Tailoring Learning, Training and Development Initiatives: Exploring how organisations can reduce the barriers that the neurodivergent employee faces

Dissertation

By

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Abstract

Approximately 15% - 20% of the population are neurodiverse (McAllister, 2023) yet only 29% of autistic individuals are employed (Office for National Statistics, 2021), and only 20% of employees feel their organisation's policies are supportive of neurodiversity (Bank of Ireland, 2024). There is ample literature discussing learning, training and development (LT&D) however there is a clear gap in the literature where neurodiversity is concerned. This study sought to bridge the gap between the two and identify how organisational learning and training can be harnessed to support the neurodiverse employee and improve neuro-inclusion in the workplace.

This research study examined the experience of neurodivergent individuals in the workplace to identify how organisations can harness learning, training and development to better support neurodiversity in the workforce. The study took a mixed methods approach with the data being collected via a survey that was distributed online. It had a total of 56 participants with 4 exclusions, varying in age, gender, employment type and neurodiverse condition. The participants were individuals with a mixture of formal diagnoses and self-identified neurodiverse conditions to encompass the growing community and accurately measure the experience of the neurodivergent person. The research sought to measure neurodivergent individuals' perceptions of organisational understanding of neurodiversity, their experience as employees, their perception of needing to camouflage, neuro-inclusion and developmental and progression opportunities for the neurodivergent individual in the workplace. The study found that neurodiverse employees do not have a positive experience in the workforce, and they perceive organisations to have a poor understanding of neurodiversity and how to support it. It was also found that there is no difference in how the workforce is experienced and perceived by neurodiverse individuals regardless of the formality of their diagnosis. An increased want for accommodations personalised to the needs of the neurodiverse employee was identified as was the need for organisations to harness their LT&D initiatives to improve understanding and awareness of neurodiversity to create a more open, neuro-inclusive workplace.

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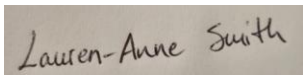

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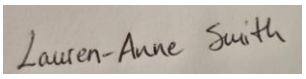
Signature of Candidate: 

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Neurodiversity is the collective term for the community of neurodivergent people and neurodivergence refers to the ways in which the brain functions differently for some people. Neurodiversity encompasses conditions such as Autism spectrum Disorder (ASD), Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, etc. (Neurodiversity Ireland, 2024). In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of people diagnosed and self-identifying with neurodiverse conditions and with that, an increased awareness of the conditions that reside under the umbrella term of neurodiversity. Individuals are becoming increasingly aware of their neuro-differences and needs, however, there are still barriers relating to their neuro-differences that the community face when it comes to accessing and maintaining employment and/or contributing to a negative experience in the workforce.

There is ample literature discussing the benefits of diversity in the workplace and how learning, training and development (L,T&D) can support it however there is little research specifically discussing LT&D in relation to neurodiversity.

This study focuses on assessing the experience of neurodiverse individuals in the workforce by measuring organisational understanding, employee experience, the pressure to camouflage, neuro-inclusion in the workplace and the development and progression opportunities for neurodiverse people using a mixed-methods analysis.

Through measuring these topics, the research intends to provide insight into the research objectives, 1.) To what extent do organisations understand and support their neurodiverse employees presently, 2.) Do neurodiverse employees have a positive experience in the workforce and 3.) Is there a difference between the experience and perception of the workforce between neurodiverse individuals with a formal diagnosis versus those without a formal diagnosis who self-identify as neurodivergent?

Finally, the research intends to answer the research question, *What steps can employers take to tailor their organisational learning and training initiatives to positively impact the experience of neurodiverse people in the workplace?*

1.2 Rationale

Effective diversity management increases employee satisfaction and performance in the workplace. To be effective, it must support all forms of diversity, including those that are not visible such as neurodiversity (Human Resource Management International Digest, 2021). Approximately 15%-20% of the global population, and therefore a significant portion of the current and potential workforce, has a neurodiverse condition (Zurich, 2023). Therefore, it is crucial that organisations ensure that their equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives are all encompassing, and actively support the neurodiverse community to encourage neuro-inclusion and harness the benefits of a neuro-inclusive workforce.

Studies suggest that only 20% of employees feel their organisation's policies are supportive of neurodiverse employees (Bank of Ireland, 2024), and lack of understanding and support from leadership can adversely affect both the manager and the neurodivergent employee (Richards, Sang, Marks and Gill, 2019; Szulc, 2024). LT&D is critical to building a culture that values and supports inclusion (McGuire and Bagher, 2010) however little reference is made to neuro-inclusion in relation to LT&D in current literature.

It can be argued that this gap in the literature presents a key area of potential research due to the rising number of individuals that are identifying as neurodiverse and the competitive advantage that can be achieved by successfully supporting and encouraging those with neuro-differences in the workplace.

This study intends to bridge the gap between LT&D and neuro-differences by investigating the experience of neurodivergent individuals in the workplace to identify how organisations can tailor their programmes to support the neurodivergent employee and create a more neuro-inclusive workforce.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Diversity

Workplace diversity is characterised as valuing the differences employees have and working to create a culture of inclusivity through policies and procedures that support groups who are under-represented in society and in the workplace (Brzozowska, Gross-Gołacka, Grima, Kusterka-Jefmańska and Zemanski, 2023). Diversity management is rooted in the belief that channelling and utilising the differences within a workforce will in turn create an inclusive organisational culture where all employees, especially those who fall under a branch of diversity, will have their differences and talents recognised, celebrated, and supported to achieve the organisation's goals and objectives (Kirton and Green, 2005).

Having a diverse workforce within an organisation can advance the business by generating a vast range of benefits including but not limited to increased organisational and employee performance, increased satisfaction amongst employees and reduced employee turnover, furthering the company's competitive advantage and employer branding (Human Resource Management International Digest, 2021).

Research completed by Brzozowska *et al*. (2023) shows that the extensive benefits related to diversity management are often negated by management's lack of understanding and knowledge of diversity and how it should be approached. To maximise on the associated benefits, diversity management and initiatives must be handled effectively. To do this, the organisation must recognise all forms of diversity including non-visible diversity factors such as hidden disabilities, neurodiversity, and sexual orientation in addition to the visible and widely recognized diversity factors such as age, race, and gender (Human Resource Management International Digest, 2021).

2.2 Neurodiversity

Neurodiverse individuals are estimated to account for approximately 15% -20% of the global population (Zurich, 2023), suggesting that a significant portion of the labour market is also neurodivergent. Public Affairs Ireland (2023) reports that 4% of the Irish population has neurodevelopmental differences and 85% of these individuals are under-employed or unemployed despite Ireland reporting full employment (Specialisterne Ireland, Morning Ireland,

2023). This indicates that a notable portion of the labour market is untapped and a significant portion of the neurodiverse community in Ireland is underrepresented in the workplace.

Studies have shown that neurodiverse individuals demonstrate a higher level of productivity and motivation than their neurotypical counterparts but only if the organisation they are employed by is able to meet their needs and support their talents, skills, and development (both career and personal) by cultivating a culture and environment that makes them comfortable to share their differences and utilize them effectively (Hutson & Hutson, 2023).

Neurodiverse individuals often attempt to conform to neurotypical standards in the workplace to fit into social norms. Due to this, in many cases the human resource systems, policies and procedures in place are often designed with only neurotypical employees in mind and do not sufficiently support neurodiverse employees in increasing or developing their skills or talents and fail to help these employee's reach their full potential (Priscott and Allen, 2021). Failure on the organisation's part to create an environment that supports and understands neurodiverse employees' differences may exacerbate this situation further.

A 2019 Australian research report found that individuals that identify as autistic face long-term unemployment despite being qualified, if not overqualified for the roles they were applying for. The same report cited the biggest barriers they are facing in accessing jobs is the shortage of organisational support and lack of willingness to adjust to support their needs in the workplace (Jones, Akram, Murphy, Myers and Vickers, 2019). Similarly, an American study has found that individuals who identify with other neurodivergent disorders have also reported comparable obstacles to accessing employment (Maroto and Pettinicchio, 2015).

The lack of training and understanding from the public regarding neurodiversity is concerning and acts as a significant barrier for the community in both gaining access to meaningful employment and climbing the ladder in the workplace. For example, 1 in 5 Australians reported that they would feel concerned should an individual with autism be appointed as their superior (Jones et al, 2019). UK charity, Neurodiversity in Business, conducted research that identified a gap in neurodiversity support within organisational equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) initiatives. Even though 92% of UK employers surveyed have EDI initiatives in place, only 22% of those businesses include a dedicated focus to neurodiversity within their policies. The same report found that 55% of the neurodiverse individuals surveyed stated that they feared potential

stigma in the workplace if they were to disclose their neuro-differences and 65% of those surveyed stated that they feared future discrimination and have already experienced a poor understanding of their conditions and associated needs from management (McDowall, A., Doyle, N. and Kiseleva., M, 2023).

2.3 Autism

One of the most widely recognised forms of neurodiversity is Autism and it's estimated that 1 in 100 people have autism worldwide (World Health Organization, 2023). According to the US National Institute for mental health (2024), autism or 'autism spectrum disorder' (ASD) is a neurological developmental disorder that affects the way in which affected individuals communicate and interact with other people as well as their ability to learn and regulate their behaviour, therefore impacting their social integration. Autism is a 'spectrum disorder' which means that the level of severity can vary widely in individuals that have autism and it can present in many ways.

The level of impact on one's intellectual functioning and ability can also vary widely with some individuals having impairments such as learning difficulties and others who demonstrate intelligence above the average (HSE, 2024a). Autistic individuals with average or above average intelligence are likely to have a specific form of autism known as Asperger's syndrome (HSE, 2024a).

It's common for individuals with ASD to also be diagnosed with other neurological conditions. These co-occurring conditions include but are not limited to dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), epilepsy, intellectual disabilities, etc. (HSE, 2024a).

2.3.a Asperger's Syndrome and Autism

Asperger's syndrome was previously recognised as a pervasive developmental disorder (PDD), as was autism, however in 2013, the classification was changed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Aspergers syndrome was excluded from the DSM as a diagnosis and instead placed under the new DSM-5 Autism Spectrum as part of the autism spectrum (Gamlin, 2017). As this classification has changed, people who previously were diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome are now known to have ASD however many of these individuals will continue to identify with and use the term Asperger's syndrome as they view it as

an integral part of their identity (Gómez, M., Pastor-Cerezuela, Lacruz-Pérez and Tárraga-Mínguez, 2023).

Individuals with Asperger's syndrome may not have the intellectual disabilities that other individuals with autism may face, they often have average or even superior intelligence to the average person. This may also be referred to as 'high functioning' autism by some (HSE, 2024a).

2.3.b Overview of Identified Autistic Traits

Autism can present in a wide variety of ways and the characteristics associated with ASD can differ immensely from one individual to another however there are some common traits that have been identified as common amongst people with ASD. These include deficits in their ability to interact socially and communicate both verbally and non-verbally, a difficulty in maintaining eye contact, lack of understanding and/or awareness of social ques and difficulty in adjusting their behaviour to the social setting (Autism Speaks, 2024).

For example, some autistic individuals may struggle to understand sarcasm and take things literally. They may find it difficult to understand the emotions of their peers and struggle to develop and/or maintain relationships. Some people with ASD can present as blunt or rude to the neuro-typical person due to their style of communication and they may suffer from anxiety relating to social situations (HSE, 2024b).

Other common characteristics of ASD are the use of repetitive and ritualistic behaviours, for example repeating phrases or actions or having a deeply focused and extreme enthusiasm for a particular interest (National Institute of Mental Health, 2024). Research has shown that those with higher levels of anxiety demonstrate more repetitive behaviours than their counterparts with lesser levels of anxiety. It may be difficult for autistic individuals to accept changes to their routine as many find comfort in a repetitive nature of 'sameness' (Rodgers, Glod, Connolly, and McConachie, 2024).

Autistic individuals may also experience sensory processing issues that the neurotypical person may not consider. These can include sensitivity to light, noise, touch, texture etc. These differences in sensory processing can make the most mundane of daily interactions debilitating and tiresome for the individual (Crown, 2022).

2.4 Camouflaging

Compensatory behaviours or 'masking' is when individuals attempt to present an a-typical perception of their behaviours by hiding autistic characteristics. This strategy of 'social camouflaging' is used by autistic or neurodiverse individuals to appear less or non-autistic or neuro-typical in society as a method of coping and attempt to fit into to social norms (Lai, Lombardo, Ruigrok, Chakrabarti, Auyeung, Szatmari, Happé, and Baron-Cohen, 2017).

These masking techniques are behaviour modifications that one does both consciously and subconsciously, for example actively attempting to mirror another person's facial expression and body language, forcing eye contact, reducing body movements such as fidgeting and actively altering their gestures to appear more neurotypical (Cook, Crane, Hull, Bourne and Mandy, 2022).

Research suggests that the act of masking or 'camouflaging' is often used for the purpose of feeling accepted socially as these compensatory behaviours support the individual in developing meaningful relationships, protecting their reputation and reduce stress in social situations. The need to employ these strategies stem from pressure to conform in society and achieve their goals in life (Livingston, L.A., Shah, P. and Happé, 2019).

The use of masking techniques amongst individuals with autism has been found to be exhausting for the person and can lead to questioning of their identity (Bargiela, Steward, and Mandy, 2016). Camouflaging has been linked to feelings of inauthenticity as the attempts to modify their behaviours to conform can feel performative, going against their true nature (Cook, Crane and Mandy, 2024).

2.5 Gender Differences

Women are less likely to be diagnosed with autism than men with the current ratio at 4:1. However there are debates questioning the accuracy of this ratio due to an increasing number of women receiving autism diagnosis in their adulthood (Cook, Hull and Mandy, 2024). Studies have suggested that women with ASD and/or other neurodiverse conditions feel more pressure to mask behaviours associated with their neurodiversity than men do. This increased pressure has been suggested as contributory factor in the gender differences amongst neurodiverse diagnosis (McIntosh, H., Colvert, E., Happé, 2019) and may be partially responsible for the rise

in adulthood diagnosis in women as they are better able to hide their conditions for longer (Lai, *et al,* 2017).

2.6 Formal versus Self Diagnosis

Self-diagnosing oneself with ASD or another form of neurodiversity is a growing trend today, often referred to as 'self-identifying' or 'self-reporting'. Its rise in popularity may be due to several reasons, for example, the possible gender bias associated with neurodiversity. Other causes for individuals not receiving a formal diagnosis include not having an intellectual disability, individuals having co-occurring conditions that act as a barrier to diagnosing conditions such as ASD, increased lack of access to the necessary medical interventions due to issues such as socio-economic circumstances and inequalities (Huang, Arnold R. C., Foley, Trollor, 2020) and the failure of medical staff to identify ASD amongst adults seeking formal diagnosis or possible mistrust of the medical community by those requiring formal evaluation (Lewis, 2016).

The community of under-diagnosed autistic individuals are often referred to as 'The Lost Generation' (McDonald, 2020). Those who self-report do not hold a medically recognised diagnosis and in many cases, much of the information they base their assumptions off are coming from informal supports such as online forums discussing autism rather than medically accurate sources. This has led to the validity of self-reported ASD being questioned as there is limited research on the subject due to the recent emergence of the phenomenon (Overton, Marsà-Sambola, Martin and Cavenagh, 2023). However, while there is limited research into the subject, there has been recent studies supporting the validity of self-identified neurodiversity. For example, McDonald's (2020) research found that self-diagnosed adults with autism mirrored those with formal diagnosis in terms of autistic identity, employment, social stigma, quality of life, etc. and the associated challenges that they face. Another study found that there were little differences in the responses given for the study between those who were formally diagnosed and those who self-identified, thus supporting the validity of the self-reported individuals and their experience (Sturm, Huang, Bal and Schwartzman, 2024).

2.7 Neurodiversity in Relation to the Workforce

The Workplace Commission Ireland (WRC) has previously accepted cases under the Equality Act about discrimination relating to ASD and ruled in the complainants favour indicating that ASD does fall under the definition of disability in law (Mccarthaigh, 2023). With this ruling, it

could be argued that some or all neurodiverse conditions also fall under the definition of a disability. Should this be the case, there are legal obligations on employers. Under the Employment Equality Act 1998, employers are obligated to make reasonable accommodations to facilitate an employee's disability and provide training and a working environment suited to the disability where possible (Ireland. *Employment Equality Act* 1998).

According to the UK census, only 29% of autistic adults are participating in the workforce (Office for National Statistics, 2021), meaning a significant portion of the ASD community is under-employed or excluded from the workforce entirely. A survey conducted by RedC Research, on behalf of Bank of Ireland, found that only 20% of employees feel their organisation's policies are supportive of neurodiverse employees and only 48% of neurodiverse individuals that took part in the survey felt comfortable enough in their current organisations to disclose their neurodiverse condition. This is likely because only 45% of the neurodiverse individuals surveyed feel their organisation is sufficiently inclusive (Bank of Ireland, 2024).

While it has been found that the skills held by some members of the neurodiverse community can be extremely advantageous when harnessed by organisations (Doyle,2020), neurodiverse individuals have reported many barriers to both entering and existing in the workforce. For example, it has been found that some people with autism spectrum disorder can struggle with the interview process due to the social skills aspect of the traditional interview (Maras, Norris, Nicholson, Heasman, Remington and Crane, 2021). ASD individuals have been found to provide literal answers to questions that illustrate a lack of understanding of the questions and/or what the interviewer expects of them in their responses (Wehman et al., 2017). A 2022 study results discussed this further, noting that participants stated their need for more clarity in the interview process and questions over vague, open-ended questions (Burton, L., Carss, V., and Twumasi, R, 2022). The same study identified that pre-conceived notions of neurodiversity adversely affected the neurodivergent employee in the workplace, preventing them from openly discussing their own condition due to fear of negative perceptions and misinformation surrounding their neurodiverse condition. Keeping their neurodivergent conditions from their employer may result in the employee being unable to access any support and reasonable adjustments that the organisation may be able to offer, potentially limiting their performance and in turn, their career progression opportunities (Doyle, 2020).

It is well documented that individuals with a neurodiversity such as ASD can struggle to engage socially with their peers due to difficulties reading social cues, understanding body language and humour or regulating their behaviour. However, new research has shown that the neurotypical person may also struggle with communication due to an inability to recognise and understand the neurodiverse person. Thus, creating a two-way conflict in communication and hindering the neurodiverse individual from integrating socially within the workforce. Research has shown a need for organisations to be more flexible in their processes and the environment that they provide employees to support employees who may experience a sensory overload related to their neurodiversity (Chapman, 2019).

For individuals with ADHD, they may experience punctuality issues, high levels of absenteeism, increased errors in their work, impulsive behaviour and difficulty working within a team structure due to a pre-disposed likelihood to procrastinate. These symptoms can cause issues for an employee with ADHD in the workplace and if they do not receive the relevant support to manage their ADHD tendencies, they could result in disciplinary action, difficulty in achieving career progression and even loss of employment (Attention Deficit Disorder Association, 2023).

Research has shown that employees with dyslexia have an increased chance of reaching burnout in their work due to the increased difficulty in meeting the demands associated with their roles (Wissell, Karimi, Serry, Furlong and Hudson, 2022). On the contrary, dyslexic individuals are known for being resourceful, harbouring creativity, having a unique and highly advantageous talent for spotting patterns and gleaning insight from limited data in a way that neurotypical individuals struggle with (CIPD, 2023). These attributes could serve as a competitive advantage for organisations should they be able to effectively support their dyslexic employees and harness their ability.

2.8 The Impact of Leadership on Neurodiverse Employees

The impact of appropriate leadership cannot be overlooked when examining the neurodivergent employee's experience. A study evaluating the experience of managing the neurodivergent employee found that there is a need for increased emotional labour skills from the manager to effectively support the employee. The research also found that employers are placing responsibilities that are not always suitable or sustainable long-term on the managers to support the neurodivergent employee (Richards, Sang, Marks and Gill, 2019). In some cases,

these increased pressures are having an adverse effect on the managers physical and mental well-being with some reporting feeling emotionally drained and direct, negative effects on their health.

Another study identified experiences where neurodiverse individuals felt patronised and condescended to when people in positions of leadership when they were made aware of the employees neurodiversity (Szulc, 2024).

2.9 Learning and Development and Diversity

Learning, training, and development (LT&D) has been acknowledged to leverage competitiveness by enabling an organisation to increase their performance. (Tregaskis and Heraty, 2011).

If executed successfully, LT&D in an organisational context can increase retention, employee engagement and organisational performance by assisting employees to adapt to changing environments and regulations, increase their skills and talents and increase their confidence in their abilities (Carbery and Cross, 2018).

Research has found that training is imperative to cultivating a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion in the work environment and it is essential for supporting the diverse employees within the organisation to feel secure in their identity in the workplace (McGuire, D., & Bagher, 2010).

Studies completed on the topic of diversity and training found that there are two separate aspects to diversity training, the first being 'awareness' training where employees are taught to recognize bias and become more self-aware in their actions and decision making. The second being 'skills' training, its goal is to provide employees with the skills they need to proactively support their diverse colleagues and work within a diverse environment effectively (Kuknor and Kumar, 2023).

There is an abundance of literature available about how LT&D can support diversity to create an inclusive environment and how training with the management and the wider workforce in how to approach diversity can support it. However, little is written about traditional LT&D in relation to the neurodiverse individual and how it can support these individuals specifically in the progressing in workplace or their roles. For example, Carbery and Cross (2018) writes about how people learn, citing three schools of thought for learning, cognitivism, behaviourism and

experiential learning. However, upon examining the three schools and how they perceive learning styles, it's clear that they are written for the neurotypical learner as no reference is made to neurodiversity or cognitive differences.

Further to this Opperman's (2015) discussion regarding evaluating a learning and development programme references the variables and whilst no reference is made to 'neurodiversity', they do consider the individual readiness to learn in relation to their ability, motivation and reaction to learning, as well as their personal characteristics, however, when discussing the organisation's readiness, no reference is made to adjusting the programme to meet the individual's needs.

2.10 Conclusion

The literature reviewed highlights the breadth of the neurodiverse population and the growing number of individuals who identify as neurodivergent. The neurodiverse community are under-employed and adversely affected in the workplace due to a lack of support and understanding from organisations and neurotypical individuals, despite the competitive advantage one could gain from recruiting more neurodiverse employees and supporting their needs. Organisational equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives do not go far enough to adequately support their neurodivergent employees in the workforce or potential employees in the recruitment process. Based on the literature, the experience of the neurodiverse community in the workforce could be improved if organisations have a better understanding of neurodiversity and the scale of which different neurodiverse conditions and their associated needs differ. This improved understanding of the complexities associated with neurodiversity can aid organisations in tailoring their learning, training and development programmes to contribute towards improving the landscape of the workforce for the neurodivergent individual.

This study aims to identify how organisations can meet these needs and increase the inclusion of neurodiverse individuals in the workforce.

Chapter 3. Research Problem and Aims of Research

3.1 The Research Question:

There are several barriers that affect a neurodivergent individual's success in both entering the workforce and progressing within it. These barriers include difficulty connecting with their neurotypical peers and adapting to the processes, procedures and environment of the organisation.

From the literature review, the following research has been developed:

What steps can employers take to tailor their organisational learning and training initiatives to positively impact the experience of neurodiverse people in the workplace?

To support the research question, three objectives have been developed:

1. *To what extent do organisations understand and support their neurodiverse employees presently?* This objective aims to measure the neurodiverse employees' perception of organisations' understanding of neurodiversity and their perceived opportunities in these organisations for progression and development as a neurodivergent employee.
2. *Do neurodivergent employees have a positive experience in the workforce?* This objective intends to investigate the experience of the neurodiverse individual in the workforce and to what extent they feel included and the need to camouflage.
3. *Is there a difference between the experience and perception of the workforce between neurodiverse individuals with a formal diagnosis versus those without a formal diagnosis who self-identify as neurodivergent?* This objective seeks to identify if there is a difference by examining the responses of the participants in subgroups to represent formally diagnosed participants and self-identified participants.

Chapter 4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The following chapter outlines the research methodology framework and provides context to the methodologies chosen to conduct the research. It will evaluate the research instrument, the sample, , ethical considerations and procedure used. This research uses a mixed-method analysis, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a deeper exploration of the data collected.

4.2 Research Philosophy

Carefully planning and considering the assumptions facilitate the creation of a comprehensive and coherent study (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019). The goal of this research is to identify how organisations can support individuals with a form of neurodivergence within the organisation by examining organisational understanding of neurodiversity, the neurodiverse employee experience, the extent to which neurodivergent employees feel the need to camouflage within the workplace, inclusion at work and the developmental and career opportunities that they receive.

Interpretivism was considered as the philosophy as it would allow for a higher degree of the human experience to be analysed. The nature of this research is emotive, and the data is generated from the real-life experience of the participants, by taking an interpretive approach the study could be completed using a purely qualitative method to gather more detailed and personal data, possibly resulting in more meaningful findings. However, the ethical considerations led to the quantitative data collection method and the positivism philosophy as the participants may be considered vulnerable by some due to their neurodiversity and the intense nature of an interview may be too much for some participants. The personal nature of the questions about the participants' experiences may also limit the access to the required number of participants for a qualitative study due to fear of stigma.

Positivism was found to be the most suitable choice of philosophy for this research because it is usually structured and deductive in nature and aims to generate objective, measurable data with a high rate of accuracy. Although it generally uses a quantitative approach to data collection and analysis, it also allows for qualitative research, suiting the mixed-method analysis of this study which allows for more flexibility. (Saunders, *et a*l, 2019).

4.3 Research Approach

This research study is using a deductive approach, where a hypothesis is established from previous research theories and the current research seeks to test its validity (Saunders, *et a*l, 2019). This is a 6-stage approach that allows for multiple variables to be tested to validate or invalidate the hypothesis.

The deductive approach also pairs well with the positivism philosophy (Saunders, *et al*, 2019), which has been selected for this study providing further support for it as the chosen approach.

4.4 Research Design and Procedure

4.4.a Instrument

The research instrument chosen for this study was a survey. Surveys are a cost-effective approach to data collection in terms of both time and financial resources (Zhang, and Aryadoust, 2022), it allows for convenient publishing and management for the researcher.

This method of data collection was chosen in part to support the choice of quantitative analysis. The survey was anonymous, supporting the possibility of reaching a wider sample as participants who may not be comfortable disclosing or discussing their neurodiverse conditions are able to participate anonymously. Surveys also provide the added benefit of reaching a significantly increased and diversified sample size of participants as the survey can be picked up from any part of the world once it is made available online (Wilson, and Dewaele, 2010).

The anonymity associated with surveys will also increase the degree of honesty in the responses, contributing to more accurate findings. However, it is important to note a possible risk of using an anonymous sample could be possible incongruities within it (Wilson, and Dewaele, 2010).

4.4.b Ethical Considerations

As this research aims to investigate the support given to neurodiverse individuals in the workplace, an argument can be made that the subject audience of the research, neurodiverse individuals, may be considered vulnerable. This is a nuanced issue as neurodiversity is a far-reaching term that covers a wide range of cognitive differences and conditions such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism, ADHD, etc.

It's important to note that the severity of an individual's neurodiverse condition can vary greatly and there are significant spectrums of one's ability where neuro-differences are involved which will impact how vulnerable they may be.

The survey introduction specified that the participants must be of high enough functioning to be able to participate in the workforce and of at least 18 years of age to target the correct sample and address the ethical considerations associated with possible vulnerabilities associated with the sample.

4.4.c Procedure

Survey Design

Designing a survey is a 6 step process (Bourke, Kirby, and Doran, 2016); 1) Set research objectives, 2) Construct a research question or hypotheses centred around the objectives, 3) Devise the research instrument, a set of questions designed to gather the data needed to test the hypothesis, 4) Review the data collected and code it accordingly, 5) Analyse the data collected and 6) Report the findings from the analysis phase.

Surveys are best designed with a standardised approach to ensure that the participants have the same interpretation of the questions. This enables the researcher to review and evaluate the differences between responses as different experiences or views, rather than different understandings of the question (Bourke, et al, 2016).

It's imperative to define the aims of the survey and what variables are to be measured before designing the questions (Yusoff, Arifin, and Hadie, 2021). This survey intends to measure organisational understanding of neurodiversity, the neurodiverse employee experience, the extent to which neurodivergent employees feel the need to camouflage within the workplace, neuro-inclusion at work and the developmental and progression opportunities that they receive. The intention is for the survey to measure these variables by evaluating the experience of the neurodiverse employee.

The survey design was based on 2 existing questionnaires that look at similar themes. The first is a report completed by the CIPD which seeks to evaluate neuro-inclusion in the workplace (CIPD, 2024). The report measured the organisation strategy and culture, the experience of the employees, the role of leadership, existing support and the organisations impact on neurodiversity. The report surveyed both neurodiverse and neurotypical employees and while

the survey conducted for this study will only seek to collect the experience of the neurodivergent employee, the topics the survey seeks to measure were informed by this report.

The second questionnaire that this survey is based on is the Camouflaging Autistic Traits Questionnaire (CAT-Q) (NovoPsych, 2024). The CAT-Q was designed to measure to what degree an individual is camouflaging their autistic inclinations in social settings. The survey conducted for this study will seek to measure the neurodivergent employee's experience and the pressure they feel to camouflage in the workplace hence the CAT-Q being used to design the survey.

The survey is split into 8 sections.

1. Introduction and Consent
2. Sample Demographics
3. Organisational Understanding of Neurodiversity
4. Employee Experience
5. Camouflaging
6. Inclusion
7. Developmental and Progression
8. Accommodations

The first section is an introduction with a detailed description of the purpose of the survey and explanation of what participants can expect when taking it. Then it requests the participant's consent to participating in the survey before progressing.

The second section seeks to identify the demographics of the participants. While it does not collect any identifiable information, it does ask for information such as age bracket, gender and neurodiverse condition. This information is collected to support the analysis phase of the study and provide a deeper understanding of the results, for example if there is a significant difference in responses between age brackets or neurodiverse conditions.

The survey consists of 30 questions. The first 27 questions cover section 3 -7 which consists of statements. The participants are asked to choose to what degree they agree with the statement. This is measured on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 equates to strongly disagree and 5 equates to strongly agree and the participant can select the relevant option applicable to them regarding the statement.

For example:

I feel my organisation could do more to promote neurodiversity

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

The statements set forth in each section were formulated to allow the researcher to measure to what extent the participant has a positive response to theme for that section, i.e. Organisational Understanding of Neurodiversity.

The first measure, Organisational Understanding of Neurodiversity was measured using 7 items. Employee experience was measured using 4 items, Camouflaging was measured using 3 items, Inclusion was measured on 6 items as was Development and Progression.

The final section of the survey, Accommodations, consists of 3 open-ended questions. These questions were included so participants could share accommodations and initiatives they have experienced, both positive and negative, and would like to see introduced. This section was included to support this research in resulting in meaningful recommendations with input from the neurodiverse community for organisational improvement.

The survey was estimated to take approximately 20 minutes to complete. However, due to the nature of the study and the neurodiverse experience at its core, completing the survey online also enabled the participants to complete the survey in their own time, free from time constraints.

The data collection method, anonymous survey, was selected in place of in person interviews to capture the experience of the neurodiverse employee without putting unnecessary pressure on individual to divulge their condition(s) in person or reveal any personal and/or upsetting experiences they may have suffered in relation to it.

The reasons for conducting the research were explained before completing the survey as was a description of the type of questions one could expect throughout it. It was made clear that all

participation was voluntary and anyone who wished to withdraw from the study, you may do so at any time by closing the browser.

Participants

The sample this paper intends to research is anyone who identifies as with any form of neurodiversity who has experience in the workforce. This includes both those with a formal diagnosis and those who have self-identified.

As some neurodiverse conditions are spectrum disorders, for example autism spectrum disorder, the level of severity in how an individual experiences it can vary widely. For the purposes of this research, the sample which this paper will research will be limited to those who consider themselves to be high functioning. This includes but is not limited to the ability for the individual to live independently and the ability for the individual to be able to work and aims to address the ethical considerations associated with working with neurodiverse individuals that may be considered vulnerable.

All participants are required to be 18 years of age or older.

The research was conducted in full accordance with the ethics and GDPR protocols of the National College of Ireland. The information that was obtained through the survey was anonymous from the point of collection with no identifiable information being requested or collected in the survey. All participants were asked to confirm that they read and understood the nature of the study, that they met the criteria to participate in this study as listed above: 18 years of age + and considers themselves to be sufficiently high functioning to participate in the workforce. They were also asked to give informed consent to participating in the study before proceeding and any participant that did not complete this section would be excluded. This was to ensure that the correct sample participants partook in the research and to ensure that no neurodivergent individual who may be considered vulnerable would be asked to participate in the study.

Distribution

The survey was distributed mostly through social media, specifically in closed neurodiversity community groups on the social media platform, Facebook. These groups were members only and specifically for neurodiverse individuals to share their experience and support. Before joining each group and posting the survey, the researcher contacted the administrators to

explain the purpose of survey and research and sought permission prior to posting the survey to ensure the research was not encroaching on private spaces or vulnerable groups. The survey was only posted in the groups that accepted the researcher into the group and gave explicit permission.

Charities and neurodiverse organisations were also contacted for support in distributing the survey. They were sent a detailed summary of the reason for the research, access to review the survey and confirmation that the research was in line with NCI's ethical guidelines. Upon receipt of this, one organisation, Dyslexia Ireland, made the survey available through their website and social media channels.

The survey was left open for 1 month to gather responses, then closed to allow sufficient time for analysis.

Analysis

The software SPSS (IBM Corp, 2021) was used to analyse the data by running reliability tests, frequency statistics, and T-tests. Question 13 under the camouflaging measure and questions 16 and 17 under the inclusion measure needed to be reverse coded to produce accurate and reliable results as they were phrased negatively. Had they not been reverse coded, the interpretation would not have been consistent with the other questions and the results would have been inaccurate.

As the final section of the survey was open-ended, a qualitative approach was utilised in the form of thematic analysis. As they were open-ended questions, some participants fell into multiple categories where their responses gave multiple examples. Braun and Clarke's approach to thematic analysis outlines a six-stage approach, 1.) Familiarizing oneself with the data, 2.) Coding the data, 3.) Identifying themes in the data, 4.) Reviewing the themes, 5.) Defining and labelling the themes and 6.) Writing the results (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This approach was used in this research to identify emerging themes in the open-ended responses, categorise the data into the themes for review and to enable it to be added to the software SPSS for further analysis. It was selected due to its flexible nature and ability to identify key themes that emerge from the data (Saunders, et al, 2019).

All data collected was securely stored on a password protected device that only the researcher has access to. The data will be stored for 5 years on the password protected device, in line with

National College of Ireland's data retention policy. Once this timeframe is passed, the data will be securely destroyed.

4.5 Demographical Breakdown of Sample

Table 1. Overview of Sample Demographics

Neurodiversity Type	Count	Gender	Count	Age Bracket	Count	Employment Type	Count
Only Formal diagnosis	17	Male	17	18 - 30	22	Employed Full-time	34
Entirely self-reported	14	Female	34	31 - 40	11	Employed Part-time	3
Both Formally Diagnosed and Self-reported	21	Prefer not to say	1	41 -50	11	Currently Unemployed	9
				51 - 60	4	In Further Education	6
				60+	4		

The following section reviews the results of the survey using SPSS software to complete the statistical analysis. There were 56 respondents with 4 exclusions leading to 52 participants' responses being analysed. Of the participants removed, 1 was excluded due to most of the questions not being completed by said participant and the remaining 3 chose no type of neurodiversity or selected the 'other' option, indicating that they were not neurodiverse and not eligible to participate.

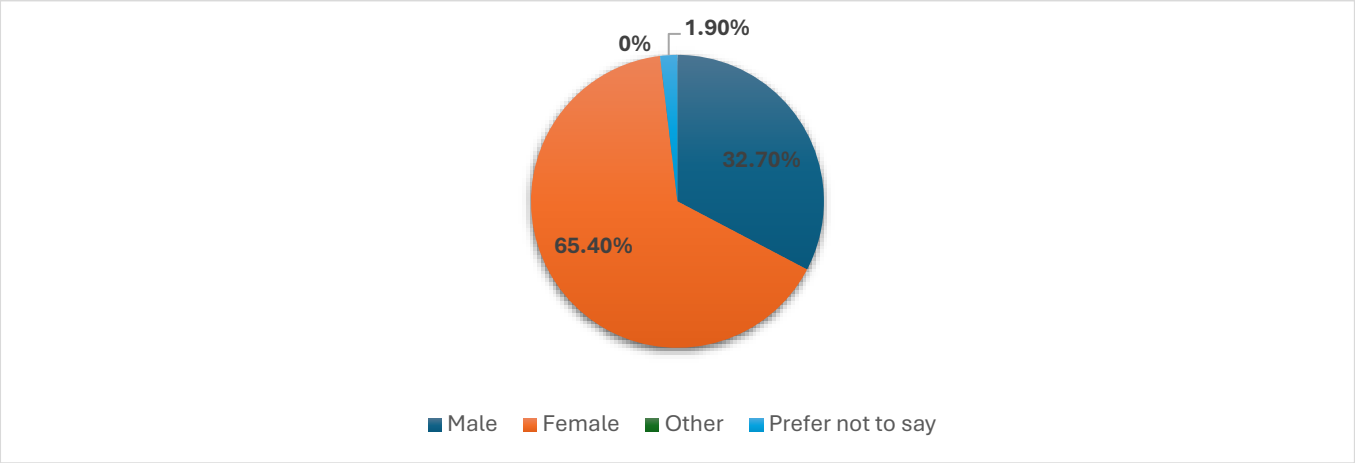

Figure 1. Gender Demographics of Sample

Of the sample 65.4% were female, 32.7% were male and 1 participant selected 'prefer not to say'. The survey did not record geographical information. The age profile of the sample was captured, and a significant portion of the sample fell into the age brackets 18-30 (42.3%), 31-40 (21.2%) and 41-50 (21.2%). The survey also collected the participants current employment situation with 65.4% of the participants selecting currently in full time employment. Further to

that, 17.3% of participants reported to be currently unemployed but do have experience within the workforce. The remainder of the sample selected either currently in full time education or part time work.

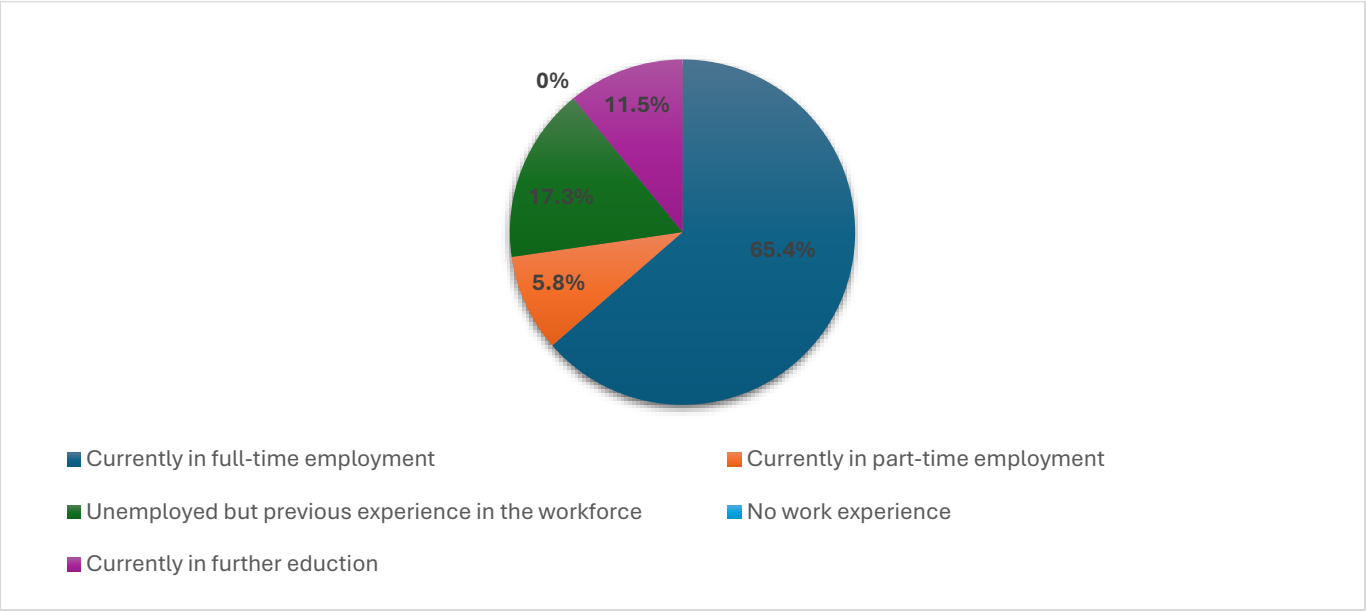

Figure 2. Employment Demographics of Sample

As this study seeks to measure the experience of neurodiverse individuals in the workforce, both formally diagnosed individuals and self-identified individuals were encouraged to participate in the survey. The survey collected information regarding the type of neurodiversity one had with 8 options listed. These conditions are 1) Autism spectrum disorder, 2) Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), 3) Dyslexia, 4) Dyspraxia, 5) Dysgraphia, 6) Dyscalculia, 7) Intellectual disabilities and 8) Other. Participants were asked to identify with each selection if they had received a formal diagnosis.

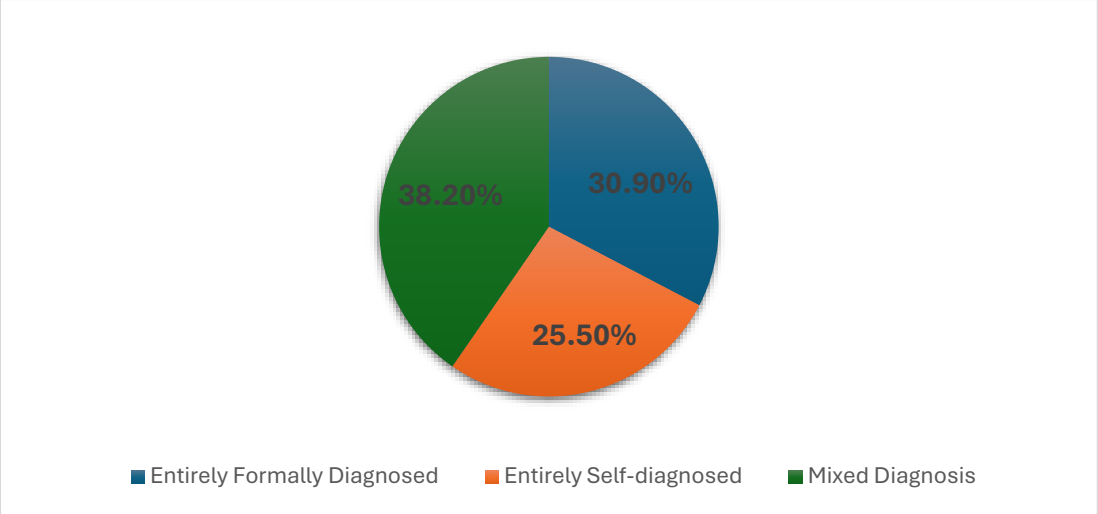

Figure 3. Neurodiversity Type Demographics of Sample

Although the neurodiverse conditions were identified, they have been combined for the purposes of this research into 3 categories, participants with only formal diagnosis of a neurodiverse condition, participants who are entirely self-identified and participants with a mix of formal diagnosis and self-reported conditions.

Of the 52 responses analysed, 17 of the participants were entirely formally diagnosed, 14 were entirely self-identified and the remaining 21 participants were mixed in that they had received at least one formal diagnosis and self-reported at least one other neurodiverse condition.

Chapter 5 Data Analysis and Findings

5.1 Reliability of the Current Study

This following portion of the report assesses the reliability of the composites measured using Cronbach's alpha.

The scales measured in this survey are organisational understanding, employee experience, camouflaging, inclusion and development and progression.

Table 2. Internal Reliability of the Current Study

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Organisational Understanding	0.604
Employee Experience	0.928
Camouflaging	0.677
Inclusion	0.814
Development & Progression	0.739

When the reliability test was run on the organisational understanding scale the Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.604. Ideally, the Cronbach's alpha would be 0.7 or higher however 0.604 is acceptable for this research.

The Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.928 when the reliability test was run on the employee experience scale. This suggests that this measure is of strong reliability.

The Cronbach's alpha for the camouflaging scale was found to be 0.677 when the reliability test was run. This result is short of the ideal 0.7, however it is close enough to be considered acceptable for this research.

The inclusion scale had a Cronbach's alpha 0.814 when the reliability test was run, suggesting that the measure is of strong reliability.

The final scale is development and progression, and Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.739 when the reliability test was run, deeming this measure to be reliable.

In summation, all 5 scales were found to be reliable when tested using Cronbach's alpha and are suitable for use in the study to provide consistent analysis.

5.2 Descriptive Statistics

5.2.a Frequency Statistics

Measure 1. Organisational Understanding

Table 3. Organisational Understanding of Neurodiversity Response Frequencies

Organisational Understanding	Valid	Excluded	1	2	3	4	5
To the best of your knowledge, neurodiversity is openly talked about in your organisation by management or leadership	52	0	18 (34.6%)	12 (23.1%)	10 (19.2%)	6 (11.5%)	6 (11.5%)
There is a general awareness across the organisation about what neurodiversity is and why it's important	52	0	13 (25.0%)	16 (30.8%)	12 (23.1%)	7 (13.5%)	4 (7.7%)
I feel included in the organisations equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives	52	0	12 (23.1%)	14 (26.9%)	13 (25.0%)	7 (13.5%)	6 (11.5%)
I feel my organisation could do more to support neurodiversity	52	0	2 (3.8%)	5 (9.6%)	7 (13.5%)	13 (25.0%)	25 (48.1%)
I feel my organisation could do more to promote neurodiversity	52	0	3 (5.8%)	2 (3.8%)	5 (9.6%)	13 (25.0%)	29 (55.8%)

My colleagues understand how to support me and other employees who are neurodiverse	52	0	17 (32.7%)	18 (34.7%)	7 (13.5%)	7 (13.5%)	3 (5.8%)
My manager(s), past or present, understand how to support me and other employees who are neurodiverse	52	1	15 (28.8%)	15 (28.8%)	10 (19.2%)	9 (17.3%)	2 (3.8%)

The participants' perception of organisational understanding scale was measured on 7 items. Each item is a statement relating to how neurodiversity is viewed and treated in the workforce and participants were asked to what extent do they agree with it.

The most frequent response to the first statement was 1 (34.6%), indicating strong disagreement with the statement and 42.2% of participants selecting 2 or 3 for somewhat disagree or neither agree nor disagree.

The participants reported a negative perception of awareness of neurodiversity and its importance as only 7.7% strongly agreed and 13.5% somewhat agreed with the prompt and most of the responses reported some form of disagreement.

Similar response levels were recorded across option 1, 2 and 3 for the 3rd prompt, implying that a large selection of the participants does not feel included in their organisations EDI initiatives and the responses levels for the prompt *"I feel my organisation could do more to support neurodiversity",* consistently increase from 1 to 5, with the most selected responses being 4 (25.0%) and 5 (48.1%). These figures clearly show that over 70% of respondents don't believe that their organisation is doing enough to support neurodiversity. This trend was mirrored in the following prompt concerning the participants' perception of neurodiverse promotion with 25.0% of the participants agreeing and 55.8% strongly agreeing that their organisation could do more to promote it. The final 2 prompts in this scale are measuring if the participants' colleagues and managers understand how to support neurodiverse employees. These prompts received similar responses with participants selecting 1 for strongly disagree and 2 for somewhat disagree, as the most popular selections for both prompts.

Measure 2. Employee Experience

Table 4. Employee Experience Response Frequencies

Employee Experience	Valid	Excluded	1	2	3	4	5
I feel supported in the workplace in relation to my neurodiverse condition(s)	52	0	11 (21.2%)	15 (28.8%)	11 (21.2%)	9 (17.3%)	6 (11.5%)

I feel my needs are being met by in the workplace	52	1	16 (30.8%)	10 (19.2%)	11 (21.2%)	9 (17.3%)	5 (9.6%)
I feel comfortable talking about my neurodiversity in my workplace	52	0	11 (21.2%)	13 (25.0%)	6 (11.5%)	16 (30.8%)	6 (11.5%)
I feel comfortable asking for support or adjustments to support my needs in my workplace	52	0	14 (26.9%)	12 (23.1%)	10 (19.2%)	9 (17.3%)	7 (13.5%)

For the first item for employee experience, number 5 on the scale was the least selected option on the scale for item 1 followed by option 4, signifying a lack of perceived support from the workforce by the participants. This theme is echoed by item 2 where only 9.6% of the people surveyed strongly agreed that their needs are being met by their workplace.

The responses for item 3 were more staggered than the other items in this scale. Option 3 (neither agree nor disagree) and option 5 (strongly agree) were tied for the lowest scores at 11.5%, however, option 4 (agree) received the highest score for the scale at 30.8%, closely followed by option 2 (somewhat disagree) at 25.0%. The mixed results demonstrate the differing experiences of the participants and their differing levels of comfort in discussing their neurodiverse conditions.

The respondents also reported mixed experiences in relation to feeling comfortable asking for the relevant support for their needs. The most frequently selected option was 1, strongly disagree, at 26.9% and the least selected was 5, strongly disagree at 13.5% with the remaining respondents split amongst 2,3 and 4.

Measure 3. Camouflaging

Table 5. Camouflaging Response Frequencies

Camouflaging	**Valid**	**Excluded**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
When interacting with peers and colleagues, I feel I am being myself	52	0	6 (11.5%)	13 (25.0%)	12 (23.1%)	9 (17.3%)	12 (23.1%)
When interacting with peers and colleagues, I feel the need to perform to feel accepted socially	52	0	1 (1.9%)	4 (7.7%)	6 (11.5%)	22 (42.3%)	19 (36.5%)
I feel exhausted at the end of the workday	52	0	6 (11.5%)	13 (25.0%)	13 (25.0%)	11 (21.2%)	9 (17.3%)

The camouflaging scale was measured on 3 items with the intention of measuring to what extent the participants feel the need to camouflage neurodiverse behaviours in the workplace.

When participants were asked if they felt they were being themselves when interacting with peers and colleagues, the most selected response was 2, somewhat disagree with the statement with 25.0% of participants selecting this option. This was closely followed by option 3 & 5, neither agree nor disagree and strongly disagree with 23.1% of participants selecting this option. When asked if they need to feel the need to perform to be accepted socially, the responses clearly showed a strong concurrence with the statement as 42.3% of the respondents selected 4 for some agreement and 36.5% of the respondents strongly agreed. The most frequently selected item in the final item in the scale was tied between 3, neither agree nor disagree and 2, disagree with both receiving 25%.

Measure 4. Inclusion

Table 6. Inclusion Response Frequencies

Inclusion	Valid	Excluded	1	2	3	4	5
At work I feel lonely	52	0	5 (9.6%)	6 (11.5%)	15 (28.8%)	16 (30.8%)	10 (19.2%)
I feel included by my colleagues in day-to-day socialising in the workplace	52	0	6 (11.5%)	6 (11.5%)	15 (28.8%)	16 (30.8%)	9 (17.3%)
I feel included by my colleagues at work or social events	52	0	26 (50.0%)	5 (9.6%)	10 (19.2%)	3 (5.8%)	8 (15.4%)
I have experienced bullying and/or harassment at work due to my neurodiversity	52	0	2 (3.8%)	2 (3.8%)	6 (11.5%)	12 (23.1%)	30 (57.7%)
I feel my colleagues could be more sensitive to my neuro-differences	52	0	4 (7.7%)	7 (13.5%)	16 (30.8%)	13 (25.0%)	12 (23.1%)
I feel my colleagues could be more supportive of adjustments I need due to my neuro-differences	52	0	4 (7.7%)	5 (9.6%)	16 (30.8%)	17 (32.7%)	10 (19.2%)

The responses for the first statement in the inclusion scale were varied. The top 2 scoring responses were 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 4 (somewhat agree), in that order as 28.8% of respondents selected 3 and 30.8% selected 4.

Responses for the 2nd item regarding feeling included in day-to-day socialising, mirrored the first item with the most frequently selected items being 3 and 4 at 28.8% and 30.8% respectively.

The responses were very negative when asked if they felt included by colleagues at work or social events with 50.1% selecting strongly disagree and 19.2% choosing 3, neither agree nor disagree.

When asked if they had experienced workplace bullying or harassment due to their neurodiversity, the most selected option by the participants was 1, strongly disagree. Although the response was statistically negative, the implication is largely positive as it demonstrates a lack of negative experiences relating to neurodiversity in the workplace.

Of the participants , 30.8% selected option 3 for both the 5th and 6th prompt, regarding whether they felt their colleagues could be more sensitive or supportive in relation to their neuro-differences and needs indicating no opinion on the statement however the remaining majorities selected 4 and 5 on both prompts with 48.1% of the participants selecting some form of agreement on prompt 5 and 51.9% agreeing to some form of agreement on the 6th prompt.

Measure 5. Developmental and Progression

Table 7. Development and Progression Response Frequencies

Development and Progression	Valid	Excluded	1	2	3	4	5
My organisation provides me with developmental opportunities	52	0	11 (21.2%)	6 (11.5%)	12 (23.1%)	17 (32.7%)	6 (11.5%)
My organisation's training and development programmes supports me in developing my skills	52	0	15 (28.8%)	7 (13.5%)	14 (26.9%)	12 (23.1%)	4 (7.7%)
My organisation has good opportunities for my career progression and development	52	0	13 (25.0%)	5 (9.6%)	14 (26.9%)	13 (25.0%)	6 (11.5%)
My organisation's training and development programmes are adaptable to my needs	52	0	18 (34.6%)	9 (17.3%)	14 (26.9%)	8 (15.4%)	3 (5.8%)
My organisation's training and development programmes are adaptable to other neurodiverse employees needs	52	0	20 (38.5%)	9 (17.3%)	14 (26.9%)	7 (13.5%)	2 (3.8%)
I feel pressure to adjust my behaviour to progress in my career	52	0	6 (11.5%)	4 (7.7%)	6 (11.5%)	14 (26.9%)	22 (42.3%)

On the first statement for final measure, development and progression, 21.2% of the participants strongly disagreed that their organisation provides them with developmental opportunities whereas 23.1% neither agree nor disagreed and 32.7% agreed showing a very mixed perception. The second item queried the participants' perception of whether their organisations supported them in developing their skills, only 23.1% somewhat agreed and 7.7% strongly agreed with this statement and a significant portion with negative perception with a total

42.3% either somewhat or strongly disagreeing. Similar response levels can be seen in the 3rd prompt regarding career progression as only 25.0% selected 4 for agree and 11.5% selected 5 for strongly agree. When asked if their organisations training and development are adaptable to their needs, the most frequently selected option was 1 at 34.6% for strongly disagree. This was echoed in the following statement when asked if they thought the training and development programmes were adaptable for other neurodiverse employees where 38.5% selection strongly disagreed. The final statement participants were asked to rate was seeking to identify to what extent they felt the need to adjust their behaviour to progress. 26.9% of the participants somewhat agreed and 42.3% strongly disagreed with the statement indicating a pressure for employees to adjust their behaviours which may be idiosyncrasies relating to their neurodiverse conditions.

5.2.b Descriptive Variables

Table 8. Overview of Numerical Statistics of Measures

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Organisational Understanding	10	35	21.9	5.0
Employee Experience	4	20	10.8	4.9
Camouflaging	5	15	10.7	2.6
Inclusion	8	30	18.7	5.3
Development and Progression	8	28	17.1	5.2

The table above uses numerical statistics to outline the responses received for each of the 5 measures.

The score chart for each of the scales is as follows:

Organisational Understanding: 8 – 40 — Higher scores indicate that participants perception of organisational understanding of neurodiversity is high.

Employee Experience: 4 – 20 — Higher scores indicate that participations experience as neurodiverse employees is positive

Camouflaging: 3 – 15 — Higher scores indicate that participants feel strong need to camouflage their neurodiverse behaviours in the workplace

Inclusion: 6 – 30	Higher scores indicate that participants feel included in the workplace
Development and Progression: 6 – 30	Higher scores indicate that positively view their development and progression opportunities in their organisation

The first scale which sought to measure the participants' perceptions of organisational understanding of neurodiversity has a mean score of 21.99 which indicates the average score falls closer to the lower end of the scale. This implies that on average, the participants had a poor perception of the organisation's understanding of neurodiversity. The standard deviation score of 5 indicates that the variability of the scores is relatively low with many of the scores falling closely to the mean score.

The mean score for employee experience was 10.8, indicating that like in the first scale, the average score falls on the lower end of the scale. The standard deviation was 4.9, suggesting a low variability in the scores. These results imply that neurodiverse employees have a more negative experience in the workplace.

The results for the camouflaging scale represent an increased pressure on participants to camouflage their neurodiverse behaviours in the workplace as the mean score was 10.7 on a scale of 5 – 15, indicating that the average score is closer to the lower end of the scale.

Regarding the inclusion scale, the mean score was 18.7. As this shows the average score is closer to the higher end of the scale, it represents a positive perception of neuro-inclusion in the workplace amongst the participants. The standard deviation score of 5.3 indicates that most of the scores are clustered around the mean score of 18.7, either 5.3 above or below it, as the mean is closer to the higher end of the scale, the reduced variability of the standard deviation further supports the implication of a positive perception of inclusion.

The final scale measuring the participants' perception of development and progression had a mean score of 17. This indicates that the average score falls in the middle of the scale, implying a neutral perspective of the development and progression opportunities available to neurodiverse employees. While this response is not negative, it is not a positive response either, representing scope for improvement for organisations in this area.

5.2.c Thematic Analysis

Positive Accommodations

Participants were asked the following question.

"Can you please describe any accommodations that you have seen implemented in the workplace to support neurodiversity (yours or others) that you felt were positive or beneficial?"

This question resulted in 8 themes as outlined in the table below.

Table 9. Themes Identified Under Positive Accommodations

Theme	**%**	**Examples**
Have not come across any positive or beneficial accommodations	30.9%	Participant 7. *I have not personally seen any specific accommodations implemented in any of my previous workplaces or have knowledge of friends workplaces where supports for* Participant. *Have never received any. Was fired several times due to my not being able to cope with bullying, being screamed at by my boss, etc.*
Flexibility	12.7%	Participant 24. *Flexibility with working hours within reason* Participant 27. *I find it less distracting, and I can work on administrative tasks which I find difficult in the comfort of my own environment.*
Communication	5.5%	Participant 15. *My colleagues are good at communicating and responding with consideration and support.* Participant 48. *Written communication and reminders for events, time tabling changes, dates etc.*
Organisational Training	7.3%	Participant 17. *Corporate events and corporate communications bring focus to the issue of neurodiversity. Regular communication and reminders are important.* Participant 47. *While not through the lens of neurodiversity, there are some trainings and teaming events around different work styles.*
Supportive Tools	14.5%	Participant 31. *I have a slightly flexible start time (but it's because I still get my work done), noise cancelling earphones/plugs are allowed, many lights*

		are dimmed in my area and some people have desk lamps (but this is for a migraine sufferer) Participant 47. *Employees can request a quieter office or noise cancelling headphones if needed.* Participant 52. *We have a site that calls out Microsoft functionalities but it's very hidden.* Participant 46. *Fidget tools, sit/stand desk, job coaching*
Personal Accommodations	14.5%	Participant 12. *My boss sent a sign-up sheet for teachers to sign up for an event taking place on a Saturday. She signed me up for the first time slot in the position that I usually take so that I would get the time I work best in the position that I know how to do.* Participant ID 24. *Offers of help with workload allocations, time allowances for projects* Participant ID 41. *My supervisor developed a PDF form for my use. The original form was a written form and people had a great deal of difficulty reading my handwriting* Participant ID 45. *Optional teamwork, for those that like to do the work alone e had separate projects but that as a pilot and unfortunately hasn't continued*
Understanding and Openness	3.6%	Participant 36. *I told my boss it takes me a little longer than others to learn things and she has been very understanding of this.* Participant 37. *Basically, just willingness to listen and help.*
Clarity	3.6%	Participant 21. *I haven't asked for any accommodations. I do not know who to ask in the organisation. Or what type of accommodations I am entitled to.* Participant 11. *My current employer won't provide accommodations to the employer who are in neurodiversity.*

Negative Accommodations

Participants were asked the following question.

"Can you please describe any accommodations that you have seen implemented in the workplace to support neurodiversity (yours or others) that you felt were negative not impactful?"

This question resulted in 4 themes as outlined in the table below.

Table 10. Themes Identified Under Negative Accommodations

Theme	**%**	**Examples**
Have not come across any negative accommodations	83.6%	Participant 51. *I have not encountered any accommodations that were unhelpful.* Participant 2. *I have not experienced any negative accommodations.*
Difficulty accessing and/or following through on supports	9.1%	Participant 12. *A lot of times, accommodations are do-it-yourself. If you ask, most of the times they say no unless you prove that you fail to do what they want you to, and that's risking a write-up.* Participant 52. *Some managers have tech called Microsoft co-pilot. This would be very valuable to me but is not being made available even after I requested it. I am not getting a clear answer as to why I can't have it.* Participant 47. *I have been able to access some support but not enough to be on "equal footing" with other employees.*
Performative Support	3.6%	Participant 13. *Performative activism. Outdated language.* Participant 44. *The introduction of regular presentations and guest speakers on Neurodiversity, which has raised awareness, but doesn't seem to have much impact in the way people work other than to give upper management the sense that "we are an inclusive company, because with have speaker sessions on the subject". They appear to feel that is enough.*
Environmental issues	3.6%	Participant 34. *Lights to bright, office too bright, over sensory in general particularly in the group office. Creating schedules which help with routine but not sticking to them* Participant 45. *Open concept plan and facing each other in a circle to work*

Accommodations the participants would like to see introduced

Participants were asked the following question.

"Are there any recommendations or changes that you feel would support you and/or other neurodiverse individuals in the workplace that you would like to see implemented?"

This resulted in 9 themes as outlined below in the table below.

Table 11. Themes Identified Under Accommodations Participants Would Like Introduced

Theme	**%**	**Examples**
Awareness	16.4%	Participant 7. *I think simply talking about neurodiversity and doing basic workshops or presentations to even explain the main different types of neurodiversity people would be good at all workplaces to promote inclusivity.* Participant 2. *Equal opportunities legislation awareness.* Participant 36. *I think it should be talked about more and there should be more awareness of it instead of just autism awareness month* Participant 40. *Include ND employees and outside ND-affirming experts to educate all levels of the organisation and raise awareness* Participant 51. *A published action plan* Participant 27. *Awareness weeks in workplaces would be amazing. As a manager, I do feel less inclined to speak about my ADHD amongst more senior staff member for fear they would think I am less capable of carrying out my duties.*
Structured processes	9.1%	Participant 34. *Having a schedule and notes for meetings so as not to feel pressure to sustain eye contact* Participant 14. *Training being in written form or being allowed to make notes during training. Not being forced to fly or travel alone. Having a clear progression structure.* Participant 22. *It would probably also help me to have structured timelines and set ways of doing things with accountability to make sure I get the important things done*

Supportive tools	7.3%	Participant 13. *Better admin systems in place so that we don't have to rely on our own organisation at all times.* Participant ID 40. *Help ND employees and provide assistive tech tools, alternate work schedules, support, and understanding so that NDs may succeed, excel, and grow at work.* Participant ID 52**.** *Chat GPT style tech like co-pilot is what I needed, its widely available now and should be no issues to provide* Participant ID 4. Quiet desk space, mandatory breaks, quiet rooms Participant ID 44. *Embracing AI (e.g. ChatGPT) to help process information/documents. My company has restricted use of AI because of what they call "professional standards". However, the ability to ask AI to summarise a document, extract key points, proof-read what I've written etc would be massively valuable to me.*
Organisational training	14.5%	Participant 7. *Doing basic workshops or presentations to even explain the main different types of neurodiversity people would be good at all workplaces to promote inclusivity.* Participant 27. *I think it would be great through education and awareness for everyone to understand a neurodiversity does not mean you have a problem - but just that you operate differently.* Participant 47. *Training for leadership would also go a long way. It is a huge burden to feel like you need to educate HR about neurodivergence in order to access support*
Environmental Changes	5.5%	Participant 13. *Instead of white/blue light have warm coloured lights* Participant 34. *Quieter not so bright spaces.*
Flexibility	9.1%	Participant 13. *The ability to work online so we don't have to deal with an unsuitable environment; this would allow for better quality work.*

		Participant 4. *Greater accessibility of less than full time working hours* Participant 51**.** *Employees should be given as much opportunity to work from home as possible.* Participant 50. *The ability to take continuing educational trainings online vs in person*
Personalised accommodations	16.1%	Participant 49. *Training formats could be adapted.* Participant 45. *One approach never works for everyone, everyone knows what they need to thrive… ask* Participant 34. *Normalising taking walks during work hours to help with regulation.*
Understanding and Openness	18.2%	Participant 21. *A better basic understanding by HR and leadership of neurodiversity. I have heard a senior leader say, we need to get people back to the office so the ADHD people can get work done. That's the exact opposite of what they need!!!* Participant 25. *Greater understanding from managers, more open discussions to discuss which accommodations are best.* Participant 40. *Make it normative, not shameful or detrimental to careers for NDs to unmask. We Are Professionals who are wired differently, but we're still highly educated, experienced, and do great work.*
Increased Communication and Discussion	*12.7%*	Participant 52. *Make sure its talked about freely and part of on boarding and ongoing discussion in teams on learning styles and how people like to be treated.* Participant 31. *I've never heard a discussion of neurodivergence in my workplace, so I don't know what efforts have been done. If that was clearer, it would be great.*

		Participant 15. *Communication is so important. I'm fortunate, in that my language skills are quite good, even though my social skills are sometimes challenged - so I can explain to my boss and colleagues what's going on in my head.* Participant 17. *More senior leaders affected by neurodiversity identifying themselves...the leaders might not be neurodiverse themselves, but chances are they know someone who is*

5.3 Inferential Statistics

5.3.a Levene's Test for Equality of Variances in Gender

Table 12. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances in Gender

		Levene's Test				
		F	**Sig.**	**t**	**df**	**Two-sided p**
Organisational Understanding	Equal Variances assumed	4.417	0.042	0.918	39.000	0.364
	Equal Variances not assumed			1.066	38.937	0.293
Employee Experience	Equal Variances assumed	0.857	0.359	0.876	48.000	0.385
	Equal Variances not assumed			0.934	38.587	0.356
Camouflaging	Equal Variances assumed	0.000	0.985	-1.470	49.000	0.148
	Equal Variances not assumed			-1.463	31.667	0.153
Inclusion	Equal Variances assumed	0.412	0.524	-2.490	49.000	0.016
	Equal Variances not assumed			-2.565	34.739	0.015
Development and Progression	Equal Variances assumed	0.321	0.574	0.412	48.000	0.682

	Equal Variances not assumed	0.393	28.655	0.697

A Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was run on each composite to establish is there was any difference in the perception of each measure between male and females. The measures for organisational understanding of neurodiversity, employee experience, camouflaging and development and progression resulted in a null hypothesis, confirming there is no significant difference in the perception or experience of these measures between male and female neurodiverse individuals.

However, when tested, the inclusion measure resulted in a significant difference, T(49) = -2.49, p = 0.016, resulting in an alternative hypothesis, there is a difference between the perception of inclusion in the workplace between neurodiverse males and females.

5.3.b ANOVA Test for Differences Between Formal and Informal Diagnosis

Table 13. ANOVA Test for Differences Between Neurodiversity Types

ANOVA		df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Organisational Understanding	Between Groups	2	19.847	0.786	0.463
Employee Experience	Between Groups	2	19.235	0.786	0.461
Camouflaging	Between Groups	2	13.026	2.032	0.142
Inclusion	Between Groups	2	48.454	1.783	0.179
Development and Progression	Between Groups	2	21.137	0.76	0.473

This study compared the perception and experience of the neurodiverse employee on 3 levels and resulted in the below hypothesis for testing.

Hypothesis: Neurodiverse individuals with a formal diagnosis and self-reported condition experience and perceive the workforce differently from their counterparts who are entirely formally diagnosed or entirely self-reported

To compare the means of the 3 groups and test the hypothesis, a one-way ANOVA was conducted.

There were no statistically significant differences between group means as determined by one-way ANOVA for any of the 5 measures. For example, the inclusion measure resulted in [F(2,49) =

1.783, p = 0.179], a statistically insignificant result and a null hypothesis. This indicates that there is no difference in the experience and perception of the workforce between neurodiverse individuals with a formal diagnosis and self-reported condition experience and their counterparts who are entirely formally diagnosed or entirely self-reported.

Chapter 6. Discussion

The following chapter reviews the findings that emerged from the results and discusses them in depth. It identifies connections with the theories and information outlined in the literature review that informed this research and recognising the impact the findings of this study may have on past and future research.

6.1.a Research Objective 1.

To what extent do organisations understand and support their neurodiverse employees presently?

Analysis in table 8 indicates that there is a low perception of organisational understanding amongst the participants. These results imply that organisations are not currently displaying a strong understanding of what neurodiversity is or the complexities associated with it.

This is further supported by the analysis of table 3 which identifies the frequency of the responses for organisational understanding. Evaluation of this table suggests that neurodiversity is not a topic that is openly discussed at a senior level within the workplace, contributing to a reduced understanding of the topic.

Additionally, the results demonstrate a lack of understanding amongst the wider workforce in how to approach support and accommodations for neurodiverse employees. This combined with the poor perception of the level of support organisations are currently offering in relation to neurodiversity represents that these organisations are not showing sufficient support to neurodiverse employees, but also, they may not necessarily know how to support them due to inadequate understanding of the topic. The deficiencies identified in the understanding and support from leadership in this study correlates with the failings of adequate leadership outlined in the literature review. The findings of this study indicate that the absence of understanding neurodiversity on a senior level can lead to management being underqualified to effectively support their neurodiverse subordinates, leading to a toll being taken on both the neurodiverse employee and neuro-typical manager. This finding is in line with Kuknor and Kumar's (2023)

suggestion that LT&D initiatives should include training to provide employees with the skills they need to proactively support their diverse colleagues.

Organisational support was further explored through the development and progression opportunities that they offer their neurodiverse employees. Analysis of table 8 indicates a moderate perception of the opportunities available to the participants although the evaluation of table 7 provides a more detailed insight into the participants perception of them available opportunities. This evaluation highlights a very unfavourable view of L,T&D activities as many respondents find them to be unadaptable to their diverse needs, illustrating a weakness in organisations ability to adapt to suit the needs of their neurodiverse employees and therefore adversely affect their developmental opportunities. This may speak to the gap identified in the literature review relating to neurodiversity within L,T&D as there is a lack of resources for organisations to refer to when developing these initiatives.

Conversely, further analysis of the results implies that there is a moderate perception of developmental and career progression opportunities. These results reveal that although there are opportunities for neurodiverse employees to progress in the workplace, there is room for expansion of these opportunities and the training programmes in organisations that should support this progression are not fit for purpose in relation to the neurodiverse employee.

The analysis of this objective presents mixed findings. Issues regarding organisational understanding of neurodiversity have been identified however the perception of the developmental and progression opportunities is moderate. When the items are looked at on an individual level, some do represent a more positive perception of the opportunities available to them but overall, the supports in place currently are not sufficient.

The findings of this study when relating to the 1st research objective, firstly illustrate a significant scope for organisations to improve their understanding of neurodiversity. This needs to be addressed on 2 levels, 1. management and leadership and 2. the general population of the workforce. Secondly, while opportunities for neurodiverse employees do not appear to be inherently poor, there is room for improvement to better support the neurodiverse employee

6.1.b Research Objective 2.

Do neurodivergent employees have a positive experience in the workforce?

Although employee experience had a scale dedicated specifically to it, for the purpose of evaluating the employee experience with a holistic view of the contributing factors, this objective also looks at other contributory factors to experience, camouflaging and inclusion.

Upon analysis of table 8, it can be understood that the experience of the neurodivergent employee is not positive but generally negative thus resulting in an alternative hypothesis, neurodiverse employees do not have a positive experience in the workforce. This is supported by the analysis of table 4, which demonstrates that organisations are failing to meet the needs and requirements of their neurodiverse employees and are continuing to fail by not creating an environment where neurodiverse people feel comfortable discussing their neuro-differences or asking for support or adjustments when their needs are not being met.

The analysis of table 8 indicates that individuals in the workforce feel an increased pressure to hide their neurodiverse behaviours when in the workplace. This added weight to conceal behavioural traits associated with their conditions negatively contributes to the employee experience by increasing levels of exhaustion and social pressure as indicated in table 5.

Although this measure has not been examined for this question, it's important to note that the increased pressure to camouflage has also been detected under development and progression. The findings in table 7 highlight a perceived need to alter behaviour to progress professionally, indicating that there is a perceived bias or prejudice against neurodivergent employees acting as a barrier in advancing in their careers.

The results outlined in table 8 relating to inclusiveness represent a positive experience amongst neurodiverse employees and indicate that they generally do feel included in the workforce despite their neuro-differences. However, analysis of table 6 indicates while they generally feel included in the workforce, there is a portion of neurodiverse employees that still feel lonely within it. The conflicting findings may signify a deeper issue relating to the mental health of neurodiverse individuals. Or it may speak to a lack of understanding of neurodiversity as identified in objective 1. Although neurotypical employees are including their neurodiverse

colleagues in social interactions, they may not fully understand them, contributing to feelings of loneliness despite general inclusion. Overall, further research is required to identify the root causes of loneliness amongst the neurodiverse community in the workplace.

Another conflicting finding identified in the analysis of table 6 is that over half of the participants have experienced bullying or harassment in the workplace that they perceive to be due to or related to their neurodiverse conditions. This would imply a workforce that is not tolerant or inclusive of neuro-differences however the overall result for inclusion is that neurodiverse employees generally do feel comfortable in the workplace. These results provide an extensive review of inclusion and emphasise that while inclusion is not a major issue in the workforce, bullying and harassment are a key issue that organisations must examine and seek to rectify.

Considering the findings used to measure the complete employee experience, the analysis of the results from this study demonstrate that neurodiverse employees don't have a positive experience in the workforce. This highlights an opportunity for organisations to work to improve the work life of its neurodiverse employees.

6.1.c Research Objective 3.

Is there a difference between the experience and perception of the workforce between neurodiverse individuals with a formal diagnosis versus those without a formal diagnosis who self-identify as neurodivergent?

Analysis of table 13 clearly indicates there is no difference in perception or experience of the workplace between individuals with only a formal diagnosis, those with only self-diagnosis and those with a mixture of both formal and self-reported neurodiverse conditions. The analysis found no disparities relating to their perception of organisational understanding, employee experience, camouflaging, inclusion and development and progression.

These results imply that regardless of the formality of one's diagnosis or condition, neurodiverse individuals are sharing the same lived experience in the workforce which we know from research objective 2's results are largely negative. These findings support previous studies which found that participants gave similar responses regardless of the formality of their conditions diagnosis (Sturm, *et al*, 2024) and people without a formal diagnosis generally mirrored those with one in several areas such as employment or challenges (McDonalds, 2020). The results of this study give further weight and support to the validity of the self-identified neurodiverse experience as

these results indicate that neurodiverse individuals are generally experiencing and perceiving the workforce in the same light regardless of the formality of their diagnosis.

Similarly, the Levene's test of equal variances returned a null hypothesis regarding differences between genders, males and females, for the same scales bar one, inclusion. This result provides an alternative hypothesis indicating that there is a difference between males and females in the perception of neuro-inclusion in the workforce. This may be a result of disparities between males and females tendency towards masking neurodiverse behaviours and the effect it may have on their feelings of inclusion.

6.1.d Research Question.

What steps can employers take to tailor their organisational learning and training programmes to positively impact a neurodiverse employee's experience in the workforce?

The results of this study show that the participants don't have a positive perception of organisations understanding of neurodiversity, have a moderate perception of their development and progression opportunities and a generally poor experience. There is a clearly identified gap in the organisational actions that are being taken in relation to a positive neurodiverse employee experience and considerable opportunities for organisations to improve the landscape for neurodiverse individuals. To bridge the gap, this study collected positive and negative experiences from participants of accommodations, initiatives and supports they have encountered and would like to see implemented. Analysis of those responses resulted in several themes which are highlighted across tables 9, 10 and 11.

Through the analysis of table 9 which outlines positive recommendations, 8 themes emerged. A key theme 'Have not come across any positive or beneficial accommodations' indicated that there is a serious portion of neurodiverse employees that have not encountered any initiatives they felt to be genuinely positive or beneficial or may not have come across any initiatives relating specifically to neurodiversity at all. Either way, this implies that organisations are not adequately implementing programmes that positively benefit their neurodiverse employees or sufficiently including neurodiversity in their equality, diversity and inclusion strategies.

Another key theme that emerged from the analysis of table 10 was relating to difficulty accessing and/or following through on supports. These findings indicate that there are barriers in organisations that are preventing the neurodiverse employees from accessing the

accommodations they are entitled to and require to support them in effectively fulfilling their duties despite their neuro-differences.

This theme is further supported by the theme 'clarity' identified in table 9 that suggested that there is a knowledge gap amongst neurodiverse individuals regarding the accommodations and supports that they are both eligible and entitled to. Although it may not fall under the breadth of learning and training programmes, taking an active approach to conveying and repeating both the legal entitlements and any other organisational supports that are available to employees is imperative to better support the employee experience for neurodiverse individuals.

'Organisational training' was a key theme that emerged over the 3 open-ended questions that were asked of participants and 14.5% of the participants selected it as an accommodation that they would like to see introduced.

'Increased communication and discussion' and 'understanding and openness' were two of the biggest themes identified in the analysis of table 11. These are complimentary themes as emerging from both themes is a distinct longing to make discussing their neurodiversity and associated needs a natural and regular topic in the workplace but lack of understanding and a possible sense of being a taboo or private subject prevent this. The findings of this study suggest that neurodiverse individuals need to see a greater understanding of neurodiversity and open discussions about the topic from leadership (as outlined in objective 1), human resource management and their everyday colleagues. The implication is that if organisations can foster a more empathetic environment through a greater understanding of neurodiversity and its complexities, that neurodiverse employees may feel more at ease discussing their conditions and needs, therefore improving their experience.

This closely links with another key theme identified from the analysis of table 11, 'awareness'. Evaluation of the responses that fell under this theme speak to the weak perception of neurodiversity understanding amongst organisations and the need for organisations to make neurodiversity awareness and understanding a priority in their EDI initiatives and learning, training and development programmes. A theme that emerged from the analysis of both table 9 and 11 was organisational training. This closely aligns with the awareness theme as the responses from participants for each of them crossed over significantly. Its suggested that

organisations that invest in education for its employees relating to neurodiversity will in turn increase the awareness amongst the workforce.

The final key theme that emerged in the analysis phase of this study suggests an increased demand for personalised accommodations in the workplace. This was identified in the analysis of tables 9 and 11. Examples across these themes included the use of artificial intelligence and supportive software, the use of quiet rooms or noise cancelling headphones, adapted training methods, environmental changes and many more. The variety of accommodations suggested by the participants illustrate the wide breadth of types of accommodations that different neurodiverse individuals may require in the workplace. It can be understood from the analysis that by making personalised accommodations a possibility in the workplace, neurodiverse employee's experience can be drastically improved as can their performance as the adjustments can be tailored to the needs of the relevant employee. However, considering this with the poor understanding of neurodiversity identified in this study, it can be assumed that organisations do not have a strong comprehension of the varied supports they could facilitate.

From the themes identified in this study and the results from the measures, it suggests that organisations need to place more emphasis on neurodiversity among their equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives. However, the results of this study suggest that they need to take a more holistic approach to educating their workforce on the topic to include not only tolerance and understanding but also provide management and employees at all levels the tools to pro-actively support their neurodivergent colleagues and subordinates. Incorporating topics and programmes relating to active listening and understanding may better enable employees to understand and engage with their neurodiverse counterparts and work towards creating a more inclusive culture in which neurodiverse employees access the support they need to better their experience.

6.2 Key Findings

Several key findings have emerged from the results of this study.

1. There is a poor perception of organisational understanding of neurodiversity amongst neurodiverse individuals.

The average response from the participants regarding organisational understanding indicated that they believe that there is a lack of understanding from organisations when it relates to

neurodiversity. This is demonstrated by the mean score of 21.9 and could be a contributing factor to the poor results relating to experience in the workforce.

2. There is no difference in the perception or experience of the workforce between individuals who have received a formal diagnosis of a neurodiverse condition versus those who self-identify

The literature review highlighted the community of individuals who are self-identifying with a form of neurodiversity and the questions regarding the validity of these reports. This study supports previous studies results that found no difference in the responses between formally diagnosed individuals and self-reported (Sturm, *et al*, 2024) as the results of this study indicate a null hypothesis.

3. Neurodiverse individuals do not currently have a positive experience within the workforce

The average response to the employee experience measure was negative with a mean score of 10.8. These results suggest that the participants in this study have not had a positive experience in the workforce which is further supported by the camouflaging scale responses. This affords organisations the opportunity to do a comprehensive review of their policies and practices and implement meaningful changes to create an increased neuro-inclusive environment.

4. There are numerous issues in the workplace that hinder a neuro-inclusive environment that must be addressed.

Participants of this study highlighted a lack of understanding, communication, and accessible accommodations in the workplace that contribute to the poor experience that neurodiverse individuals have. They also highlighted methods and approaches that organisations can take to rectify the issues, including diversifying organisational learnings to incorporate themes and topics that will teach neuro-typical employees and leaders how to approach and support neurodivergent employees in a sensitive and constructive way.

Chapter 7. Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

This study assessed the perception of organisational understanding, employee experience, camouflaging, inclusion and development and progression opportunities by neurodiverse individuals in the workforce to identify how organisations can support neurodiverse employees through learning, training and development. The results of the research found that organisational understanding is perceived as poor and must be addressed through the LT&D initiatives to improve the neurodiverse employee experience. Having a formal diagnosis was found to have no impact on the experience of a neurodiverse employee when compared to those who are self-identified, and the overall experience of neurodiverse employees is inherently negative.

Organisational education and awareness were key themes that emerged from the findings, implying that LT&D and EDI initiatives do not currently go far enough and must be invested in to increase neurodiverse understanding within organisations. Other key themes included communication and openness, suggesting that targeting these topics for improvement is important to improving the neurodiverse experience.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that there is improvement required in multiple areas and a holistic approach to LT&D is required to accurately target these areas to better the landscape of the workforce for the neurodivergent individual.

7.2 Theoretical Implications of Research

The results of this study suggest several theoretical implications outlined below.

1. The formality of one's neurodiverse diagnosis has no bearing on their experience
2. The perception of neuro-inclusion in the workplace differs between genders, which may be a result of differing perceived pressures to camouflage.
3. Attaining an improved understanding of neurodiversity at an organisational level, may improve the experience of the neurodiverse employee.
4. There may be a link between neurodiversity and feelings of loneliness.

7.3 Limitations

Neurodiverse individuals could be classed as a 'hard to reach' group in research due to the ethical and procedural barriers associated with vulnerable groups (Duvnjak, 2013). Research

should strive to give voice to the community in question and not quieten or deny their voice by over-safeguarding them. However, care must be taken when conducting research relating to these groups, by representing them in the most honest way possible (Drewett and O'Reilly, 2023).

A significant portion of the neurodiverse community fear potential stigma if they disclose their neuro-differences (Neurodiversity in Business, 2023), while the survey conducted for this research is anonymous with no identifiable information collected, this still may lead to reduced participation.

Time and access presented as a clear limitation and barrier for the researcher accessing the sample participants. The survey was published and shared publicly however due to a low response rate, it needed to be positioned in spaces that directly reached the neurodiverse community. The researcher reached out to 43 closed community groups on Facebook dedicated to neurodiversity to request access and explain the reason for joining. Each group took varying times to accept or reject the researchers request and once accepted, each group had to approve the content before the survey could be posted to the group, delaying the process.

7.4 Practical Recommendations

1. The result of the study implies that neurodiverse individuals experience the workplace the same way regardless of the formality of their condition's diagnosis. Based on these findings, organisations should consider giving all individuals who identify with neurodiversity the same access to support and accommodations.
2. Based on the findings of this study, organisations should consider examining and amending their LT&D initiatives to place a focus on neurodiversity to educate employees at all levels about the topic and increase the understanding across the organisation. The findings suggest that by attaining an improved understanding of neurodiversity at an organisational level, the experience of the neurodiverse employee may also be improved.

7.5 Recommendations for Future Research

1. The limited sample size of this study may not be sufficient to provide significant results but do offer an opportunity for further research to validate or invalidate to further test the findings of this study with a larger sample.

2. The disadvantages associated with a limited sample are particularly significant in relation to the finding suggesting there is no difference between neurodiverse perceptions of the workplace regardless of the formality of the diagnosis. Although this supports the results of previous studies, it should be noted that research in this topic is minimal and further exploration is required.
3. Given the support and accommodations those with a formal diagnosis are eligible to by law, further research may be required to investigate possible disparities in available supports between formally diagnosed and self-identified neurodivergent individuals and any associated implications.
4. Loneliness was detected amongst the participants despite a general feeling of inclusion in the workplace, suggesting there may be other factors contributing to feelings of loneliness amongst the neurodiverse community. Further research opportunities could be gleaned from this finding as the root cause was not identified in this study.

Chapter 8. CIPD Recommendations and Personal Learning Statement

8.1 CIPD Recommendations

The following recommendations emerged from the findings of this study. They aim to improve the work-life of neurodiverse individuals in the workplace by presenting well thought out, realistic and sustainable solutions to resolve some of the key issues highlighted in the study's results. It's important to note the vastness of the neurodiverse community and that it encompasses many neurodiverse conditions with differing needs within the workplace. Although these recommendations aim to support organisations in taking positive steps in the right direction, they will not be sufficient to meet all needs.

Recommendation 1. Organisational Training.

The theme of organisational training was prevalent in the findings, both in positive previous experiences and accommodations that the participants would like to see implements. The theme of understanding and openness to neurodiversity also emerged with some participants reporting positive experiences of openness and understanding surrounding neurodiversity and others reporting a strong need for it.

AsIAM, Ireland's registered autism charity offers training to employers on how to make the organisation 'autism friendly' and it can be tailored to the specific needs of the business. This is an accredited course and organisations that complete it receive a digital badge that they can display on their websites as a symbol of neuro-inclusion (AsIAM, 2024).

A training workshop with AsIAm will last 90 minutes and can be arranged with immediate effect. The cost of the course is €650 when delivered in person and €500 when delivered online, rendering it an adaptable, cost-effect option for organisations that want to increase their neuro-inclusion.

Recommendation 2. Quiet Spaces

Another theme that emerged from the report was the benefit of quiet spaces in the office for when the environment may be overwhelming. There are several options for how organisations may be able to implement this with differing financial implications and time frames.

Option 1. Quiet Rooms using existing spaces.

If the organisation has a room or multiple rooms that are not in use presently, they could consider designating one to become a quiet room with rules that prohibit talking and laptops or devices can only be used with the volume turned off. This room would allow employees to avoid the noise of an office when needed.

This is a cost-effective option for companies but is only viable for offices with available rooms.

Financial implications could be €0 depending on the suitability of the room and assuming no furniture needs to be purchased. If the room is not suitable at present costs may include for furniture, paint, lighting, etc. depending on what resources need to be sourced.

This readiness of the room also affects the timeline for implementing the recommendation. If the room is suitable and equipped with the necessary furniture it could be ready to be used within the space of 1 week however it requires refurbishing, the timeline will depend on the severity of the needs.

Option 2. Soundproof office Pods

The second option for a quiet space is purchasing a soundproof pod for the office. These pods come in a range of sizes to suit the needs of the organisation. The pods are only suitable for organisations with a significant amount of open floor space to accommodate them. They also

have the added benefit of doubling up on their usage. They can be used as a quiet space or when not in use, they can be used to conduct private or confidential meetings due as they are soundproofed.

They range in cost depending on size and specifications, however the below is an example pod would be the Narbutas S Silent Room, a 1-man soundproof pod from Hunt Offices. It starts at €4,750 and can be altered to the required specifications. Ordering to installation of the pod is approx. 6 weeks (Hunt Offices, 2024).

Option 3. Soundproof Headphones

If the organisation does not have the space or financial resources to allocate a room to a quiet room or put a soundproof pod into place, introducing soundproof headphones as available equipment could be implemented. While they don't deal with the whole environment, they may support employees who struggle with the noise levels in an office. These are a significantly cheaper alternative and can be implemented almost immediately.

For example, the Vanderfields Ear Defenders for Adults are designed to neutralise noise. The cost is €20.18 per unit making them a cost-effective option for offices. They can be delivered within 3 days making them the fastest option for implementation.

Recommendation 3. Transparent Procedures and Liaison Officer

3.A Publishing Company Literature With Clear Accommodation Eligibility Criteria and Procedure

Only 14.5% choose 'strongly agree' with the statement "I feel comfortable asking for support or adjustments to support my needs in my workplace", one participant reported that they did not know what accommodations they were entitled to, and another participant reported that they felt the process for seeking accommodations was 'off putting". Neurodiverse employees should be aware of the accommodations and support available to them and how to proceed in requesting them. Publishing new or updated literature clearly outlining the types of accommodations and supports the organisation offers with a straightforward clear, streamlined process for accessing these could reduce the ambiguity in the process and reservations employees may have in requesting support.

The timeline and financial implications for this recommendation are unclear as they will vary for each organisation and depend on what resources are already in place. For organisations with

support and comprehensive processes already in place, it may take no more than several hours to review the procedures and re-publish on the company website and/or send a communications email to all the staff.

However other organisations with lacklustre processes in place may take several weeks to review and streamline processes before publishing. In this scenario, the main financial cost involved is the time the employees involved in the project spend on it. Other financial costs may include if the organisation needs to seek third party guidance while writing procedures, for example reaching out to the As I Am charity for training and support. Costs associated with that support are noted in recommendation 1.

3.B Liaison Officer

Appointing a member of the human resource management team as a liaison officer for neurodiversity may help the process run smoothly for employees seeking out the support outlined in the company literature. The position could be assigned to an existing member of the team and the role focused singularly on neurodiversity or it may be amalgamated into a wider equality, diversity and inclusion officer role. The time frame for putting this recommendation in place should coincide with the time frame associated with publishing the literature relating to accommodations and supports in place as the literature should include the officers name and contact information. Participants in this study highlighted a need for a specific contact in the human resource team to contact about supports and recognised the difficulties some neurodivergent individuals have completing forms and admin relating to accessing supports. Having a person with a focus on supporting these employees as they seek out support should simplify the process and encourage employees to seek the support they require.

Should this position be assigned to an existing member of staff as an additional responsibility, the financial implications involved refer to the time spent on the role in relation to their salary.

Should a full EDI officer be recruited, the financial implications involved are the cost of recruitment and selection, training and induction and their salary. While salary will vary depending on the organisation, an example of a current position in the market is the Irish Museum Association who are recruiting a full-time EDI officer with a salary of €56,556 (gross) per annum (Irish Museum Association, 2024). The recruitment and selection, training and

induction period will also affect the timeframe for implementing the role and vary depending on the organisation.

8.2 CIPD Personal Learning Statement

In undertaking this research, I have gained a deeper insight into the experience of the neurodivergent individual and the hardships and barriers they face both in and out of the workforce. It is clear to me from the literature that I read and the research I undertook that despite the increased focus on inclusion in the workforce and society, neurodiversity is still underrepresented and undervalued.

While I was aware of the diverse nature of neurodiversity and the number of conditions grouped under the term, I feel I have gained an enhanced understanding of neuro-differences and idiosyncrasies involved and hope that understanding leads to greater tolerance and patience in myself as I progress in work and life.

Regarding the research, I am confident that I have gained analytical skills and an improved ability to critically think, read and evaluate data. I have immense admiration for anyone who undertakes a research study of this size. I struggled with research methods, understanding the philosophies and what best suited my study, but I am thankful for the experience that it gave me and the satisfaction of completing the study with a stronger understanding of the research process. If I were to continue in academia and take on another research project, I know I would still have a lot to learn and improve upon however this project has undoubtedly given me the confidence in my skills to try. I struggled with the data analysis tool, SPSS. I am not naturally inclined towards statistics and mathematics and found this portion of the study very difficult. However, in using the software I learnt more about my ability and was able to gain a deeper understanding of the data I had collected.

While this research project has been challenging and all-consuming, I have no regrets and strongly believe that this experience will stand to me in many aspects of my life going forward.

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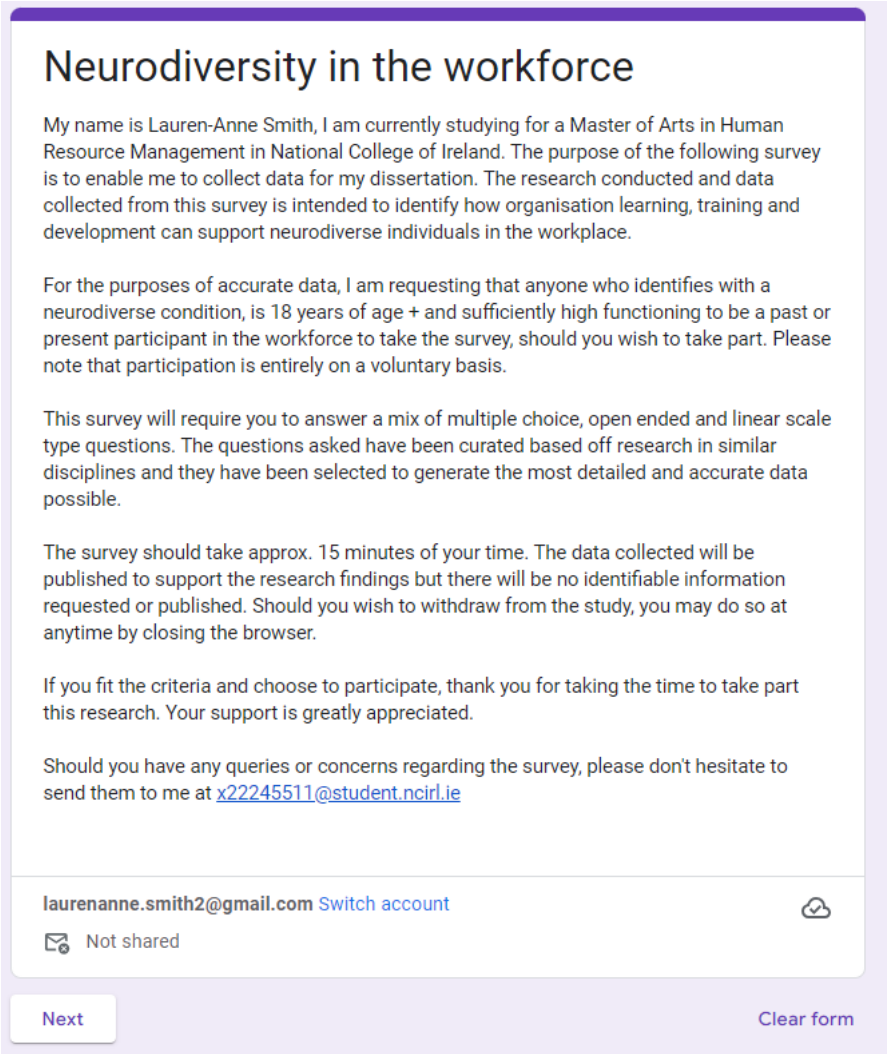
Chapter 9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1. Survey



Neurodiversity in the workforce

My name is Lauren-Anne Smith, I am currently studying for a Master of Arts in Human Resource Management in National College of Ireland. The purpose of the following survey is to enable me to collect data for my dissertation. The research conducted and data collected from this survey is intended to identify how organisation learning, training and development can support neurodiverse individuals in the workplace.

For the purposes of accurate data, I am requesting that anyone who identifies with a neurodiverse condition, is 18 years of age + and sufficiently high functioning to be a past or present participant in the workforce to take the survey, should you wish to take part. Please note that participation is entirely on a voluntary basis.

This survey will require you to answer a mix of multiple choice, open ended and linear scale type questions. The questions asked have been curated based off research in similar disciplines and they have been selected to generate the most detailed and accurate data possible.

The survey should take approx. 15 minutes of your time. The data collected will be published to support the research findings but there will be no identifiable information requested or published. Should you wish to withdraw from the study, you may do so at anytime by closing the browser.

If you fit the criteria and choose to participate, thank you for taking the time to take part this research. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Should you have any queries or concerns regarding the survey, please don't hesitate to send them to me at x22245511@student.ncirl.ie

laurenanne.smith2@gmail.com Switch account

Not shared

Next Clear form

Consent form

If you wish to participate in the survey, we must receive consent to enable me to use the data from your answers in the research. Please confirm your consent by selecting the the required boxes below. Before consenting, please ensure that you have read and understood the nature of the study and what is required of you before continuing to the survey. By ticking the boxes you are confirming that you have read the information sheet to this research and are consenting to participate. All data will be confidential and will be stored with secure servers on a password-protected computer. The information will only be accessed by myself, Lauren-Anne Smith, and my research supervisor.

The data collected will be published to support the research findings but there will be no identifiable information requested or published.
Participation is entirely voluntary and should you wish to withdraw from the survey at any point during it, you can do so. Only data collected from completed surveys will be used.

Please confirm if you have read and understood the information relating to the nature of the study above

- ◯ I confirm that I have read and understood the information relating to the study

Please confirm if you meet the criteria to participate in this study as listed above: * 18 years of age + and considers themselves to be sufficiently high functioning to participate in the workforce

- ◯ I confirm that I am 18 years of age + and consider myself to be sufficiently high functioning to participate in the workforce to take the survey, should you wish to take part.

Do you consent to participate in the study?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Participant Demographics

Please select the gender you identify with: *

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female
- ◯ Other
- ◯ Prefer not to say

If you selected other in question 1, please specify:

Your answer

Please select the age range you fall into: *

- ◯ 18 - 30
- ◯ 31 - 40
- ◯ 41 - 50
- ◯ 51 - 60
- ◯ 60+

Please select the following neurodiverse categories that apply to you. Please confirm for each applicable category if you have received a formal diagnosis or if you have self-identified.

	Autism spectrum disorder (this includes Asperger's syndrome)	Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	Dyslexia	Dyspraxia	Dysgraphia	Dyscalculia	Intellec disabili
Formal diagnosis	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Self-Identified	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you selected 'other' in the previous question, please specify any other neurodiverse condition that you identify with and please confirm if it was formally diagnosed or self-identified.

Your answer

If you selected 'other' in the previous question, please specify any other neurodiverse condition that you identify with and please confirm if it was formally diagnosed or self-identified.

Your answer

Please select the relevant option that most closely mirrors your current employment situation *

- ◯ Currently in full time employment
- ◯ Currently in part time employment
- ◯ Currently unemployed but do have previous experience in the workforce
- ◯ No previous work experience
- ◯ Currently in further education

Organisational Understanding

To what degree do you agree with the following statements?
1 being in strongly disagree all and 5 being in strongly agree

To the best of your knowledge, neurodiversity is openly talked about in your organisation by management or leadership *

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

If answered yes to the previous question, is it discussed in your view in a positive way, negative way or neither

	1	2	3	4	5	
Negatively	○	○	○	○	○	Positively

There is a general awareness across the organisation about what neurodiversity is and why it's important

1 2 3 4 5

I feel included in the organisations equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives

1 2 3 4 5

I feel my organisation could do more to support neurodiversity

1 2 3 4 5

I feel my organisation could do more to promote neurodiversity

1 2 3 4 5

My colleagues understand how to support me and other employees who are neurodiverse

1 2 3 4 5

My manager(s), past or present, understand how to support me and other employees who are neurodiverse

1 2 3 4 5

Employee Experience

I feel supported in the workplace in relation to my neurodiverse condition(s)

1 2 3 4 5

I feel my needs are being met by in the workplace

1 2 3 4 5

I feel comfortable talking about my neurodiversity in my workplace

1 2 3 4 5

I feel comfortable asking for support or adjustments to support my needs in my workplace

1 2 3 4 5

Camouflaging

When interacting with peers and colleagues, I feel I am being myself

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

When interacting with peers and colleagues, I feel the need to perform to feel accepted socially

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

I feel exhausted at the end of the workday

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

Inclusion

At work I feel lonely

1 2 3 4 5

I feel included by my colleagues in day-to-day socialising in the workplace

1 2 3 4 5

I feel included by my colleagues at work or social events

1 2 3 4 5

I have experienced bullying and/or harassment at work due to my neurodiversity

1 2 3 4 5

I feel my colleagues could be more sensitive to my neuro-differences

1 2 3 4 5

I feel my colleagues could be more supportive of adjustments I need due to my neuro-differences

1 2 3 4 5

Development and Progression

My organisation provides me with developmental opportunities

1 2 3 4 5

My organisation's training and development programmes supports me in developing my skills

1 2 3 4 5

My organisation has good opportunities for my career progression and development

1 2 3 4 5

My organisation's training and development programmes are adaptable to my needs

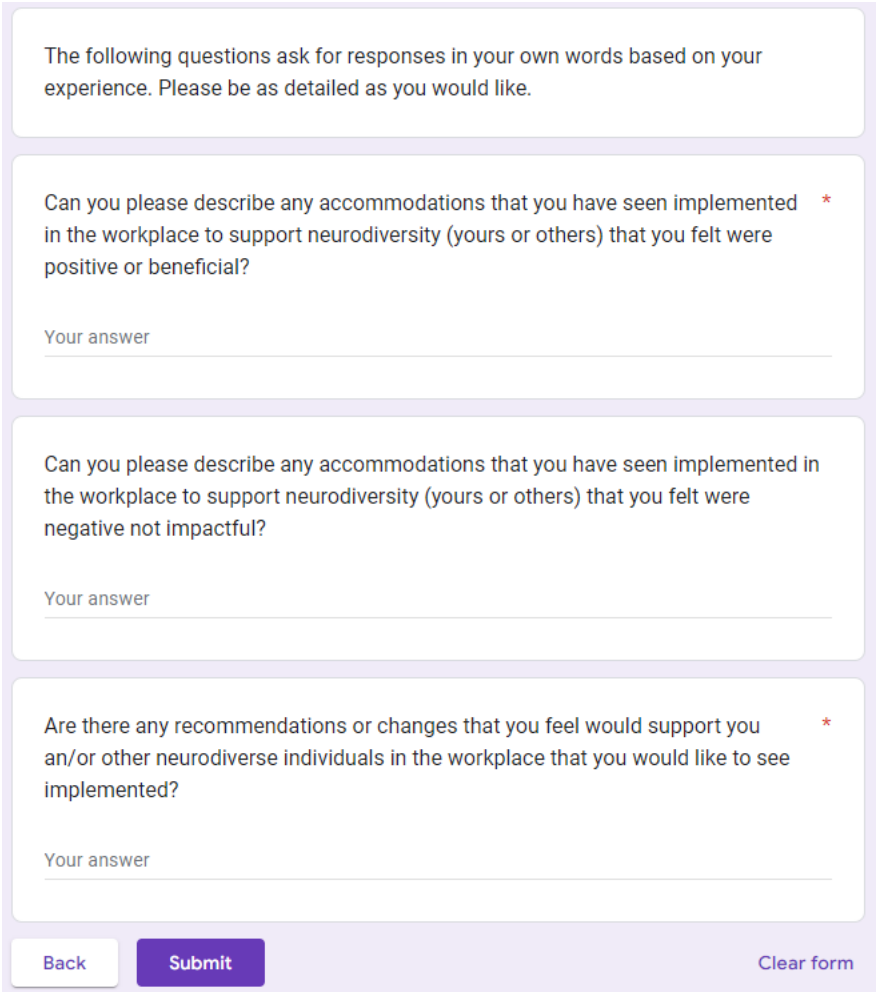
1 2 3 4 5

My organisation's training and development programmes are adaptable to other neurodiverse employees needs

1 2 3 4 5

I feel pressure to adjust my behavior to progress in my career

1 2 3 4 5



9.2 Appendix 2. Sample of Raw Data

Please confirm if you meet the criteria to participate in this study as listed above: 18 years of age + and considers themselves to be sufficiently high functioning to participate in the workforce	Do you consent to participate in the study?	Please select the gender you identify with:	If you selected other in question 1, please specify:	Please select the age range you fall into:	Formal Diagnosis	Self-Reported	Other	Please select the relevant option that most closely mirrors your current employment situation
I confirm that I am 18 years of age + and consider myself to be sufficiently high functioning to participate in the workforce to take the survey, should you wish to take part.	Yes	Female		18 - 30		Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)		Currently in full time employment
I confirm that I am 18 years of age + and consider myself to be sufficiently high functioning to participate in the workforce to take the survey, should you wish to take part.	Yes	Female		51 - 60	Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	disorder (this includes Asperger's syndrome)		Currently in full time employment
I confirm that I am 18 years of age + and consider myself to be sufficiently high functioning to participate in the workforce to take the survey, should you wish to take part.	Yes	Female		31 - 40		Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)		Currently in full time employment
I confirm that I am 18 years of age + and consider myself to be sufficiently high functioning to participate in the workforce to take the survey, should you wish to take part.	Yes	Female		18 - 30	disorder (this includes Asperger's syndrome), Attention-	disorder (this includes Asperger's syndrome), Attention-		Currently in full time employment
I confirm that I am 18 years of age + and consider myself to be sufficiently high functioning to participate in the workforce to take the survey, should you wish to take part.	Yes	Male		18 - 30		disorder (this includes Asperger's syndrome), Attention-		Currently in full time employment
I confirm that I am 18 years of age + and consider myself to be sufficiently high functioning to participate in the workforce to take the survey, should you wish to take part.	Yes	Male		18 - 30		Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)		Currently in full time employment
I confirm that I am 18 years of age + and consider myself to be sufficiently high functioning to participate in the workforce to take the survey, should you wish to take part.	Yes	Female		18 - 30	Dyslexia	Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)		Currently unemployed but do have previous experience in the workforce
I confirm that I am 18 years of age + and consider myself to be sufficiently high functioning to participate in the workforce to take the survey, should you wish to take part.	Yes	Male		18 - 30	Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	disorder (this includes Asperger's syndrome)		Currently in further education
I confirm that I am 18 years of age + and consider myself to be sufficiently high functioning to participate in the workforce to take the survey, should you wish to take part.	Yes	Male		18 - 30	Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)			Currently in further education
I confirm that I am 18 years of age + and consider myself to be sufficiently high functioning to participate in the workforce to take the survey, should you wish to take part.	Yes	Male		18 - 30	disorder (this includes Asperger's syndrome), Dyslexia,	Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)		Currently in part time employment
I confirm that I am 18 years of age + and consider myself to be sufficiently high functioning to participate in the workforce to take the survey, should you wish to take part.	Yes	Female		31 - 40	disorder (this includes Asperger's syndrome), Attention-			Currently in full time employment

I feel supported in the workplace in relation to my neurodiverse condition(s)	I feel my needs are being met by in the workplace	I feel comfortable talking about my neurodiversity in my workplace	I feel comfortable asking for support or adjustments to support my needs in my workplace	When interacting with peers and colleagues, I feel I am being myself	When interacting with peers and colleagues, I feel the need to perform to feel accepted socially	At work I feel lonely	I feel included by my colleagues in day-to-day socialising in the workplace	I feel included by my colleagues at work or social events
1	1	2	1	4	3	1	5	5
4	4	5	5	4	4	3	4	3
5	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	3
1	1	1	1	1	5	3	4	4
2	3	1	1	2	4	4	2	2
3	4	4	5	3	4	1	4	4
5	4	4	5	5	3	4	4	5
3	1	1	1	5	5	1	4	3
2	3	1	2	1	4	2	3	4
5	3	2	2	5	4	1	4	3
3	2	2	2	3	5	5	1	1

9.3 Appendix 3. AI Acknowledgement Supplement and Declaration

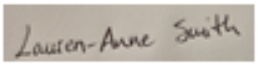
National College of Ireland

National College of Ireland

Project Submission Sheet

Student Name:	Lauren-Anne Smith
Student ID:	22245511
Programme:	Ma in Human Resource Management **Year:** 2024
Module:	Dissertation
Lecturer:	N/A
Submission Due Date:	10th August 2024
Project Title:	Tailoring Learning, Training and Development Initiatives: Exploring how organisations can reduce the barriers that the neurodivergent employee faces
Word Count:	19990

I hereby certify that the information contained in this (my submission) is information pertaining to research I conducted for this project. All information other than my own contribution will be fully referenced and listed in the relevant bibliography section at the rear of the project.
ALL internet material must be referenced in the references section. Students are encouraged to use the Harvard Referencing Standard supplied by the Library. To use other author's written or electronic work is illegal (plagiarism) and may result in disciplinary action. Students may be required to undergo a viva (oral examination) if there is suspicion about the validity of their submitted work.

Signature: 

Date: 10th August 2024

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Please attach a completed copy of this sheet to each project (including multiple copies).
2. Projects should be submitted to your Programme Coordinator.
3. **You must ensure that you retain a HARD COPY of ALL projects**, both for your own reference and in case a project is lost or mislaid. It is not sufficient to keep a copy on computer. Please do not bind projects or place in covers unless specifically requested.
4. You must ensure that all projects are submitted to your Programme Coordinator on or before the required submission date. **Late submissions will incur penalties.**
5. All projects must be submitted and passed in order to successfully complete the year. **Any project/assignment not submitted will be marked as a fail**

Office Use Only	
Signature:	
Date:	
Penalty Applied (if applicable):	

AI Acknowledgement Supplement

[Dissertation]

[Tailoring Learning, Training and Development Initiatives: Exploring how organisations can reduce the barriers that the neurodivergent employee faces]

Your Name/Student Number	Course	Date
Lauren-Anne Smith 22245511	Ma in HRM	10/08/2024

This section is a supplement to the main assignment, to be used if AI was used in any capacity in the creation of your assignment; if you have queries about how to do this, please contact your lecturer. For an example of how to fill these sections out, please click here.

AI Acknowledgment

This section acknowledges the AI tools that were utilized in the process of completing this assignment.

Tool Name	Brief Description	Link to tool
N/A	N/A	N/A

Description of AI Usage

This section provides a more detailed description of how the AI tools were used in the assignment. It includes information about the prompts given to the AI tool, the responses received, and how these responses were utilized or modified in the assignment. **One table should be used for each tool used.**

[Insert Tool Name]	
[N/A]	
[N/A]	[N/A]

Evidence of AI Usage

This section includes evidence of significant prompts and responses used or generated through the AI tool. It should provide a clear understanding of the extent to which the AI tool was used in the assignment. Evidence may be attached via screenshots or text.

Additional Evidence:

[N/A]

Additional Evidence:

[N/A]