

Orientation and Mobility Training as a Core Component of Supported Employment for Employees with Visual Impairment

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ABSTRACT

Employment participation among persons with visual impairments (PVI) remains limited by persistent barriers, particularly mobility constraints and inaccessible workplace environments. Although Orientation and Mobility (O&M) training is widely recognised as essential for independent travel, its role within supported employment, especially in real workplace contexts, remains insufficiently examined. This study explored how O&M training supports employment access, daily commuting, initial workplace adaptation, and collaborative support processes for PVI within supported employment in Malaysia. A qualitative multiple case study design was employed. Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with purposively selected informants, including employees with visual impairments, employment specialists, and employers in private sector settings. Interview data were analysed using inductive thematic analysis supported by NVivo (Version 14), with trustworthiness enhanced through triangulation and member checking. The analysis generated four interrelated themes: (i) O&M as access to employment; (ii) O&M in daily commuting and independent mobility; (iii) O&M supporting workplace adjustment and job retention; and (iv) O&M as a structured and collaborative support process. Overall, the findings indicate that O&M training extends beyond basic mobility skills and functions as an employment-oriented support mechanism across pre-employment, placement, and retention phases. The integration of context-specific O&M training within supported employment models may strengthen workplace inclusion, safety, and sustainable employment outcomes for PVI.

Keywords: orientation and mobility training; supported employment; persons with visual impairments; workplace adaptation; independent commuting

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The participation of persons with visual impairments (PVI) in the labour market remains a critical concern within both global and national inclusive development agendas. Despite the implementation of various policies and initiatives aimed at promoting the employment of persons with disabilities (PWD), individuals with visual impairments continue to encounter persistent barriers that hinder their ability to secure and maintain employment (De Veuster & Bastiaens, 2023; Uiras et al., 2024). Empirical evidence consistently identifies these barriers as including mobility limitations, inaccessibility of physical environments, and the absence of structured, contextspecific workplace support systems that address their functional needs (Bashir et al., 2024; De Seram, 2025).

Mobility is a key determinant in enabling PVI to engage meaningfully in employment. The capacity to travel safely, independently, and efficiently is not only essential for daily living, but also constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for attending job interviews, commuting to work, and adapting to the physical demands of the workplace (De Veuster & Bastiaens, 2023). Research consistently highlights that mobility-related challenges and inaccessible infrastructure remain among the most significant obstacles encountered by PVI throughout their employment journeys (Uiras et al., 2024).

In this regard, O&M training has been widely recognised as a vital intervention that fosters the development of independent travel and environmental navigation skills. O&M training refers to a systematic process that cultivates sensory awareness, spatial orientation, environmental comprehension, and the ability to move safely within both public and built environments (Blake, 2020). Within employment contexts, O&M extends beyond basic mobility to include familiarisation with workplace layouts, identification of safe routes, and access to key facilities that enable effective job performance (De Veuster & Bastiaens, 2023).

The supported employment model has gained increasing traction as an effective strategy for promoting inclusive employment outcomes for PWD. This model emphasises the provision of individualised, phased, and sustained support within actual work settings to enhance job retention and performance. Within this framework, O&M training constitutes a core component, empowering PVI with the confidence, independence, and functional competencies necessary for navigating workplace environments effectively (De Seram, 2025). Nonetheless, recent studies suggest that existing support systems for mobility and vocational skill development remain inadequate, thereby contributing to the ongoing exclusion of PVI from the labour market (Okonji et al., 2023).

Despite the recognised importance of O&M training in facilitating labour market participation, its specific role within supported employment contexts remains under-researched. In particular, there is a paucity of empirical studies that explore how O&M training is experienced by PVI in real-world workplace settings, as well as how support providers perceive its contribution to sustainable employment outcomes. Addressing this gap is essential to inform the development of more effective, inclusive, and contextually responsive supported employment practices for PVI.

Problem Statement

O&M training is widely recognised as a fundamental component of rehabilitation for PVI, aiming to develop safe, efficient, and independent travel skills across diverse environments (Altunay et al., 2021; Ricci et al., 2022). Despite its established importance, O&M training is frequently implemented in generic or community-based settings and is often disconnected from employment-specific contexts. Consequently, such training often fails to align with the unique mobility demands, spatial configurations, and functional requirements of actual workplace environments (Ricci et al., 2022).

Existing O&M programmes typically prioritise general community navigation, such as the use of public transportation and movement through public spaces without adequately addressing the complex, context-specific challenges of workplace mobility. These include indoor navigation, task-related movement, and environmental adaptation (Altunay et al., 2021). This limited integration constrains the potential of O&M training as a comprehensive strategy for supported employment, thereby diminishing its role in facilitating job access, workplace adjustment, and long-term employment sustainability for PVI.

Moreover, there remains a notable scarcity of empirical research exploring the lived experiences of individuals with visual impairments who undergo O&M training in employment contexts. In particular, few studies have examined how such training supports independent workplace mobility, initial adaptation, and sustained job retention. Recent scholarship highlights a critical gap in qualitative, user-centred investigations that focus on real-world employment environments, limiting our understanding of how individuals with visual impairments navigate and adapt to the mobility demands of workplace settings (Soltani et al., 2025).

In the Malaysian context, existing research on the employment of PWD has largely concentrated on policy frameworks, participation rates, and general barriers to inclusion. Although there is increasing recognition of the need to enhance O&M training and professional capacity in Malaysia, issues related to mobility within actual workplace environments remain underexamined (Deverell et al., 2020). The absence of context-specific empirical evidence regarding the role of O&M training within supported employment settings may compromise the effectiveness of supported employment interventions. Consequently, this results in fragmented practices that do not sufficiently reflect the lived work experiences of PVI.

Accordingly, this study aims to address these gaps by examining the role of O&M training within employment contexts, with particular emphasis on the lived experiences of PVI. It explores how O&M training supports workplace mobility, facilitates initial adaptation, and contributes to sustainable employment outcomes.

Specifically, there is a pressing need for research that conceptualises O&M not merely as a set of individual mobility skills, but as an employment-oriented, graduated, and collaborative support process. Limited attention has been given to how O&M training facilitates work-related travel and enhances functional independence. Furthermore, there is a lack of focus on how it is delivered through coordinated efforts involving PVI, employment specialists, and employers within actual work settings. Addressing this gap is essential to inform the effective integration of O&M training within supported employment models that promote inclusive and sustainable workforce participation for PVI.

Research Objectives

This study aims to explore and understand the role of O&M training in supporting the employment participation of PVI within the context of supported employment. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to:

RQ1: Explore the role of O&M training in enabling PVI to access and undertake work-related travel independently.

RQ2: Analyse the contribution of O&M training to the development of independent mobility and initial workplace adaptation among PVI.

RQ3: Examine O&M training as a graduated and collaborative support process involving PVI, employment specialists, and employers.

Research Questions

To achieve the research objectives, the following research questions are formulated:

RO1: How does O&M training support PVI in accessing and commuting to the workplace independently?

RO2: How does O&M training contribute to independent mobility and initial adaptation of PVI within the workplace environment?

RO3: How is O&M training implemented as a graduated and collaborative support process within the context of supported employment?

Significance of Study

This study is significant as it contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of O&M training within the real employment contexts of PVI. The findings are expected to enrich the literature on vocational rehabilitation and special education by emphasising the importance of mobility as a prerequisite for effective employment participation.

From a practical perspective, the study may assist employment specialists, rehabilitation organisations, and employers in gaining a better understanding of the mobility needs of PVI, thereby supporting the planning of more systematic and context-specific O&M training. In addition, the study supports the development of more inclusive supported employment practices through an emphasis on collaboration among employees with visual impairments, support professionals, and employers.

Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on the experiences of PVI who are engaged in employment or job placement processes, as well as relevant support stakeholders, including employment specialists and employers. The scope of the study is limited to the role of O&M training in work-related travel, initial workplace adaptation, and graduated support processes within the context of supported employment.

However, this study does not aim to quantitatively evaluate the effectiveness of O&M training or its long-term impact on job retention. The findings are also not intended to be generalised to the entire population of PVI, but

rather to provide an in-depth understanding based on the experiences of the study participants within a specific context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Orientation and Mobility in the Employment Context of Persons with Visual Impairments

O&M is widely recognised as a core component of rehabilitation for PVI. However, its significance within the employment context extends beyond facilitating daily mobility. In employment-related situations, O&M functions as a prerequisite for access to employment opportunities, as independent travel skills are essential for reaching interview locations, commuting to workplaces, and navigating unfamiliar environments. Scholars in the field of visual impairment have emphasised that O&M skills are integral to employment preparation, as they enable independence and support workforce participation among PVI (McDonnall, 2020).

The literature further indicates that limitations in mobility often constitute an initial barrier to labour market participation for PVI Adults who lack adequate O&M skills frequently experience difficulties accessing transportation systems and unfamiliar environments, thereby restricting their engagement in employment-related activities (Altunay et al., 2021). O&M has also been consistently linked to broader outcomes such as social participation and self-determination. However, gaps in research and service provision continue to constrain equitable access to employment for this population (Blake, 2020).

Insufficient O&M skills may lead to increased dependence on others for movement, which can undermine autonomy and confidence in employment-related decision-making. Empirical evidence suggests that confidence in independent travel is positively associated with the level of O&M training received, highlighting the role of O&M in fostering self-efficacy among PVI (Ajuwon et al., 2022). Despite this, existing research continues to address O&M primarily in general or educational contexts, with limited attention to how O&M skills are experienced and applied during the early stages of employment.

Consequently, there remains limited empirical understanding of how O&M training directly supports access to employment opportunities and shapes the lived employment experiences of PVI.

Orientation and Mobility and Independent Mobility in Daily Commuting

Independent mobility constitutes a core element in the ability of PVI to sustain daily work routines, as it directly influences their capacity to commute independently and manage work-related responsibilities (Amaral et al., 2023; Blake, 2020). The ability to commute consistently and safely between home and the workplace plays a crucial role in employment stability, as commuting represents an essential component of the journey-to-work experience involving physical travel, planning, and time management (Amaral et al., 2023). In this regard, O&M training supports the development of navigation skills such as route comprehension, use of public transportation, and safety strategies in dynamic environments (Blake, 2020; Altunay et al., 2021).

Daily commuting also involves cognitive and emotional processes, including route planning, risk anticipation, and the management of uncertainty, particularly in unfamiliar environments (Shemndolwa et al., 2025). Research indicates that O&M training grounded in real routes and experiential learning is more effective in fostering confidence and independence than generalised approaches, as it enables individuals to practise mobility skills within authentic travel contexts (Altunay et al., 2021). Such training reduces reliance on others and enhances autonomy in managing work-related travel (Ajuwon et al., 2022).

Strong independent mobility has further been associated with reduced travel-related stress and greater consistency in work attendance, as individuals who are confident in their commuting routes are more likely to sustain regular employment routines (Ajuwon et al., 2022; Shemndolwa et al., 2025). Although independent mobility is widely discussed within the broader context of daily living, its specific role in supporting work-related commuting remains underexplored.

In particular, limited research has examined how O&M training supports daily work-related commuting experiences within real employment contexts.

Orientation and Mobility in Initial Workplace Adaptation

Initial workplace adaptation represents a critical phase for employees with visual impairments, particularly when entering unfamiliar work environments. The literature highlights that orientation to the physical workplace is essential for understanding spatial layouts, internal pathways, and the locations of key facilities such as workstations, restrooms, and emergency routes (Tylutki et al., 2024; Shemndolwa et al., 2025). Such orientation supports independent functioning and reduces environmental uncertainty during the early stages of employment.

In this context, O&M training should extend beyond commuting to include internal workplace orientation that supports daily work functioning. Effective O&M training encompasses navigation within complex built environments and adaptation to unfamiliar indoor settings, both of which are essential for sustained employment participation (Deverell et al., 2020; Shemndolwa et al., 2025).

The ability to navigate the workplace confidently contributes to employees' sense of safety, autonomy, and early adjustment to job tasks, while reducing exposure to environmental risks (Tylutki et al., 2024; Darabont et al., 2020). Conversely, inadequate workplace orientation has been associated with heightened fear, reduced independence, and increased reliance on co-workers for mobility-related assistance (Shemndolwa et al., 2025).

Despite its importance, limited empirical research has explored how PVI experience O&M training during the initial stages of workplace adaptation.

Orientation and Mobility as a Core Component of Supported Employment

The supported employment approach emphasises the provision of graduated and continuous support for persons with disabilities (PWD) throughout job placement and workplace adjustment processes. Within this framework, O&M training functions as a core component that supports independent travel, workplace participation, and selfdetermination among PVI (Blake, 2020; Ajuwon et al., 2022).

Mobility support that is systematically planned and contextually grounded has been shown to be more effective in promoting safety and independence than ad hoc or temporary interventions (Altunay et al., 2021). O&M training within supported employment contexts often involves collaboration among PVI, employment specialists, and other stakeholders, highlighting the importance of coordinated support in facilitating effective mobility instruction.

This collaborative support is commonly implemented in a graduated manner, with intensive guidance gradually reduced as individuals demonstrate stable mobility competencies, thereby promoting autonomy and sustained independence (Ajuwon et al., 2022). Although supported employment is increasingly discussed in the literature, the specific contribution of O&M training within this model remains insufficiently elaborated.

There is a need for further research that examines O&M training as a structured, collaborative, and graduated support process within supported employment for PVI.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative approach using a multiple case study design to explore the role of O&M training within the context of supported employment for PVI. This design was selected as it allows for an in-depth understanding of individual's lived experiences as well as the supported employment processes occurring within private sector work environments. Through the multiple case study approach, analysis could be conducted across multiple perspectives, enabling a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

This article reports selected findings from a larger qualitative study, with a specific focus on the role of O&M training in employment access, daily commuting to the workplace, initial workplace adaptation, and collaborative support processes. The choice of this design is aligned with the objectives of the article, which emphasise the lived experiences of PVI and the supported employment practices implemented by employment specialists and employers.

Participants

Table 1: Profile of Selected Study Participants

Participant Code	Category	Role / Position	Work Experience
PVI-1	Low vision	Receptionist	≥ 2 years
PVI-2	Low vision	Operation assistant	≥ 2 years
PVI-3	Blind	Telephone operator	≥ 2 years
PVI-4	Blind	Customer service officer	≥ 5 years
ES-1	Employment specialist	Job placement officer	≥ 10 years
ES-2	Employment specialist	Job placement officer	≥ 10 years
ES-3	Employment specialist	Job placement officer	≥ 5 years
ES-4	Employment specialist	Assistant case manager	≥ 2 years
EM-1	Employer	Manager	≥ 5 years
EM-2	Employer	Supervisor	≥ 5 years
EM-3	Employer	Executive officer	≥ 5 years

Note: Participants were purposively selected from a larger qualitative study based on data richness and relevance to the focus of this article.

Data Collection

Data were collected primarily through in-depth and semi-structured interviews. Individual interviews were conducted to allow informants to share detailed experiences, perspectives, and reflections related to O&M training and their employment experiences. The semi-structured approach ensured that discussions remained aligned with the study objectives while allowing flexibility to explore emerging issues.

Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or online, depending on informants’ preferences and feasibility. All interview sessions were audio-recorded with participants’ consent and fully transcribed prior to analysis. In addition to interviews, selected document analysis was used as a supplementary method to enhance understanding of policy contexts and supported employment practices. Data collection was conducted iteratively until recurring themes emerged and data saturation was achieved for the focus of this article.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using inductive thematic analysis with the support of NVivo software (Version 14). The analysis process began with repeated reading of interview transcripts to gain an overall understanding of the data. Initial coding was conducted to identify meaning units related to experiences of O&M training, workrelated mobility, and employment support.

The initial codes were subsequently refined, merged, and clustered to form subthemes and overarching themes. Theme development was carried out inductively, grounded in participants’ accounts without the use of preestablished categories. Cross-informant analysis was undertaken to identify similarities and differences in perspectives among PVI, employment specialists, and employers. The most representative verbatim quotations were selected to support the study findings and to preserve participants’ voices as central to the analysis.

Trustworthiness and Ethics

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, several strategies were employed. Source triangulation was achieved by involving three distinct categories of informants to validate findings across perspectives. Member checking was conducted by allowing informants to review their interview transcripts to ensure accuracy. In addition, the analysis process was systematically documented to establish a clear audit trail.

From an ethical standpoint, this article is based on a study that received research ethics approval from The National University of Malaysia (UKM). All informants were provided with clear information regarding the purpose of the study and their rights as participants prior to obtaining informed consent. Participants' identities were protected through the use of codes, and all data were stored confidentially and used solely for academic purposes.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings on the role of O&M training in supporting the employment of PVI within the context of supported employment. Thematic analysis of in-depth interviews with PVI, employment specialists (ES), and employers (EM) generated four interrelated themes.

The themes reflect a progressive pathway of supported employment, beginning with access to employment opportunities, followed by independent commuting, workplace adjustment, and ultimately contributing to job retention. Across all stages, O&M training functioned as a structured and collaborative support mechanism involving multiple stakeholders.

Table 2 presents the development of themes from initial codes and participant groups, while Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual relationship and overlap among the themes.

Table 1: Development of Themes from Codes and Participant Groups

Initial Codes	Sub-Theme Focus	Final Theme	Participant Groups
Route to interview, accompaniment, job search guidance	Accessing interview locations	Theme 1: O&M as Access to Employment	PVI, ES
Public transport use, route repetition, travel training	Daily commuting routines	Theme 2: O&M in Independent Mobility	PVI, ES
Initial Codes	Sub-Theme Focus	Final Theme	Participant Groups
Office layout familiarisation, safety routes, facility orientation	Workplace adaptation	Theme 3: O&M Supporting Workplace Adjustment and Job Retention	PVI, EM
Guided practice, gradual withdrawal, multi-party support	Structured implementation	Theme 4: O&M as Structured and Collaborative Support Process	PVI, ES, EM

Theme 1: Orientation and Mobility as Access to Employment

The findings indicate that O&M training functions as an entry point to employment opportunities. Participants described O&M not merely as physical mobility instruction, but as foundational support that enabled them to attend interviews and navigate unfamiliar environments with confidence.

One participant emphasised that O&M support was the starting point of their employment journey:

“For me, the impact was really significant. At the beginning, without her (employment specialist), I honestly wouldn’t have known how to look for a job. She helped me find opportunities, accompanied me to interviews, and showed me the routes to the office. For me, that support was like the starting point.” (PVI-2)

Employment specialist confirmed that O&M training includes full-route orientation to interview locations:

“We will teach the client how to go to the interview, the whole journey, until they reach the office. That is orientation and mobility.” (ES-2)

Across PVI and employment specialist, O&M was framed as enabling access and reducing the psychological and practical barriers to entering the workforce.

Theme 2: Orientation and Mobility in Daily Commuting and Independent Mobility

The second theme highlights the importance of O&M training in establishing safe and consistent commuting routines. Participants described learning how to use public transportation, identify landmarks, and follow repeated routes independently.

One participant explained:

“They taught me mobility from the LRT station to the office and how to get there, which bus number to take, and how to travel.” (PVI-1)

Employment specialist described accompanying clients during real commuting journeys:

“I also teach orientation, which train to take, which route to follow, whether to use a taxi or a bus. I travel together with them.” (ES-1)

While PVI emphasised increased confidence and independence, employment specialists focused on practical travel instruction and route mastery. Independent commuting emerged as a prerequisite for consistent attendance and employment sustainability.

Theme 3: Orientation and Mobility Supporting Workplace Adjustment and Job Retention

Beyond commuting, O&M training extended into workplace orientation. Participants described structured familiarisation with office layouts, nearby facilities, and safety procedures.

A participant explained:

“Once we passed the interview and accepted the job offer, they started showing us how to get to the office. Then they would go together with us and show us nearby shops, eating areas, and where the toilets are.” (PVI-4)

Employers played a direct role in facilitating internal orientation:

“In the office, during the first few days, we walk them through the layout, from the entrance to their workstation, pantry, toilets, and meeting rooms. We let them practise several times until they remember the routes.” (EM-1)

Safety was emphasised by employers:

“First, I provide floor training. I walk them around slowly, count the steps, and explain safety routes and emergency exits.” (EM-2)

Across groups, workplace-based O&M was associated with early adaptation, safety awareness, and improved functional performance. Employers focused primarily on safety and productivity, while PVI emphasised familiarity and confidence within the physical workspace.

Theme 4: Orientation and Mobility as a Structured and Collaborative Support Process

The fourth theme demonstrates that O&M training was implemented as a structured, graduated, and collaborative process rather than a one-off intervention. Support was adapted according to individual competence and workplace context.

An employment specialist explained:

“During that time, I assist them with mobility in a particular location, for two or three days, until they are truly proficient.” (ES-3)

Employers also provided ongoing assistance when necessary:

“If they have difficulty getting to a meeting, I accompany them. If they need to walk a long distance within the campus, I guide them.” (EM-3)

Mobility was identified as a primary workplace constraint:

“For persons with visual impairments, their main limitation at the workplace is mobility.” (ES-4)

One participant demonstrated proactive engagement in seeking formal O&M support:

“Even though I got the job through networking, I contacted the Malaysian Association for the Blind myself because they handle job placement and taught me how to manage mobility, from home to the workplace.” (PVI-3)

This theme cuts across all others, illustrating that O&M training operates as a dynamic support mechanism involving cooperation between PVI, employment specialists, and employers.

Cross-Participant Comparison

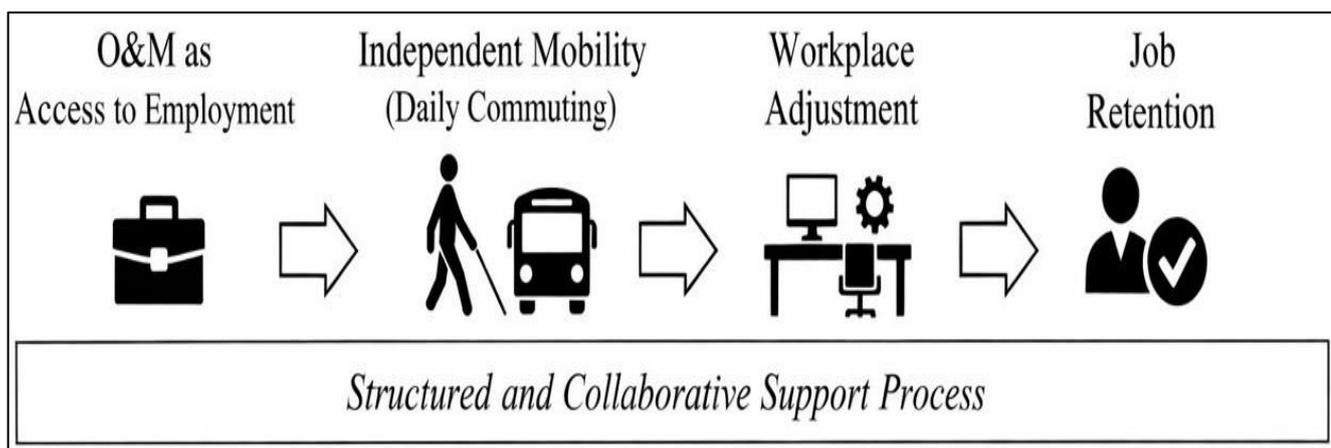
A comparison across participant groups reveals nuanced differences:

- ✦ **PVI** emphasised confidence, independence, and reduced reliance on others.
- ✦ **Employment Specialists** focused on structured instruction, route mastery, and graduated support.
- ✦ **Employers** prioritised workplace safety, spatial familiarity, and productivity.

Despite these differing emphases, all groups recognised mobility as central to employment sustainability.

Figure 1: Conceptual Relationship Among Themes

Figure 1 illustrates the progressive and overlapping nature of the themes. O&M as Access to Employment forms the entry point, followed by Independent Mobility (daily commuting), leading to Workplace Adjustment and Job Retention. The Structured and Collaborative Support Process operates across all stages as an enabling mechanism.



The overall findings demonstrate that O&M training functions not only as a mobility skill intervention but as a comprehensive employment support framework. It enables access to opportunities, facilitates independent

commuting, supports workplace adaptation, and contributes to job retention. Importantly, its effectiveness depends on structured implementation and collaboration among key stakeholders.

DISCUSSION

This discussion critically examines the findings of the study concerning the role of O&M training as a core component of supported employment for PVI. Drawing on the four themes identified, the findings demonstrate that O&M training extends beyond physical mobility skills and functions as a comprehensive supported employment process that spans the pre-employment, job placement, and job retention phases. The discussion is structured in alignment with the study objectives and highlights implications for supported employment practices within private sector settings.

Orientation and Mobility as a Prerequisite for Access to Employment

The findings indicate that O&M training serves as a critical gateway to employment access for PVI. Consistent with existing literature, effective O&M competencies enable independent and confident movement, which is essential for accessing employment-related spaces such as interview venues and unfamiliar workplaces (Altunay et al., 2021; Shemndolwa et al., 2025).

Beyond facilitating physical navigation, the findings suggest that O&M support contributes to broader dimensions of employment readiness, including increased confidence, spatial awareness, and psychological preparedness to engage in job-seeking activities. These outcomes align with previous research emphasising that O&M skills foster independence and access to community and employment resources, which are foundational to labour market participation (Griffin-Shirley et al., 2020).

Importantly, the present findings position O&M training as a foundational prerequisite within the employment access process, particularly in private sector contexts where independence and self-navigation are implicitly expected. This challenges the prevailing assumption that O&M interventions are primarily relevant after employment has been secured. Instead, the findings suggest that inadequate O&M support may restrict participation at earlier stages of employment engagement, including job searching and interview attendance.

From this perspective, employment exclusion should not be attributed solely to limited vocational competencies. Rather, the findings underscore how mobility constraints and restricted physical access operate as structural barriers that impede otherwise qualified individuals from progressing through initial employment stages. This supports emerging arguments that independent mobility is central to accessing employment opportunities and sustaining livelihoods among PVI (Griffin-Shirley et al., 2020; Shemndolwa et al., 2025). Accordingly, O&M training should be recognised as an integral component of comprehensive employment preparation rather than a supplementary or post-employment service.

The Role of Orientation and Mobility in Supporting Independent Mobility and Work Attendance

The findings further highlight the central role of O&M training in supporting independent commuting and consistent work attendance among PVI. Mastery of familiar and safe travel routes was found to contribute directly to sustained attendance, which is a key indicator of reliability and performance within private sector employment. This finding is consistent with prior research demonstrating that effective O&M skills are closely associated with independent functioning, employment participation, and self-determination (Blake, 2020).

In the context of daily work routines, O&M training supports the development of structured and predictable travel patterns, thereby reducing reliance on family members, colleagues, or external assistance. Such independence enhances personal autonomy while simultaneously addressing safety-related concerns, which have been widely identified as significant barriers to employment participation among PVI (Altunay et al., 2021). From an employer's perspective, improved mobility competence may indirectly alleviate concerns related to punctuality, absenteeism, and workplace risk.

These findings suggest that O&M training should be conceptualised as a long-term investment rather than a temporary rehabilitation intervention. By promoting safe, reliable, and independent mobility, O&M training contributes to workforce stability and sustained employment participation. This interpretation aligns with

broader discussions that position O&M as foundational to social inclusion and employment equity rather than as a discrete or short-term form of support (Blake, 2020).

Orientation and Mobility as Support for Initial Workplace Adaptation and Job Retention

The findings indicate that O&M training plays a crucial role during the initial workplace adaptation phase and has important implications for job retention among PVI. Orientation to workplace layouts, safety routes, and surrounding environments facilitated more rapid adjustment and increased confidence in navigating unfamiliar work settings. This is consistent with existing studies highlighting that effective O&M skills reduce environmental uncertainty and reliance on others during early employment stages (Shemndolwa et al., 2025).

Employer involvement emerged as a significant enabling factor in workplace-based O&M training. Structured orientation practices and accessibility-related support were perceived as essential in facilitating safe and effective job performance. These findings reinforce earlier research demonstrating that inclusive workplace practices and appropriate accommodations significantly influence employment sustainability for PVI (Alanazi & Benlaria, 2024; Gupta et al., 2021).

Conversely, limited or absent structured adaptation support was associated with heightened stress and anxiety during early employment stages, increasing the risk of premature job discontinuation. Similar patterns have been documented in previous studies, where insufficient workplace support was linked to difficulties in sustaining employment (Eseadi, 2023; Nayak et al., 2025). Collectively, these findings suggest that integrating O&M training into new employee orientation processes may serve as an effective strategy for supporting workplace adjustment and promoting job retention.

Orientation and Mobility as a Graduated and Collaborative Support Process

The findings further conceptualise O&M training as a graduated, flexible, and context-responsive support process rather than a standardised or one-off intervention. The effectiveness of O&M training appears to depend on its adaptability to individual needs and workplace-specific demands, reflecting the situated and dynamic nature of mobility within employment contexts (Deverell et al., 2020).

Collaboration emerged as a central feature of effective O&M implementation. Meaningful outcomes were achieved through coordinated engagement among PVI, employment specialists, and employers. This highlights that responsibility for employment success should not rest solely on individuals or rehabilitation professionals.

Instead, employers play a critical role in creating accessible, safe, and supportive environments that enable the practical application of O&M skills (Alanazi & Benlaria, 2024).

Viewed within a supported employment framework, O&M training should be understood as embedded within a broader ecosystem of supported employment. Rather than functioning in isolation, O&M interacts with organisational practices, workplace cultures, and systemic accessibility provisions. This conceptualisation aligns with calls for holistic supported employment models that integrate individual skill development with environmental and structural accommodations to promote inclusive and sustainable employment outcomes for PVI.

Implications for Supported Employment Practice

Overall, the findings emphasise that O&M training should be recognised as a core component of supported employment for PVI. Integrating O&M across all phases of supported employment, from pre-placement to job retention, has the potential to enhance employment participation and workplace adjustment. This integrated approach can also promote long-term sustainability in private sector employment.

From a practical perspective, the findings underscore the need to:

- integrate O&M training into job preparation and pre-employment programmes;
- actively involve employers in workplace-based O&M training and orientation;

- implement O&M training using a flexible and graduated approach tailored to individual needs; and
- recognise O&M as an essential element of workplace safety and job performance rather than a supplementary support skill.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study affirms that O&M training constitutes a core component of supported employment for PVI, particularly within the private sector context. The findings indicate that O&M extends beyond physical mobility skills and functions as a comprehensive form of support spanning the pre-employment, job placement, and job retention phases.

Through O&M training, PVI are able to access employment opportunities, manage daily commuting to the workplace, adapt to work environments, and perform job tasks in a safer and more effective manner.

The study further demonstrates that the effectiveness of O&M training depends on its implementation as a graduated and collaborative process involving cooperation among PVI, employment specialists, and employers.

Continuous mobility support helps to reduce the risk of early placement failure and contributes to long-term job retention. Overall, this study contributes to the understanding that O&M training should be recognised as a strategic element within the supported employment ecosystem, rather than merely an auxiliary form of support.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

Integration of O&M into Supported Employment Programmes

O&M training should be formally incorporated into all phases of supported employment, beginning with interview preparation, followed by job placement, and continuing through job retention.

Active Employer Involvement

Employers are encouraged to participate directly in workplace-based O&M training, particularly in familiarising employees with physical layouts, safety routes, and daily work environments.

Flexible and Graduated Approach

O&M training should be implemented in a graduated and flexible manner, tailored to individual needs and organisational contexts, rather than adopting a uniform, one-size-fits-all approach.

Future Research

Future studies are recommended to explore the effectiveness of O&M training in other employment sectors or to adopt longitudinal approaches to assess its impact on long-term job retention.

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