

Mental Health of Employees with Disabilities: Psychological Adjustment and Workplace Reintegration

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary era of career growth and competitive workplaces, employees with various disabilities encounter several challenges to their mental and physical health in an organization. Workplace barriers, including inaccessible workspaces, inadequate workplace accommodations, physical disabilities, and social discrimination, create obstacles to productivity and participation while generating additional stress that decreases employee job satisfaction. Mental health concerns, including burnout, depression, and anxiety, are frequently heightened in these employees due to the integration effects of workplace barriers, physical disability, and lack of support. This systematic literature review study provides evidence from 18 reviews and empirical studies examining the mental health of employees with disabilities, psychological adjustment processes, and workplace reintegration strategies. Findings from the present study revealed that targeted interventions, such as flexible scheduling, supported employment, vocational rehabilitation, ergonomic adjustments, and inclusive organizational policies, significantly improve job retention, psychological well-being, and return-to-work rates. Despite these significant outcomes, the literature highlights several gaps, including the limited availability of longitudinal studies, insufficient evaluation of cost-effectiveness, and inadequate attention to stigma and workplace culture. The present study demonstrates the need for sustainable workplace strategies that are individualized.

Keywords: Employees with Disabilities, Workplace Reintegration, Mental Health, Organizational Practices, Job retention, Employee Well-Being, Psychological Adjustment.

INTRODUCTION

In this era of career growth competition, mental health is a critical aspect of overall well-being for employees, especially for employees with physical disabilities (Green et al., 2025), who often face unique challenges, including anti-discrimination policies, workplace accommodations, and mental health support. An inclusive work culture that fosters acceptance and support for employees with disabilities. Disability, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), encompasses any condition that restricts an individual's full participation in society due to impairments in physical, mental, or sensory functioning. In this view, Khalema & Shankar (2014) stated that people with physical disabilities are more likely to experience mental health issues such as stress, depression, and anxiety due to barriers in the work environment, discrimination, and the struggle for social inclusion. Mental health in the workplace holds essential value because it affects both personal wellness and work performance, job satisfaction, and career longevity (Toffoletto and Ahumada, 2023). Prior existing studies have shown that the history of workplace inclusion for disabled employees has shifted from complete exclusion to the active implementation of accessible support systems. For instance, Saleem et al. (2023) stated that people with disabilities encounter ongoing workplace discrimination, which hinders their ability to achieve full employment participation despite existing legal

protections under the “United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” (CRPD) and national disability policies. Modern labor and health policy focuses on workforce inclusion of disabled employees because organizations now understand how essential workplace accommodations are for people with physical and mental health disabilities.

However, employees with physical and mental disabilities encounter multiple employment challenges, which result in discrimination when trying to work in various job settings (Khalema & Shankar, 2014). Notably, the CRPD supports people with disabilities to work equally through accessible workplaces that welcome everyone (Gaviria et al., 2015). Moreover, the employment potential of people with disabilities remains restricted in several developing countries because workplaces lack proper accommodations and maintain discriminatory attitudes that prevent them from keeping their jobs and returning to work (Green et al., 2025; Lefever et al., 2018). Valk & Versluijs (2024) highlighted that workplaces implement various types of adaptations, including ergonomic changes, flexible work arrangements, and remote work options, to support employees with disabilities in meeting their individual needs. Therefore, Richard C. Corbière (2025) added that workplace adaptations serve two critical functions: preventing job termination and enabling workers to return to their jobs following health-related absences. Several existing empirical studies indicate that Danish and Swiss vocational rehabilitation programs (Poulsen et al., 2017, and Zürcher et al., 2023) enhance work return rates for staff members suffering from exhaustion disorders, adjustment disorders, and severe mental health conditions. Zürcher et al. (2023) demonstrated that supported employment programs create substantial improvements in job maintenance for workers with mental health conditions.

However, despite these positive findings, Lefever et al. (2018) argued that significant gaps remain unexplored regarding the long-term effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of workplace adaptations. Furthermore, the barriers to successful integration, such as insufficient support systems and stigma, continue to challenge the sustainability of such programs (Van Beukering et al., 2022; Richard et al., 2025). While previous research has focused on the clinical and vocational outcomes of workplace adaptations, there is limited evidence on the economic impact of these interventions and how they can be optimized to meet the needs of a broader range of disabilities across various industries (Green et al., 2025).

The present study aims to address the above research gaps by systematically reviewing the existing literature on workplace adaptations for employees with physical and mental health disabilities, assessing both the psychological adjustment and workplace reintegration of such employees. By evaluating the effectiveness of various adaptations and interventions, this research seeks to inform future policies and practices that promote more inclusive and supportive workplace environments for employees with disabilities. Thus, findings from the present study may contribute to the growing body of literature supporting workplace inclusion and provide actionable recommendations for enhancing job retention and workplace reintegration.

Mental Health of Employees with Disabilities

The mental health of employees with disabilities is a critical area of research, as it directly impacts their ability to maintain employment and reintegrate into the workforce after periods of sick leave or disability-related absence. Empirical studies consistently show that employees with mental health conditions face significant barriers to job retention and reentry into the workforce, with discrimination, stigma, and lack of support being among the most prominent challenges (Khalema & Shankar, 2014). For example, mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, and exhaustion disorders cause people to miss work frequently, which ultimately results in job loss (Poulsen et al., 2017; Lefever et al., 2018). The workplace stigma against mental health issues leads to two significant problems, which prevent people with mental health conditions from getting proper employment and from staying in their jobs (Van Beukering et al., 2022).

Numerous empirical studies have extensively emphasized how vocational rehabilitation and supported employment (SE) programs enhance work success for people who have mental health disorders. Recently, Zürcher et al. (2023) revealed that SE programs that offer personalized assistance leads to better job stability and employment success for workers with mental health issues. The programs support individuals in finding suitable employment through training at their job sites, while providing ongoing support for both workers and their employers. Another study by Gaviria et al. (2015) shows that people with severe mental disorders who join SE programs achieve enhanced clinical functioning and better mental health and work stability. In addition, a recent study by Green et al. (2025) demonstrates that workplace accommodations, including flexible work hours, telecommuting, and ergonomic adjustments, play a crucial role in supporting the mental health of employees with disabilities. The implemented adjustments decrease workplace tension while boosting employee satisfaction and mental well-being, resulting in improved work performance and job retention. Nieuwenhuijsen et al. (2003) found that early workplace interventions and accommodations are necessary, yet scientists need to study their complete impact on mental health outcomes and employment stability.

In summary, existing empirical studies have demonstrated that mental health support and vocational rehabilitation programs enhance workplace reintegration for employees with disabilities; however, further empirical examinations are needed to investigate their long-term economic effects and cost-effectiveness. Lefever et al. (2018) suggested that the researchers must examine how managerial backing and workplace culture affect disability inclusion for people with mental health issues. Research continuation may support organizations in establishing better workplace policies and developing improved interventions that maximize mental health and employment success for people with disabilities.

METHOD

This research employs a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology to synthesize existing knowledge on the mental health of employees with disabilities, with a specific focus on psychological adjustment and workplace reintegration strategies. The SLR approach was chosen for its rigor and ability to provide a comprehensive and unbiased summary of available evidence. The process follows predefined steps to ensure the inclusion of relevant studies, reduce bias, and offer a transparent overview of the research landscape. The first step involved developing a robust search strategy to identify relevant studies published between 2012 and 2023. The search focused on articles written in English, including peer-reviewed journals and other scholarly publications. The primary databases searched were Scopus, ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis, and other free-access databases, as well as the Scholars database. The search utilized a combination of keywords, including "mental health," "workplace reintegration," "disability," "psychological adjustment," and "employee accommodation," to capture studies relevant to the research questions.

Inclusion Criteria

Empirical studies (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods) that investigated the mental health of employees with disabilities in the context of workplace reintegration and adaptation; studies that discussed or assessed workplace adaptations and their effectiveness in improving job retention and psychological adjustment for employees with mental health and physical disabilities; and articles published between 2012 and 2023 in English and Spanish. Exclusion criteria included studies focusing exclusively on non-occupational mental health issues or unrelated disabilities. These studies only included abstract or unpublished data and research that did not address workplace accommodations or reintegration strategies. Following the identification of relevant studies, data extraction was conducted using a standardized template. Key information recorded for each study included study reference, study design (e.g., RCT, cohort study, cross-sectional), sample size, participant characteristics (including the type of disability), workplace adaptations (e.g., ergonomic adjustments, flexible working hours, telecommuting), mental health measures (e.g., depression scales, job satisfaction inventories, return-to-work rates), key findings related to mental health outcomes, job retention, and workplace reintegration, limitations identified in the study (e.g., sample size, follow-up period, generalizability), and conclusions and recommendations regarding workplace practices or mental health interventions.

Data Collection and Analysis

To ensure the methodological rigor of the included studies, the AMSTAR tool (for systematic reviews) and the STROBE checklist (for observational studies) were employed. AMSTAR helps assess the quality of systematic reviews, ensuring that the review's methodology is transparent and reproducible. The STROBE checklist was used to evaluate the quality of observational studies included in the review, with a focus on aspects such as sample selection, data collection methods, and statistical analysis. The final step involved synthesizing the extracted data to identify patterns, trends, and gaps in the literature. A narrative synthesis approach was adopted, which allowed for the comparison of study outcomes based on study design, sample characteristics, and types of workplace adaptations. The studies were grouped based on their focus areas—psychological adjustment, workplace reintegration, and the impact of specific workplace accommodations.

Additionally, the effectiveness of different interventions was analyzed across the studies, with particular attention given to the long-term impact of workplace accommodations on job retention and mental health outcomes. During the synthesis, several research gaps were identified, including the need for more longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impact of workplace adaptations on employees with disabilities; limited research on the cost-effectiveness of workplace accommodations and their impact on organizational productivity; and a lack of studies addressing the intersection of mental health and physical disabilities in the workplace context, with many studies focusing on either one or the other. This systematic literature review aims to fill these gaps by providing a comprehensive overview of current research on mental health and workplace reintegration for employees with disabilities. The findings will inform best practices for creating inclusive workplaces and contribute to the broader discussion on disability management in employment contexts. Through this review, the study seeks

to highlight the importance of targeted interventions that not only support employees' mental health but also enhance their ability to remain in and return to the workforce.

Data Analysis and Findings

The findings from the present SLR reveal several key trends and insights regarding workplace adaptations, mental health, and the reintegration of employees with disabilities. A thorough examination of the included studies highlighted various organizational, psychological, and physical accommodations, their effectiveness, and the challenges they face in facilitating successful workplace reintegration and mental health support. Therefore, the key past studies are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Past Empirical Studies

Study Reference	Participants (e.g., Disability Type)	Workplace Adaptations	Mental Health Measures	Key Findings	Limitations/Gaps
Khalema & Shankar (2014)	Employees with mental illness & disability	Employment integration strategies	Not specified	Highlights barriers to employment integration; mental health and disability affect job retention	Lack of empirical data on specific adaptations
Poulsen et al. (2017)	Employees on sick leave due to mental health issues (e.g., exhaustion disorder, adjustment disorder)	Vocational rehabilitation program	Exhaustion disorder, adjustment disorder, distress	Increase in return-to-work rates for participants in the vocational program	Limited to specific health conditions; trial design limits generalizability
Lefever et al. (2018)	Employees with disabilities	Disability management programs	Job retention and reintegration measures	Disability management improves job retention and reintegration outcomes	Limited data on effectiveness and cost-efficiency
Gaviria et al. (2015)	Patients with severe mental disorders	Workplace reintegration program	Clinical functioning scales	Significant improvement in clinical functioning post-reintegration	Sample limited to severe mental disorders
Nieuwenhuis et al. (2003)	Workers with adjustment disorders	Vocational rehabilitation based on practice guidelines	Adjustment disorders	High success rate in work rehabilitation for employees with adjustment disorders	Retrospective design; lack of long-term data
Nielsen et al. (2012)	Employees with mental health problems	Work-related interventions	Return to work time	Time to return to work is predicted by work and personal-related factors	Lack of long-term follow-up
Maiwald et al. (2013)	Employees with disabilities in Canada	Employee involvement in work reintegration	Not specified	Employee involvement in reintegration can yield mixed results	Biases due to self-reporting
Zürcher et al. (2023)	Employees with mental health problems (e.g., mood disorders, schizophrenia)	Supported employment (SE) retention and reintegration programs	Mental health disorders (schizophrenia, mood disorders)	SE-retention shows better job retention outcomes than SE-reintegration	Descriptive study; limited to a single center
Urrejola-Contreras et al. (2025)	Employees with physical disabilities	Workplace adaptations (e.g., ergonomic changes, telecommuting)	Not specified	Organizational adaptations, such as flexible scheduling, improve integration for employees with disabilities	Limited to published articles; lacks primary data
Green et al. (2025)	Individuals with common mental disorders in disability-based insurance systems	Workplace accommodations	Mental health recovery scales	Scoping review suggests mental health recovery is a key factor in return-to-work experiences	Limited to disability insurance systems; lacks detailed intervention analysis
Prévost et al. (2025)	Veterans with mental health conditions	Barriers to Employment and Coping Efficacy Scales	Coping efficacy, employment barriers	Identified barriers to employment and coping efficacy for veterans with mental health conditions	Limited to veterans; not generalizable
Toffoletto & Ahumada (2023)	Workers on sick leave with musculoskeletal and mental health issues	Workplace adjustments related to musculoskeletal and mental health diseases	Not specified	Workplace adjustments can aid in reducing absenteeism and improving work reintegration	Lack of detailed data on specific adaptations
Valk & Versluijs (2024)	Military personnel with injuries/illnesses	Workplace reintegration programs for military personnel	Not specified	Effective reintegration strategies help military personnel return to work after injury/illness	Limited to military personnel; no quantitative data
Matos et al. (2024)	Stroke survivors	Workplace reintegration programs	Quality of life, mental health, community integration	Professional reintegration positively impacts mental health and quality of life	Limited sample size; no control group
Gutiérrez Naharro et al. (2025)	Individuals with mental health-related work disabilities during the COVID-19 lockdown	Work-related adaptations during the pandemic	Not specified	Mental health-related disabilities increased during the COVID-19 lockdown	Limited to the COVID-19 lockdown context
Van Beukering et al. (2022)	Employees affected by health-related stigma	Workplace adaptations addressing stigma	Stigma-related scales	Health-related stigma significantly impacts sustainable employment	Lack of longitudinal data on the effectiveness of anti-stigma interventions

Richard et al. (2025)	Employees with mental health conditions	Impact of mental health disclosure in the workplace	Disclosure-related scales	Mental health disclosure affects workplace integration and stigma	Limited generalizability to different sectors
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The findings from the SLR highlight key patterns and trends in the research on workplace adaptations, psychological adjustment, and job reintegration for employees with disabilities. The studies reviewed consistently emphasize that organizational adjustments—such as flexible working hours, telecommuting, and changes to job responsibilities—are commonly implemented across different sectors to support employees with mental health and physical disabilities. These adjustments are generally perceived as effective in improving job retention and reducing the negative impact of disabilities on employees' ability to perform their roles. The studies included in the systematic review provide valuable insights into workplace adaptations, mental health, and reintegration strategies for employees with disabilities. The findings from the table highlight the diversity of interventions, target populations, and outcomes across different types of disabilities and mental health conditions. For instance, based on the literature synthesis, the following are presented below. Organizational adjustments such as flexible working hours, telecommuting, and ergonomic changes were commonly implemented across most studies. Poulsen et al. (2017) demonstrated that vocational rehabilitation programs improved the return-to-work performance of employees who took sick leave due to mental health problems. The research by Zürcher et al. (2023) demonstrated that Supported Employment (SE) retention programs produced superior job retention results compared to reintegration approaches, as they should start early. Thus, empirical studies consistently show that workplace adaptations integrating mental health support, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) or vocational rehabilitation, are associated with improved job retention and return-to-work rates. Studies by Lefever et al. (2018) and Gaviria et al. (2015) further corroborated the role of mental health interventions in improving the well-being and reintegration of employees with disabilities. However, there was also a noted gap in specific mental health interventions designed exclusively for employees with disabilities, especially for those with common mental disorders or musculoskeletal health conditions. Moreover, Richard et al. (2025) noted that disclosure of mental health conditions could lead to discrimination or altered work relationships, hindering effective integration.

Additionally, many studies, such as those by Van Beukering et al. (2022), pointed out that health-related stigma significantly impacts sustainable employment, with employees feeling marginalized or less valued due to their conditions. Therefore, effectiveness and Gaps: While the reviewed studies report positive outcomes associated with workplace adaptations, gaps in implementation were a consistent theme. Many employees with disabilities, particularly those with physical disabilities, noted that the necessary workplace adjustments, such as changes to job responsibilities or improvements in accessibility, were not fully realized. Studies by Urrejola-Contreras et al. (2025) and Lefever et al. (2018) noted that, while specific physical accommodations, such as wheelchair access, were commonly implemented, adjustments related to job function or work rhythms were often lacking.

However, most of the empirical studies lacked long-term follow-up on the effectiveness of workplace adaptations and their impact on job retention and mental health outcomes. While interventions like the Supported Employment programs (e.g., Zürcher et al., 2023) showed immediate positive outcomes, the sustainability of these results over time remains unclear. Several studies, including those by Maiwald et al. (2013), have highlighted the need for further exploration of the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of these workplace adaptations.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the systematic literature review provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of workplace adaptations and their impact on job retention and reintegration for employees with disabilities. Across the studies, it was consistently observed that organizational and physical adaptations play a crucial role in enabling individuals with disabilities to remain in or return to the workforce. However, the review also highlights several barriers and challenges that must be addressed to ensure the success of these adaptations and facilitate the long-term integration of employees with disabilities into the workplace. One of the main themes emerging from the studies is the importance of workplace adaptations. Organizational changes, such as flexible working hours, telecommuting, and adjustments to job responsibilities, were widely recognized as crucial for ensuring the inclusivity of the workplace for employees with disabilities. For example, Poulsen et al. (2017) found that vocational rehabilitation programs significantly improved return-to-work rates for employees with mental health disorders. Similarly, Zürcher et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of Supported Employment (SE) retention programs, which demonstrated better job retention outcomes than SE reintegration efforts, particularly for individuals who were still employed. These results suggest that early intervention and workplace flexibility are critical for preventing job loss among employees with disabilities. In addition to organizational changes, physical accommodations were also found to be key in enhancing workplace accessibility. Many employees with physical disabilities reported the importance of modifications such as accessible restrooms, elevators, and parking spaces. However, the review found that, while

these physical accommodations were often implemented, they were not always sufficient to meet the diverse needs of employees with disabilities. Studies by Urrejola-Contreras et al. (2025) and Lefever et al. (2018) emphasized that while basic accommodations, such as wheelchair access, were often provided, adjustments related to job function modifications or work rhythms were frequently lacking, which could limit the effectiveness of the adaptations in promoting full inclusion. Another critical factor identified across the studies was the role of psychological support in the workplace. Mental health interventions, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and vocational rehabilitation, were shown to contribute positively to employees' psychological adjustment and ability to cope with the challenges of working with a disability. Several studies, including those by Gaviria et al. (2015) and Nieuwenhuijsen et al. (2003), have found that when psychological support is integrated with workplace adaptations, employees are more likely to return to work and maintain their positions successfully. These findings suggest that psychological interventions are essential in facilitating mental health adjustment and improving job retention for employees with disabilities.

Therefore, despite the positive outcomes observed, the review also highlighted several barriers to effective reintegration and job retention. One of the most significant barriers identified was the presence of stigma surrounding mental health and disability. Richard et al. (2025) pointed out that employees with mental health conditions often face discrimination or negative attitudes from employers and colleagues, which can undermine their confidence and hinder their workplace reintegration. Similarly, studies by Van Beukering et al. (2022) and Green et al. (2025) found that health-related stigma negatively affected employees' integration into the workforce, leading to exclusion or reduced opportunities for advancement. This stigma often manifests as prejudices about productivity and the abilities of employees with disabilities, which can result in job segregation, lower job satisfaction, and ultimately, job loss. Addressing these attitudes and promoting a culture of inclusion within organizations is critical for ensuring that employees with disabilities feel valued and supported. Moreover, the study revealed two key findings regarding the implementation of workplace adaptation. Many organizations have implemented workplace adaptations, but their employees with disabilities often experience inadequate or inappropriate accommodations that fail to meet their specific needs. Gaviria et al. (2015) and Maiwald et al. (2013) found that workplace adaptations often lacked proper evaluation for effectiveness, resulting in employees lacking essential resources to perform their work successfully. Organizations need to perform detailed needs assessments and maintain ongoing monitoring of workplace adaptations to verify their alignment with employee-specific requirements. Finally, while some studies have focused on specific populations, such as veterans with mental health conditions (e.g., Prévost et al., 2025), stroke survivors (Matos et al., 2024), and military personnel (Valk & Versluis, 2024), there remains a need for more diverse and representative samples in research on workplace adaptations. Most studies have been limited to specific industries or populations, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Future research should aim to include a broader range of disabilities, industries, and geographic locations to better understand the effectiveness of workplace adaptations across different contexts.

In conclusion, the literature suggests that workplace adaptations, both organizational and physical, are crucial for supporting employees with disabilities and ensuring their successful reintegration into the workforce. However, significant barriers such as stigma, gaps in implementation, and a lack of long-term data and cost-effectiveness analysis remain. Addressing these barriers through comprehensive needs assessments, ongoing support, and anti-stigma campaigns will be essential for promoting sustainable employment and improving the mental health and well-being of employees with disabilities. Further research is needed to explore the economic impact of workplace adaptations, the long-term sustainability of these interventions, and the role of social inclusion in the workplace.

Implications for the Practice and Future Research Directions

The findings from the systematic literature review emphasize several practical implications for workplace practices and provide directions for future research. To improve the integration of employees with disabilities, organizations must prioritize comprehensive workplace adaptations, both organizational and physical, to create more inclusive environments. Employers should focus on flexible working hours, telecommuting options, ergonomic adjustments, and psychological support systems to ensure that employees with disabilities can fully participate in the workforce. Therefore, the key empirical studies were synthesized and presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Implications for the Practice and Future Research Directions are Covered in a Single Heading

Author/Year	Practical Implications	Limitations	Future Research	Strengths
Khalema & Shankar (2014)	Highlights the importance of workplace adaptations for improving job retention for employees with mental health conditions.	Lack of empirical data on specific adaptations for various disabilities.	Investigate specific adaptation strategies for mental health in different industries.	Comprehensive review of workplace integration strategies.

	Emphasizes inclusive work policies.			
Poulsen et al. (2017)	Vocational rehabilitation programs significantly improve return-to-work rates for employees with exhaustion disorder and other mental health issues.	Limited generalizability due to specific health conditions studied. The trial design limits broader applicability.	Explore the long-term efficacy of vocational rehabilitation programs across industries.	RCT design with precise control and intervention comparison.
Lefever et al. (2018)	Disability management programs are crucial to enhancing job retention and reintegration outcomes, particularly for employees with disabilities.	Limited data on the cost-efficiency and effectiveness of disability management programs.	More studies on the cost-effectiveness of disability management programs.	Comprehensive systematic review on disability management.
Gaviria et al. (2015)	Workplace reintegration programs significantly enhance clinical functioning and workplace participation for employees with severe mental disorders.	Sample limited to severe mental disorders; findings may not generalize to other conditions.	Research on the long-term outcomes of reintegration programs for employees with severe mental disorders.	Cohort study design with a focus on clinical outcomes.
Nieuwenhuijsen et al. (2003)	Work-related interventions help employees with adjustment disorders return to work faster and reduce the burden of mental health issues on the workplace.	Retrospective design with limited long-term data.	Investigate the effectiveness of work-related interventions for chronic mental health conditions.	High success rate in work rehabilitation for adjustment disorders.
Nielsen et al. (2012)	Early interventions and personal support help employees with mental health problems return to work faster.	Lack of long-term follow-up to assess sustained return-to-work outcomes.	Further research into the personal-related and work-related factors that predict return-to-work success.	Clear identification of predictors for return-to-work.
Maiwald et al. (2013)	Employee involvement in reintegration programs helps enhance workplace participation, but results can vary.	Potential bias due to self-reporting; findings are subjective.	Investigate the effectiveness of employee-involvement strategies and explore how motivation affects outcomes.	In-depth exploration of employee involvement in reintegration.
Zürcher et al. (2023)	Supported employment programs (SE) effectively help employees with mental health disorders maintain employment and avoid job loss.	Study limited to a single center; may not apply to larger or diverse settings.	Research on how SE programs can be adapted for specific mental health disorders and tailored to various sectors.	Large sample size and straightforward comparison of SE retention vs. reintegration.
Urrejola-Contreras et al. (2025)	Organizational adaptations, such as flexible schedules and telecommuting, enhance workplace integration for employees with physical disabilities.	Limited to published articles; lacks primary data.	Research on the impact of workplace adaptation on long-term job sustainability and employee well-being.	Integrative review of workplace adaptations for employees with physical disabilities.
Green et al. (2025)	Mental health recovery is a key factor in the success of returning to work in disability-based insurance systems. Workplace	Limited to disability-based insurance systems; lacks detailed intervention analysis.	Research on how disability-based insurance systems can better support mental health recovery and	Scoping review of mental health recovery and workplace accommodations.

	accommodations help improve recovery.		facilitate workplace integration.	
Prévost et al. (2025)	Coping efficacy and addressing employment barriers can improve return-to-work outcomes for veterans with mental health conditions.	Limited to veterans; not generalizable to other populations.	Further validation of the Barriers to Employment and Coping Efficacy Scales and how they affect return-to-work.	Validation study of coping efficacy and employment barriers.
Toffoletto & Ahumada (2023)	Workplace adjustments for musculoskeletal and mental health diseases can reduce absenteeism and aid work reintegration.	Lack of detailed data on specific adaptations and long-term outcomes.	Research on long-term effects of musculoskeletal and mental health adjustments and their cost-effectiveness.	Systematic review of musculoskeletal and mental health adjustments.
Valk & Versluijs (2024)	Reintegration strategies for military personnel significantly help them return to work after an injury, fostering a sense of empowerment and normalcy.	Limited to military personnel; findings may not apply to civilians or other sectors.	Investigate reintegration strategies across different sectors beyond military personnel.	Focus on military personnel reintegration with in-depth qualitative data.
Matos et al. (2024)	Professional reintegration programs for stroke survivors improve their mental health, quality of life, and community integration.	Small sample size; lacks a control group.	Research on the long-term impacts of professional reintegration for other chronic conditions like cancer.	Clear evidence on the positive impact of reintegration for stroke survivors.
Gutiérrez Naharro et al. (2025)	Workplace adaptations during the COVID-19 pandemic increased the mental health burden for employees with disabilities, highlighting the need for more comprehensive support.	Limited to the COVID-19 lockdown context; may not apply to non-pandemic situations.	Research on the impact of pandemic-related workplace changes on employees with mental health disabilities.	Timely research on the effects of the pandemic on mental health disabilities.
Van Beukering et al. (2022)	Health-related stigma in the workplace significantly affects sustainable employment for individuals with health conditions.	Lack of longitudinal data on the effectiveness of anti-stigma interventions.	Investigate anti-stigma interventions and how they affect sustainable employment for individuals with mental and physical disabilities.	Comprehensive review of the effects of health-related stigma in employment.
Richard et al. (2025)	Mental health disclosure in the workplace can significantly impact workplace integration and reduce stigma, but requires clear support structures.	Limited generalizability to different sectors; lacks data on the long-term impact of mental health disclosure.	Research on the long-term effects of mental health disclosure policies and workplace accommodations.	Clear insight into the role of mental health disclosure in workplace integration.

The empirical studies listed in Table 2 examined workplace adaptation factors that interact with mental health and disability status through various research approaches, yielding diverse results. The research demonstrates that workplace accommodations play a crucial enabling role for disabled employees to remain in their jobs and return to work. The research by Poulsen et al. (2017) and Lefever et al. (2018) demonstrates that vocational rehabilitation programs and disability management initiatives lead to better return-to-work outcomes and extended job retention for employees. Zürcher et al. (2023) found that supported employment programs help people with mental health issues sustain their competitive employment, according to their research. A recent empirical study by Urrejola-Contreras et al. (2025) demonstrates that workplace accommodations, including flexible work arrangements, telecommuting, and ergonomic modifications, benefit employees with physical disabilities. The workplace adaptations help employees integrate physically while simultaneously enhancing their mental health and social connections at work, according to Green et al. (2025), who emphasize the importance of workplace mental health

recovery. The research studies demonstrate promising outcomes, yet they present multiple restrictions in their methodology. The research designs primarily employ observational methods with limited participant numbers, focusing on specific groups, including military personnel and veterans, as noted by Valk and Versluijs (2024). The research findings lack universal application because they were obtained from limited populations within specific industries and employee groups. An empirical study by Gaviria et al. (2015) and others demonstrates that insufficient follow-up data exist to determine the long-term effectiveness of workplace adaptations. Research must conduct extended studies to measure the effects of workplace adaptation on employee retention and mental health outcomes over extended periods. The financial impact of these interventions requires additional research, as most studies fail to include cost-effectiveness data (Toffoletto and Ahumada, 2023). The research should focus on developing workplace culture to reduce mental health-related stigma through organizational changes (Van Beukering et al., 2022).

The strengths of the above empirical studies emerge from their diverse methodological approaches, which enable a better comprehension of workplace adaptations. The research delivers strong evidence about workplace inclusivity for people with disabilities through systematic reviews (Lefever et al., 2018) and RCTs (Poulsen et al., 2017) that demonstrate intervention effectiveness. Research indicates that employee participation in reintegration processes (Maiwald et al., 2013). The research includes various disability types, including mental health and physical disabilities, which enables researchers to understand multiple factors that affect workplace inclusion and job maintenance. Overall, existing studies indicate substantial progress in the workforce inclusion of employees with disabilities; however, numerous challenges persist in their full integration. Future research should aim to enhance the applicability of study results across different business sectors, while also working to eliminate workplace discrimination and investigating the long-term effects of workplace modifications. Employers, along with policymakers, must continue their efforts to create inclusive work environments that meet both physical and mental health requirements while enabling staff members to develop professionally and socially.

CONCLUSIONS

The SLR demonstrates that workplace accommodations play a vital role in maintaining disabled employees at work and facilitating their return to their jobs. The review indicates that flexible work arrangements, telecommuting, and physical accessibility improvements, such as accessible restrooms and ergonomic modifications, create essential conditions for workplace inclusion. The review shows multiple obstacles exist because disability stigma continues to persist, and adaptation implementation and assessment remain incomplete. There is a lack of research on the long-term adaptation outcomes and their financial value. The research reveals beneficial results in terms of employee retention and work return rates for disabled staff members; however, additional studies are needed to determine the long-term effects of workplace modifications. Research needs to evaluate both the financial efficiency of these interventions and their dual advantages for staff members and their organizations. The review underlines the need for employers to establish supportive workplaces that eliminate discrimination against employees with mental health and physical disabilities. Future research should address the identified gaps, including the lack of generalizable findings resulting from limited sample populations and industry-specific studies. Broader, more inclusive research is necessary to understand the full spectrum of workplace adaptations needed across different disabilities and sectors. Ultimately, the findings of this review highlight the need for multi-disciplinary approaches, involving experts from various fields, to develop effective, sustainable, and inclusive workplace practices that benefit both employees and employers in the long term.

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