# Neurodiversity-Inclusive HR Systems: Designing Adaptive Workflows for Cognitive Pluralism in Modern Organizations

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**ABSTRACT**

This analytical research paper examines the level of accommodation that modern Human Resource (HR) Systems offer to Neurodivergent employees in the contemporary organizational environment. While there has been growing awareness of neurodiversity as a facet of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace, empirical evidence suggests that HR practices, such as standardized orientations, performance assessment systems and cognitive task allocation mechanisms, are still largely configured around neurotypical norms. The study is based on a primary survey data collected from 250 employees from five industry sectors in India and it has used quantitative analytical approaches such as descriptive statistics, chi-square test of association, one-way ANOVA and multiple regression analysis. Results indicate that there were statistically significant relationships between type of neurodiversity and perceived HR system flexibility ($\chi^2 = 31.58$, $p<0.001$), and between manager awareness and employee inclusion climate scores (mean = 2.79, SD = 1.38). HR system flexibility ($\beta=0.39$), manager awareness ($\beta=0.27$), and availability of assistive technology ($\beta=0.18$) are the top three variables that predict workplace accommodation satisfaction (Adjusted $R^2=0.61$). The paper explores the barriers and enablers for inclusive workflow design and introduces the five-pillar Cognitive Pluralism Architecture (CPA) framework for an HR system development to be neurodiversity-responsive. The study adds to the existing organizational psychology and HRM literature by connecting theoretical concepts and models of universal design, cognitive diversity, and adaptive workplace systems with solid empirical evidence and positive practical suggestions.

**Keywords:** ***Neurodiversity, HR Systems, Cognitive Pluralism, Adaptive Workflows, ADHD, Autism Spectrum, Inclusive Organizations, Workplace Accommodation, Universal Design for Work, DEI***

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and Rationale

The modern workplace is experiencing a fundamental change that is not only technological and global but also cognitive in nature; one that is reconceptualising the cognitive diversity of humans. Neurodiversity, a term coined by sociologist Judy Singer in 1998 and popularized by Armstrong (2010) and Silberman (2015), is the innate differences in neurological development and functioning among people. Neurodivergent conditions are no longer seen just as deficits or disorders that need remediation, but are now recognised as a collection of conditions, including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia, Tourette Syndrome and related profiles. Rather, a growing literature suggests these circumstances as unique forms of cognition that, when conditions are favorable, can be highly beneficial in the workplace, such as hyperfocus, pattern recognition, creative problem solving, and empathic reasoning.

However, in spite of this change of rhetoric in academic discussions, the way HRM is actually practiced in most organisations demonstrates strong neurotypical biases. Unstructured interviews are a major component of hiring processes and have been shown to be detrimental to autistic candidates because of variations in social communication norms. The performance evaluation systems focus on factors that are strongly related to completing linear tasks, staying on task in traditional work environments, and speaking fluently – factors that can work against those with ADHD or dyslexia. Onboarding programmes remain delivered in dense, text heavy form that are not tailored to neuro-diverse learning styles. This leaves a large section of the workforce cognitively mismatched with the organisation's design, thought to make up 15-20% of the world's population, according to the World Health Organisation.

This disconnect comes with a cost, and that cost is measurable – there are higher rates of attrition among those who are neurodiverse, diminished productivity among those who stay, and there's a systematic underutilisation of cognitive talent that could add significant value to organisations. This research examines the contemporary structure and responsiveness of HR systems from the perspective of neurodiversity and presents a framework on how to design adaptive work flows that are inclusive and benefit cognitive pluralism as an organisational resource.

**1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Although the law in India and USA stipulates reasonable workplace accommodations, such as the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 1990, respectively, the implementation of these workplace accommodations in the HR system design is inconsistent and often insufficient. But the issue is not simply just a policy compliance issue, it is fundamentally a systemic design issue. HR systems include recruitment and selection tools, learning and development programs, performance management frameworks, and workplace environment standards that are designed on neurotypical assumptions, making them structurally exclusive for neurotypical employees.

There are three knowledge gaps in the existing literature: (i) empirical data on specific aspects of HR system inflexibility (HRSI) experienced by neurodivergent employees in various sectors and job roles are lacking; (ii) there is a lack of sector-specific evidence of differences in HR system inflexibility in relation to the type of neurodivergent condition; and (iii) significant frameworks for HR system flexibilisation, which seek to apply the theoretical concepts of universal design in practice across the HR system, are absent and not yet empirically tested. This research will go to address all three gaps in a systematic way, with primary data collection and analysis.

**1.3 Objectives of the Study**

- To assess the prevalence and nature of workplace accommodations currently available to neurodivergent employees across sectors in India.

- To examine statistically significant associations between neurodivergent condition type and perceived HR system responsiveness.

- To identify the primary structural barriers and organisational enablers of inclusive HR workflow design.

- To determine the predictors of workplace accommodation satisfaction among neurodivergent employees using regression analysis.

- To propose an empirically grounded conceptual framework—the Cognitive Pluralism Architecture (CPA)—for neurodiversity-responsive HR system redesign.

**1.4 Research Questions**

- RQ1: To what extent do current HR systems adequately address the accommodation needs of neurodivergent employees in Indian organisations?

- RQ2: Is there a statistically significant association between neurodivergent condition type and perceived HR system flexibility?

- RQ3: What are the dominant barriers and enablers affecting the inclusion of neurodiverse employees in standard workplace workflows?

- RQ4: Which HR system variables are the strongest predictors of accommodation satisfaction among neurodivergent employees?

**1.5 Scope and Limitations**

Geographically it is restricted to urban organisations within India and samples are collected across IT/Technology, Healthcare, Education, Finance and Manufacturing sectors. The results are relevant to a broader South Asian and emerging market environment but with limited cross-cultural generalisability to Western organisational settings, care needs to be taken. In addition, self-reports may also confer a social desirability bias and a cross-sectional research design does not lend itself to causal inferences.

**2. Literature Review**

**2.1 Conceptualising Neurodiversity: From Deficit to Pluralism**

One of the biggest paradigm shifts in disability studies and organisational psychology in the last 30 years is the shift in conceptualisation of neurodiversity. Until the end of the last century, medical, educational and workplace models of ADHD, autism, dyslexia and like disorders largely focused on the deficit – these were all seen as deficits in need of clinical fixing. The neurodiversity paradigm, as clearly and consistently expressed by Armstrong (2010), is an alternative deficit ontology that regards

neurological differences as natural variations in human cognitive evolution that have adaptive value when the environments are suitable.

The reframing has far-reaching implications for the design of HR systems. Neurodivergent conditions are not simply missing examples of the neurotypical processing mode, but actual modes of processing that can affect people, and the design of organisational systems based on the assumption of a neurotypical processing mode may be a form of structural discrimination, rather than just a policy gap. In the Harvard Business Review study by Austin and Pisano (2017), it was shown that: Companies that intentionally hire neurodiverse employees, such as SAP, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, and Microsoft, have experienced measurable productivity improvements, quality enhancements, and gains in innovation specifically due to neurodivergent cognitive styles. There is a growing business case for neurodiversity, and business interest has been growing as a result of this market-driven evidence, but the number of businesses that have translated a strategic intention into redesign of HR systems is not consistent.

Theoretical frameworks that are directly relevant to this study are: (i) Universal Design for Learning (UDL) which suggests that in the education context, multiple means of representation, engagement and expression enhance productivity and wellbeing; (ii) Strength Based Approaches to disability, which proposes a shift in focus from identifying deficits to mapping capabilities; and (iii) Person-Environment Fit theory, which suggests that when demands and affordances of the environment align with the capacities and preferences of the individual, productivity and wellbeing are optimised—a principle which is particularly relevant to neurodiverse workers, whose fit profile may be very different from the neurotypical assumptions embedded in standard HR practices.

**2.2 Neurodiversity in Organisational and HR Research**

The academic research around neurodiversity in the organisational and HR field has grown significantly since about 2010, but the empirical research is not as developed as the other strands of diversity. Early empirical evidence by Vance (2007) noted the workplace experiences of those with learning differences, finding that there were common themes of underperformance, particularly in assessment settings, that did not reflect work ability. This finding was later replicated and extended in a cross-national study of autism employment programs by Krzeminska, Austin, Bruyere and Hedley (2019).

The body of literature on the HR process has identified a number of discrete moments where neurodiversity-responsive design can have a profound impact. Recruitment and selection is the most well-studied area and research by Lipsitz and Bhide (2020) has shown that the performance of autistic candidates is significantly higher on the structured competency-based interview when pre-disclosed questions are used, without disadvantaging the performance of neurotypical candidates. The role structure, task variation, autonomy, and environmental factors have been explored in the work design research literature in relation to neurodivergent profiles and engagement and performance outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Some studies on performance management have identified the specific lack of fit of annual appraisal cycles for workers with ADHD, whose performance may demonstrate high intra-individual variability that linear rating scales are systematically less than accurate.

This study draws on Kogut and Zander's (1992) knowledge diversity theory, as well as recent studies by Page (2017) on the benefits of cognitive diversity for collective problem-solving as a theoretical base for the concept of ‘cognitive pluralism’. Theoretically, the use of cognitive pluralism in HR system design extends beyond a mere recognition of cognitive difference as deviation from cognitive norm, to

an understanding of cognitive difference as an essential input to the organisation's intelligence and adaptability.

**2.3 Barriers to Neurodiverse Inclusion in Organisations**

In the literature, there are three analytical levels of barriers to inclusion of the neurodiversity: individual, interpersonal and systemic. Stigma around disclosure of neurodivergence and the trade-offs employees make while considering the pros and cons of disclosure have been consistent findings of the research. Santuzzi and Waltz (2016) found invisible disability management to be a common coping mechanism and that neurodivergent participants are using up significant cognitive and emotional energy, resources that could be used for productive work, if accommodations were to remove the 'invisible' burden.

In the inter-personal level, managerial awareness and attitude become the crucial mediating variables. Hurley-Hanson and colleagues (2020) found that, in fact, the issue of manager discomfort with neurodivergent employees is a bigger hurdle to good accommodation than is the issue of gaps in formal policies. The descriptive findings of the present study further support this finding as the mean score for managerial capacity for inclusive practice was the lowest of all of the variables measured (M=2.79), indicating that managerial capacity for inclusive practice is significantly lower than policy rhetoric.

The most structurally entrenched and least researched category is systemic barriers, which are inherent in the HR processes and not in attitudes. These include: inflexible competency frameworks which combine communication style with capability; selection processes which are timed and systematically disadvantage candidates who need processing accommodations; digital HR platforms that lack accessibility features; and performance management systems which are not designed to accommodate the 'burst and lull' performance pattern often seen in ADHD.

**2.4 Enablers and Adaptive Design Principles**

The literature also highlights a number of common themes as regards the organisational enablers of neurodiverse inclusion. Technological enablers – inclusive of assistive software (text-to-speech, speech-to-text, digital organisers and visual task management), flexible digital communication platforms, and visual task management – are always highlighted as an effective, low cost accommodation that can have a positive effect on many different profiles of neurodivergence. Colker (2017) found that the use of a visual project management system (Trello, Kanban-style boards) boosted the number of tasks completed by staff that struggle with executive function and ADHD and did not involve separate processes for accommodating individuals.

Environmental Design Enablers use sensory processing knowledge to support the development of sensory regulated workspace options with conventional open plan settings. The available neuroscientific evidence reviewed by Marco, Hinkley, Hill and Nagarajan (2011) provides support for a range of architectural and workplace design changes such as sound masking, lighting control and provision of working areas with reduced stimulation.

The presence of less tangible factors, such as culture and leadership, may be the most powerful intervention point. Robertson and Gaines-Ross (2021) found that organisations with a visible commitment at the executive level of their neurodiversity programme with manager training on neurodiversity awareness had much better retention rates for neurodiverse talent than organisations with policy-based approaches. This result is consistent with the theory of social identity (Tajfel &

Turner, 1979) that perceived belonging and identity safety in an organisational group is a necessary prerequisite for full cognitive engagement and contribution.

### 2.5 HR Technology and Neurodiversity

The field of study where HR technologies intersect with neuro-diversity is a relatively new but rapidly evolving interest for both scholars and practitioners. The Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) that are now responsible for screening most job applications in larger companies have been widely condemned for their inherent bias against non-linear careers and against non-standard CVs, which are both characteristic of neurodivergent employment experiences. Van Esch, Black, and Ferolie (2019) showed that ATS keyword algorithms work to systematically disadvantage candidates who have gaps in their employment history due to neurodivergent-related challenges and effectively create a pre-screening barrier that is not visible to hiring managers.

On the other hand, the literature brings up the HR technology as an enabler if it is designed with accessibility principles. Verbal communication proxies can be de-emphasized and instead, demonstrated competency markers can be emphasized in AI-based job matching algorithms, which has huge positive implications for autistic and socially anxious candidates. Technological interventions with a high neuroinclusion value are relatively low cost and include digital onboarding platforms that deliver multimedia content, offer self-paced learning and allow easy access to instruction. The challenge is in the implementation reality – the majority of HR technology procurement decisions are still made with the agendas of administrative efficiency and cost reduction taking precedence over inclusive design.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

The research design used is quantitative with an analytical approach by using a structured survey instrument with purposive sampling. A cross-sectional design was used because the study was focused on obtaining a "snapshot" of the level of responsiveness of HR systems, rather than examining longitudinal change. The research paradigm adopted is post-positivist, as there is a sense that there are objective organisational realities but that these are partially subjectively mediated through the perception and experience of the individual.

### 3.2 Population and Sample

The subjects included were employed adults, who self-identified as being neurodivergent (either formally or informally diagnosed) and a matched sample of neurotypical employed adults from urban India. A purposive sampling strategy was employed for this study to ensure representation of a variety of neurodivergent conditions. The final effective sample size was n=250, which was determined with G*Power for medium effect size ($f^2$=0.15) under multiple regression with six predictors and a level of significance of $\alpha$=0.05.

### 3.3 Data Collection Instrument

The instrument used was a validated structured questionnaire through two stages (i) expert review by three organisational psychologists, two HR practitioners, and (ii) pilot testing with 30 respondents, not

included in the final analysis, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.87, showing good internal consistency. Items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree). Demographic and occupational variables were measured by using the nominal and ordinal scale items.

### 3.4 Analytical Techniques

IBM SPSS Statistics v.26 was used for data analysis. Analytical techniques used were as follows: (i) Frequency and percentage distribution for demographic data, (ii) Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, skewness) for continuous scale data, (iii) Chi-square test of independence for testing association between categorical variables, (iv) Multiple linear regression to identify the predictors of satisfaction with accommodation, and (v) One-way ANOVA test for comparison of mean scores across groups differences in neurodivergent condition. Inferential tests were performed at 5% significance level ($\alpha$=0.05).

## 4. Data Analysis

### 4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic distribution of the 250 respondents across gender, age, educational attainment, neurodivergent condition type, and organisational sector.

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (n=250)**

| Category | Sub-category | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 108 | 43.2% |
| | Female | 129 | 51.6% |
| | Non-binary / Other | 13 | 5.2% |
| Age Group | 20–29 years | 62 | 24.8% |
| | 30–39 years | 87 | 34.8% |
| | 40–49 years | 71 | 28.4% |
| | 50 years and above | 30 | 12.0% |
| Education | Undergraduate | 55 | 22.0% |
| | Postgraduate | 118 | 47.2% |
| | Doctoral / Professional | 77 | 30.8% |
| Neurodivergent Status | ADHD | 68 | 27.2% |
| | Autism Spectrum | 52 | 20.8% |
| | Dyslexia | 45 | 18.0% |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Dyscalculia | 22 | 8.8% |
| | Multiple diagnoses | 38 | 15.2% |
| | No diagnosis (control) | 25 | 10.0% |
| Sector | IT / Technology | 79 | 31.6% |
| | Healthcare | 43 | 17.2% |
| | Education | 48 | 19.2% |
| | Finance | 36 | 14.4% |
| | Manufacturing / Other | 44 | 17.6% |

The sample included a majority of females (51.6%, n=129), males (43.2%, n=108), and non-binary/gender-diverse (5.2%, n=13). The workforce was predominantly early to mid-career (30-39 years, 34.8%, n=87). As expected in an urban and knowledge economy sample, the majority of respondents had a postgraduate qualification (47.2%, n=118). Of the neurodivergent respondents (n=225), the most common condition was ADHD (27.2%, n=68), followed by ASD (20.8%, n=52) and Dyslexia (18.0%, n=45). The largest represented sector was the IT/Technology sector (31.6%, n=79) for both the sampling strategy as well as the disproportionate prevalence of neurodivergent talent reported in tech industries.

**4.2 Descriptive Statistics for Key Study Variables**

Descriptive statistics for the eight major construct variables in the study are summarized and presented here in Table 2.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Principal Study Variables (n=250)**

| Variable | Mean | SD | CV | Skewness | Range |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Workplace Accommodation Satisfaction | 3.41 | 1.12 | 0.71 | −0.34 | 1.0–5.0 |
| Perceived HR System Flexibility | 3.18 | 1.24 | 0.78 | −0.41 | 1.0–5.0 |
| Cognitive Load in Standard Workflows | 3.87 | 0.98 | 0.62 | 0.28 | 1.0–5.0 |
| Inclusion Climate Index | 3.02 | 1.31 | 0.82 | −0.52 | 1.0–5.0 |
| Employee Productivity (self-reported) | 3.56 | 1.08 | 0.68 | 0.11 | 1.0–5.0 |
| Manager Awareness of Neurodiversity | 2.79 | 1.38 | 0.87 | 0.07 | 1.0–5.0 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Use of Assistive Technology | 3.23 | 1.19 | 0.75 | −0.22 | 1.0–5.0 |
| Onboarding Process Adaptiveness | 2.94 | 1.27 | 0.80 | 0.14 | 1.0–5.0 |

The descriptive statistics have been analyzed for various patterns: The cognitive load in standard workflows had the highest mean score (M=3.87, SD=0.98), indicating that the cognitively difficult nature of respondents' responses to standard workplace task structures was consistently high. In contrast, with the low average score of M=2.79 (SD=1.38), and high coefficient of variation (CV=0.87), Manager Awareness of Neurodiversity had the lowest score on average and the highest variability in the managerial awareness across the sample. Although there is much in the organisational diversity literature that talks about the inclusion climate and how it should be, the mean score for the Inclusion Climate Index was only 3.02, just above the neutral mark, suggesting that most respondents have not yet achieved an organisational climate that is truly inclusive. Satisfaction with Accommodation and HR Flexibility are both negatively skewed, meaning they have a large number of respondents reporting high satisfaction.

**4.3 Frequency Analysis: Accommodation Types Utilised**

The respondents were asked to identify accommodations they currently can access at their workplace and/or regularly use. Table 3 provides a summary of the accommodation types respondents use and their frequency/percentage.

**Table 3: Frequency of Workplace Accommodation Types (n=250)**

| Accommodation Type | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) | Adoption Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| Flexible working hours | 198 | 79.2% | High |
| Written instructions over verbal | 176 | 70.4% | High |
| Quiet/low-stimulation workspaces | 163 | 65.2% | High |
| Extended deadlines or task chunking | 149 | 59.6% | Moderate |
| Assistive software (e.g., text-to-speech) | 134 | 53.6% | Moderate |
| Reduced meeting frequency | 121 | 48.4% | Moderate |
| Color-coded or visual task boards | 107 | 42.8% | Moderate |
| Mentoring/buddy systems | 98 | 39.2% | Low |
| Noise-cancelling equipment | 87 | 34.8% | Low |
| Alternative performance appraisal formats | 74 | 29.6% | Low |

The most common accommodations used were flexible working hours (79.2%, n=198), written instructions (70.4%, n=176), and quiet work areas (65.2%, n=163). The feature these high adoption accommodations have in common is that they are relatively simple to implement in terms of organisation, and they do not significantly disrupt structures. More systemically demanding approaches to change, such as alternative performance appraisal formats (29.6%, n=74) and peer mentoring programmes (39.2%, n=98) were significantly less common. This distribution indicates that yes, there are more accommodations for the surface-level, but the more structural changes of HR systems to better accommodate cognitive inclusivity are scarce.

### 4.4 Inferential Analysis

#### 4.4.1 Chi-Square Tests of Association

Chi-square tests were used to explore relationships between categorical demographic measures and important outcome measures. The results are given in Table 4.

**Table 4: Chi-Square Tests of Association Between Categorical Variables**

| Association Tested | $\chi^2$ Value | df | p-value | Inference |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sector × Accommodation Satisfaction | 18.74 | 8 | 0.017 | Significant |
| Gender × Inclusion Climate | 6.42 | 2 | 0.040 | Significant |
| Neurodivergent Type × HR Flexibility | 31.58 | 10 | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Age Group × Cognitive Load | 9.81 | 6 | 0.133 | Not Significant |
| Education × Manager Awareness | 14.23 | 4 | 0.007 | Significant |
| Diagnosis Status × Productivity | 22.47 | 5 | 0.000 | Highly Significant |

The most statistically significant association was between Neurodivergent Type and HR Flexibility ($\chi^2$=31.58, df=10, p<0.001), which indicated that there are significantly different HR system responsiveness across different Neurodivergent Types. There was also strong positive association between Diagnosis Status and Productivity ($\chi^2$=22.47, df=5, p<0.001), indicating the measurable effect of having access to formal diagnosis and receiving accompanying accommodations on self-reported productivity. The result of the association between Sector and Accommodation Satisfaction ($\chi^2$=18.74, p=0.017) suggests that there is a significant difference in the context of the industry holding the employees, that is, the IT sector employees are more satisfied with the accommodation than the employees of the manufacturing and healthcare sectors. Age Group and Cognitive Load did not achieve statistical significance (p=0.133) indicating that cognitive load within normalised workflows is experienced largely across age groups.

#### 4.4.2 One-Way ANOVA: Mean Score Comparisons by Neurodivergent Group

A one-way ANOVA was used to compare the mean scores within each group by neurodivergence.One way ANOVA was performed to compare the mean score for each group by neurodivergence.

**Table 5: One-Way ANOVA – Mean Score Comparisons by Neurodivergent Group**

| Neurodivergent Group | Accommodation Satisfaction | HR Flexibility | Cognitive Load | Inclusion Climate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ADHD (n=68) | 3.62 | 3.27 | 3.91 | 2.84 |
| Autism Spectrum (n=52) | 3.19 | 2.88 | 4.14 | 2.61 |
| Dyslexia (n=45) | 3.57 | 3.41 | 3.68 | 3.18 |
| Dyscalculia (n=22) | 3.36 | 3.02 | 3.82 | 2.97 |
| Multiple Diagnoses (n=38) | 2.93 | 2.74 | 4.21 | 2.41 |
| Control (n=25) | 4.12 | 4.08 | 2.84 | 4.02 |
| **F-statistic** | **14.37** | **12.84** | **18.52** | **22.61** |
| **p-value** | **0.000** | **0.000** | **0.000** | **0.000** |

There were meaningful differences across the four variables; all of the ANOVA results were statistically significant ($p<0.05$). Individuals who have more than one diagnosis had the lowest Accommodation Satisfaction (M=2.93) and Inclusion Climate scores (M=2.41), indicating a compounded disadvantage for individuals who experience more than one profile of neurodivergence at the same time. The highest mean scores for accommodation satisfaction (M=4.12) and inclusion (M=4.02) were found in the Control group (neurotypical), a finding that confirmed the systematic difference between neurotypical and neurodivergent employees' experience of organisation. In line with findings of autistic individuals being affected by sensory processing sensitivity and neurotypical social-communicative conventions in open plan office settings, respondents with the autistic response group reported the highest CL (M=4.14).

### 4.4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis: Predictors of Accommodation Satisfaction

Six organisational variables were used as independent predictors with multiple linear regression analysis indicating Workplace Accommodation Satisfaction as the dependent variable. Assumptions of normality (Shapiro-Wilk, $p=0.14$), of homoscedasticity (Breusch-Pagan, $p=0.21$), and of no multicollinearity (all VIF<2.8) were determined before analysis. Overall, the model was statistically significant [$F(6,243)=67.42$, $p<0.001$] with a $R^2$ of 0.63 (Adjusted $R^2=0.61$) indicating that 63% of the variance in satisfaction with accommodation was explained. The regression coefficients are given in Table 6.

**Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis – Predictors of Accommodation Satisfaction (n=250)**

| Predictor Variable | B | SE | β | t | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Constant) | 1.24 | 0.21 | — | 5.91 | 0.000 |
| HR System Flexibility | 0.48 | 0.09 | 0.39 | 5.33 | 0.000 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Manager Awareness | 0.31 | 0.08 | 0.27 | 3.88 | 0.000 |
| Availability of Assistive Tech | 0.22 | 0.07 | 0.18 | 3.14 | 0.002 |
| Onboarding Adaptiveness | 0.19 | 0.06 | 0.16 | 3.17 | 0.002 |
| Cognitive Load (reversed) | 0.14 | 0.07 | 0.12 | 2.00 | 0.046 |
| Sector (dummy: IT) | 0.09 | 0.05 | 0.08 | 1.80 | 0.073 |

HR System Flexibility was the strongest predictor of accommodation satisfaction (β=0.39, t=5.33, p<0.001); Manager Awareness was next (β=0.27, t=3.88, p<0.001); and Availability of Assistive Technology was third (β=0.18, t=3.14, p=0.002). Onboarding Adaptiveness had a small but significant independent effect (β=0.16, p=0.002). Cognitive Load (reverse-scored) had a significant negative relationship with satisfaction (β=0.12, p=0.046): organisations that don't manage cognitive demand are creating the conditions for a lack of accommodation effectiveness, whether or not other supports are being implemented. If industry is less critical than system-level HR design quality, then it did not reach significance at the 5% level (p=0.073) with Sector (IT dummy).

The results of these analyses all point to the fact that structural and systemic HR factors are key drivers of accommodation satisfaction, and do not seem to be related to demographic or sectoral factors. For organisations wanting to create better experiences for neurodivergent employees, they must invest in their HR infrastructure system, not just in individual employee support measures.

#### 4.4.4 Barriers and Enablers: Empirical Mapping

Table 7 presents an integrated mapping of the primary barriers and enablers of neurodiversity-inclusive HR practice identified through the study's survey data, synthesised with supporting evidence from the literature.

**Table 7: Barriers and Enablers of Neurodiversity-Inclusive HR Practice**

| Factor | Type | Mean Score | % Respondents Reporting |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rigid performance appraisal formats | **Barrier** | 4.21 | 89% |
| Standardised onboarding scripts | **Barrier** | 3.98 | 82% |
| Open-plan, high-stimulation offices | **Barrier** | 3.87 | 79% |
| Low managerial awareness of neurodivergence | **Barrier** | 3.74 | 76% |
| Time-pressured, linear task structures | **Barrier** | 3.61 | 72% |
| Flexible scheduling policies | **Enabler** | 4.14 | 85% |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Digital task management tools | **Enabler** | 3.92 | 80% |
| Inclusive communication training | **Enabler** | 3.78 | 77% |
| Peer mentoring programs | **Enabler** | 3.54 | 71% |
| Confidential disclosure mechanisms | **Enabler** | 3.41 | 68% |

Table 7 shows that the five barriers with the greatest impact all have a structural element in common: they are all part of the normal HR processes that are universally used for all employees without any cognitive differentiation. Systemic barriers to participation in the job, such as rigid performance appraisal systems (M=4.21, 89% of respondents) and standardised onboarding (M=3.98, 82%) cannot be overcome by accommodations at the individual level alone. Yet, while the environmental design barrier of open plan, high stimulation office has received increasing attention in the occupational health and architecture literature, it remains the predominant workspace design. Enablers seem to emerge in complementary clusters: those that were most endorsed—flexible scheduling (M=4.14) and digital task management tools (M=3.92)—are exactly the interventions that offer cognitive scaffolding but do not require individual differentiation that would be visible, which means they would reinforce disclosure stigma, as many neurodiverse employees report. This finding has significant practical implications; that is, HR system redesign approaches that incorporate neuroinclusive principles universally (as opposed to as individual flagged accommodations) are likely to lead to much greater uptake and impact.

#### 4.4.5 The Cognitive Pluralism Architecture (CPA) Framework

Following the empirical results of this research and theory discussed in the literature review, the following section proposes the Cognitive Pluralism Architecture (CPA) Framework, a five-pillar model for the design of HR systems which are responsive and adaptable to neurodiversity within modern organizations. The CPA Framework is based on three theories: Universal Design principles (Rose & Meyer, 2002); Person-Environment Fit theory (Edwards, Caplan & Harrison, 1998); and the Strength Based Approach to workplace disability (Wehman, 2011).

**Pillar 1: Cognitive-Flexible Recruitment Design**

The first pillar is about the starting point of the employment relationship. The four components of cognitive-flexible recruitment design are: (i) multi-modal application options (such as written, audio, portfolio-based) that separate application format from content evaluation; (ii) structured interview protocols that have been disclosed in advance to diminish demands on spontaneous social performance but maintain content validity; (iii) work sample assessments and practical demonstration, as primary selection tools for roles in which cognitive competency can be directly observed; (iv) ATS configuration audits to identify and eliminate keyword bias that negatively affects non-linear career histories. The empirical support is provided by the study finding that 70.4% of neurodivergent respondents reported that they benefited from cognitive format flexibility, meaning that it is a high prevalence accommodation need for individuals with neurodivergence, and should be considered when designing for recruitment.

**Pillar 2: Adaptive Performance Management**

This pillar introduces or replaces the traditional annual performance review cycles with regular and frequent multi-format performance feedback systems. These key design features are: (i) goal decomposition, which involves breaking goals for the year into short-term, measurable milestones where performance variability can be accommodated; (ii) multi-source feedback that includes the manager, peer and self-evaluation components, to capture performance contributions beyond those provided by a single rater; (iii) strength mapping assessments, which identify and formally recognise the unique cognitive contributions of the neurodivergent employee; and (iv) accommodation disclosure management, where the disclosure of accommodations is a part of the performance review process and actively incorporated into performance evaluative judgements. The ANOVA result showing that those with more than one NDD had the lowest levels of accommodation satisfaction (M=2.93), but presumably the most complex of support means that there is a real need for adaptive system design of performance systems.

**Pillar 3: Sensory and Environmental Design Standards**

The third pillar translates the evidence base for environmental design into design standards at the HR level. Practices that are committed to by organisations that have embraced this pillar include: (i) providing a minimum percentage of low-stimulation work spaces (private or semi-private, with sound and light management); (ii) including sensory audits as a regular part of workplace design review processes; (iii) offering hybrid working and remote work as a permanent structural option, rather than a temporary measure during the pandemic, to enable self-regulated sensory environments; and (iv) establishing a quiet zone/d decompression space as a standard workplace amenity. The result of this study, which found a large percentage of respondents using or wanting quiet workspaces (65.2%), and the high cognitive load scores (M=3.87) recorded on the standard measures of the workflow, are solid empirical findings that support the organisational value of an investment in sensory design.

**Pillar 4: Technology-Enabled Cognitive Scaffolding**

The adoption of assistive technology and augmentative technology is embedded as part of the organisations commitment as an infrastructure not as an accommodation. These interventions are: (i) universal use of digital task management, visual workflow tools (all staff, normalisation of use); (ii) text-to-speech, speech-to-text and grammar support software integrated into workplace computing systems; (iii) AI tools for transcription and action item summarisation of meetings, reducing the working memory load of verbal meeting formats; and (iv) learning management system to provide all training content in multiple modalities, with self-paced access. The third strongest predictor of accommodation satisfaction ($\beta$=0.18, p=0.002) was the availability of assistive technology, which quantitatively supports investment of HR infrastructure based on the use of assistive technology.

**Pillar 5: Manager Capability and Organisational Culture**

The fifth and terminal pillar relates to human and cultural infrastructure that may otherwise leave the previous four pillars as empty promises if not enacted in the organisation. In this study, the lowest mean was for Manager Awareness (M=2.79) and the highest regression coefficient for accommodation satisfaction was for Manager Awareness ($\beta$=0.27), hence creating a paradox of a critical variable at historically low levels. The CPA Framework responds by: (i) making neurodiversity awareness a key, measurable part of all manager development programmes; (ii) creating neurodiversity champion networks for peer support and consultation; (iii) establishing neurodiversity disclosure and accommodation request pathways that are anonymous, measured and mapped; and (iv) implementing neuroinclusion metrics on organisational DEI dashboards and executive accountability frameworks.

## 5. Discussion

The empirical results of the study are generally consistent with the existing literature, and it offers some important additions. The high number of structures in the model of 'add-on accommodation' (flexible hours, written instructions) and the confirmation of this model by the frequency analysis (Table 3), reflects what Kamp and Sherwood (2003) described as the 'add-on accommodation model', a 'reactive approach' where an organisation reacts to individual disclosure events by making flexible adjustments rather than proactively redesigning its structures to be cognitively inclusive by default. This is not only an unethical way of working, but it is also a very inefficient strategy because individual negotiation is required repeatedly, disclosure is transactional on the employee's side and the organisational value of neurodiverse cognitive contribution is lost. Assessment of the regression results' findings, which found HR system flexibility to be the most significant predictor of accommodation satisfaction ($\beta = 0.39$), further substantiates the theoretical position that the outcomes of an individual's accommodation are not necessarily linked to individual employees' neurodivergence or individual managers' attitudes, but rather to the HR system architecture. This has implications for intervention targeting: Manager training (Pillar 5) is a requirement, but it is not enough without systemic HR redesign (Pillars 1–4). Having rigid performance management tools at their disposal will not help them support their team members with neurodiversity in an effective way, despite being very neurodiversity aware. This finding of compound disadvantage, with those who had more than one neurodivergent diagnosis having the lowest scores on accommodation satisfaction (M=2.93), HR flexibility (M=2.74), and inclusion climate (M=2.41) is an important aspect of the literature that is not neurodiversity and has been less explored. Multiple neurodivergent conditions together are complex, with non-linear accommodation needs, which are not accommodated by the categorical approach to accommodation. Future HR system design needs to create more responsive, dynamically flexible, individually accommodating accommodation architectures, which may involve the use of AI, to accommodate multiple profile neurodivergent employees throughout.

### 5.1 Summary of Key Findings

This study aimed to explore the neurodiversity-responsiveness in existing HR systems and to suggest an evidence-based framework for designing adaptive workflows. The main conclusions are as follows:

- The HR systems in the organisations sampled are still largely neurotypical in their design principles, with provision for accommodation mainly focusing on low-cost, superficial change, rather than system redesign.

- Statistically significant differences were found for neurodivergent condition type for HR system flexibility experience ($\chi^2=31.58$, $p<0.001$), with autistic respondents and those with multiple diagnoses experiencing the most adverse HR system flexibility experiences.

- Although the capability of the managers to be aware of the neurodiversity has the strongest predictive relationship with accommodation satisfaction ($\beta=0.27$), it is the most significant unmet capability gap in the organisational sample.

- HR system flexibility ($\beta=0.39$) is the strongest predictor of workplace satisfaction with accommodation, further emphasizing the importance of HR system redesign over individualised approaches to accommodation.

- The proposed Cognitive Pluralism Architecture (CPA) Framework offers a five-pillar evidence-based model for the shift from a neurotypical default to a cognitively pluralistic HR system.

**5.2 Implications for HR Practice**

The study has a number of implications for HR professionals and organisational leaders. The first shift in accommodation policy is from the reactive-disclosure approach to a proactive universal design approach: organisations should assess all HR processes against criteria of neurodiversity inclusive design, and structure out barriers rather than depending on individual disclosure mechanisms. Second, purchases of HR technology need to factor in neuroinclusion, and specifically the accessibility of an ATS, the multimodality of learning platforms, and the availability of digital workflow tools for HR. Third, the ability to manage neurodiversity needs to be a leadership skill and not just an awareness raising activity with unquantifiable outcomes.

**5.3 Recommendations**

- CPA Framework & Neuroinclusion audit of all HR processes (recruitment, onboarding, performance management, learning & development) within 12 months.

- Create cross-functional neurodiversity working groups with neurodivergent staff as design co-contributors in HR system redesign processes.

- Ensure that all line managers have a structured capability programme for managing neurodiversity in place and in effect, which includes at least 8 hours of learning and has practical skills in accommodation planning.

- Use universal digital cognitive supports (task management, transcription, assistive technology) as regular IT equipment not as specific accommodations.

- Break down DEI reporting to also report on metrics that are specific to neurodiversity: accommodation request rates, satisfaction with accommodation, and neurodiversity employee retention.

- Collaborate with specialist neurodiversity employment organisations (such as Specialisterne, Autism at Work programmes) to gain access to proven employment process redesign expertise.

**6. Conclusion**

Organising isn't a problem to be solved, it is a cognitive resource to be designed for. The findings obtained from this study are empirical, clearly illustrating that Indian organisations' current HR system underutilises, under-accommodates, and systematically disadvantages a significant number of neurodivergent talents, which can and should be changed through structural design. The framework for the Cognitive Pluralism Architecture proposed here provides a starting point in this transformation, one that has been grounded in theory and validated in practice: one that makes the use of cognitive diversity not a deviation from an organisational norm, but the very substrate from which adaptive, innovative and resilient organisations are built.

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