysis, using open and axial coding, was conducted to discern motivational quality. Three groups were discerned: participants displaying (1) autonomous, (2) controlled, or (3) both autonomous and controlled motivation, which were examined in relation to job satisfaction.

*Results* Reasons displaying low quality motivation (i.e. controlled motivation; e.g. financial reasons, urged by someone, unpleasantness of staying at home, feeling they ought to) were expressed more frequently than reasons displaying high quality motivation (i.e. autonomous motivation; e.g. enjoyment, meeting or helping others). Job satisfaction was higher for participants with autonomous motivation compared to controlled motivation. Participants in integrated and sheltered employment displayed no differences in motivational quality.

*Conclusions* Preliminarily evidence is provided that quality of work motivation of people with intellectual disabilities varies between individuals and for the assumption of SDT that motivational quality may affect employment outcomes. It may be advised to pay attention to individual's work motivation throughout continuation of the job.

## INTRODUCTION

Work motivation is considered an important issue for people with intellectual disabilities. Research indicates that many people with intellectual disabilities aspire to work, and often prefer to do this in an integrated employment setting, which is also stimulated by policies and legislation (Holwerda, Van der Klink, De Boer, Groothof, & Brouwer, 2013; Migliore, Mank, Grossi, & Rogan, 2007). Nevertheless, unemployment rates are high, and for those participating in employment, the majority works in sheltered employment settings, and/or relies on government benefits for receiving an income (Verdonschot, De Witte, Reichrath, Buntinx, & Curfs, 2009). The sustained employment participation of people with intellectual disabilities is interesting from a motivational point of view. Moreover, successful recruitment and job retention of people with intellectual disabilities starts with understanding their motivation. Research indicates that higher levels of motivation of persons with intellectual disabilities were associated with an increased likelihood of obtaining a job (Holwerda et al, 2013; Rose, Saunders, Hensel, & Kroese, 2005; Hensel, Stenfert Kroese, & Rose, 2007), whereas lack of motivation appeared to be a barrier to employment (McConkey & Mezza, 2001). Motivation has been found so important that it has been suggested that employment agencies use it as entry criterion (Hensel et al., 2007).

The role of motivation does not end once people with intellectual disabilities have obtained a job. Motivation remains important throughout continuation of the job, as it adds to employees' well-being and optimal functioning (Steers, Mowday, & Shapiro, 2004). Besides, not only the amount or intensity (i.e. quantity) of motivation matters, but also the variation in types of motivation, referred to as quality of motivation (Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, & De Witte, 2008). Previous studies among people with intellectual disabilities indicated that various reasons might motivate them to work, including money, enjoyment, social aspects, perceived competence, personal development, and avoiding the negative consequences of staying at home (Andrews & Rose, 2010; Cinamon & Gifsh, 2004; Ferrari, Nota, & Soresi, 2008; Li, 1998; Stenfert Kroese et al., 2000). Some reasons for working may be more important for one worker than the other. For instance, whereas one worker may mainly be motivated by money, the other may predominantly work in order to have social interactions with others, and some workers might combine motives, working for both financial and social reasons. It is conceivable that workers in integrated and sheltered employment may display different types of motivation for working. Learning more about what motivates people with intellectual disabilities in both integrated and sheltered employment is critical to optimally connect with individuals and for developing career guidance interventions (Ferrari et al., 2008). Thus far, studies on the work motivation of people with intellectual disabilities have not explicitly investigated the quality of their work motivation, or compared the motivation of people with intellectual disabilities in different types of employment (integrated and sheltered). The

current study aims to fill this gap. In addition, this study wants to explore the importance of quality of work motivation for the job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities.

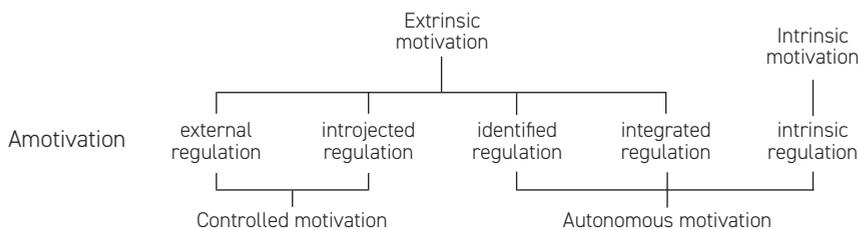
**Self-determination theory**

For this study we make use of self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000) as a framework. SDT represents a meta-theory of human motivation, that fits within a broader positive psychological view on intellectual disabilities (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Sheldon & Ryan, 2011; Shogren, 2014). SDT recognizes that people vary in their motivation to work, and specifically addresses the quality of motivation. According to SDT, the most optimal type of motivation is intrinsic motivation, which refers to performing an activity for its own sake (i.e. for excitement, enjoyment, and interest that is inherent in the work itself; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, & De Witte, 2008). As not all activities are intrinsically motivating, some require extrinsic motivation, which refers to performing an activity to attain some separate outcome, such as tangible or verbal reward (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, & De Witte, 2008). An important proposition of SDT is that extrinsic motivation can vary in the extent to which persons have internalized the reasons for their behaviour, and experience it as part of their self. Four types of extrinsic motivation have been distinguished, which vary in the degree to which internalization has taken place (Deci & Ryan, 2000). External regulation refers to doing an activity to receive a rewards or avoid punishments administered by others, or to meet external expectations. These pressuring contingencies can be either material (e.g. receiving a bonus), or social (e.g. recognition). With introjected regulation people pressure themselves, reinforcing their behaviour with self-worth contingencies, such as ego-involvement, pride, guilt, shame and anxiety. Some internalization has taken place, however the reasons for working have not been fully accepted as their own. Hence the behaviour comes with feelings of inner compulsion and conflict. In case of identified regulation people feel greater freedom and volition as the goal of the behaviour is personally endorsed and considered important. Finally, integrated regulation allows extrinsic motivation to be truly volitional because the behaviour fits with one's broader set of values and beliefs (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, & De Witte, 2008). The four regulatory styles (external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, integrated regulation), represent the four types of extrinsic motivation. Together with amotivation (which involves a lack of intention; Gagné & Deci, 2005) and intrinsic motivation they represent the self-determination continuum (Figure 1). This ranges from amotivation to intrinsic motivation, with more self-determined types of motivation being of higher quality (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Sheldon, Turban, Brown, Barrick & Judge, 2003).

External regulation and introjected regulation can be combined into what is called controlled motivation, which involves a sense of pressure to engage in activities. Intrinsic motivation and the last two types of extrinsic motivation (identified and integrated

regulation) are called autonomous motivation, which is characterized by a sense of volition and the experience of choice (Gagné & Deci, 2005). The fact that some types of external motivation are experienced as volitional, implies that people can be qualitatively motivated for work even when they do not consider it enjoyable (Sheldon et al., 2003). For instance by stimulating a sense of identification with the work and by emphasizing the personal importance and significance of it. SDT assumes that this would be better than providing rewards or punishments or appealing to someone's self-esteem (Sheldon et al., 2003; Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, & De Witte, 2008).

The distinction between autonomous motivation and controlled motivation is central to SDT. Having an autonomous versus a controlled regulation style is assumed to yield positive effects in terms of higher well-being and better performance (Deci & Ryan, 2000). With respect to the work context, research among people without disabilities has indeed found that being autonomously compared to controlled motivated was associated with various indicators of work-related well-being, amongst which higher job satisfaction (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Millette & Gagné, 2008; Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, & De Witte, 2008).



**Figure 1.** The self-determination continuum, showing the types of motivation (based on Deci & Ryan, 2000; Sheldon et al., 2003)

Few studies have applied SDT for people with intellectual disabilities. These studies provide initial evidence that the assumptions of SDT also apply to people with intellectual disabilities. Various types of motivation (amotivation, external, introjected, identified regulation, and intrinsic motivation) were found for individuals with intellectual disabilities within the domains of sports and therapy (Farrell, Crocker, McDonough, & Sedgwick, 2004; Frielink, Schuengel, Kroon, & Embregts, 2015). The quality of motivation of people with intellectual disabilities within the domain of employment has to our knowledge not been studied before.

### **Job satisfaction**

Job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities is an important issue. It is considered an indicator for work-related well-being, and as such, paying attention to their job satisfaction reflects good treatment (Spector, 1997). Job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities also merits attention from a utilitarian point of view, for its associations with job retention, and satisfaction in the work environment (Chiocchio & Frigon, 2006; Fornes, Rocco, & Rosenberg, 2008). Thus far knowledge on the antecedents of job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities remains limited and incomplete. Research needs to determine which factors are associated with job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities, in order to provide them with a good workplace and adequate support. Quality of motivation may be such a factor (Akkerman, Janssen, Kef, & Meininger, 2016; Reiter, Friedman, & Molcho, 1985).

### **This study**

The present research is an explorative study on the quality of work motivation of people with intellectual disabilities in integrated and sheltered employment, and the associations between quality of work motivation and job satisfaction, using SDT as a framework. More specifically, following SDT, this study investigates (1) the types and quality of work motivation that people with intellectual disabilities display, distinguishing high and low quality motivation (i.e. autonomous and controlled motivation); (2) differences in type and quality of work motivation between people with intellectual disabilities in integrated and sheltered employment; (3) associations between quality of work motivation and job satisfaction.

## **METHOD**

### **Procedure**

Participants were drawn from the registration of an organization providing support to people with disabilities in the Netherlands. Brochures describing the research project, including information about confidentiality and anonymity, were sent to every fifth person of the alphabetically ordered register. A total of 428 persons were approached through their mentors, who would screen for eligibility, and subsequently hand them the information and clarify when necessary. Eligible participants had to be between 18 and 67 years old; have moderate to borderline intellectual disability (IQ 35-85) as a primary diagnosis; have sufficient communication ability in Dutch, with at least some verbal expression; and have worked at least two months in the present employment setting. Exclusion criteria were severe visual or hearing deficits, and having no current work activities (staying at home or having recreational day care). Letters were accompanied by brochures in which the research project and information on confidentiality and anonymity was described in simple language,

and that informed potential participants on the voluntary nature of participation and their right to withdraw at any time. The study was executed in compliance with a research design that had been approved by the client advisory board of the service organization (D-13 171).

Of the 428 potential participants, 145 persons were willing to participate, 205 indicated they did not want to participate, and 78 persons did not respond. Of those willing to participate, 28 more dropped out for reasons of no show, no permission from their legal representative, or being unfit for participation (e.g. not meeting inclusion criteria, participation was too stressful), resulting in a total of 117 participants in this study.

As this study was part of a larger research project, all 117 persons were interviewed, and additional interview questions which did not relate to job demands and job resources (not reported in this article) were also asked. Interviews were held by trained interviewers. The average length of the interviews was 75 minutes. Adaptions, to improve comprehension by people with intellectual disabilities, consisted of simplification of items when necessary, addition of visual aids as a means of clarifying the response scale, and the choice for interview instead of self-report, with the possibility to elaborate on answers.

In this study we used a sample of matched pairs in order to allow comparison of the results for participants in integrated and sheltered employment. For the selection of the sample of matched pairs two groups were discerned, one with persons in integrated employment (n=31) and one with persons in sheltered employment (n=86). Participants in both groups were registered and numbered according to the moment of response. Starting with the first person on the list for persons in integrated employment, the list for persons in sheltered employment was then examined to identify individuals who could be matched with this person on the basis of gender, level of intellectual disability and age. The first two criteria would have to be an exact match; age would be as similar as possible, with a maximum difference of 5 years. This procedure resulted in a total of 25 matched pairs (50 participants).

### **Participants**

Of the 50 participants, 22 participants were male (44%) and 28 (56%) female. The mean age of the participants was 36 years. 12% of the participants had a moderate intellectual disability (IQ range 35-50), 80% a mild intellectual disability (IQ range 50-70), 8% borderline intellectual functioning (IQ range 70-85). 25 participants worked in integrated employment, among people without intellectual disabilities, in various jobs (e.g. cleaning, shop assistance, hospitality, gardening, manufacturing). The 25 participants in sheltered employment worked in various day centers, where all workers had intellectual disabilities, and diverse work activities were conducted (e.g. manufacturing, gardening, hospitality, painting, shop assistance, animal care, cleaning). All participants had been declared unfit for gainful employment according to Dutch legislation. As such they were reliant on government benefits for their income, and their jobs were unpaid.

**Instruments**

Work motivation Participants were interviewed on their work motivation, starting with the question: "Why do you work?". They would be asked to elaborate on their answers, to give the interviewer additional information on their motivation (e.g. "Can you tell me more about that?") and would be prompted to think of more reasons (e.g. "Are there more reasons for you to be working?," "Some persons do not work, you do. Why do you work?").

Job satisfaction was assessed using a 5-item job satisfaction scale, developed by Judge, Locke, Durham and Kluger (1998), which was based on the Brayfield and Rothe (1951) job satisfaction scale, and has proven to be a reliable measure in other studies (e.g. Judge et al., 2000). The scale was chosen as it provides an overall, global measure of job satisfaction, contains a limited number of items and uses simple words and phrases. The scale comprises both positively and negatively worded items (e.g. "I find real enjoyment in my work", "I consider my job rather unpleasant"). A 5-point response scale (totally agree – totally disagree) was used. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of the scale was 0.83 in this study.

**Data analysis**

To explore the type and quality of work motivation a qualitative analysis was conducted, following elements of grounded theory techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Text fragments on the work motivation questions were coded, based on their main concepts, by way of open and axial coding. Codes were improved and specified by comparing them within and across different transcripts. Codes with similar content were grouped together into broader themes. Subsequently, for each theme it was established which type of motivation it concerned (external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, integrated regulation, intrinsic motivation). For instance, 'working for financial reasons' was characterized as external regulation, and 'enjoyment of work' as intrinsic motivation. For each individual it could be established which type(s) of motivation he had. The coding system was checked and approved by the other authors. In case of doubt of the type of motivation, the theme (including underlying codes and text fragments) was discussed with the other authors until consensus was reached.

Based on types of motivation that were described in the qualitative phase for each participant, three groups could be discerned: participants displaying (1) only controlled motivation (i.e. reasons displaying introjected regulation, and/or external regulation), (2) only autonomous motivation (i.e. reasons displaying intrinsic motivation, integrated regulation, and/or identified regulation), or (3) a combination of controlled and autonomous motivation.

The qualitative analysis was followed by quantitative analysis. To explore differences in quality of work motivation between people with intellectual disabilities in integrated and sheltered employment a Chi-square analysis was used. To explore associations between

quality of work motivation and job satisfaction, scores on the level of job satisfaction were first checked for outliers ( $Z > 3.29$  or  $< -3.29$ ), which were winsorized to the nearest non-outlier (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2007). This happened in one case. Associations between motivational quality and job satisfaction were tested by investigating differences between the three motivation-groups in level of job satisfaction, using one-way ANOVA.

## RESULTS

Below, the findings are presented. The types of motivation are outlined, by describing the themes, followed by quotations to provide further detail. To enhance understanding of possible differences between workers in integrated and sheltered employment, for each theme the number of integrated and sheltered workers that mentioned it is provided in brackets. Note that participants would often bring forward more than one theme.

### Motivation to work

*Autonomous motivation (i.e. intrinsic motivation, integrated regulation, identified regulation)*  
 Almost half of the participants (13 integrated, 11 sheltered) displayed autonomous motivation for working. Sixteen participants (7 integrated, 9 sheltered) were working for the enjoyment of working, because it gave them pleasure to work, indicative of intrinsic motivation, (e.g. "Because I enjoy working."). Eleven participants (8 integrated, 3 sheltered), mentioned the enjoyment of certain aspects of working, and were working for instrumental reasons, that were valuable to them personally, indicative of identified regulation. This included meeting new people, and being able to help others, for instance, as was stated: "I enjoy doing something (...), even if it is voluntary work. If I can help others with that, then I enjoy doing it." Themes that were indicative of integrated regulation were not found.

### *Controlled motivation (i.e. external regulation, introjected regulation)*

Many participants mentioned reasons indicative of controlled motivation for working (19 integrated, 20 sheltered), mostly pertaining to external regulation. Sixteen participants (8 integrated, 8 sheltered) mentioned the theme financial reasons. Some of them indicated they were obliged to work in order to keep their benefits, or that they received a small compensation for their efforts in addition to their social benefits, "I want to earn money. I have a government benefit, but want to earn something extra beside it." Others seemed to be under the (incorrect) impression that they were actually receiving a wage. Another six participants (3 integrated, 3 sheltered) were working on the urging of someone else, or because it was mandatory for other reasons. For instance, one man stated: "You need to have a job in order to live here (i.e. residential facility)." Many participants (13 integrated, 16 sheltered) were

working to avoid the unpleasant consequences of staying at home, such as boredom, social isolation and emotional distress, which was expressed in statements like. *"Being at home is not good for me. It makes me feel dreary, and frustrated."*, *"I need something to do, structure in my life. (...) This has to do with problems in my past."*, *"I needed work. I don't have anything else"*, and *"I don't want to stay home every day. Otherwise I get really bored"*. Finally, seven participants (3 integrated, 4 sheltered) were motivated for working because they felt like they ought to, indicative of introjected regulation. They indicated to be working because it was the right thing to do (*"I think it is strange to receive benefits, and do nothing in return"*), or a logical thing to do, for instance as a next step after finishing school.

### **Motivation in integrated and sheltered employment**

From the 50 participants, 39 participants (19 integrated, 20 sheltered) mentioned reasons indicative of low quality of motivation (i.e. controlled motivation), and 24 participants (13 integrated, 11 sheltered) mentioned reasons indicative of high quality of motivation (autonomous motivation). Of these participants 26 displayed only controlled motivation (12 integrated, 14 sheltered), 11 participants displayed only autonomous motivation (6 integrated, 5 sheltered), and 13 participants (7 integrated, 6 sheltered) displayed a combination of controlled and autonomous motivation.

A Chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between employment type (i.e. integrated or sheltered employment) and quality of motivation (i.e. controlled, autonomous, both). Results indicated no differences in quality of motivation between participants in integrated employment and sheltered employment ( $X^2(2, N = 50) = 0.322, p = 0.851$ ).

### **Motivation and job satisfaction**

For the overall sample a mean job satisfaction level of 4.28 (SD = 0.93) was found. Mean level of job satisfaction for participants with controlled motivation was 3.93 (SD 1.12), for participants with autonomous motivation 4.76 (SD 0.38), and for participants with a combination of controlled and autonomous motivation 4.58 (SD 0.47). Analysis of variance showed that differences between quality of motivation groups regarding their job satisfaction were significant, ( $F(2, 47) = 4.63, p = 0.015$ ). Post hoc analyses using the Tukey post hoc criterion for significance between certain subgroups indicated that the average level of job satisfaction was significantly higher for participants with autonomous motivation than for participants with controlled motivation ( $p = 0.026$ ).

## DISCUSSION

This study explored the work motivation of people with intellectual disabilities. First, we explored the types of work motivation. The findings indicate that people with intellectual disabilities display great variation in their reasons for working. Based on SDT, these were classified as 'autonomous', including working for the enjoyment of working (intrinsic motivation), or for reasons that were valuable to the individual, like meeting or helping others (identified regulation), or 'controlled', including working for financial reasons, on the urging of someone else, to avoid the unpleasant consequences of staying at home (external regulation), or because they felt they ought to (introjection). Participants varied in their motivational quality, with some participants displaying autonomous motivation, others displaying controlled motivation, or combinations of autonomous and controlled motivation. In general, reasons displaying low quality motivation (i.e. controlled motivation) were expressed more frequently than reasons displaying high quality motivation (i.e. autonomous motivation).

Second, we explored the motivation to work of persons in integrated and sheltered employment. Generally, the same themes emerged in both groups, and also, the amount of persons displaying autonomous and controlled motivation was not significantly different in both groups. Apparently, people with intellectual disabilities in integrated and sheltered employment seem to have the same reasons for working. Previous studies indicated that motivation was associated with employment success, in terms of obtaining or maintaining a job in integrated employment (Holwerda et al, 2013; Rose, Saunders, Hensel, & Kroese, 2005; Hensel, Stenfert Kroese, & Rose, 2007). These studies focused on quantity of motivation, instead of quality of motivation. Further research is needed to fully understand the associations between motivation (quality and quantity) and employment outcomes, such as obtaining and maintaining a job in integrated employment.

Finally, this study compared job satisfaction levels of participants with different motivational quality (controlled, autonomous or a combination of both). It was found that participants with autonomous motivation displayed higher levels of job satisfaction than participants with controlled motivation. These findings are in line with studies among people without intellectual disabilities using SDT as framework, that have found that being autonomously compared to controlled motivated was associated positive employment outcomes, amongst which higher job satisfaction (Millette & Gagné, 2008; Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, & De Witte, 2008).

### Limitations

Considering the explorative nature of this study results should be taken with caution, and as a pilot for further research. More specifically the following limitations need to be pointed

out. Firstly, participants in this study, although varying in IQ-levels, all had significant work limitations and were not receiving salary. This may have affected outcomes. We suggest future research includes people with intellectual disabilities who have mild work limitations, and also people with intellectual disabilities who do receive salary.

Secondly, we used open-ended questions to investigate the motivation of participants. This has been recommended for research concerned with the point of view of people with intellectual disabilities, and has been used successfully before (Finlay & Lyons, 2001). Nevertheless, although all participants did provide an answer, some participants did experience difficulties responding to the question, particularly those with limited expressive abilities. These participants spontaneously revealed only limited information on their motivation and needed more prompting. This may have affected the content of their answers. Moreover, it is conceivable that participants were unable to think of, or express, the full range of reasons relevant to them.

Thirdly, in this study we merely coded whether or not a participant expressed autonomous or controlled motivation (yes or no). Due to the exploratory nature of the study we did not determine the extent to which they were autonomously or controlled motivated, which is in contrast to previous studies among people without intellectual disabilities (e.g. Gagné et al., 2015). The nominal measurement level in this study may have obscured differences in quality of motivation between participants and limited the possibilities for investigating associations with employment type and job satisfaction. More insight in the associations between motivation and employment outcomes (e.g. employment type, job satisfaction, job performance, job retention) could be obtained by using scales to assess both the quantity and quality of motivation. Such scales have been developed for people without intellectual disabilities (e.g. Gagné et al., 2014). Results of this study could be used as input for development of a scale to further assess work motivation of people with intellectual disabilities.

Finally, although the two groups (integrated and sheltered employment) were matched, other factors that were not included in this matching procedure (e.g. personality, perceived job characteristics) may have affected the outcomes.

### **Implications**

This study provides preliminary evidence that the quality of motivation of people with intellectual disabilities varies between individuals and may affect employment outcomes. Based on the results of the study it can be advised that employment support workers pay attention to individual's work motivation. As people vary in the reasons to work, learning more about their motivation is important in order to optimally connect with them. Encouraging people with intellectual disabilities to examine in-depth their reasons for

working, what they expect of it, provides employment workers with valuable information, and may also make individuals more aware of what work may mean to them. This may be helpful in setting personal objectives, and developing a career path. Of course, this presupposes correct information about available options and working conditions, such as the (absence of) payment.

Attention may be paid to not only to enhancing the intensity of work motivation of people with intellectual disabilities, but also to enhancing their motivational quality. More research is needed on effective interventions for enhancing autonomous work motivation and job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities. Based on self-determination theory (SDT) it is suggested that employment workers may be able to increase autonomous motivation by making individuals more aware of the positive aspects and the value of work, or by promoting a social context that supports autonomous motivation. Motivational interviewing techniques were found to be useful for enhancing treatment motivation of people with intellectual disabilities (Frielink et al., 2015), and may also be useful for increasing autonomous motivation to work. For maintaining autonomous motivation, providing an autonomy supportive support style has been found to be a key ingredient (Deci, 2004). Furthermore, research points to the motivational potential of job design. According to SDT the extent to which an activity fulfils a person's basic psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence, determines the level of autonomous motivation for that activity (Deci & Ryan, 2000; De Cooman, Stynen, Van den Broeck, Sels, & De Witte, 2013; Gagné & Deci, 2005). A work environment with resourceful job characteristics (e.g. social support, opportunities for skill utilization, meaningfulness), promotes the fulfilment of a person's basic psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence, whereas job demands (e.g. work pressure, physical demands) thwart the fulfilment of basic psychological needs (De Cooman et al. 2013, Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, & Lens, 2008).

This study provides preliminary evidence that autonomous motivation may also be associated with employment outcomes of people with intellectual disabilities. More research is needed on the associations between quality of work motivation and job satisfaction, as well as other employment outcomes (e.g. employment type, job performance, job retention). Future research may also provide further insight in the connection between job characteristics, basic psychological needs, motivation and job outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities. The results of this study can be considered a first step towards further understanding of the motivational processes underlying the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction of people with intellectual disabilities.

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