

Review Article

Studies related to employment of persons with intellectual disability: A systematic review

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Abstract.

BACKGROUND: There are still a lot of countries that do not provide employment opportunities to people with intellectual disability (ID). Ten years after the UN passed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it is important to review existing studies on the employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

OBJECTIVE: In this study, researchers reviewed studies that examined the employment of people with intellectual disability.

METHOD: A thorough search of various bibliographic databases identified 1005 academic papers. Ten studies on the employment of persons with intellectual disabilities met the criteria for in-depth analysis.

RESULTS: Employment is vital for individuals with intellectual disability, but predetermined employment options and parent-related factors may limit their access to the labour market. Efforts must be made to ensure a seamless progression from school to work. Lack of support makes bridging the gap between individual capacity and societal demands challenging. For people with intellectual disability to increase employment opportunities, stakeholders must work together.

CONCLUSION: An intervention to support and follow up on older employees with intellectual disability will be greatly appreciated.

Keywords: Employment, intellectual disability, job placement, sheltered employment

1. Introduction

Employment is a vital element of an industrialised society that helps ensure equality of opportunity for citizens by ensuring their participation in economic, social, and cultural activities (Hulin, 2014; Nuo & Torres, 2012). In adult life, employment serves as a significant avenue for self-realization as well as a

primary function of life (Lysaght & Cobigo, 2014). A person's life and income are fundamentally shaped by their work. There is also considerable evidence that work promotes well-being and enables individuals to achieve their goals and fulfil their potential (Lent, 2013). For most people, work is an essential part of their lives. Individuals with ID benefit from employment as a means of securing a sense of purpose and belonging (Lysaght et al., 2009; Petner-Arrey et al., 2015) because of increased opportunities for social interaction and skill development (Jahoda et al., 2009; Holloway & Long, 2019), among other benefits (Robertson et al., 2019).

In addition to contributing to community inclusion, employment provides interpersonal contact and

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a sense of belonging for individuals with ID (Donnelly et al., 2010; Louw & Kirkpatrick, 2020). A lack of paid employment opportunities may contribute to discrimination, poor health, and dissatisfaction with work later in life (Robertson, 2018), especially among young adults without employment opportunities. Individuals with ID are traditionally segregated from non-disabled peers and society once they leave school and enter funded adult day services. The result is social exclusion, specifically for students who attend special schools with low expectations, high dependency, and poor skill acquisition resulting in low employability within their communities and poor citizenship skills (Sylvestre et al., 2018).

Furthermore, research has shown that employment positively impacts psychological wellbeing (Dean et al., 2018). Due to this loss of competence and skills, higher education institutions and employers may not offer young people the opportunities and support they need to engage in education and training (Jacob et al., 2022b). As a result, they may not have the opportunity to advance and discover their professional interests. It is pertinent to note that some barriers preclude them from participating in the workforce, including a low perception of their capabilities and ability to secure and maintain employment (WALK, 2015; Jacob et al., 2023). Due to these dichotomies, employers may be reluctant to offer supported employment to employees with ID. Furthermore, families may be discouraged from seeking substitutes for adult day care due to economic uncertainty.

In addition, there is a disconnect between special needs education curricula and career guidance available to young adults with ID. According to Jahoda et al. (2008), workers with ID may have more a difficult time performing their duties and be more susceptible to poor performance than the general population. Employees with ID may experience work stress. Notably, most people with ID are excluded from employment opportunities due to their proximity to the periphery of the labour market (Canivet et al., 2016; Grant, 2008). However, Jahoda et al. (2008) found a significant increase in living standards and the well-being of employees with ID in competitive employment. It has historically been difficult for people with disabilities to find regular employment because most vocational services are provided in segregated settings (Varkas, 2022; Timmons et al., 2019). Owing to the growing interest in the human rights movement in normalisation, integration, and deinstitutionalisation, attitudes toward employment for individuals with ID have changed (Whitaker, 2013).

A significant gap exists between the employment rates of individuals with disabilities and those without disabilities, even after policies and legislation are implemented (Bonaccio et al., 2020). Different work environments provide people with ID with different employment opportunities. There are two types of environments in which it can occur: sheltered and integrated workplaces (Ellenkamp et al., 2016; Voermans et al., 2020). According to Metzger et al., 2007, sheltered employment is working in an environment that provides ongoing support and supervision to employees with disabilities. In an integrated workplace, no more than 10% of workers with disabilities work within the general labour market (Migliore et al., 2007, p. 7). There are four types of employment: competitive, supported, entrepreneurial, and self-employed (Cho et al., 2016; Ashley & Graf, 2018). Significant differences exist between sheltered and integrated workplaces within and between nations (Visier, 1998; Migliore et al., 2007) regarding various aspects of the work environment (for instance, wages and how they are paid).

Intellectual disability refers to the inability to process information (a deficit of cognitive abilities), learn essential skills (a deficit of intelligence), and cope independently with social situations (a deficit in social interaction skills). Persons with learning disabilities (LD) are generally considered to have ID or developmental disabilities in the United Kingdom (UK) (AAIDD, 2022). A person with ID is characterised by impaired cognitive functioning resulting from insufficient cognitive development before, during, or after birth (known as the developmental period) (Jacob & Pillay, 2020; Jacob et al., 2022b). Significant impairments in the social and adaptive skills of persons with ID may exist. Intellectual disability is usually diagnosed before age 18 and are associated with significant impairments in intellectual processing and adaptive behaviour (Schalock et al., 2010). Developing intellectual deficits because of delays in mental development may adversely affect children's academic, social, emotional, behavioural, and mental abilities (Oyundoyin, 2013).

1.1. Critical elements in job placement for people with ID

Recruiting and retaining workers with disabilities is a crucial function of employers (Barnes & Mercer, 2005; Vornholt et al., 2013). There is sometimes a conflict between employers' perceptions of disability and potential applicants, especially for job

seekers with ID (Luecking, 2004; Shier et al., 2009). Most countries also report that employees without disabilities earn more than their counterparts with disabilities (OECD, 2010). Additionally, some groups may have more difficulty finding employment than others (Donnelly & Given, 2010). Traumatic brain injury patients are at greater risk of being unemployed (Doctor et al., 2005).

The International Labour Office (2012) highlights the necessity of expanding the economic participation of people with special needs in developed countries. Policies and practices rarely ensure workers with intellectual disabilities have access to efficient processes (Scheid, 2005). Limited information about these workers' challenges (Alston et al., 2002; Price & Gerber, 2001). Compared to other types of disability, employees with ID rarely receive assistance from management (Price & Gerber, 2001). Without role models, these workers are less likely to feel confident in their job search (Alston et al., 2002).

Providing custom job descriptions to employees with ID is the only way employers will support them (Luecking et al., 2006). Their perception is that the organization will benefit directly from it. An employee's experience may be negatively impacted by a manager's inexperience with ID (Cunningham et al., 2004). A lack of diversity training and policy constraints often inhibit colleague support from management. Studies initially focused on individual characteristics, such as employers' age and gender (Henry et al., 2004; Jones et al., 2008; Swain et al., 2013; Vornholt et al., 2013); employee characteristics, such as training and disability type, and organizational factors such as company size and job type (Luecking, 2004; Swain et al., 2013). People with disabilities may be underemployed partly because of unwelcoming attitudes among employers.

The four critical attributes of employees that employ persons with disabilities are employer experiences, work culture issues, job matches, and employer support. Additionally, recruitment practices have been investigated. According to Dalgin and Bellini (2008), disclosing inconspicuous disabilities (physical and psychological) during a job interview can significantly impact the interview's outcome. Based on the extent of disclosure and disability type, no significant effects were found (Foster & Fosh, 2010). Job applications, resumes, and CVs are the most common means of evaluating candidates. Big companies generally manage the hiring process better. Small and medium-sized businesses rely on intuition to make the process complicated.

People with disabilities, especially those with ID, may not participate in recruitment processes. Some people may have difficulty performing aptitude tests or interviews (Frazer et al., 2011).

Furthermore, other studies have used mixed methods approaches to study employer attitudes. A series of questionnaires were particularly interested in exploring the various aspects of these attitudes, including employers' concerns regarding hiring persons with disabilities, their opinion of the legal requirements governing people with disabilities in the work environment, and their emotional responses towards them (Unger, 2002). Additionally, qualitative research was undertaken by interviewing employers and administrators (Chan et al., 2010; Davidson, 2011). Employers may have reservations about employees with disabilities' work potential based on preconceived ideas rather than first-hand experience (Dovidio et al., 2011; Levy et al., 1991).

Several concerns exist regarding the performance, quality, and job skills of job seekers with ID (Lysaght et al., 2012). Disability-related accommodations are also a challenge for employers. Furthermore, it is difficult for them to understand discrimination laws, reasonable accommodations, and their experience with people with ID. Organizational issues, such as costs, safety, and adverse effects on staff and customers, have also been raised (Davidson, 2011; Domzal et al., 2012; Houtenville & Kalargyrou, 2012). Approximately 15% of the global population has a disability of some kind (World Health Organization and World Bank, 2011).

Despite making up a significant proportion of the population, their participation in formal employment is significantly lower (Colella & Bruyère, 2011). People with ID face the greatest marginalization compared to other impairment groups and are underrepresented in the labour force (Khayat-zadeh-Mahani et al., 2020). The problem is that cross-disability approaches to disability-inclusive employment generally ignore the limitations individuals with ID encounter in the job market, despite their systemic exclusion. Therefore, policies and programs are often not responsive to the specific needs of each impairment group, resulting in a range of unresponsive policies and programs.

Researchers have identified a few key elements that promote inclusive employment for individuals with ID. These elements include securing community employment, securing fair pay, ensuring individuals can choose their own jobs, and supporting employees (Bond, 2004). Generally, these analyses are based on

a cross-disability perspective rather than on the personal experiences of individuals with ID and their families.

1.2. Objective of the study

In this review, we seek to provide a comprehensive overview of studies conducted on employment of people with ID. Our research questions were as follows:

1. What are the objectives of the studies reviewed?
2. From whose perspective are the studies conducted (employers, employees, educators, job coaches and others)?
3. What are the differences between the people with ID that the study focuses on?
4. How did the research study reach its conclusions?

2. Methodology

2.1. Literature search

We searched extensively for relevant articles. The terms used in the search were: ID, employment, support, sheltered employment, developmental disabilities, job satisfaction, reading skills, intervention, independence, and work environment. Journal articles not published in English were also excluded. Studies included in this review were identified via keyword searches of the EBSCO Host, Scopus, ERIC, Web of Science, PubMed, CINAHL, and PsycINFO databases. The search resulted in 1005 documents. Relevant articles' reference lists were also manually searched. The articles or studies included in this survey must have been published between January 2016 and October 2021. Specifically, 2016 was selected ten years after the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol were adopted by the UN (United Nations, 2022).

2.2. Selection criteria

Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Literature Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) (Ghafari et al., 2006) were screening criteria. In this study, we mapped the available literature on the employment of individuals with ID. We exclude 995 from the 1005 initially identified research articles based on the criteria used as inclusion and exclu-

Table 1
Criteria for inclusion and exclusion

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Articles that addressed ID specifically were included	Articles without explicit references to ID were excluded.
We included only employment-related articles in our analysis	Articles that focused not directly related to the employment of persons with ID.
Only empirical articles presenting research results from mixed-method, quantitative or qualitative designs were considered	We excluded papers dealing with policy or review (Jacob, et al., 2022a)
Articles published between 2016 and 2021 were included	

sion of articles. Vickers and Smith (2000) found that the inclusion of dissertations did not affect the outcome of the literature review, therefore supporting the exclusion criteria. Initially, there were 1005 articles found, but duplicates were removed from Endnote X9, leaving 332 articles (see Fig. 1). The articles were screened and analyzed using Atlas.TI version 22. Titles and abstracts of articles were evaluated independently according to set criteria (See Table 1).

2.3. Outcome of search

A search of PubMed, Scopus, and Ebsco for the terms "intellectual disability", "employment", "work", and "social participation" revealed 1005 publications (Fig. 1). As part of the search process, records were verified for inclusion and exclusion based on our criteria. There were 850 articles removed based on document type, publication stage, source type, and publication language. The remaining 155 articles were further screened for duplicates and relevance to the review. This resulted in the removal of 43 more articles. From the remaining 112 titles, 88 were excluded due to the inability to access complete articles, primary participants, preliminary studies, and the scope of the studies. The review included only 10 studies.

2.4. Quality assessment

Using a coding scheme developed for the study, we systematically analysed the ten articles that met the criteria for inclusion (see Tables 1–3). The purpose of each study was summarised using qualitative content analysis to answer our first research question. Themes were coded according to their perspective

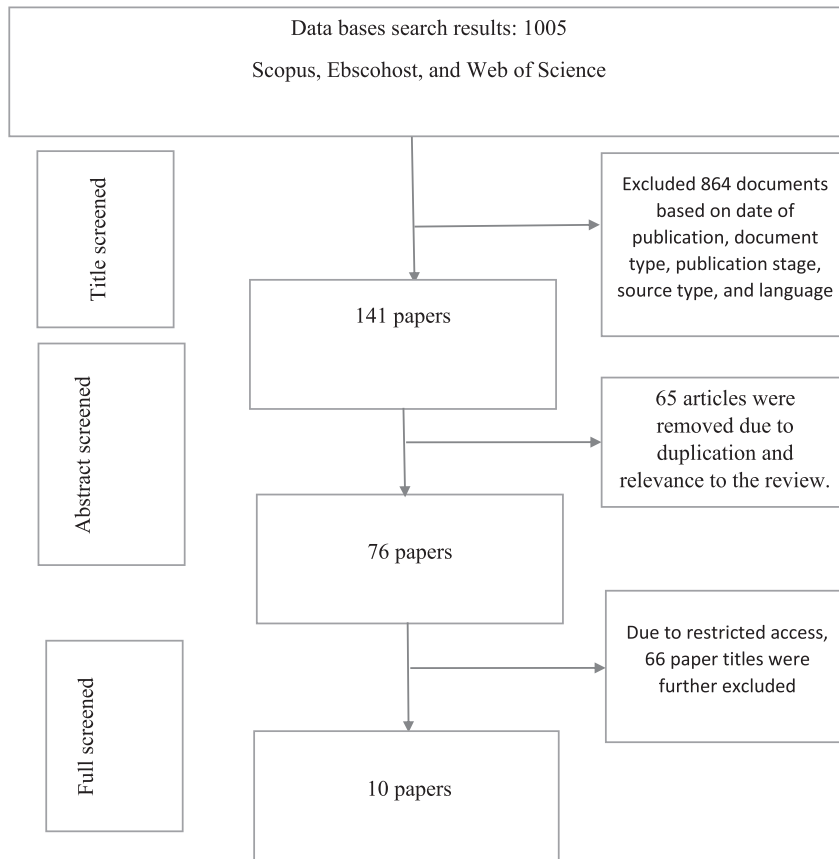


Fig. 1. Flowchart of the systematic literature search.

Table 2
Summary of the study participants and methodology

Author	Nature of Participants	Sampling method	Research Design/	Method of data analysis
Scanlon and Doyle (2021)	School leavers with ID	Purposive	Qualitative	phenomenological perspective, and thematic analysis
Pettersson and Rodby-Bousquet (2021)	Adults with Cerebral Palsy	Total enumeration	Cross-sectional registry-based study	Frequencies and percentages chi-squared test Binary logistic regression models
McCausland et al. (2020)	older adults with ID	Random	Qualitative approach	Content analysis
Wass et al. (2021)	Adults with ID	Purposive	Qualitative Interviews.	Thematic analysis
Flores et al. (2021)	Workers with ID	Convenience sample of	A cross-sectional study design	Structural equation model and a multi-group analysis
Spencer et al. (2021)	Young adults with ID	Convenience sampling	Mixed methods design	Social network analysis
Soeker et al. (2021)	People with ID	Purposive sampling	Qualitative research	Inductive and deductive approaches to analysis
Voermans et al. (2019)	People with ID	Not specified	Qualitative research	Interpretative phenomenological analysis
Garrels and Sigstad (2019)	Employees with mild ID and their employers	Not specified	A triangulation of methods: photovoice, qualitative interviews	Thematic structural analysis
Pereira-Silva et al. (2018)	Individuals with ID	Purposive sampling		Descriptive statistics and content analysis

Table 3
Summary of the study's major findings

Author	Number of participants with ID	Age range / Mean age of participants	Major findings of the study
Scanlon and Doyle (2021)	31 students with ID (16 pre-transitional students, 11 final year students and 4 post-transition students)	16–21 years	Providing information, options, confidence, and hard and soft skills are essential for young people with ID to transition to education and employment successfully.
Pettersson and Rodby-Bousquet (2021)	1,888 adults with CP	(1,030 males; 858 females) Median age 25 years (range 16–78 y).	There was a 55.6% independence rate among 25- to 29-year-olds compared with a 72.4% independence rate among 40- to 49-year-olds. An increase in independent living was significantly associated with weekly personal assistance of 160 hours (OR 57). There are 45.2% of people with ID who attend activity centres in addition to competing for jobs. Slightly more women than men had partners.
McCausland et al. (2020)	20 adults	11 females 9 were male	Individuals with ID reported that they were well cared for in terms of physical health, indicating satisfaction with the level of support provided. However, family caregivers and key workers agreed that regular screenings, check-ups, and clinical contact would be helpful.
Wass et al. (2021)	9 adults with ID	5 males and 4 females (20–44 years old)	Two main themes emerged from the thematic analysis: involvement during the transition and adjusting to a new role. The result revealed that some participants could not participate in activities or that their choices had been limited to predetermined options or decisions made by others. As well as sharing their experiences of navigating new situations and interacting with new individuals, participants shared their experiences in navigating into new contexts. Having a support network in such an environment was crucial to navigate successfully.
Flores et al. (2021)	554 workers with ID	192 workers in supported employment 362 workers in sheltered workshops 58.6% were men and 41.4% were women. 16–60 years old	Health impairment and motivation are relatively independent processes that are elicited by job demands and resources. These results confirmed the validity of the model and the suitability of the model. It was confirmed through the multi-group analysis that the model was invariant between the two work alternatives. It is thus possible to analyse job satisfaction among employees with ID using the JD-R model.
Spencer et al. (2021)	6 Young adults with an ID	5 males and 1 female 6 parents/guardians of young adults with an ID	One year after graduation, all graduates except one were employed. Half of the respondents were associated with small personal and professional networks. Additionally, students rely on familiar support when they do not have employment. The involvement of parents in their children's employment decisions restricted graduates' self-determination. Families play an essential role in graduates' employment choices and are prominent in their networks. In addition to providing constant protection and support, families ensure that graduates have access to benefits and maintain a healthy lifestyle.
Soeker et al. (2021)	5 people with ID	5 male participants (22–48 years old) and 2 key informants	Researchers identified three concepts based on data analysis: 1) Changes that were not anticipated. 2) Successful work preparation requires a well-planned programme 3) Crossing into the workplace: "Am I welcome here?" Further, support employment approaches and work preparation programs assist people with ID with finding employment.

(Continued)

Table 3
(Continued)

Author	Number of participants with ID	Age range / Mean age of participants	Major findings of the study
Voermans et al. (2019)	6 participants with mild ID or borderline functioning and good verbal communication skills	4 males, 2 females with IQ scores between 50 and 85	Three major themes emerged from the analysis: (a) Leveraging my life experiences, (b) my place at work, and (c) Making a positive contribution to society. People with ID benefit substantially from competitive employment in terms of their social integration and living standards. Despite this, they must deal with obstacles caused by stigma while at work and feel dependent on others.
Garrels and Sigstad (2019)	7 employees	4 women 3 men	Some themes emerged from the findings, including self-efficacy, adequate workload, capacity building, self-determination, salary, meaningful employment, and relationships with others. In addition to providing participants with a sense of self-efficacy, work also provides them opportunities for social contact. The result showed that participants did not have much autonomy or self-determination at work.
Pereira-Silva et al. (2018)	9 individuals with ID	4 women and 5 men Age range (23–40 years old)	There is a right to inclusion in the workplace, and the interviews show that it has been successfully implemented. The results suggest that inclusion facilitates autonomous development, self-reliance, self-actualization, productivity, and responsibility.

to answer the second research question. This study aimed to explore who was represented in the survey: employers, employees, staff, job coaches, educators, etc. The third research question focused on participants' characteristics (such as gender, sample size, age range, and degree of disability). For our fourth research question, we summarised the main findings of the included articles. Using these findings as a starting point, we developed more general categories. A random sample of 20% of the studies included in the review was independently coded by the authors to ensure reliability. Inter-rater reliability was calculated based on percentage agreement, and 87.3% of codes agreed. Study coding disagreements were discussed among the authors.

3. Results

3.1. Description of the included studies

Of the 10 articles that met the inclusion criteria, one was published in 2018, two in 2019, six in 2021, and one in 2020. Five studies used a qualitative research method; two used a cross-sectional study design, one used a mixed-method design, and one used a triangulation design. None of the studies reported the use of a quantitative research design. Four studies used the purposive sampling technique for sample selection:

one used total enumeration and two used convenience sampling. Two studies did not specify the sampling technique.

Data were analyzed using various methods, such as phenomenological perspective and thematic analysis; frequencies and percentages chi-squared test were used to detect differences between categorical data; binary logistic regression models; content analysis; thematic analysis; structural equation model and a multi-group analysis; social network analysis; inductive and deductive approaches to analysis; interpretative phenomenological analysis and thematic, structural analysis.

3.1.1. RQ 1: Objective of the studies

We asked ourselves, 'What are the objectives of these studies?' After summarizing each article, qualitative content analysis was used to categorize them (Weber, 1990). Qualitative content analysis enables us to analyze language characteristics as a means of conveying meaning while responding to context (Budd et al., 1967; Tesch, 1990). As part of the method, relevant information is translated into categories and then classified into those categories (Kondracki & Wellman, 2002). Based on this analysis, studies fall into four general categories:

Transition: Three studies examined the transition of persons with ID from secondary school to employment.

Employment experiences: Three of the articles in this review examined the labour market experiences of people with disabilities.

Living conditions and social outcomes: An overview of the living conditions and social outcomes of persons with ID, as well as their participation in the labour market, was conducted in two studies.

Assumptions: An overview of assumptions and motivation was the focus of two studies included in the review.

3.1.2. R2: Perspective of the studies

This review focuses on the perspectives presented in studies from 2016 to 2021 as the second research question. Eight of the studies focused directly only on the employee's perspective. One study focused on employees' experiences and informants, while one study focused on the perspective of individuals with ID and their caregivers. Furthermore, the included studies have 2,535 individuals with ID.

3.1.3. RQ3: Description of Individuals with ID

This review primarily focused on studies that dealt with the employment conditions of individuals with ID. A total of seven articles in this review examined the experiences of only individuals with ID. However, one study examined participants with an additional handicapping condition such as cerebral palsy disorder. Two articles presented the perspective of key informants and parents/guardians of individuals with ID and other handicapping conditions. Two articles did not specify any characteristics. One study described participants with ID as pre-transitional, final year, and post-transition students.

Furthermore, participants in one study were identified as individuals with mild-to-severe ID diagnosis, whereas the remaining nine did not specify the level of ID. A total of four studies identified participants with ID as males and females, while six studies did not specify the gender of the participants with ID. Across the studies, 2,535 participants with ID, ranging from $n =$ five to 1,888. The participants included school leavers with ID, adults with Cerebral Palsy, older adults with ID, adults with ID, workers with ID, young adults with an ID, people with ID, employees with mild ID and their employers and individuals with ID. The age range of the participants was between 16–78 years, while two studies did not specify the participants' age range.

3.1.4. RQ 4: Main findings of the studies

The study's main findings can be summarized as follows:

1. There is a positive attitude toward employment among persons with ID.
2. Persons with ID may face barriers to employment due to school-related factors.
3. The availability of workplace support is essential.

Each of the result is explained and illustrate below:

There is a positive attitude toward employment among persons with ID.

The findings from three studies revealed that a supported transition program provides information, opportunities, confidence, and hard and soft skills needed to succeed in education and employment (Scanlon & Doyle, 2021; Soeker et al., 2021). Being able to navigate such a work environment successfully required a support network (Wass et al., 2021) in addition to assisting people with ID in finding employment (Soeker et al., 2021).

Persons with ID may face barriers to employment due to school-related factors.

According to four studies, the low participation of individuals with ID is not necessarily due to their impairment. The factors include the special school curriculum, inadequate career counseling, and the National Framework for Qualifications (NFQ) ladder, which represent systemic barriers (Scanlon & Doyle, 2021). Others include management change and parental involvement resulting in reduced individuals with ID self-determination (Spencer et al., 2021) and unforeseen challenges such as job descriptions, new faces and public ignorance of ID (Soeker et al., 2021).

In terms of competitive employment, a reduced ability to communicate was the most important risk factor (Pettersson & Rodby-Bousquet, 2021). Transition programs, however, help young people prepare for the transition from school to work by providing them with information, options, confidence, and soft skills (Scanlon & Doyle, 2021). One needs opportunities to put one's skills to use to feel competent. It is generally true that such opportunities are widespread in competitive employment, but not enough work is offered in sheltered workshops (Garrels & Sigstad, 2019). Additionally, students rely on familiar support systems in the absence of employment (Spencer et al., 2021).

The availability of workplace support is essential.

Some of the included studies identified workplace-related factors that may affect the employment situation of persons with ID. The interests and strengths of a young person can have a significant impact on their future hopes and ambitions (Scanlon & Doyle, 2021). Despite this, they did not feel as competent in sheltered employment as they did in competitive employment since they did not have enough opportunity to utilize their skills. (Garrels & Sigstad, 2019). In addition, various and complex needs were identified, including those related to physical health, mental health, and social needs (McCausland et al., 2020).

Two studies found that individuals with ID generally viewed transitioning from school to work positively. They described transitions in which they had participated in transition activities, identified their preferences and made personal choices (Wass et al., 2021). Thus, participants perceive competitive employment as essential to their sense of belonging because competitive employment enables them to contribute to society in a meaningful way (Voermans et al., 2019). Even under challenging circumstances, individuals with ID advise future “transitioners” to remain courageous and take advantage of opportunities (Wass et al., 2021).

4. Discussion

A significant increase in employment studies for individuals with ID has been documented in this review since 2016. In addition to quantitative studies, there are also qualitative studies, almost all of which are descriptive in nature. Research typically examines transition, living conditions, employee experiences, and employment market conditions. Most studies focus on young adults in competitive employment and examine their perspectives. Studies use different terminology when describing ID. This review summarizes the main findings of the studies as follows: attitude toward employment among persons with ID; barriers to employment due to school-related factors and availability of workplace support is essential.

Besides varying definitions and measurements, the reviewed articles varied in many ways. Comparing studies based on different definitions and terms for disabilities, support systems, and the age range of participants is difficult. There is, for instance, where the focus was on open employment (Soeker et al., 2021) and transition from sheltered employment (Flores

et al., 2021; Scanlon & Doyle, 2021; Wass et al., 2021). Further, the living conditions of persons with ID differ, resulting in variations in access to support (Pettersson & Rodby-Bousquet, 2021). Thus, labour market opportunities can vary significantly between countries, making it difficult to compare studies internationally.

However, the most significant difficulty in comparing studies is the great variation in the description and diagnosis of participants within the studied material. As an inclusion criterion (Scanlon & Doyle, 2021; Pettersson & Rodby-Bousquet, 2021; McCausland et al., 2020; Wass et al., 2021; Flores et al., 2021; Spencer et al., 2021; Soeker et al., 2021; Voermans et al., 2019; Garrels & Sigstad, 2019; Pereira-Silva et al., 2018), the diagnosis of ID is rarely defined or controlled). In some articles (Voermans et al., 2019), however, the term mild ID is used instead, and in one study (Pettersson & Rodby-Bousquet, 2021), ID co-occurs with Cerebral Palsy (CP). Moreover, participants were described as school leavers with ID (Scanlon & Doyle, 2021), adults with Cerebral Palsy (Pettersson & Rodby-Bousquet, 2021), older adults with ID (McCausland et al., 2020), adults with ID (Wass et al., 2021), workers with ID (Flores et al., 2021), young adults with an ID (Spencer et al., 2021) and people with ID (Soeker et al., 2021; Voermans et al., 2019).

Others are employees with mild ID (Garrels & Sigstad, 2019) and individuals with ID (Pereira-Silva et al., 2018). Furthermore, different countries have different diagnosing traditions, so the studied populations cannot be compared. Thus, we conclude that the articles are not studying the same groups. Factors affecting individuals with ID’s ability to find work may differ from factors affecting their ability to maintain employment. As stated by Wass et al. (2021), participants were unable to participate in activities or were unable to select from predetermined options. Successful inclusive employment is rarely measured by metrics that accurately reflect genuine inclusion. Studies investigating employee satisfaction, reciprocity, and belonging in the workplace are scarce (Lysaght et al., 2012). Most case studies on individuals with ID at work focus on strategies that maximize their efficiency (Moore et al., 2017).

Inclusion and belonging are still less likely to be addressed at work. There is the risk of promoting methodologies that will not contribute to inclusive workplaces and communities. There is no focus on inclusion as a value and no grounding in the CRPD to explain this. Spencer et al. (2021) noted that parents’

involvement in their children's employment decisions restricted graduates with ID independence. However, it is essential to investigate factors that impact sustainable employment and their relationship to factors that influence access to employment for individuals with ID.

5. Conclusion

This review examined the characteristics of peer-reviewed research on employment for people with ID. Studies included in this review suggest that persons with ID may experience barriers to employment due to several school-related factors. Support for persons with ID at work is crucial, but it varies greatly, and traditional gender roles often dictate their choice of work. Since ID is a lifelong condition, it is essential to explore how young and senior adults with ID can remain employed. Detailed descriptions of study samples would also improve the generalization of research findings in future studies. Support systems may help bridge the gap between the demands IN the workplace and the capacities of individuals with ID, but few studies have investigated this topic.

In addition to its multidisciplinary research group, comprehensive searches, and inclusion of a wide range of studies, this review had several strengths. A team of experts in quantitative and qualitative research methodologies conducted the review. A wide variety of knowledge was presented regarding the process and employment of individuals with a disability through quantitative, qualitative, multi-method, and case studies. Our efforts were directed toward conducting a comprehensive search. As a result of excluding articles based on predetermined criteria, we may not have included all relevant studies. There are some limitations to this review, which should be acknowledged. Although we attempted to identify all relevant research studies, some publications may not have been included. It is possible that this outcome was influenced by the search terms and criteria for inclusion/exclusion used in this review.

Furthermore, we are aware that several peer-reviewed articles have been published in other languages regarding employment for persons with ID. In our review, we excluded articles written in languages other than English. Consequently, the body of evidence may be more extensive and complex than this review suggests. In addition, the quality of the studies is not evaluated in this review. The review included only peer-reviewed articles. Despite this,

neither the methodology nor the design rigour of the study was evaluated. The limitations identified in this review may affect the validity of the findings presented in each study. Despite identifiable limitations, this review followed PRISMA-ScR guidelines rigorously (Tricco et al., 2018). In selecting which articles to review, we were guided by systematically answering our research questions.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationship that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Ethics statement

There were no special ethical considerations since all articles were freely available.

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Informed consent

Not applicable.

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