

## Chapter 5

# Diversity and Inclusion in Telework for Persons With Disabilities After COVID–19: A Literature Review

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter reviewed the extant literature on teleworking of individuals with disabilities during the pandemic. The authors searched PubMed and Google Scholar databases for English-language articles, which yielded 163 articles from PubMed and 417 articles from Google Scholar. They reviewed those articles that aligned with the objectives of this research. The results show both potential benefits and challenges. Telework offers increased flexibility and control over work schedules and environments, which is beneficial for workers with disabilities. However, telework also presents unique challenges, such as the digital divide and the need for appropriate technology and workspace. The authors identified factors influencing the work experience of teleworkers with disabilities, including physical and mental health, work skills, work values, and work environment. The findings underscore the importance of considering the unique needs of people with disabilities in telework practices. The study also suggests the need for continued research and policy attention in this area.*

### **INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE**

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a seismic shift in the global work landscape, with telework becoming a prevalent mode of operation across a multitude of occupations. Facilitated by the extensive use of information and communication technologies, such as email, web-conferencing systems, personal computers, and mobile terminals, this transition has led to a significant increase in cognitive processing and load compared with traditional face-to-face work. While telework offers numerous advantages, it also presents unique challenges, particularly for workers with disabilities. The need for effective re-

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sponses from managers and careful consideration of cognitive load are paramount in telework settings. However, the specific environmental adjustments and labor management strategies needed to support workers with disabilities in telework are not yet fully understood. Furthermore, the extent of the digital divide among people with disabilities in the context of the shift to telework during the pandemic requires further exploration. In addition, the effectiveness of existing strategies and accommodations for people with disabilities in telework remains unclear. The digital divide, that is, the gap in access to information and communication technologies, plays a significant role in this context. People with disabilities often have lower rates of Internet use and access to high-speed Internet services, which can hinder their ability to participate in telework. This chapter is significant because it aims to provide a comprehensive review of the literature on telework accommodations for people with disabilities, with a particular focus on diversity and inclusion. This focus is original and timely, given the increasing importance of telework and the need for more inclusive and effective telework practices. The potential of this study is to contribute to the development of these more inclusive and effective telework practices.

The objective of this study was to review the literature on reasonable accommodations for telework for people with disabilities, with a specific focus on diversity and inclusion in telework, and identify strategies and recommendations that can help bridge the digital divide and enable people with disabilities to telework effectively.

## **Significance of This Chapter**

Academically, this study enriches the literature on disability-inclusive telework practices and provides a comprehensive review of the necessary accommodations and job management strategies. Practically, it offers valuable insights for corporate managers and support workers by guiding the creation of more inclusive and accessible telework environments. This study significantly contributes to improving the work experiences of people with disabilities and promoting their productivity and well-being. Furthermore, it aids workplaces in fostering diversity and inclusion to enhance overall organizational performance in the post-COVID-19 era.

## **Research Methods**

This literature review used a database search to target the relevant literature in English, including PubMed and Google Scholar. Table 1 presents the search formulas. After confirming the titles and abstracts of the extracted papers, we extracted the papers that were directly related to this paper. We subsequently confirmed the text and made a final selection of the target papers.

*Table 1. Search formulas*

	Database	Search Formulas
1	PubMed	("disability" OR "disabilities" OR "disease") AND ("covid-19" OR "pandemic") AND ("telework" OR "remote work")
2	Google Scholar	("persons with disability" OR "persons with disabilities") AND ("covid-19" OR "pandemic") AND ("accommodation" OR "job management" OR "environmental adjustment") AND ("telework" OR "remote work")

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