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Global scientific trends on the inclusion of people with disabilities in companies: mapping the bibliometric analysis

Abstract. The inclusion of people with disabilities (PWD) in the labor market is an important component of modern social and economic policies aimed at ensuring equality, fairness, and the realization of human rights.

Problem statement. In the global context of promoting diversity and inclusion in organisations, the employment of PWD is a topical issue, given both their fundamental rights and the positive impact on company performance.

Unresolved aspects of the problem. With growing interest on the one hand in human resources as key drivers of company performance and on the other hand in equalising the rights of PWD to work, this systematic review of recent developments, challenges, implications and benefits of employing PWD in companies is welcome.

Purpose of the article. This study aims to conduct a systematic review of the existing literature on the employment of PWD in companies between 2010 and 2025.

Presentation of the main material. The results indicate both significant benefits, such as increased diversity and improved corporate image, and challenges related to stereotypes, lack of accessibility and insufficient training of employers.

Conclusions. The study addresses current gaps in research and provides recommendations for future research and policies for the integration of PWD in the private sector.

Keywords: *people with disabilities, challenges, diversity, social inclusion employment, business, bibliometric analysis.*

JEL Classification: M14, J71, I14, L14

Formulas: 0, fig: 4, tabl: 3, bibl: 37

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Introduction. In recent years, the inclusion of people with disabilities (PWD) in the labour market has become an increasingly discussed topic, both in the context of their fundamental rights and in relation to the economic impact of diversity within organisations. Many studies highlight that employing PWD can bring significant benefits to companies, such as increased innovation, team diversification and improved public image (Gupta & Sahu [12]; Kumari & Patra [18]). According to a United Nations report [32], diversity in the workplace not only encourages inclusion, but also improves organisational performance by increasing diversity of thought and innovative solutions. However, some researchers argue that despite these advantages, the integration of PWDs into organisations remains a difficult process due to stereotypes, accessibility barriers and a lack of education among employers regarding diversity management (Stone & Colella [20]). Other authors believe that legislation and public policies are not always effective enough to encourage their employment, and most existing studies focus more on the theory of inclusion than on the practical aspects of policy implementation (Al-Rashaida et al. [2]; Blanck [3]; Suresh & Dyaram [30]).

Motivated by these research gaps, our study adopts an exploratory approach to investigate the dynamics of hiring PWD in enterprises, focusing on both the benefits and challenges faced by organisations. This research also aims to identify the factors that facilitate the recruitment of PWD by studying the literature on the employment of PWD in companies between 2010 and 2025, thus contributing to a better understanding of current trends and practices in the field of inclusive employment. We intend to achieve this goal by pursuing two interdependent objectives: first, to assess the benefits and challenges associated with the employment of PWD in companies, and second, to identify the factors that can stimulate their recruitment and integration into the business environment. Through this systematic review, we will contribute to identifying gaps in the literature and developing recommendations for improving inclusion policies and practices.

With growing interest on the one hand in human resources as key drivers of company performance and on the other hand in equalising the rights of PWD to work, this systematic review of recent developments, challenges, implications and benefits of employing PWD in companies is welcome.

Literature review. In recent decades, literature has increasingly highlighted the importance of including PWD in the labour market, both from the perspective of organizational benefits and structural challenges. Systematic reviews analyse and synthesise a body of literature in a logical and transparent manner (Pigott & Polanin [23]). In this context, many studies on the inclusion of PWD discuss various examples of research focusing on barriers, benefits and employment policies, mainly in the context of a qualitative approach (Burke et al. [6]; Schloemer-Jarvis et al. [25]). The starting point for formulating hypotheses is the premise of Lengnick-Hall et al. [19], according to which PWD represent an untapped human resource, and their lack of integration generates economic and social losses. According to Bonaccio et al. [4], employers frequently express concerns about productivity and adaptation costs, similar to Kang [16], who states that negative perceptions of PWD skills limit recruitment. Furthermore, Goodman et al. [10] emphasise that a lack of managerial knowledge about accommodations perpetuates exclusion.

Other studies also discuss challenges or difficulties related to stigma, transport, or limited access to support infrastructure (Yazıcı et al. [35]). In this context, Henry et al. [13] argue for the need for coordination between companies and public employment services. Wendelborg et al. [33],

taking as a reference point the collaboration between employers and academia, highlight that educational partnerships facilitate the integration of PWD into the labour market. Furthermore, Houtenville and Kalargyrou [15] show that recruitment perceptions and practices vary significantly between industries.

Thus, based on previous literature and empirical findings, the employment of PWD brings benefits such as organisational diversity, employee loyalty and enhanced public image (Chajduga & Ingaldi [8]; Miethlich & Oldenburg [21]). Although this process is generally considered beneficial in the literature (Lindsay et al. [20]; Kendall & Karns [17]), negative aspects such as stereotypes and employer reluctance have also been identified.

Prior research offers mixed evidence on how HR practices shape inclusion. Some studies report that inclusive strategies increase retention and reduce turnover (Schur [26; 27]; Tamene [31]). Similarly, Fisher & Purcal [9] show that public policies can change employers' attitudes. In contrast, other studies find that employers remain reluctant despite legal incentives (Abd Manaf et al. [1]; Sepulveda [28]). Moreover, much of the existing research is conceptual, with limited empirical investigation into long-term sustainability (Nurhaeni et al. [22]).

Despite its significance, prior research has overlooked the crucial role of sector-specific dynamics. For instance, studies in hospitality show that customer perceptions weigh heavily on hiring decisions (Houtenville & Kalargyrou [14]). Also, although there is consistent research on recruitment, few studies analyse the retention and promotion of PWD. Furthermore, the impact of digitalisation and remote work on PWD inclusion remains insufficiently explored.

To guide the review process and meet the research objectives, the study was guided by two main questions:

RQ1: What are the benefits and challenges of hiring PWD in companies?

RQ2: What factors can act as facilitators in the recruitment process?

As such, there remains limited understanding of how systemic, organisational and attitudinal factors interact in shaping workplace inclusion. This research, therefore, seeks to shed light on both benefits and challenges of PWD employment, while identifying factors that can stimulate recruitment. In line with these developments, our study contributes to the growing body of knowledge by demonstrating that inclusion is not only a social responsibility, but also a strategic lever for sustainable growth.

Purpose, objectives and research methods. This study aims to conduct a systematic review of the existing literature on the employment of PWD in companies between 2010 and 2025.

The main objective of the research is to analyse the benefits and challenges encountered by companies in the process of recruiting and integrating PWD.

The methodology used consists of a systematic review of published empirical studies, from which relevant information was extracted to better understand the context and current practices.

This study was conducted as a systematic literature review (SLR), a methodology increasingly used in social and management sciences to synthesise existing knowledge in a rigorous and transparent manner (Pigott & Polanin [23]). Similar to other works on the same topic (Lindsay et al. [20]; Schloemer-Jarvis et al. [25]), we followed the methodological recommendations established in the literature, dividing the process into three major stages: planning, implementation and reporting.

In the planning stage, we formulated the research questions and developed the analysis protocol, following the logic used by Schloemer-Jarvis et al. [25] in their systematic review of HR practices for the inclusion of PWD. The protocol was defined to ensure the reproducibility of the process and to minimise bias, in accordance with the PRISMA guidelines.

In the implementation stage, relevant articles were identified in two major databases, Web of Science and Scopus, recognised for their international coverage and publication quality. The search string used was: employing and people and disabilities and companies. We applied inclusion and exclusion criteria similar to those in the study by Lindsay et al. [20], which reviewed the benefits of employing PWD. Only articles published between 2010 and 2025, in English, and positively

evaluated by peer review were included. Review articles, editorials, books, or book chapters were excluded. To ensure scientific relevance, only studies with a minimum of two citations were retained, a methodological strategy also applied by in their SLR on barriers to the employment of PWD.

The SLR execution process is illustrated in Figure 1. The validation process involved double-checking the eligibility criteria and using NVivo 15 to analyse the frequency and f key terms, similar to the procedure applied in a thematic analysis of the social inclusion of PWD.

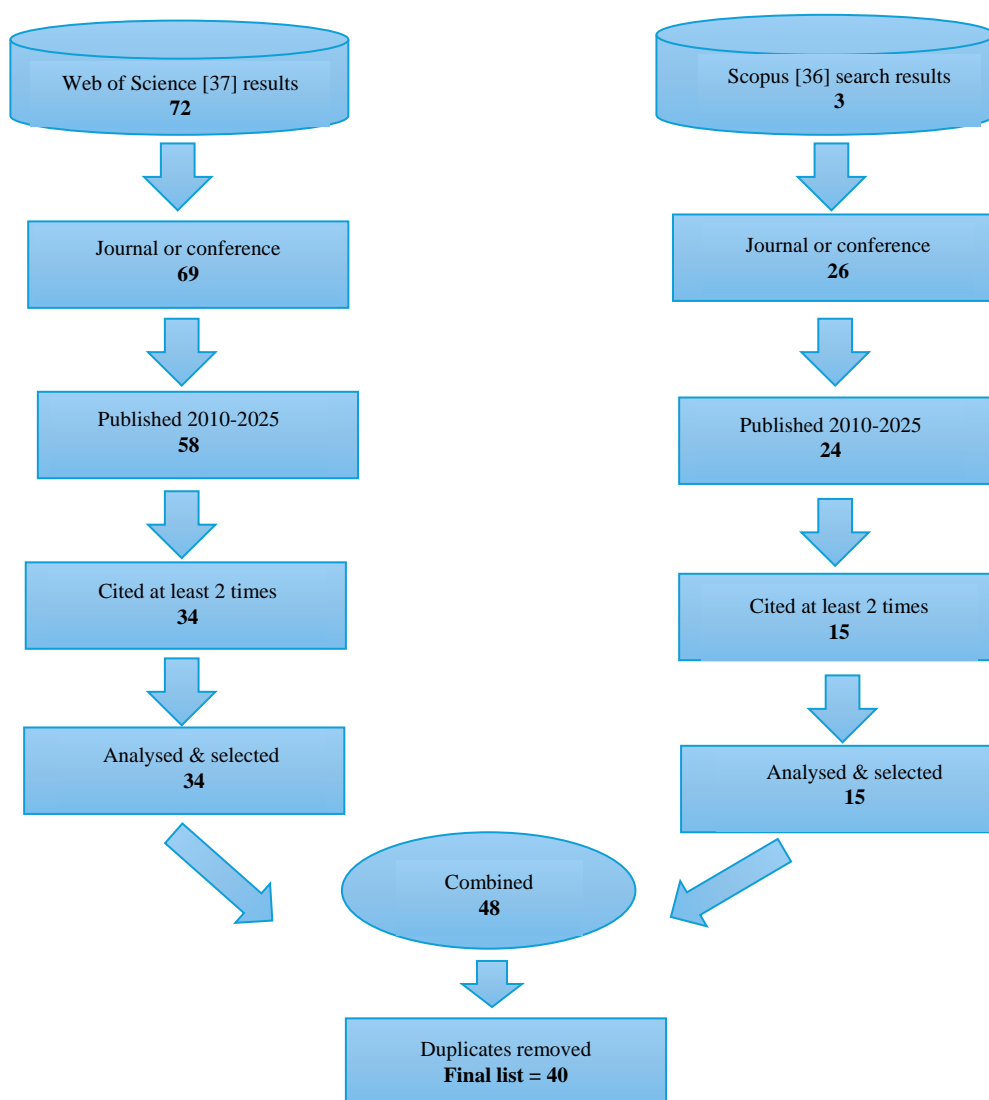


Figure 1. SLR execution flow
Source: prepared by the authors

During the reporting stage, the extracted data were summarised in tables and graphs (number of publications per year, scientific fields, citations and sources). This integrated approach allowed not only for the quantification of trends, but also for the critical interpretation of results, in line with previous studies on this topic (Lindsay et al. [20]; Schloemer-Jarvis et al. [25]).

Research results. The study selection process resulted in the inclusion of 40 articles published between 2010 and 2025 (see Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C), after removing duplicates and applying relevance criteria. The distribution of articles by year indicates a growing interest in the topic, with a peak in publications in 2020 and 2024, when six articles were recorded, while the first years analysed (2010, 2015, 2016) yielded only one paper each. This evolution

suggests that the issue of the inclusion of PWD in the organisational environment has become increasingly visible in the specialist literature over the last decade (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Number of papers per year of publication

Source: the authors' own development using Web of Science [37] and Scopus database [36]

Most of the selected studies were published in recognised scientific journals, with only two coming from conference proceedings, confirming a higher methodological rigour and broader scientific validation. Frequent sources include the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation (3 articles), Sustainability (2 articles), Disability & Society (2 articles), and Disability and Rehabilitation (2 articles), reflecting the multidisciplinary nature of the topic and the growing interest in areas such as management, occupational health, and social sciences (Table 1).

Table 1. Top 10 sources and number of publications retrieved

Source title	NA	Source title	NA
Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation	3	Equality Diversity and Inclusion	2
Sustainability	2	Rehabilitation Counselling Bulletin	2
Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities	2	Work—A Journal of Prevention Assessment & Rehabilitation	2
Disability & Society	2	Business Strategy and Development	1
Disability and Rehabilitation	2	Business Strategy and the Environment	1

* NA – number of articles

Source: the authors' own development using Web of Science [37] and Scopus database [36]

The analysis of scientific fields revealed a predominance of publications in "Rehabilitation", followed by "Business & Management" and "Public Health", confirming the cross-cutting nature of the issue (Table 2).

Table 2. Top 10 fields of study by number of articles

Field of science	Publications	Field of science	Publications
Rehabilitation	8	Psychiatry	2
Public, Environmental & Occupational Health	3	Business Management & Accounting	1
Management; Women's Studies	2	Management	1
Green & Sustainable Science & Technology; Environmental Sciences; Environmental Studies	2	Business Management & Accounting; Social Science; Environmental Science	1
Social Work	2	Business; Environmental Studies	1

Source: the authors' own development using Web of Science [37] and Scopus database [36]

The scientific impact of the selected articles varies considerably. Most citations were recorded in 2013 and 2020, with 77 and 67 citations, respectively, corresponding to periods when debates on labour market inclusion were accelerated by legislative changes and socio-economic crises (Figure 3). Furthermore, an analysis of citations by source shows that prestigious journals in the field of hospitality management or human resources accounted for a significant proportion of high-impact articles.

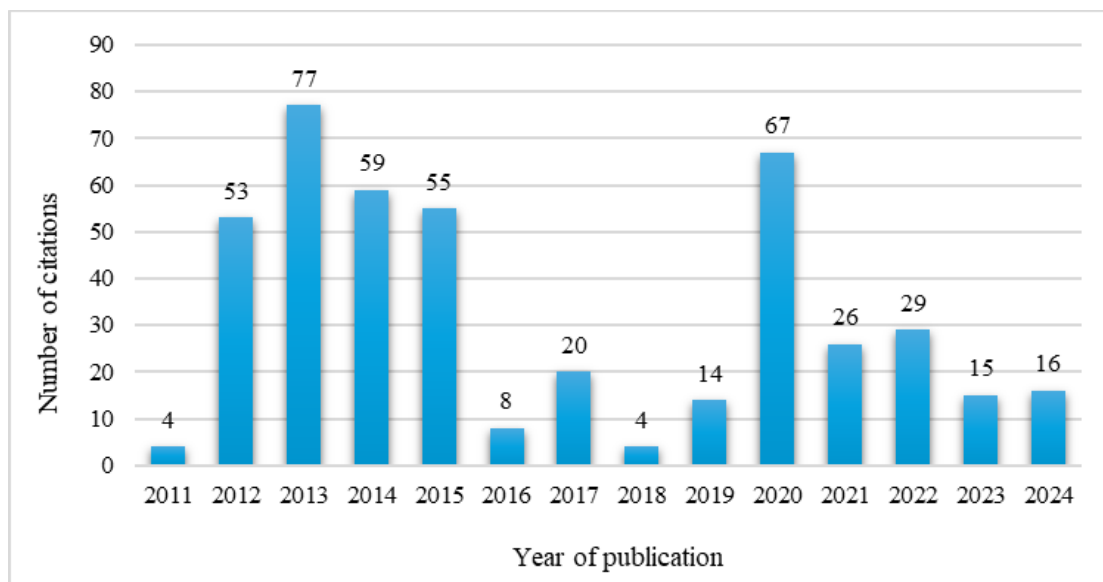


Figure 3. Citations per year of publication

Source: the authors' own development using Web of Science [37] and Scopus database [36]

In terms of content analysis, the use of NVivo 15 allowed the extraction of the most frequent terms from the abstracts of the articles. The results, summarised in the form of WordCloud (Figure 4), highlight the centrality of the concepts of employment, disability, inclusion and barriers, confirming that the literature focuses on both opportunities and difficulties.



Figure 4. WordCloud

Source: authors' own elaboration with NViVo 15, 2025

The results obtained were centralised in Table 3, which summarises the benefits and challenges identified (RQ1) and the stimulating factors (RQ2), together with the relevant literature sources.

Table 3. Centralisation of responses to research questions for SRL and selected sources

RQ1	Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased diversity, talent pool expansion, and brand loyalty as advantages of hiring PWD Transport difficulties, stigma, uncertainties about candidates' abilities and the complexity of the public employment services system for PWD as challenges related to employment PWD remain employed with the same employer for longer compared to 'able-bodied' employees, meaning that it may be worthwhile to incur additional expenses to hire PWD who may become loyal employees for years, which is a benefit of hiring PWD Misperceptions about PWD, uncertainty about the costs of workplace accommodation as challenges related to the employment of PWD 	(Chajduga & Ingaldi [8]); Yazıcı et al. [35]; Henry et al. [13]; Goodman et al. [10])
RQ2	Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the professional skills of PWD, reducing employers' fears about workplace accidents among PWD, reducing tax and social security costs for companies that employ PWD, establishing workplace accommodations, differentiating the employment rate of PWD by occupational category, providing information to companies about PWD seeking employment as incentives for employing PWD Using a specialised recruitment agency, developing a specific recruitment plan and training staff in disability awareness, as well as internships, are perceived as the best facilitators for the employment of PWD 	Kang [16]; Houtenville and Kalargyrou [15]; Wendelborg et al. [33]; Henry et al. [13]; Wiggett-Barnard & Swartz [34]

Source: author's compilation

Discussion. We employ a systematic literature review approach to critically discuss the benefits, challenges, and enabling factors associated with the employment of PWD. This section integrates the findings of the 40 selected studies with existing theoretical and empirical contributions, highlighting areas of consensus, divergence, and emerging gaps in the literature.

Benefits and challenges of employing PWD

The analysis confirms that companies recognise a range of benefits when hiring PWD, particularly in terms of workforce diversification, reduced staff turnover, and enhanced corporate image (Chajduga & Ingaldi [8]; Miethlich & Oldenburg [24]). Moreover, several studies indicate that PWD tend to display stronger loyalty towards their employers, remaining in jobs longer than their non-disabled peers, which can offset the additional costs of workplace adaptation (Chajduga & Ingaldi [8]). These findings are consistent with Lindsay et al. [20], who similarly emphasised the potential for PWD to strengthen organisational culture and retention rates.

However, challenges persist across multiple contexts. Negative stereotypes and doubts regarding the competencies of PWD continue to limit hiring intentions (Goodman et al. [10]; Yazıcı et al. [35]). Employers frequently cite concerns about adaptation costs, workplace accidents, and the uncertainty surrounding the process of hiring and training PWD (Henry et al. [13]; Goodman et al. [10]). Other structural barriers include inadequate transportation systems and insufficient managerial training for diversity management (Yazıcı et al. [35]). As Carrieri et al. [7] point out, these barriers not only hinder workplace inclusion but also impose social costs by reducing the active participation of PWD in society.

Enabling factors for recruitment

In relation to RQ2, the literature identifies several facilitators of recruitment. Public policies and fiscal incentives are among the most frequently cited, with Kang [16] recommending tax reductions, social security benefits, and differentiated employment quotas for various occupational categories. Houtenville and Kalargyrou [15] further show that companies weigh a mix of factors when considering PWD employment, but industry-specific concerns play a key role. For instance, leisure and hospitality firms tend to prioritise customer attitudes, raising concerns about discrimination and the reputational risks perceived by employers.

At the organisational level, collaboration with higher education institutions has proven to be a valuable mechanism for integrating PWD into the labour market, particularly for individuals with intellectual disabilities (Wendelborg et al. [33]). Henry et al. [13] highlight the importance of networks between firms and employment services to improve coordination and expand opportunities for PWD. Employers also recommend innovations in service systems and changes in recruitment practices, such as using specialised recruitment agencies, developing targeted hiring plans, and offering internships to enhance workplace adaptation (Wiggett-Barnard & Swartz [34]). These strategies are particularly effective in addressing uncertainties regarding workplace performance and adaptation costs.

Our findings largely confirm those of previous systematic reviews. Lindsay et al. [20] and Schloemer-Jarvis et al. [25] similarly observed that while the advantages of hiring PWD are widely recognised, barriers persist due to entrenched stereotypes and insufficient organisational readiness. However, our review extends these insights by showing that sectoral differences (e.g., hospitality vs. manufacturing) play a critical role in shaping employer attitudes, an aspect less emphasised in earlier reviews.

Conclusions. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that companies should invest in disability awareness training, collaborate with educational institutions, and develop tailored recruitment programmes to better integrate PWD. Public policies remain crucial, but their impact is mediated by sector-specific dynamics and organisational culture.

From a theoretical perspective, this review contributes to the broader literature on diversity and inclusion by highlighting how structural barriers intersect with organisational and industry-level practices. It reinforces the need to view inclusion not merely as a legal or ethical obligation, but as a multidimensional process shaped by economic, social, and cultural contexts.

Despite the valuable insights, the review is limited by its reliance on peer-reviewed journal articles, potentially excluding relevant grey literature and policy reports. Moreover, most studies are cross-sectional, leaving open questions about the long-term impacts of PWD employment on firms and employees.

Future research should explore how digitalisation, remote work, and artificial intelligence are reshaping opportunities for PWD inclusion, as these emerging trends may significantly reduce traditional barriers such as transportation and workplace accessibility. Comparative cross-country studies would also be valuable in capturing the influence of cultural and institutional differences on employer attitudes and practices.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A. Selected studies

Author	PY	NC	Publication source	Author	PY	NC	Publication source
Kang	2013	10	Asia Pacific Journal of Social Work and Development	Clube & Tennant	2022	23	Business Strategy and Development
Houtenville & Kalargyrou	2015	55	Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	Wong et al.	2020	28	Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives
Wendelborg et al.	2022	4	Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities	Dray-Spira et al.	2013	28	Diabetic Medicine
Yazici et al.	2011	4	Disability & Society	Brinsmead	2019	2	Journal of Enabling Technologies
Henry et al.	2014	36	Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation	Elbaek et al.	2018	2	Proceedings of the 12th European Conference on Games Based Learning (ECGBL 2018)
Goodman et al.	2024	2	Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation	Alajlan	2023	3	Information Sciences Letters
Rustad & Kassah	2021	6	Disability & Society	Thomas et al.	2021	2	Journal of Rehabilitation
Litwin et al.	2024	2	International Journal of Production Research	Warmate et al.	2021	13	Business Strategy and the Environment
Wiggett-Barnard & Swartz	2012	21	Disability and Rehabilitation	Grenawalt et al.	2020	11	Journal of Management and Organisation
Folguera	2014	8	Equality Diversity and Inclusion	Ramachandra et al.	2017	15	Indian Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
Munsell et al.	2024	7	Rehabilitation Counselling Bulletin	Raman et al.	2012	19	BMC Research Notes
Holzgreve et al.	2023	2	Journal of Occupational Medicine and Toxicology	Toldra & Santos	2013	30	Work-A Journal of Prevention Assessment & Rehabilitation
Alborno & Gaad	2012	11	Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities	Aytac et al.	2012	2	International Congress on Interdisciplinary Business and Social Sciences 2012
Carrieri et al.	2014	15	Work-A Journal of Prevention Assessment & Rehabilitation	Potgieter et al.	2017	5	Sa Journal of Human Resource Management
Calderon-Milan et al.	2020	20	Sustainability	Efeoglu & Kilincarslan	2024	2	Equality Diversity and Inclusion
Chajduga & Ingaldi	2021	5	Sustainability	Doolabh & Khan	2020	2	Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation
Noffsinger et al.	2018	2	Psychiatric Annals	van Oosten et al.	2023	2	BMC Psychiatry
Voermans et al.	2023	8	Disability and Rehabilitation	McDonnall & Antonelli	2020	6	Rehabilitation Counselling Bulletin
Saur & Johansen	2013	9	Ride - The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance	Hirschberg & Papadopoulos	2016	8	Societies
McDonnall & Cmar	2022	2	Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation	Walsh et al.	2019	12	Frontiers in Psychology

* NC – number of citations; * PY – year of publication

Source: the authors' own development using Web of Science [37] and Scopus database [36]

Appendix B. Publication source and number of retrieved articles and citations

Source title	TC	NA	Source title	TC	NA
Asia Pacific Journal of Social Work and Development	10	1	Sa Journal of Human Resource Management	5	1
Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	55	1	BMC Psychiatry	2	1
Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities	15	2	Societies	8	1
Disability & Society	10	2	Frontiers in Psychology	12	1
Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation	40	3	Business Strategy and Development	23	1
Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation	2	1	Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives	28	1
International Journal of Production Research	2	1	Diabetic Medicine	28	1
Disability and Rehabilitation	29	2	Journal of Enabling Technologies	2	1
Equality Diversity and Inclusion	10	2	Proceedings of the 12th European Conference on Games Based Learning (ECGBL 2018)	2	1
Rehabilitation Counselling Bulletin	13	2	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	3	1
Journal of Occupational Medicine and Toxicology	2	1	Information Sciences Letters	3	1
Work—A Journal of Prevention Assessment & Rehabilitation	45	2	Journal of Rehabilitation	2	1
Sustainability	25	2	Business Strategy and the Environment	13	1
Psychiatric Annals	2	1	Journal of Management and Organisation	11	1
Ride—The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance	9	1	Indian Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine	15	1
International Congress on Interdisciplinary Business and Social Sciences 2012 (ICIBSOS 2012)	2	1	BMC Research Notes	19	1

* TC – total citations; NA – number of articles

Source: the authors' own development using Web of Science [37] and Scopus database [36]

Appendix C. Field of science dataset

Field of science	Articles	Field of science	Articles
Rehabilitation	8	Engineering; Operations Research & Management Science	1
Business Management & Accounting	1	Public, Environmental & Occupational Health	3
Business Management & Accounting; Social Science; Environmental Science	1	Health Policy & Services; Rehabilitation	1
Management	1	Psychiatry	2
Business; Environmental Studies	1	Education & Educational Research; Theatre	1
Business; Environmental Studies; Management	1	Computer Science, Cybernetics; Ergonomics	1
Business; Social Sciences; Interdisciplinary	1	Psychology, Multidisciplinary	1
Management; Women's Studies	2	Sociology	1
Mathematics; Social Science; Computer Science	1	Transport	1
Green & Sustainable Science & Technology; Environmental Sciences; Environmental Studies	2	Endocrinology & Metabolism	1
Rehabilitation; Social Sciences - Other Topics	1	Education & Educational Research	1
Rehabilitation; Social Issues	1	Psychology	1
Social Work	2	Medicine	1
Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism; Management; Sociology	1	Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology	1
Health Care Sciences & Services; Rehabilitation	1		

Source: the authors' own development using Web of Science [37] and Scopus database [36]

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Глобальні тенденції наукових досліджень щодо інклюзії людей з інвалідністю в компаніях: картування бібліометричного аналізу

Анотація. Інклюзія людей з інвалідністю (ЛІ) на ринку праці є важливим компонентом сучасної соціальної та економічної політики, спрямованої на забезпечення рівності, справедливості та реалізації прав людини.

Постановка проблеми. У глобальному контексті сприяння різноманітності та інклюзії в організаціях, працевлаштування ЛІ є актуальним питанням, враховуючи як їхні фундаментальні права, так і позитивний вплив на ефективність діяльності компаній.

Нерозв'язані аспекти. Зі зростанням інтересу, з одного боку, до людських ресурсів як ключових рушійних сил діяльності компаній, а з іншого боку, до зрівняння прав ЛІ на працю, цей систематичний огляд останніх подій, викликів, наслідків та переваг використання ЛІ в компаніях є вітаним.

Мета статті. Це дослідження має на меті провести систематичний огляд існуючої літератури щодо працевлаштування ЛІ в компаніях у період з 2010 по 2025 рік.

Основний матеріал. Результати вказують як на значні переваги, такі як збільшення різноманітності та покращення корпоративного іміджу, так і на проблеми, пов'язані зі стереотипами, відсутністю доступності та недостатньою підготовкою роботодавців.

Висновки. Дослідження розглядає поточні прогалини в дослідженнях та надає рекомендації для майбутніх досліджень та політики інтеграції людей з інвалідністю у приватний сектор.

Ключові слова: люди з інвалідністю, проблеми, різноманітність, соціальна інтеграція, працевлаштування, бізнес, бібліометричний аналіз.

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