

A Systematic Review on Digital Inclusion Practices for Women with Disabilities

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Abstract

This systematic review explores digital inclusion practices designed to empower women with disabilities by addressing the intersecting challenges of gender inequality and disability exclusion in the digital era. The review synthesizes evidence from academic literature, policy reports, and case studies to examine how accessibility, assistive technologies, and inclusive design contribute to equitable participation. Findings highlight persistent barriers such as limited affordability of devices, inaccessible platforms, low digital literacy, and socio-cultural stigma, which collectively restrict women with disabilities from fully engaging in education, employment, and civic life. Effective practices identified include the integration of accessible technology, provision of assistive devices, implementation of gender-sensitive training programs, and establishment of community-based mentoring networks. Policy interventions such as subsidies, affordable internet initiatives, and inclusive monitoring frameworks further strengthen digital participation. The review concludes that digital inclusion is not only a technological necessity but also a human rights imperative, fostering autonomy, economic opportunity, and social empowerment for women with disabilities.

Keywords: Digital Inclusion, Women with Disability, Digital Literacy, Inclusive design.

1. Introduction

Digital inclusion practices for women with disabilities are rooted in the idea of bridging the intersecting gaps of gender inequality and disability exclusion in the digital age. Women with disabilities often face compounded barriers such as limited access to affordable devices, inaccessible digital platforms, and social stigma that restricts their participation in online spaces. Ensuring their inclusion means creating accessible technologies, promoting digital literacy, and designing policies that recognize both gender and disability dimensions. Accessibility features like screen readers, captions, and voice commands, combined with assistive technologies such as Braille displays or adaptive software, play a crucial role in enabling participation. Beyond technology, community-based mentoring, gender-sensitive training, and inclusive policy interventions help empower women with disabilities to engage in education, employment, and

civic life through digital means. Ultimately, digital inclusion is not just about access to devices or the internet—it is about fostering autonomy, economic opportunity, and social participation, while upholding the human rights of women with disabilities in a rapidly evolving digital society.

2. Review of Literature

1. The study's objective by **Pagan (2016)** is to investigate the impact of relational goods on the life satisfaction levels of people with and without disabilities in Germany. It aims to understand how social interactions and leisure activities contribute to overall happiness, particularly for those with disabilities who may face social exclusion. The study revealed that relational goods positively impact life satisfaction for everyone, but this effect is even more substantial for people with disabilities. Attending social gatherings and cultural

events significantly enhances life satisfaction, particularly among individuals with disabilities. The findings emphasise the importance of policies that foster social inclusion and provide access to relational activities, improving the well-being of people with disabilities. The study recommends that public policies focus on enhancing access to social and relational activities to improve the well-being of people with disabilities.

2. The study by **Kitis et al. (2017)** investigates the factors contributing to life satisfaction among disabled employees. The study revealed no significant differences in leisure satisfaction or disability level among various groups based on age, gender, or disability level. In other words, these factors did not significantly impact leisure satisfaction or disability status in the study population. It was observed that leisure satisfaction varied substantially between males and females. Specifically, males reported better disability assessments and higher leisure satisfaction levels than females. The study found that age, gender, and disability level significantly influenced disability, leisure satisfaction, and overall quality of life. Specifically, these factors play a crucial role in shaping the well-being of individuals with disabilities.
3. According to **Kelliher et al. (2019)**, work-life balance refers to the relationship between work and non-work dimensions of a person's life; it involves limiting one's paid work to have much time for the other dimension to fulfil childcare responsibilities, personal responsibilities, and family time. The study highlights the need to consider the work-life balance concerns of individuals with dependent children and those with a low-standard work environment. Overall, this study emphasises understanding work-life balance in the 21st century in an inclusive way to reflect changes according to the social and organisational setting. It argues that the current understanding of work and life is

limited and does not account for recent developments in working arrangements and employment relationships.

4. **AL-Omari et al. (2020)** identified that the work-life balance is leading to high job satisfaction among employees. The study has been conducted in Jordan to investigate the impact of work-life balance on employee satisfaction. The study used a descriptive analysis and identified a work-life balance that has a positive effect on the performance of employees. Also, the study states that demographic variables like gender, age, and experience did not affect work-life balance significantly.
5. In their study, **Gulzar et al. (2020)** define work environment as a combination of factors that can influence an employee's well-being. It can be a physical workplace setup, a relationship with colleagues and superiors, or a balance of roles and responsibilities. The study examines the effect of work-life balance, work stress, engagement and working environment on the well-being of employees working in the banking sector. The study was conducted in Pakistan, and it aims to explore the research gap for managers and policymakers to improve employees' well-being. The study found a direct, positive effect of employee engagement on employee well-being. It identifies a significant negative effect of work stress on employee well-being and shows no direct impact on work-life balance on the well-being of the employees. The study determines that the working environment significantly affects employee engagement and well-being. It recommends a supportive working environment and implementation of strategies for work stress management to enhance employee engagement through cognitive, emotional, and behavioural support. The study also referred to promoting work-life balance by implementing flexible work arrangements and improving employee satisfaction.

6. **Chordiya (2020)** examines the turnover intentions of employees with Disabilities compared to those without disabilities in their study. The study assesses the impact of inclusive organisational practices on reducing turnover intentions among federal employees with disabilities. A federal employee's viewpoint survey was taken as the data for the research, and the logistic equation method was used for analysis. It identified that persons with disabilities have a long history of discrimination and marginalisation; also, persistent negative perceptions and discrimination hinder their employment opportunities and professional growth. Even though inclusion and diversity of persons with disability remain unexplored or less explored in public administration, this study figured out significantly higher turnover intentions among federal employees with disabilities compared to those without disabilities. It is stated that organisational fairness is crucial in reducing turnover intentions among employees with disabilities. Supportiveness and openness did not affect reducing turnover intention as expected. The research recommends fair treatment of employees' disabilities in performance appraisals and promotions and fair access to reporting channels to reduce turnover intentions. It also adds to the accountable and transparent organisational leadership with a representative from employees with disabilities. It also proposes cultural audits, assessments, and continuous evaluations to foster an inclusive culture that implements diversity, equity and inclusion
7. **Pagan (2020)** investigated the relationship between sports participation and life satisfaction among individuals with and without disabilities. This study examines how satisfaction individuals with disabilities pursue in various life domains, such as job, health, house responsibilities, leisure, and income, contributes to overall life satisfaction. It also explores the correlation between participation in sports and satisfaction levels in health, housework and leisure of individuals with disabilities. In the study, you used data from a German socio-economic panel to analyse how sports participation affects various life domains. The study finds a positive correlation between sports participation and life satisfaction. It identifies healthy housework and household income as the main contributors to life satisfaction for people with disabilities; a study suggests inclusive public and private sports programs to enhance life satisfaction among people with disabilities.
8. In their study, **McMahon et al. (2020)** aim to examine the discrimination against individuals with hearing loss, comparing the complaints filed by people with hearing loss to those with other types of disabilities before and after the 2008 ADA Amendment Act. The research discusses the importance of cross-disability movement, highlighting these challenges faced by individuals with hearing impairments in the workplace. The study compares the allegations filed by persons with hearing loss for workplace discrimination to those with other disabilities. It extends the investigation into the unique barriers faced by individuals with hearing loss in the workplace. The research raises new research questions and provides implications for the cross-disability movement, enriching the discourse on employment discrimination
9. The research done by **Bezyak et al. (2021)** seeks to comprehend employers' negative perceptions towards people with disabilities. It was found that more significant stigma among employers correlates with adverse views about disability, reduced backing for recruitment initiatives, and a lower likelihood of employing individuals with disabilities. The findings support the need for customised interventions that address

particular issues relevant to employers and staff involved in recruitment.

10. **Etieyibo & Omiegbe (2021)** conducted studies that empirically demonstrate the relation between culture and the discrimination of persons with disabilities in Nigeria. It aims to show how cultural practices affect the rights and well-being of individuals with disabilities. This study involves a survey research design, and 120 respondents were selected using cluster sampling and simple random sampling techniques. The sample includes teachers, parents, persons with disabilities, siblings of persons with limited disability and their caregivers. The study identified that cultural practices that are followed in Nigeria have a significant contribution to the discrimination of individuals with disabilities. It also finds the situation of sending children with disabilities to beg for economic gain. It is concluded that due to cultural practices that violate their rights, people with disabilities in Nigeria are marginalised. The practices are followed by cultural beliefs and superstitions, which lead to discrimination and abuse. Recommendations have been given to enact laws that prohibit discrimination.
11. A study conducted by **L'Horty et al. (2022)** focused on hiring discrimination among individuals with hearing impairments, comparing it to discrimination based on gender and ethnicity. The study aims to understand whether disability, particularly hearing impairment, affects hiring decisions. This study found that discrimination against candidates with hearing impairments is significant and comparable to ethnic discrimination. The study could not find conclusive evidence about the discrimination level in the public and private sector. The research emphasises the need to tackle employment discrimination faced by people with disabilities. The study states that discrimination is not lower in public-sector banks compared to private-sector banks. The study suggests policy implications based on the severity of the disability leading to perfect accommodation.
12. The study in China by **Huang (2023)** empirically examines how the discriminatory effect of the employment quota is shaped, mainly focusing on the interaction between the quota policies and stakeholders. The study found that the quota system for employment in China could unintentionally result in biased treatment and isolation, putting individuals with disabilities in a less favourable position. It recommends introducing laws to eliminate disability-based discrimination in the labour market. The study also recommends expanding policies to ensure more opportunities for people with disabilities.
13. **Bedi & Thakur (2024)** conducted a study to identify the relationship between employee emotional intelligence and job and life satisfaction of employees of India's public and private sector banks. The study collected data using a systematic random sampling method, and 150 managers are participating in middle-level managerial positions. The results show a significant difference in the occupational role stress factors of self management, empathy, and relationship management in both the public and private sectors. It found that job and life satisfaction have no variation in both private and public sectors. This research suggests how emotional intelligence can achieve work-life balance and enhance job satisfaction to manage occupational job stress effectively.
14. **Syahrina et.al., (2025)** this article provides a strong overview of how organizations can improve inclusivity for disabled employees in modern digital workplaces. It highlights key barriers such as inaccessible digital systems, poor organizational attitudes, lack of leadership commitment, and limited workplace accommodations. The authors argue that inclusive leadership, accessible

technology platforms, and supportive workplace culture are essential for enabling equal participation and productivity. One major strength of the paper is that it connects social inclusion with business benefits such as innovation, employee satisfaction, and better performance. Although the study is conceptual rather than based on field data, it offers practical recommendations for HR managers and organizations seeking to build equitable digital work environments. Overall, it is a relevant and useful source for research on disability inclusion in the digital era

- 15. Britta, et.al. (2025)** this article presents a modern and innovative method for workplace inclusion through persona-based design. The authors argue that employees with disabilities have different needs, so organizations should not apply one standard solution for everyone. Instead, workplaces should use employee personas to understand specific requirements related to mobility, communication, vision, hearing, or cognitive needs. This is especially important in digital workplaces where software interfaces and workflows can either support or exclude employees. A strong feature of the article is its human-centered design perspective, which aligns well with modern digital transformation strategies. It also recognizes that personalization can increase productivity and employee satisfaction. The study is valuable because it moves beyond traditional compliance models and focuses on employee experience. Overall, it offers a future-oriented strategy for building smarter and more inclusive organizations.

Recommendation

To strengthen digital inclusion for women with disabilities, recommendations should focus on accessibility, empowerment, and systemic support. Governments and organizations must prioritize accessible technology design, ensuring that websites, apps, and digital platforms integrate features like screen readers, captions, and voice navigation.

Expanding access to affordable assistive devices and internet connectivity is equally critical, as cost remains a major barrier. Tailored digital literacy programs designed with gender-sensitive approaches can build confidence and skills, while community-based mentoring networks allow women with disabilities to learn from peers and share experiences. Policy interventions should integrate digital inclusion with welfare schemes, offering subsidies, incentives, and protection against fraud to encourage adoption. Collaboration between policymakers, NGOs, and private companies can create inclusive ecosystems where women with disabilities are not only users but also contributors to digital innovation. Ultimately, these practices promote autonomy, economic opportunity, and social participation, ensuring that women with disabilities are active participants in the digital society rather than marginalized observers.

Conclusion

Digital inclusion practices for women with disabilities are essential for advancing equity, empowerment, and participation in the digital age. By addressing the dual challenges of gender inequality and disability exclusion, these practices ensure that women with disabilities are not left behind in technological progress. Accessible design, assistive technologies, and affordable connectivity form the foundation of inclusion, while gender-sensitive training, community mentoring, and supportive policies strengthen confidence and skills. More importantly, digital inclusion is about enabling autonomy, expanding economic opportunities, and fostering social participation, thereby affirming the rights of women with disabilities as active contributors to society. Building inclusive digital ecosystems is not only a matter of technological advancement but also a commitment to justice, dignity, and human rights.

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