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MANAGING NEURODIVERSITY IN MNCS:

A Comparative Study of HR professionals' Experiences in Indonesia and Sweden

Dwike Aprilia Cesarini & Lena Tok

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Forewords

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Gothenburg, 250608

Dwike Aprilia Cesarini Lena Tok

Abstract

Despite growing awareness, biases in HR practices continue to hinder neurodivergent employees from recruitment to retention. Hesitation to hire neurodivergent employees limits access to suitable roles, while inconsistent accommodations, stigma, and limited advancement opportunities challenge retention. This study examines how HR professionals in multinational corporations (MNCs) in Indonesia and Sweden perceive and implement neurodiversity initiatives, investigating HR practices related to accommodations, recruitment, and engagement, identifying both barriers and enablers.

Grounded in Schein's (1984) model of organisational culture, this study analyses how cultural elements influence neuro-inclusion. ***Underlying assumption*****s** and ***Values*** shape perceptions of difference, leading to exclusion, while their manifestation in ***Artefacts*** includes inclusive policies and workplace practices. Schein's framework helps examine how these cultural dimensions interact to either support or hinder neurodiversity initiatives. A qualitative approach is employed, involving ten interviews with HR professionals from MNCs in both countries, complemented by secondary sources. Thematic analysis follows Flick's (2014) abductive method, with themes refined through an iterative process. Triangulation and expert feedback ensure rigour.

Findings reveal distinct national contexts. In Indonesia, cultural taboos, weak legal protections, and a profit-first mindset hinder inclusion, leading to reactive accommodations and dependence on individual leaders. In Sweden, strong legal frameworks, union presence, and meritocratic values support inclusion, though initiatives often rely on self-advocacy and remain passive. In both countries, stigma and lack of awareness contribute to non-disclosure, masking, and inconsistent support. To ensure neuro-inclusion, HR professionals must act across all stages, from recruitment to retention. Recruitment should include transparent accommodations, such as prior access to interview questions and alternative assessment formats, reducing the pressure to self-disclose. Retention requires proactive adjustments, including the integration of *autonomy* through flexible structures, work arrangements, and sensory-friendly environments. Personalised training and mentorship foster *competence*, while empathetic leadership, peer support, and advocacy networks build *relatedness.*

Keywords: Neurodiversity, Multinational Corporations (MNC), Organisational Culture, Perceived Discrimination, Workplace Accommodation.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Neurodiversity encompasses a range of brain functions, including conditions such as autism, ADHD, and dyslexia (Neurodiversity Hub, n.d.). With an estimated 15–20 per cent of the global population being neurodivergent (Doyle, 2020), it is increasingly important to understand how workplace accommodations can support this group effectively. Workplace accommodations refer to adjusting work settings, job tasks, or procedures to support employees in carrying out their responsibilities more effectively, particularly when they face cognitive, sensory, or physical challenges (Rumrill et al., 2022). This study specifically examines accommodations for neurodivergent employees. Such adjustments foster equal employment opportunities and may include modifications to the recruitment process, job responsibilities, physical workspace, or workflow, creating a more inclusive and supportive workplace (Northwest ADA Center, 2018).

While many businesses have implemented diversity and inclusivity programs, and numerous prominent companies report such initiatives (World Economic Forum, 2024), neurodiversity remains an area that requires further attention. Research from ADP Research Institute (2022) indicates that 68 per cent of employees would consider leaving their jobs if their companies lacked an effective Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (DEI) policy, and 51 per cent of neurodivergent employees have taken time off work due to their neurodivergence (City and Guilds Foundation, 2025). Thus, planning for neurodiversity is a significant element of DEI efforts, allowing HR professionals to promote greater inclusion and a competitive advantage for their businesses.

Despite growing awareness, neurodivergent employees continue to face stereotypes and discrimination that limit their career prospects and job satisfaction (Praslova et al., 2023). Research has highlighted the importance of 'cognitive team diversity', which refers to differences in team members' thinking styles, skills, knowledge, beliefs and values, which is a key contributor to team creativity (Waisman-Nitzan et al., 2018). However, many neurodiversity programs focus on short-term metrics and lack comprehensive evaluations of their long-term impact on educational and employment outcomes (Leadbitter et al., 2021). Thus, we recommend organisations to adopt a more holistic approach that extends beyond initial attraction strategies to ensure sustained support throughout the employment lifecycle, from hiring to retention.

Major MNCs such as Microsoft, SAP, Deloitte, and IBM have embraced neurodiversity programs, reporting various benefits such as problem-solving, process improvement, and innovation by challenging inefficiencies, optimising workflows, and identifying new opportunities for value creation (Austin & Pisano, 2017). Despite these initiatives, many MNCs still struggle to fully leverage the potential of neurodiversity, as evidenced by persistently high unemployment and underemployment rates among neurodivergent employees (Ott et al., 2022). Given that MNCs operate across diverse cultural and regulatory environments, a context-sensitive approach is essential for understanding how neurodiversity policies and practices are implemented, evaluated, and adapted in various settings (Doyle & McDowall, 2022).

MNCs' efforts to advance neurodiversity awareness and create culturally relevant initiatives are often limited by the cultural preparedness of the countries involved (Ott et al., 2022). This suggests that simply adapting existing HR practices is insufficient, organisations must challenge traditional assumptions about employee success and move beyond standardised management approaches (Austin & Pisano, 2017). The lack of culturally sensitive research limits the successful implementation of neurodiversity initiatives across different regions, making it essential to bridge the gap between Western-centric approaches and non-Western realities to foster more inclusive and effective global practices (Hirota et al., 2024). To explore these dynamics, Indonesia and Sweden were chosen for this study due to their contrasting cultural and legal environments, offering valuable insights into neuro-inclusion in varying societal contexts. Indonesia presents a unique context in which limited societal awareness of cognitive differences, combined with the lack of legally mandated workplace inclusion, poses significant challenges for advancing neurodiversity initiatives (Aliyah, 2024). Meanwhile, Sweden, with its progressive social policies and robust infrastructure for supporting individuals with diverse abilities, offers insights into how MNCs navigate implementation challenges despite an advanced legal system (Gjertsen et al., 2021). Examining HR professionals from these two countries sheds light on how MNCs adapt and implement neurodiversity strategies within such diverse environments. This research is particularly compelling as it aims to uncover effective approaches tailored to the cultural, societal, and organisational nuances of each context, enabling MNCs to foster inclusive workplaces.

As agents of change within their host institutions (Kwok & Tadesse, 2006), MNCs can potentially drive shifts in local policies and practices on neuro-inclusion. One example is Harbour Energy, which has been actively raising awareness about neurodiversity in the broader community in Aberdeen's schools, hospitals, and offices so that this company is not only transforming its workplace culture but also influencing neuro-inclusion practice in society (City

and Guilds Foundation, 2025). By exploring how HR professionals in MNCs support neurodivergent employees, this study seeks to highlight the ways these organisations promote inclusivity and equity in the workplace, particularly in relation to neurodiversity, across various cultural and political contexts. Building on Biswas et al. (2017), who emphasise that organisational values, such as equal opportunities, are interpreted and applied differently across cultural contexts, this study takes a closer look at how cultural differences shape the implementation of neuro-inclusion in Indonesia and Sweden. While Biswas et al. (2017) examined HR practices in Sweden and India, demonstrating how cultural variations influence HR strategies, this research extends the discussion by focusing on neurodiversity initiatives. Specifically, our study aims to explore how HR professionals in MNCs operating in Indonesia and Sweden navigate these cultural distinctions when implementing neuro-inclusion, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities they encounter in fostering more inclusive workplaces.

1.2. Problem Discussion

Despite growing societal awareness of neurodiversity, neurodivergent employees still face pressure to conform to societal norms, making it crucial to challenge stereotypes that restrict their access to roles suited to their strengths (Johnson & Ahluwalia, 2024). Research shows that nearly half of HR professionals express reservations about hiring neurodivergent employees, indicating pervasive biases and a lack of understanding (Jackson, 2024). These biases often lead to restricted career advancement opportunities and exclusion from key decision-making processes, negatively impacting engagement levels (Praslova et al.,2023).

An example from Umeå, Sweden, where a woman was denied an internship placement after disclosing her Asperger's diagnosis, illustrates how neurodivergent employees may face discrimination due to preconceived notions about their abilities (Sundström, 2022). Discrimination in this context is defined as unfair treatment, harassment, or abuse stemming from characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or age (Johns, 2020; Rafferty, 2020). However, the focus of this study is specifically on individuals with neurodivergent conditions like autism, ADHD, and dyslexia.

Despite legal protections for individuals with cognitive and neurological conditions under Sweden's Discrimination Act (Diskrimineringslagen, SFS 2008:567) and Indonesia's Law No. 8 of 2016 (Aliyah, 2024), the effective implementation of these regulations in workplace settings remains a challenge. In practice, companies often rely on their policies, which can be inconsistent or insufficient, thereby perpetuating stigma and limiting workplace inclusion for neurodivergent employees. One of the primary barriers to accessing workplace

accommodations is the reluctance to disclose neurodivergent conditions, often due to the stigma associated with neurological differences (Farquhar, 2024), limiting access to workplace support. This stigma is driven by societal fears and misconceptions that portray neurodivergent employees as awkward, unsociable, incompetent, or lacking intelligence (Patton, 2019; Farquhar, 2024). As a result, employers and colleagues may hold lower performance expectations for neurodivergent employees, further reinforcing workplace inequalities (Patton, 2019; Farquhar, 2024).

Hildebrant et al. (2025) emphasise that tailored accommodations, particularly for autistic job candidates, can significantly reduce anxiety and improve employment outcomes. However, without disclosure, many neurodivergent employees miss out on these significant supports, further deepening workplace inequities. This tension between disclosure and discrimination highlights the need for organisations to cultivate environments where neurodivergent employees feel safe expressing their needs without fear of stigma or bias.

Omanović (2013) highlights that companies often prioritise informational diversity, such as skills and knowledge, over a more holistic approach to inclusion, focusing on the business case rather than meaningful integration. This narrow interpretation further hinders efforts to embrace neurodiversity fully. Beatty and Kirby (2006) further reveal that the failure to disclose a hidden social identity, such as a neurodivergent condition, can lead to adverse outcomes, including feelings of isolation, identity fragmentation, and reduced workplace performance. While disclosure is necessary to gain legal protection and access to accommodations, it also increases the risk of stigma and discrimination. This underscores the significant necessity to confront stereotypes that hinder career prospects and restrict access to supportive roles for neurodivergent employees.

At the same time, the lack of genuine inclusion and psychological safety in the workplace forces many neurodivergent employees to engage in "masking", the suppression of their authentic behaviours to meet social and professional expectations (Pryke-Hobbes et al., 2023). Workplace accommodations are significant in mitigating these challenges by providing individualised support. However, without an inclusive environment that normalises neurodivergence, many employees feel compelled to mask their traits rather than seek necessary adjustments. This constant effort to conform can result in emotional and mental distress, ultimately affecting job satisfaction and performance (Pryke-Hobbes et al., 2023). Research shows that employees with ADHD face significant workplace challenges, being 30 per cent more likely to struggle with long-term employment, 60 per cent more likely to be terminated, and three times more likely to resign abruptly (ADDA – Attention Deficit Disorder Association,

2023; Barkley, 2008). These findings underscore the need for targeted support and proactive accommodations in the workplace, which are often lacking, leaving neurodivergent employees without the necessary tools to thrive, which can result in the decision to resign in pursuit of organisations that better understand and accommodate the needs of neurodivergent employees. Addressing existing support gaps may play an important role in fostering stronger engagement and improving retention outcomes for neurodivergent employees.

Praslova et al. (2023) highlight the importance of using work samples in place of interviews, offering flexible work arrangements such as remote work or adjusted schedules, careful job matching based on talent assessments, employee advocacy, and job crafting to promote engagement and inclusivity of neurodivergent employees. Wen et al. (2024) emphasise that employer interventions targeting attitudes, as well as improvements to the workplace social environment, are critical to fostering successful outcomes for neurodivergent employees. Wissel et al. (2022a, 2022b) and Lauder et al. (2022) further underscore the significance of leadership support, peer relationships, mentorship, and physical and technological accommodations in fostering inclusion.

Despite existing research identifying key strategies for promoting neuro-inclusion, such as flexible work arrangements, tailored job design, and supportive leadership, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these strategies are operationalised within MNCs. This gap is influenced by varying industry norms, organisational structures, and cultural dynamics, yet few studies have examined how HR professionals navigate these complexities. Moreover, most existing literature focuses narrowly on specific neurodivergent traits, such as autism or ADHD, and it often includes the presence of formal diagnoses or voluntary disclosure. In practice, however, many companies do not collect or have access to such diagnostic data, as its collection is prohibited (Art. 9 GDPR). This may contribute to a critical gap in both research and practice, as current approaches may overlook employees who are undiagnosed or prefer not to disclose their condition. A more inclusive lens is therefore needed, one that recognises and supports a broader range of cognitive differences regardless of formal identification.

An additional gap lies in the intersectionality factors present within MNCs, where employees often represent a multitude of diverse identities across ethnicity, gender, socio-economic background, and more. The interplay between neurodivergence and other forms of diversity introduces further complexity into the implementation of inclusive workplace practices. Understanding how HR professionals account for and address these intersecting identities when developing neuro-inclusion strategies is critical for creating equitable and effective accommodations.

This study addresses these gaps by exploring HR professionals' perspectives on neuro-inclusion within MNCs, with a focus on uncovering organisational practices that either support or hinder inclusion. By expanding on existing findings, it aims to identify additional forms of organisational support that can enhance neuro-inclusion efforts while accounting for the unique intersectionality challenges of the MNC environment, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive workplace culture in the global context. By examining HR professionals' decision-making processes in MNCs operating in Indonesia and Sweden, this research aims to uncover the practical challenges and opportunities in advancing neuro-inclusion in culturally diverse contexts. A deeper understanding of these factors can help create workplaces where neurodivergent employees experience genuine belonging, reducing the pressure to "mask" or conform their differences (Pryke-Hobbes et al., 2023).

Furthermore, Waisman-Nitzan et al. (2021) identify a research gap in understanding how organisational culture and leadership styles impact the effectiveness of inclusive employment practices, particularly for individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Wen et al. (2023) further emphasise the need to explore how HR professionals' attitudes influence the hiring process and the long-term support and retention of autistic employees. Their findings underscore the importance of focusing on HR professionals' perspectives in this study, as their knowledge and approach can significantly impact the success of neuro-inclusive practices from recruitment to retention. This aligns with the need for interventions that enhance HR professionals' competencies in managing and sustaining a neurodivergent workforce. This gap highlights the critical role of HR professionals in shaping a visibly supportive and inclusive work environment for neurodivergent employees. Beyond formal policies and accommodations, the way leadership attitudes, workplace culture, and everyday interactions are visibly demonstrated plays a significant role in making inclusivity truly felt.

Ultimately, this study underscores the need for DEI initiatives that go beyond surface-level commitments, advocating for meaningful, individualised support systems that empower neurodivergent employees to thrive in multinational environments. The perspective of HR professionals is significant in understanding neurodivergent employees' experiences in the workplace, as organisational attitudes heavily influence hiring practices and ongoing support throughout employment. As the key drivers of systemic change, HR professionals' views on hiring and retaining neurodivergent employees are pivotal to fostering inclusive workplaces. Albright et al. (2020) highlight that HR professionals' willingness to accommodate neurodivergent employees varies significantly, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to improve HR knowledge and attitudes toward neurodivergent inclusion.

This study holds both theoretical and practical significance by investigating the relatively overlooked DEI initiatives, specifically emphasising neurodiversity. This study will examine HR practices across the entire talent management process, from recruitment to retention, to understand how neurodivergent employees are supported throughout their employment journey. By exploring the HR professional's perspective across various stages, this study aims to provide insights into the workplace accommodation that fosters or hinders the inclusion of neurodivergent employees.

1.3. Purpose & Research Question

Due to this background, this study examines neurodiversity practices in MNCs in Indonesia and Sweden. The study intends to answer the following research questions:

1. *How do HR professionals in MNCs perceive and address discrimination and workplace accommodations for neurodivergent employees?*
2. *To what extent do HR professionals' perceptions and practices in supporting neurodivergent employees differ between MNCs in Indonesia and Sweden?*

The purpose of this study is to provide insights into how neurodiversity practices are implemented and managed within multinational corporations (MNCs), focusing on the experiences of HR professionals in Indonesia and Sweden. These findings are intended to contribute to a deeper understanding of how HR strategies can support neurodivergent employees and enhance inclusion in multinational organisations.

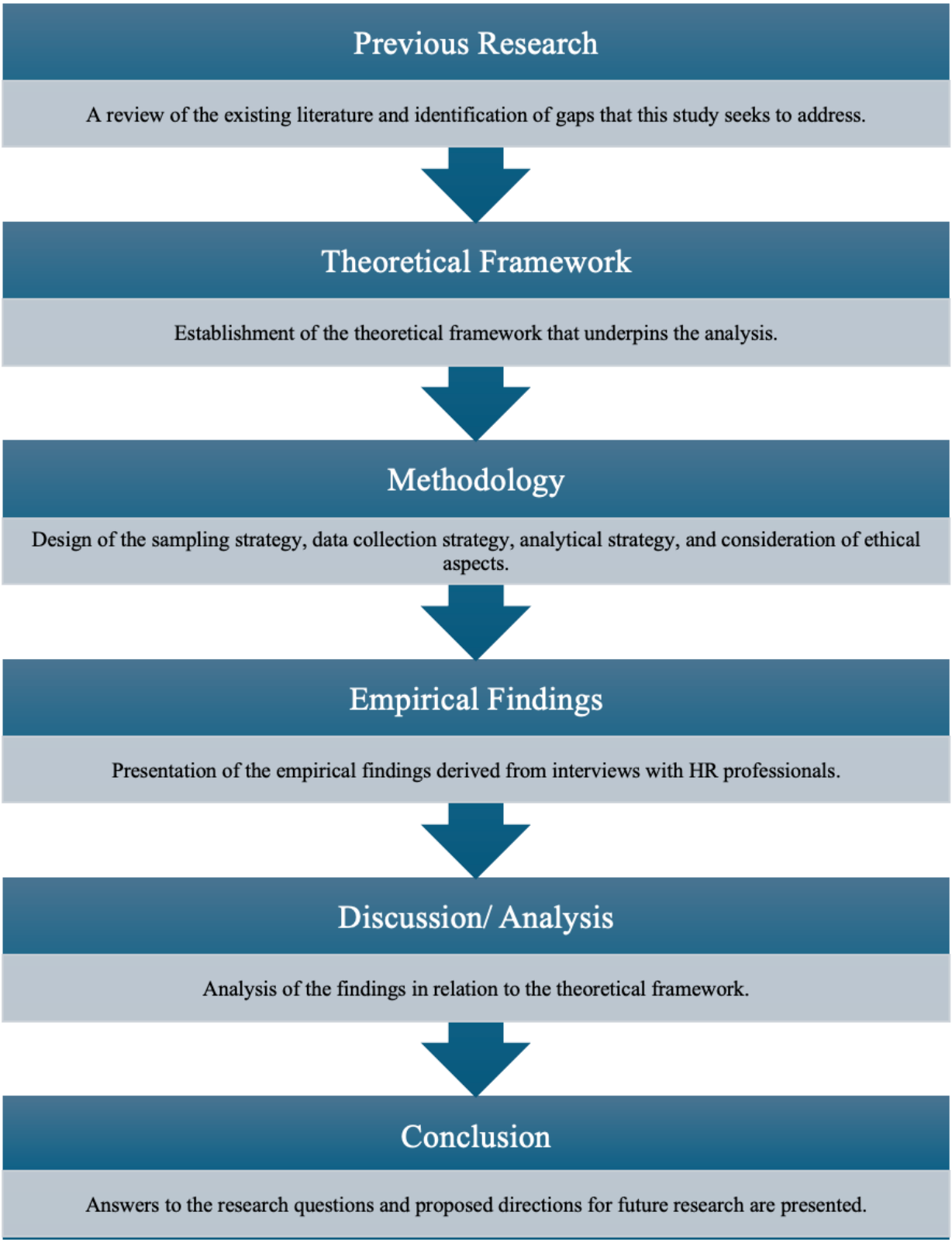
1.4. Terms Definition

This section outlines the definitions of key terms that will be referenced frequently throughout the subsequent chapters. By clarifying and standardising these terms, it aims to ensure a consistent and shared understanding of essential terms within the framework of this thesis.

Term	**Definition**
Neurodiversity	Natural differences in how people think, process information, and interact with others. It includes neurotypical individuals as well as individuals with ADHD, autism, dyslexia, etc. (Szulc et al., 2021).
Neurodivergent	An individual who is markedly different from the norm in how their brain processes information. They may have a diagnosis like ADHD, autism, dyslexia or difficulty to learn (Salvesen Mindroom Research Centre, 2022).
Neurotypical individuals	Individuals with cognitive abilities that align with common societal expectations (Shah et al., 2022)
Multinational companies (MNCs)	A business that invests directly in foreign countries and operates with assets or holdings in multiple nations (Dunning, 2008).
Perceived Discrimination	"Experiences of personal discrimination that are perceived by individuals when it is not possible to verify the actions or behaviours that precipitated the perception." (Heads et al., 2020. P. 495)
Workplace Accommodation	Changing the work environment or adjusting how key job tasks are performed, enabling qualified individuals to obtain or maintain employment by addressing significant disability-related work barriers." (Rumrill et al., 2023. p. 6)
Organisational Culture	A complex system of shared assumptions and behaviours that develops over time as a group addresses external & internal challenges, with its strength influenced by factors such as the group's history, stability, and learning mechanisms (Schein, 1990).
Workplace Engagement	A positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind is characterised by high energy, resilience, dedication, and being fully focused and engrossed in work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).
HR professional	Individuals who are responsible for managing recruitment, retention, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives to create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive work environment

1.5. Disposition

The following chapters are structured as follows:



2. Previous Research

This chapter examines how perceived discrimination affects employee engagement, particularly for neurodivergent employees, who continue to face barriers such as biased hiring, restricted career growth, and workplace stigma, an issue often overlooked compared to gender and race-based discrimination. To the best of our knowledge, while research has explored workplace discrimination across various marginalised groups, the specific impact of workplace accommodations such as norms, values, and structures on neurodivergent employees remains underexplored.

2.1. Organisational Culture

Organisational culture plays a central role in workplace inclusion, influencing how policies are applied in the workplace. Since workplace norms, values, and structures shape inclusion efforts, understanding these cultural dynamics offers valuable insights into creating more supportive and inclusive work environments (Hirota et al., 2024). Organisations must go beyond formal policies to foster a more inclusive culture and address informal cultural elements that shape how neurodivergent employees interact with colleagues, managers, and work tasks such as leadership commitment, neuro-inclusive recruitment, tailored workplace adjustment and neurodiversity training for employees (Heron, 2024). Thus, organisational culture plays a significant role in shaping these experiences, as it determines whether inclusion efforts are truly embedded in everyday workplace interactions or merely surface-level policies.

While research has examined the gap between Western-centric and non-Western perspectives on neuro-inclusion (Hirota et al., 2024), limited cultural understanding continues to hinder adoption, highlighting the need for localised strategies. However, based on the literature reviewed by the researchers, neurodiversity within multicultural contexts like Indonesia and Sweden, remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by examining the unique challenges and opportunities of fostering neuro-inclusive environments in MNCs across these regions. Chapter 3 will analyse organisational culture using Schein's Model of Culture (1984), which categorises culture into underlying assumptions, espoused values, and cultural artefacts. By applying these dimensions through inclusive policies, intentional office design, and leadership-driven engagement, organisations can effectively navigate cultural differences, strengthening workplace harmony and performance in global settings.

2.2. Perceived Discrimination and its Impact on Employee Engagement

Workplace policies and practices are shaped by deeply embedded underlying assumptions, unconscious beliefs that influence how organisations perceive diversity, productivity, and employee engagement (Schein, 1990). Perceived discrimination occurs when individuals feel discriminated against but cannot prove what caused it, making it hard to point to a specific action or behaviour (Heads et al., 2020). When these assumptions go unchallenged, they contribute to perceived discrimination, where neurodivergent employees experience exclusion despite formal inclusion policies (Doyle, 2020).

Neurodivergent employees encounter significant barriers, including higher unemployment rates and limited job security (Østerud, 2022; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). Differences in productivity and employer biases contribute to the disparities faced by these individuals in the workplace. PWD often experience lower productivity levels and encounter discrimination, leading to reduced earnings. This discrimination manifests in various aspects, such as hiring practices, job placement, and salary differences (Liao et al., 2024). Neurodivergent employees are vulnerable to these forms of discrimination, especially when their conditions are invisible or not formally disclosed. To explore these challenges, prior studies have used qualitative methods, often focusing on the perspectives of HR professionals or small samples of neurodivergent employees (e.g., Wissel et al., 2022a; Wissel et al., 2022b). While such studies provide valuable insights into workplace inclusion and contextual factors affecting engagement, they remain limited in scope.

While most prior research on neurodivergence has been confined to the healthcare sector, studies on employment remain scarce (Krzeminska et al., 2019). This gap is particularly significant as HR professionals must navigate complex diversity initiatives, balancing inclusivity with potential perceptions of reverse discrimination, especially in workplaces where neurodivergent employees may not disclose their condition (Creative Spirit, 2024). Addressing these challenges, this study explores strategies for MNCs to implement neuroinclusive practices while ensuring fairness and equity for all employees.

Previous research on perceived discrimination has identified its impact on employee engagement. Perceived discrimination has significant adverse effects on retention and future labour supply, which would exacerbate gender and racial gaps caused by discrimination itself (Ruebeck, 2023). For employees with dyslexia, this challenge manifests as a significant barrier, as experiences of discrimination can lead to burnout (Wissell et al., 2022b). Furthermore, Innocenti et al. (2023) emphasise that employees with chronic illnesses (CIE) respond

positively to HR practices in discrimination-free environments, however perceived workplace discrimination can diminish or reverse these benefits. Furthermore, persistent misconceptions and stereotypes often limit neurodivergent employees' career opportunities and job satisfaction as they are type-casted into specific job roles that overlook their diverse skills and abilities (Praslova et al., 2022).

Perceived discrimination against neurodivergent employees in Indonesia continues due to systemic barriers to employment and a lack of effective enforcement of existing policies. According to Aliyah (2024), despite the enactment of Law Number 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities, discrimination in Indonesia's employment sector persists due to limited accessibility and a lack of employer awareness about aligning job opportunities with the skills of neurodivergent people. Low public awareness, including among business actors, further exacerbates this issue. While the government is responsible for upholding human rights, insufficient monitoring and enforcement have allowed discrimination to continue, emphasising the need for stronger oversight and a greater societal commitment to inclusion.

Despite strong legal frameworks in Sweden supporting the rights of individuals with cognitive and neurological differences, research suggests that legal provisions alone do not eliminate bias in recruitment processes. For instance, a study by Ahmed et al. (2024) found that applicants with diverse conditions were 21 per cent less likely to receive responses to job applications than their non-disabled peers. This gap may be attributed to employers' limited understanding of inclusive hiring practices.

Neurodiverse individuals are frequently perceived as unemployable and unsuitable for regular jobs, even though they often demonstrate their ability to work in segregated settings or alternative contexts (Reinertsen 2016, Gjertsen et al., 2021). Additionally, support professionals often redirect neurodiverse individuals away from supported employment programs toward segregated workplaces, labelling them as "difficult to employ" (Hardonk & Halldórsdóttir, 2021; Gjertsen et al., 2021). This pattern of exclusion from regular workplaces directly contradicts Sweden's official policy, which advocates for a social relational understanding of cognitive and neurological differences (Gjertsen et al., 2021).

Weak oversight and limited employer knowledge continue to restrict opportunities for neurodivergent individuals (Sundström, 2022). Addressing these challenges requires more than policy commitments; it demands tangible actions that translate inclusion into everyday workplace experiences (Gjertsen et al., 2021). HR professionals ensure that inclusion efforts go beyond compliance and actively foster engagement. One critical area where organisations can make a difference is in workplace accommodations. Providing the necessary adjustments can

help mitigate the impact of discrimination and create an environment where neurodivergent employees can fully participate. The following section explores how workplace accommodations serve as observable artefacts of organisational culture, shaping the inclusivity of work environments and influencing employee engagement.

2.3. Workplace Accommodation and its Impact on Neurodivergent Employees

Workplace accommodations enable neurodivergent employees to thrive (City and Guilds Foundation, 2025). Research indicates that policies advocating for workplace accommodations may exist, however their implementation and effectiveness often fall short. For example, a report from the City and Guilds Foundation (2025) found that only 5 per cent of neurodivergent employees feel that the tools provided help them thrive. This suggests that policies alone are insufficient; the practical, everyday adjustments, such as offering flexibility and fostering understanding among colleagues, will create a supportive and inclusive environment. Many of these adjustments are low-cost or free, yet they can make a significant difference in the work experience of neurodivergent employees (City and Guilds Foundation, 2025).

The City and Guilds Foundation (2025) reports, based on its Neurodiversity Index 2025, further identifies the top three factors that help neurodivergent employees thrive, including access to support from line managers, training opportunities, and having workplace allies. Furthermore, employees report feeling psychologically safe when they work in an inclusive culture, have a supportive line manager, and do not feel the need to mask their neurodivergent traits. These findings underscore the importance of creating an environment where neurodivergent employees can excel, emphasising that a supportive culture and practical accommodations are key to their success. Examining how organisational commitments to accommodations translate into everyday workplace experiences is significant in this context. This research emphasises the need for accommodations to be not just policies on paper but integral to the daily work environment, ensuring neurodivergent employees feel truly supported and included.

Recognising neurodiversity as a fundamental aspect of human variation is both a moral duty and a strategic necessity, as ensuring workplace accommodations for neurodivergent employees not only upholds ethical and legal obligations but also enhances organisational success in an increasingly complex global market (Hagner & Cooney, 2005). According to Hyseni et al. (2024), neurodiverse employees are more likely to request accommodations in their workplace than neurotypical employees. Despite this difference, studies have shown that

many individuals feel pressured to mask or suppress their need to fit in due to fear of stigma, which discourages them from requesting accommodations (Gonzales et al., 2019). This reluctance to seek accommodations further negatively impacts employee engagement and retention.

While previous research has explored workplace accommodations for neurodivergent employees, important gaps remain regarding how HR professionals approach these accommodations in practice. Weber et al. (2022) explored the impact of workplace adjustments on neurodivergent employees, mainly focusing on sensory challenges like sound and light sensitivity control to improve job performance, longevity, and employee well-being. However, limitations in the study's methodology prevent evaluating these adjustments' effectiveness. Similarly, Waisman-Nitzan et al. (2018) highlight the need for workplace accommodations that consider human factors that hinder the performance of neurodivergent employees. Adequate accommodation could include establishing clear task procedures and fostering support among co-workers (Waisman-Nitzan et al., 2018). Budhwar et al. (2022) also emphasised how personalised support, such as skill-building resources, sentiment analysis and tailored onboarding, can foster resilience, job satisfaction, and retention, promoting a more inclusive and high-performing workplace. Organisations benefit from cultivating an engaged workforce, as engaged employees tend to be healthier, more productive, and more satisfied with their jobs and create a culture of trust and support (Sypniewska et al., 2023). Remote work has impacted engagement, with research highlighting the need for organisational resources and individual capabilities to sustain productivity and well-being (Mäkikangas et al., 2022).

However, previous research that we examined did not delve further into organisational barriers to implementing such accommodations, such as a lack of awareness, limited resources, and rigid workplace structures, which can significantly impede their effectiveness. Furthermore, how HR professionals navigate challenges like budgetary constraints, resource allocation, or cultural resistance to provide such accommodations remains underexplored. To address these challenges, the Social Model of Disability (SMD) (Kudlick, 2003) offers a lens to reframe individual impairments as a result of societal and environmental barriers. Incorporating this perspective emphasises the need to dismantle structural obstacles and foster an inclusive organisational culture. Additionally, Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) (Ryan & Deci, 2017) provides a valuable framework for analysing workplace accommodations, emphasising intrinsic motivation and autonomy as central to performance and engagement. CET suggests that effective accommodations should not only address practical needs but also foster a sense of competence and autonomy among neurodivergent employees. By

understanding these barriers and exploring how HR professionals navigate them, this study aims to inform the design of more inclusive and impactful accommodation strategies that enhance employee engagement, retention, and job satisfaction, while promoting cognitive diversity within organisations.

This study aims to fill these gaps by investigating HR practices for accommodating neurodivergent employees, with a focus on the challenges that HR professionals face in practice. By focusing on HR's practices, this research will provide actionable insights into how accommodations can be effectively implemented and tailored to support neurodivergent employees in diverse organisational and cultural settings. It will also examine how management can address systemic obstacles, such as costs, leadership engagement, and cross-cultural adaptation, to ensure more effective neuro-inclusive practices.

3. Theoretical Background

This chapter presents the theoretical framework guiding this study, focusing on how organisational culture shapes the experiences of neurodivergent employees in MNCs. Using Schein's (1984) model, which categorises culture into three levels (underlying assumptions, espoused values, and artefacts), this framework examines how HR professionals' assumptions, divided into perceptions (beliefs about neurodivergent employees) and organisational support (policies, practices, and resources), drive or hinder neuro-inclusion.

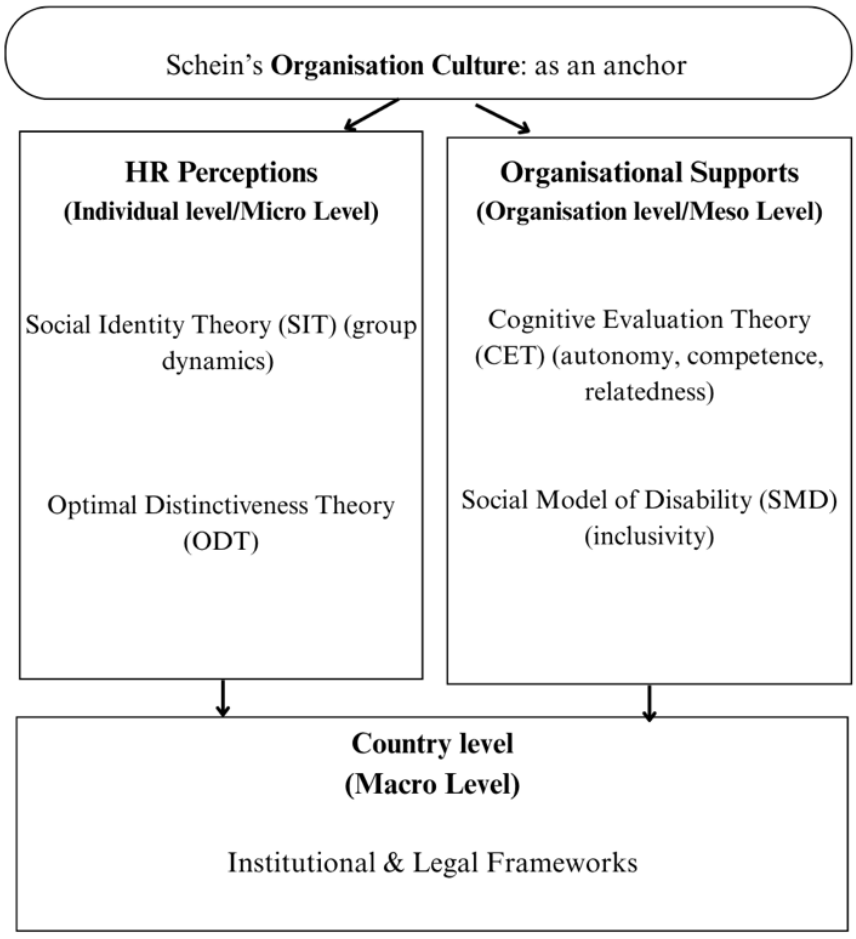
A company's approach to neuro-inclusion depends on how these elements interact; underlying assumptions and values influence perceptions of difference, often leading to discrimination, while their impact is visible in artefacts such as workplace accommodations, inclusive policies, and HR practices. If these cultural aspects fail to support neurodivergent employees, their well-being, engagement, and job satisfaction may suffer. This framework examines perceived discrimination as an aspect of underlying assumptions, shaping how differences are viewed and contributing to workplace biases. Meanwhile, workplace accommodations are framed within espoused values and observable artefacts, reflecting organisational commitments to inclusion through policies, practices, and environmental adaptations.

The theme of perceived discrimination offers a comprehensive exploration of HR professionals' roles in cultivating inclusive work environments. Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) provides insights into the dynamics of group categorisation bias in the workplace, explaining the challenges neurodivergent employees face regarding inclusion and engagement. Complementing this, Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT) (Brewer, 1991)

further explores the balance between the need for differentiation and belonging, offering a perspective on how HR professionals navigate providing individual accommodations while maintaining a sense of group cohesion.

Furthermore, on the theme of workplace accommodations, CET (Ryan & Deci, 2017) and the SMD (Kudlick, 2003) offer complementary perspectives that shape effective neuro-inclusion strategies. CET emphasises the role of autonomy and competence in fostering motivation, highlighting how well-designed accommodations can empower neurodivergent employees rather than restrict their potential. At the same time, the SMD challenges traditional approaches by shifting the focus from individual impairments to systemic barriers, advocating for workplace modifications that facilitate inclusion rather than expecting employees to adapt. By examining the interplay between individual perceptions and organisational structures, this framework provides a holistic perspective on how HR professionals influence neuro-inclusion.

Figure 1 below illustrates our conceptual framework for studying HR professionals' experiences in managing neurodivergent employees in the workplace.



3.1. Theoretical Approach: Organisational Culture

The study of organisational culture emerged as researchers sought to understand how organisations function beyond formal structures. Initially focused on group norms and workplace behaviour (Lewin et al., 1939), organisational culture gained prominence and was recognised as a system of shared values, beliefs, and assumptions that shape decision-making and employee behaviour (Schein, 1990). Building on this foundation, the Organisational Culture Model was later introduced, identifying three levels of culture: underlying assumptions, espoused values, and observable artefacts. Underlying assumptions are deeply rooted, often unconscious beliefs that shape an organisation's behaviour; they affect how employees perceive and react to their environment. These assumptions form the foundation of workplace culture but are challenging to identify and change since they are so deeply rooted. Espoused values refer to the principles, norms, and policies organisations claim to uphold and guide their decision-making. For example, these values can be found in mission statements and leadership speeches. Finally, observable artefacts are the visible and tangible elements, such as office layout, dress code, or company policies, that reflect deeper cultural assumptions but do not necessarily alter them. While these artefacts are easy to see, it can be difficult to interpret them without fully understanding the deeper layers of culture (Schein, 1990).

This framework helps shape the organisational environment and provides employees with a shared lens for understanding and addressing workplace challenges. In the context of neuro-inclusion, organisations must align their daily practices, shared values, and foundational assumptions to build a genuinely inclusive culture that supports diverse needs (Schein, 1984). Schein (1984) emphasises that organisational culture acts as an anchor, guiding employees in decision-making and aligning them with shared values. This cultural foundation shapes how workplace challenges are understood and addressed, ensuring that daily practices reflect broader organisational commitments. In the context of neuro-inclusion, a strong cultural anchor helps translate DEI principles into meaningful actions, fostering an environment where diverse cognitive needs are genuinely supported.

Schein's model emphasises that sustainable cultural change requires transformation at all three levels. While leadership support, social inclusion, and flexible work arrangements are critical for neurodivergent employees, their success hinges on shifting deep-seated beliefs. If an organisation prioritises uniformity over cognitive diversity, leadership may encounter difficulties translating DEI commitments into meaningful action. Schein (1984) observes that a

fundamental challenge lies in recognising that culture is not monolithic; it varies across departments, leadership levels, and even among HR professionals.

Based on Schein's (1990) cultural model, this framework divides HR professionals' assumptions into two categories: perceptions and organisational support. Perceptions reflect HR professionals' beliefs and assumptions, while organisational support involves the visible policies, practices, and resources that impact inclusion. This framework differentiates between two levels of influence in neuro-inclusion. At the individual level, HR professionals' personal beliefs, professional training, and workplace experiences shape how they interpret and implement inclusion strategies. At the organisational level, both meso-level, which refers to organisational support, and macro-level forces, such as legal frameworks, social norms, and national policies, impact HR professionals' assumptions and determine the extent of available support.

Therefore, we suggest that actual change is likely to stem from a shift in mindset, as relying solely on policy without addressing underlying assumptions may risk neurodiversity initiatives becoming fragmented and ineffective. This is where psychological safety becomes significant. When employees feel psychologically safe, they are more likely to express themselves authentically without fear of judgment or exclusion (Lacovini, 1993). In environments where deep-seated beliefs about neurodiversity are challenged and redefined, psychological safety encourages open dialogue and enables neurodivergent employees to contribute their unique perspectives without masking or conforming. As cultural gatekeepers, HR professionals play a pivotal role in fostering psychological safety by ensuring that inclusive practices are firmly embedded in the organisation's values and daily operations (Huyghebaert et al., 2018).

3.2. Theoretical Approach: Perceived Discrimination

The concept of perceived discrimination is central to understanding how systemic biases and workplace dynamics impact neurodivergent employees. This study focuses on how HR professionals' decisions, from hiring to retention, are influenced by these biases and how they shape the experiences of neurodivergent employees throughout the journey of their careers. In the mid-20th century, psychological research on discrimination primarily focused on individual traits and interpersonal conflict. Two key theories from this period were the Authoritarian Personality Theory (Adorno et al., 1950) and the Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis (Berkowitz, 1962). While these theories provided early insights into discriminatory behaviour, they had significant limitations. They primarily viewed discrimination as a result of individual

psychology, neglecting the complex interplay between individual behaviour and social processes of intergroup conflict (Tajfel, 1981).

Tajfel et al. (1971) demonstrated that individuals displayed in-group bias even when no conflict of interest existed, suggesting that economic or personal rivalries do not solely drive discrimination but are a fundamental aspect of social identity formation. This insight laid the foundation for SIT, which provides a broader framework for understanding discrimination beyond individual psychology (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). SIT was formalised as a comprehensive framework, introducing a new perspective for understanding how individuals categorise themselves and others into social groups, leading to in-group favouritism and out-group discrimination, which fosters strong group attachment (Shore et al., 2011). Instead of focusing on individual traits, SIT shifted the focus toward the social and cognitive mechanisms that drive group-based discrimination, arguing that mere categorisation into social groups is enough to shape biases and exclusionary behaviours, even in the absence of direct competition or hostility (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

In workplace contexts, this process influences relationships by fostering in-group cohesion while reinforcing biases against out-group members. Individuals derive a sense of identity from their group memberships, reinforcing shared norms and values within the in-group, while those in the out-group face exclusion and stereotyping (Shore et al., 2011). These dynamics play a significant role in shaping workplace inclusion efforts, determining how neurodivergent employees are perceived and integrated into professional environments.

These group dynamics play a critical role in HR professionals' decision-making, as they may unconsciously categorise employees, including neurodivergent employees, as part of the in-group or out-group. This classification shapes recruitment, support, and career development decisions, potentially reinforcing biases that limit opportunities and influence workplace treatment. Such biases can lead to exclusion or perpetuate stereotypes about neurodivergent employees' capabilities. Moreover, these dynamics also influence workplace relationships, contributing to bias, exclusion, and the need for neurodivergent employees to engage in masking behaviours to conform to social norms (Pryke-Hobbes et al., 2023). Pryke-Hobbes et al. (2023) highlight that masking is mentally exhausting, requiring neurodivergent employees to expend significant energy on social adaptation rather than focusing on their professional contributions, which can contribute to stress and burnout, potentially affecting their ability to stay engaged in work over time.

While SIT explains how social categorisation can lead to exclusion, ODT (Brewer, 1991) adds depth by highlighting individuals' need to balance belonging with maintaining a

sense of uniqueness. Individuals are motivated to affiliate with groups that provide both inclusion and differentiation, avoiding identities that feel either too individualised or overly assimilated. Individuals desire inclusion in the broader organisational culture while needing recognition of their unique individual traits (Brewer, 1991). Achieving this balance can be particularly challenging in workplaces that prioritise neurotypical behaviours and expectations.

From an HR perspective, these theories provide a valuable framework for understanding and supporting neurodivergent employees in the workplace (Shore et al., 2011). Thus, it can explain how HR professionals see the need for adjustment to accommodate neurodiverse employees, who feel they belong yet still maintain their uniqueness as a strength. In workplace settings where neurotypical behaviours are privileged, neurodivergent employees may struggle to achieve this balance as they navigate pressures to conform to dominant neurotypical norms while seeking recognition for their distinct strengths and perspectives (Shore et al., 2011). When workplace norms strongly favour neurotypical behaviours, neurodiverse employees may feel compelled to engage in masking behaviours to satisfy their need for belonging. However, research indicates that prolonged masking behaviours can lead to increased stress and burnout (Hull et al., 2020). Conversely, if neurodivergent employees emphasise their uniqueness without organisational support, they may risk social exclusion or stereotyping, reinforcing perceptions of discrimination and inequality (Abrams et al., 2005).

Understanding how neurodivergent employees experience discrimination highlights the necessity of structural interventions to promote workplace inclusion. While biases and categorisation processes contribute to exclusion, they also shape the need for accommodation strategies. Rather than placing the burden on neurodivergent employees to conform, organisations must rethink workplace structures to foster equity and belonging. This leads to the next section, which explores how workplace accommodation can help mitigate these challenges and create an environment where neurodivergent employees can fully engage and thrive.

3.3. Theoretical Approach: Workplace Accommodation

Workplace accommodation is significant in fostering inclusion and ensuring that neurodivergent employees can fully participate in the workforce. Looking through Schein's (1990) lens of organisational culture, workplace accommodations can be understood as both espoused values and observable artefacts. While organisations may espouse values such as inclusivity, it is the observable accommodations that reveal how these values are truly enacted within the workplace.

Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET), a sub-theory of Self-Determination Theory, complements this perspective by focusing on employees' intrinsic motivation. It suggests that employees are more likely to experience motivation when they have a sense of autonomy in their work, opportunities to develop competence through meaningful feedback, and a strong sense of relatedness within their workplace relationships in environments that foster these elements, employees feel more engaged and motivated to contribute (Ryan and Deci, 2017). Importantly, CET offers a psychological perspective, shifting the focus from individual impairments to the systemic barriers that shape workplace experiences (Ryan & Devi, 2017). Together, these theories provide a comprehensive framework for HR professionals to address the internal drivers of motivation and the external structural changes necessary to support neurodivergent employees effectively.

Research has shown that when employees' intrinsic motivation is nurtured, they are more likely to feel valued and engaged (Gagné & Forest, 2020). For neurodivergent employees, structured support mechanisms such as clear feedback, recognition of individual strengths, and accommodations for different work styles can significantly improve workplace experiences. Managers play a central role in shaping these conditions, ensuring that policies and management practices encourage autonomy by offering flexible work arrangements, competence by providing skill development opportunities, and relatedness by promoting an inclusive and socially supportive work environment.

While CET focuses on individual motivation, the SMD offers a broader lens by positioning "disability" as a socially constructed phenomenon, similar to race, class, and gender, rather than an inherent limitation (Kudlick, 2003). This model argues that inclusion barriers arise not from individual impairments but from structural and environmental factors, such as workplace norms, rigid job expectations, and ingrained biases (Thomas, 2008). From an HR perspective, this means that neurodivergent employees may face exclusion not because of their cognitive differences but due to organisational structures that fail to accommodate their needs. Stereotypes and misconceptions among managers can contribute to these barriers, influencing hiring decisions, performance evaluations, and promotion opportunities (Sundström, 2022). These concepts highlight that the challenge does not lie in the individual's neurodivergence but in the workplace's ability to adapt and support diverse needs.

Addressing these systemic issues requires a shift in organisational thinking, rather than expecting neurodivergent employees to adapt to existing workplace norms, companies should focus on creating environments that accommodate diverse cognitive styles (Benson et al., 2023). This may involve revising job designs to align with neurodivergent strengths,

implementing inclusive hiring practices, and fostering a workplace culture that values different ways of thinking (City & Guilds Foundation, 2025). Research suggests that organisations that actively work to remove systemic barriers improve workplace inclusion and benefit from enhanced innovation and problem-solving capabilities (Doyle & McDowall, 2022). These changes will ultimately enhance workplace diversity and expand talent pools, unlocking individual capabilities and engagement (Doyle & McDowall, 2022).

4. Method

This study presents comparative research between Swedish and Indonesian MNCs, moving beyond the UK- and US-centric focus (Rollnik-Sadowska & Grabińska, 2024). The choice to compare Sweden and Indonesia is grounded in the need to diversify the global understanding of neurodiversity practices, which have traditionally been shaped by Western, English-speaking contexts (Hirota et al., 2024). Hirota et al. (2024) further argue that directly transporting Western neurodiversity paradigms to non-Western contexts risks "repeating the colonisation of Euro-North American-centric research practices and paradigms" by overlooking local social, cultural, and historical nuances. By addressing this gap, this study seeks to uncover new perspectives on global neurodiversity practices. The comparison of Indonesia and Sweden allows for the exploration of how neurodiversity is perceived and managed across distinct cultural, economic, and legislative contexts. This contrast allows for a rich exploration of how neurodiversity is perceived and managed across diverse cultural, economic, and legislative contexts, offering insights into adapting neurodiversity practices in vastly different environments. This study was conducted within a 20-week period.

4.1. Sampling strategy

To explore HR practices surrounding neurodiversity, the study engaged ten HR professionals, five from each country, who work within MNCs. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling (Ritchie et al., 2014) to ensure that participants met specific criteria aligned with this study objectives. The participants were selected through our own professional network, with the primary criterion being employed as an HR professional in an MNC, regardless of their prior experience in managing neurodivergent employees. Including participants with diverse experiences provides valuable insights into the underlying reasons for current HR practices and the factors influencing their implementation. These participants are particularly relevant as they offer a practical perspective on the intersection of cultural, societal, and organisational factors in managing neurodivergent employees in MNCs in Indonesia and

Sweden. By focusing on experienced HR professionals, this study aims to generate relevant and actionable findings for the HR field.

Table 1. Overview of interviewees acquired from the study.

Interviewee	Position	Years of exp. in HR field	Sector	Organisation size	Time of Interview	Duration of Interview	Country
IN 1	HR Business Partner	5	IT	Approx 5000	Jan 16th, 2025	00:54	Indonesia
IN 2	Recruiter	6	IT	Approx 3000	Jan 28th, 2025	00:49	Indonesia
IN 3	HR Business Partner	5	IT	Approx 4000	Feb 19th, 2025	00:56	Indonesia
IN 4	HR manager	8	IT	Approx 500	Feb 28th, 2025	00:39	Indonesia
IN 5	Talent Manager	7	IT	Approx 1000	March 8th, 2025	00:38	Indonesia
IN 6	HR and C-level assistant	5	IT	Approx 100	Jan 7th, 2025	00:59	Sweden
IN 7	Recruiter	6	IT	Approx 100	Feb 26th, 2025	00:34	Sweden
IN 8	Regional Manager	7	FMCG	Approx 100 000	Feb 23rd, 2025	00:45	Sweden
IN 9	Recruiter	8	IT	Approx 1000	Feb 27th, 2025	00:35	Sweden
IN 10	People Manager	7	Finance	Approx 5000	March 21st, 2025	00:25	Sweden

The participants were selected based on the requirements of them being employed in MNCs as well as their responsibilities in recruitment, retention, and DEI initiatives, within their organisations. Thus, despite not all participants having direct experience in managing neurodivergent employees, their insights are particularly valuable in the sense that they possess prior experience in DEI initiatives, contributing to the assessment of the current level of awareness and the challenges organisations face in fully implementing neuro-inclusive initiatives.

We chose to include five participants from each country aligning with the study's qualitative and abductive approach, prioritising depth of insight over breadth of coverage. Although 10 might not represent an entire population we deem it sufficient to capture diverse perspectives across different organisational contexts while simultaneously allowing for an in-depth analysis of individual experiences and organisational practices.

The selection of participants was guided by the goal of reaching theoretical saturation (Dahal et al., 2024) rather than by the number of participants. Through the analysis, we identified recurring theoretical patterns across the interviews, which provided the necessary connections needed to address the research questions effectively. This indicates that the data collected was thorough and adequate for the study's objectives.

Furthermore, we decided to focus MNCs, which may limit the transferability of the findings to other types of organisations, such as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) or non-profit organisations, where HR practices and organisational structures could differ significantly. Future research could expand the scope to include a more diverse range of organisational contexts to enhance the generalisability of the results. However, the relatively small sample size remains a limitation in terms of generalisability. The findings are not intended to represent all MNCs or HR professionals in the selected countries but to provide context-specific insights that can inform future research and contribute to the broader discourse on neuro-inclusion in the workplace.

4.2. Data collection strategy

We collected primary data through qualitative interviews with HR representatives from MNCs in Indonesia and Sweden, gaining detailed insights and reflections and allowing flexible, personalised discussions (Waisman-Nitzsan et al., 2018; Kindblom & Yousef, 2023). According to Magaldi and Berler (2020), this method enables us to maintain consistency across interviews while allowing discussions to evolve dynamically based on interviewees' insights and examples. This approach ensures key themes are covered while remaining flexible enough to explore new perspectives introduced by interviewees. Most interviews have been conducted online to accommodate the diverse geographical locations of the participants in this study. However, online interviews in research have certain limitations, including the potential for interviewer bias, subjectivity, and challenges in generalising results due to the absence of nonverbal cues (Markham, 1998, pp. 62–75; Flick, 2014).

Furthermore, we collected secondary data, including government and organisational reports, research studies and case studies, complementing interview findings by providing a comparative perspective on neurodiversity policies and workplace practices to ensure consistency and rigorousness of data (Waisman-Nitzsan et al., 2018). We incorporated key terms such as neurodiversity, ADHD, and dyslexia, while focusing on themes including perceived discrimination, organisational dynamics, and workplace accommodations or organisational support. The eligibility of secondary data was determined based on peer-

reviewed sources and citation credibility. We obtained all secondary data through university libraries and reputable institutional archives, ensuring that only high-quality and verified peer-reviewed information informs the study's conclusions. This methodological approach strengthens the validity of findings and minimises biases that may arise from relying solely on primary data.

We identified participants through our personal networks to obtain a sample of HR professionals from Swedish and Indonesian companies. We also utilised various professional platforms, such as LinkedIn, student group networks, and experienced group networks. Efforts were made to include participants with diverse levels of seniority, organisational roles, and industry affiliations. While our recruitment strategy did not specifically target the tech sector, eight out of ten participants were employed in the tech industry. This resulted in a concentration of insights from the tech industry, which offered valuable insights into neurodiversity practices within technology-driven workplaces but may have inadvertently limited the exploration of challenges and practices in other sectors. The predominance of tech industry representation in our sample underlines the importance of sectoral diversity in understanding the multifaceted nature of neuro-inclusion across different organisational contexts. Notably, this study was conducted independently and did not involve formal collaborations with specific organisations.

4.3. Conducting Interviews

For this research study, we conducted a total of ten individual qualitative interviews with HR professionals, five based in Indonesia and five in Sweden, from January to March 2025. The qualitative format allowed for flexibility, enabling the researchers to adapt and evolve the questions over time while focusing on exploring each interviewee's individual experiences and perspectives.

As the researchers of this study are originated from Indonesia and Sweden, we individually handled the coding of interviewees from our respective countries. However, all the interviews were conducted with both researchers present, ensuring a collaborative and thorough data collection process. Each interview's coded transcript typically ranged about five pages for a 30-minute session, while a one-hour interview resulted in approximately ten pages. Participants were selected using predetermined criteria to ensure the credibility and relevance of sources in relation to the study's objectives, as stated in the data collection strategy.

All participants provided informed consent prior to the interview, having received and signed a consent form outlining the study's purpose, their rights, and how the data would be used. We developed the interview guide based on the initial themes of perceived discrimination

and workplace accommodation approaches implemented by HR professionals in both Indonesia and Sweden. We selected these themes based on insights from previous research and the theoretical foundation provided by Schein's (1990) organisational culture model. Perceived discrimination is explored through underlying assumptions, reflecting how HR professionals interpret neurodivergent employees' capabilities, disclosure decisions, and the perceived impact of accommodations.

Meanwhile, workplace accommodation is examined through observable artefacts and espoused values, capturing the tangible policies, strategies, and organisational commitments aimed at supporting neurodivergent employees. This framework ensures that the interview questions align with both practical experiences and theoretical perspectives, providing a structured approach to understanding neuro-inclusion practices in different cultural contexts. An interview guide was also sent in advance to help participants familiarise themselves with the topic. Throughout the interview process, researchers adjusted the interview guide to better fit the key examples that we had given. None of the participants withdrew during the research process.

Most interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams, except for two Swedish interviews; one face-to-face interview and one phone interview. Interviews were conducted and transcribed in English, except for interviews eight and 10, which were carried out in Swedish and subsequently translated and transcribed into English for consistency. The use of English during the interview may hinder the ability of candidates from Indonesia and Sweden to fully express themselves, as English is not their native language. However, we encouraged them to use their native language for terms they could not express in English, which were then translated into English during the analysis process. Before each interview started, we asked each participant for permission to audio-record and transcribe the interview to support the analysis process.

4.4. Analytical strategy

We conducted a qualitative study and employed a thematic analysis of interviews with HR professionals, following Flick's (2014) abductive approach. This methodological choice allows for a flexible and iterative exploration of neuro-inclusion, enabling the interplay between theoretical frameworks and the patterns emerging from the empirical data. At the outset, we began our research with pre-determined key themes such as organisational culture, perceived discrimination, and workplace accommodations, identified from existing literature. However, consistent with the abductive process, the attributes within these themes remained open and

fluid, allowing new and unanticipated insights from the empirical findings to shape and refine the analytical framework.

The abductive approach is central to this study, fostering a dynamic interaction between empirical observations and theoretical constructs. As the study progressed, the interview guide was adjusted to ensure that emerging findings, whether challenges, strategies, or perceptions, were incorporated into the framework. By analysing findings from both empirical data and the broader literature, this study maintains a balanced and rigorous approach. The iterative nature of the analysis allowed for the continuous evolution of theory. Initial themes, guided by established literature, were revisited and refined as new insights emerged from the data. By weaving theoretical constructs with empirical findings, the study captured the complex and dynamic processes involved in fostering neuro-inclusion within diverse organisational settings. This continuous refinement allowed for the integration of novel attributes into existing themes, enhancing the study's capacity to capture the nuanced realities of neuro-inclusion within diverse organisational contexts, particularly in Indonesia and Sweden.

To identify recurring patterns across the interviews we employed thematic coding. This approach enabled the extraction of key themes, including the influence of culture on neuro-inclusion strategies, perceived discrimination of neurodivergent employees, and practical support mechanisms. We also considered intersections between these themes, exploring how organisational culture, discrimination, and accommodations interact to create a holistic understanding of neuro-inclusion in multinational corporations. The thematic coding will be presented in chapter 6.1.

The findings are presented through illustrative key quotes, conceptual maps, and narrative summaries, giving voice to the experiences and perspectives of HR professionals. However, it is significant to note that we, for this study, decided to exclusively focus on the HR perspective due to constraints such as access, time limitations, and sensitivity of engaging directly with neurodiverse employees. While this focus provides valuable insights into organisational practices and decision-making processes, it inherently limits the understanding of the lived experiences and challenges faced by neurodiverse employees themselves.

Following Ritchie et al. (2014), the study's validity and reliability are ensured through theory triangulation, peer review, and the use of multiple data sources, including consultations with experts. Reflexivity played a pivotal role throughout the research process so that personal and professional experiences, pre-study beliefs, motivations, and qualifications influenced the study (Cohen et al., 2011, Holmes, 2020). These preconceptions, grounded in theoretical foundations and educational backgrounds, were carefully examined to mitigate bias and

enhance the credibility of the findings. This reflexive process included regular consultation with the author's thesis supervisor and a thorough analysis of primary and secondary data obtained during the study. By critically reflecting on the interviewee's positionality and integrating multiple data sources, we ensured a robust and transparent approach to understand neuro-inclusion within diverse organisational contexts.

4.5. Ethical Considerations

Following Ritchie et al. (2014), we ensured that all participants provided informed consent prior to the interviews. The consent form clearly outlined the study's purpose, interview process, and data usage. Participation was entirely voluntary, and anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained, no names, company details, or identifying information were recorded. Participants were explicitly informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without consequences, reinforcing ethical research practices. Informed consent was also required for publication to ensure compliance with ethical guidelines. Transparency was upheld throughout data collection and analysis, with no deception involved. The data was used solely for academic purposes, maintaining ethical integrity. Additionally, AI tools such as Grammarly and DeepL were utilised solely for enhancing language precision, clarity, and accuracy, ensuring alignment with the University of Gothenburg's academic guidelines.

5. Empirical Findings

In this chapter, we present the empirical findings derived from interviews conducted with five participants from MNCs in Indonesia and five participants from Swedish MNCs. The analysis is organised into three key themes: the influence of differing organisational cultures between Indonesia and Sweden, variations in perceptions of discrimination among HR professionals in the two countries, and the current workplace accommodations and challenges related to neuro-inclusion in each context. This chapter seeks to uncover both the similarities and differences in practices between Indonesia and Sweden, offering valuable insights into how neuro-inclusion practices are shaped by organisational and cultural factors within the unique environments of these two countries. To support this objective, the empirical analysis focuses on answering the following research questions: *How do HR professionals in MNCs perceive and address discrimination policies and workplace accommodations for neurodivergent employees?* Additionally, *to what extent do HR professionals' perceptions and approaches to supporting neurodivergent employees differ between MNCs in Indonesia and Sweden?* By examining these findings, we provide a comparative overview of the practical approaches adopted in each country, highlighting key trends in neuro-inclusion efforts within distinct organisational and cultural settings.

5.1. Organisational Culture Indonesia vs Sweden

This section explores the theme of organisational culture as identified in the interviews, focusing on how key cultural, legal and societal factors influence neuro-inclusion practices in MNCs operating in Indonesia and Sweden.

Indonesia

Across all interviewees in Indonesia, there is a common challenge in convincing leaders of the value and impact of neuro-inclusion. All interviewees emphasised that the current organisational focus remains largely business-centric, prioritising performance and measurable outcomes over proactively fostering inclusion. IN 1 highlights a performance-first mindset, where neurodivergent employees are primarily evaluated based on their productivity rather than their needs or challenges. While this approach may prevent outright discrimination, it also suggests a passive stance on neuro-inclusion, where accommodations are considered only if they directly impact business performance. IN 3 also emphasised that the inclusion practice must demonstrate "profit value" for the company, but calculating return on investment in the context of diversity initiatives is complex, as it is hard to determine how much the company

can expect to gain from the program in terms of revenue, employee engagement, or improved corporate image. Similarly, IN 4 also highlights that in most companies in Indonesia, diversity is often viewed more as an employer branding effort than a genuine commitment to inclusion. By prioritising metrics like employer branding over creating an inclusive environment, the effectiveness of diversity efforts in driving meaningful change is limited. This external recognition driver is mentioned further by IN 4, *"If I may speak from my perspective here in Indonesia, diversity is often seen as a way to boost employer branding, more of a credit from external perspectives. It's not necessarily about truly accommodating diverse needs." (IN 4).* This highlights how diversity initiatives in Indonesia are often framed as a strategy for enhancing organisational reputation rather than genuinely addressing the needs of diverse employees. The emphasis appears to be placed on external validation rather than fostering an inclusive internal culture.

Several interviewees provided insights about why neuro-inclusion is not a priority in the organisations. IN 5 stated that neurodiversity is not yet a priority in the organisation due to several factors, such as the costs associated with diversity initiatives and the need to allocate resources efficiently. From a business perspective, the focus remains on scaling core HR programs, such as leadership development, employer branding, and talent attraction, to build strong foundational HR capabilities before expanding inclusion frameworks. This approach makes it a lower priority than other HR strategies.

IN 4 also provided valuable insights into why neurodiversity has not yet become a priority, highlighting the influence of societal and market factors. They noted that *"The culture of our society still considers that kind of diversity as taboo" (IN 4)* and expressed a lack of experience hearing from candidates who openly identify as neurodivergent. Since the topic is rarely discussed, it remains less prioritised in HR practices, leading to a continued perception that neurodiversity is an underexplored issue in the workplace.

Although there has been progress in raising awareness about mental well-being at work, prevailing collectivist norms may unintentionally discourage individuals from disclosing their neurodivergence for fear of disrupting group harmony. IN 4 highlighted that this reluctance to share often stems from concerns about rejection and a tendency toward "masking", a behaviour where neurodivergent employees suppress or conceal their traits to conform to societal or workplace expectations. This masking can further limit their ability to seek the necessary support and accommodations, perpetuating barriers to inclusivity.

IN 1 mentioned that the influence of religion in Indonesia also plays a significant role in shaping attitudes towards mental health, even as awareness in this area continues to grow.

Despite this progress, formal diagnoses and open discussions about mental health remain uncommon, particularly in workplace settings. IN1 highlighted that religious beliefs strongly impact perspectives on diversity in Indonesian workplaces, further impeding the acceptance of neurodiversity. This impact frequently leads to inadequate acknowledgment and support for neurodivergent employees, creating an environment where they feel reluctant to disclose their traits. As a result, organisations struggle to prioritise diversity effectively, reflecting Wen et al. (2023)'s findings on how such dynamics shape HR attitudes toward supporting neurodivergent employees.

Furthermore, education also plays a significant role in the challenges surrounding neurodiversity inclusivity in Indonesia. IN 1, 4, and 5 highlighted that the country's education system lacks a strong foundation in teaching diversity-related topics from an early age. According to IN 1, the insufficient emphasis on diversity and inclusion within the educational framework leaves both societal and occupational environments inadequately equipped to foster inclusivity. This gap in cultural and educational systems further obstructs the development of inclusive practices, particularly in the workplace, compounding the issues influenced by religion and other factors. IN 5 also expressed a desire to build a supportive community of industry peers to advocate for a clearer framework and best practices for neuro-inclusion. They emphasised the importance of engaging with the community, noting that special events often bring forward unique cases that could highlight potential opportunities for neurodiverse talent. By being involved in such community activations, IN 5 believes there is an opportunity to tap into a unique talent pool, which could inform and strengthen their neuro-inclusion strategy, ultimately creating a broader support network for this important initiative.

From the empirical, none of the companies interviewed in Indonesia had formal DEI policies or measurable metrics in place. Instead, DEI efforts are mainly driven by leadership directives rather than structured frameworks. This lack of emphasis on DEI within labour laws fosters a company-centric approach to such initiatives. IN 5 emphasised that the regulatory landscape plays a critical role in shaping decision-making, noting that Indonesia lacks local benchmarks for neuro-inclusion compared to countries such as the UK, US, and Australia, where large corporations have established neurodiversity hiring programs. As Indonesia's labour laws currently lack explicit provisions for neurodiversity, this regulatory gap means that investments in neurodiversity initiatives remain voluntary, and value driven.

All interviewees expressed the need for specific policy adjustments to better support neurodivergent employees, address systemic barriers, and foster a more equitable work environment. Without these legal changes and cross-sector collaboration, the potential for

diversity and inclusion in the workforce will remain constrained, hindering the development of a genuinely inclusive and supportive workplace culture. IN 3 further emphasised that such initiatives are significant to ensuring diversity programs are sustained and embedded into Indonesia's long-term vision for social inclusion.

Sweden

The organisations we studied integrate diversity training into their learning and development programs, including diversity education. Internal platforms serve as centralised hubs, providing employees with access to training, best practices, and resources that support both individual and organisational growth (IN 8). However, despite these efforts, diversity discussions in the workplace tend to focus on well-established dimensions such as gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, while neurodiversity remains largely overlooked (IN 8). Among the interviewees in this study, neurodiversity was still perceived as a familiar yet under-discussed topic, rarely addressed in workplace conversations or training initiatives.

Employees are generally expected to advocate for their own needs, while managers and workplace structures provide support without taking full responsibility for inclusion. IN 8 explained that while employees are expected to advocate for their own needs, managers and workplace structures offer support but do not take full responsibility for inclusion, emphasising that helping someone requires effort from both sides, and if the individual does not help themselves, it becomes a challenge. While self-advocacy can be empowering, it also places a significant burden on neurodivergent employees, particularly those who may not feel safe or comfortable disclosing their challenges. This approach risks overlooking the role of organisations in actively fostering an inclusive environment.

However, the presence of unions counterbalances this self-advocacy approach. Unions serve as a key external force in workplace dynamics, advocating employee rights and fostering systemic support for inclusion. As IN 7 explained, *"Employees have the power to speak up, and they don't have to be afraid of their employers basically. So, I think the Union plays a big role in how Sweden is pioneering the inclusivity of their company" (*IN 7). Employees in Sweden have significant power to speak up without fear of reprisal from their employers. The role of trade unions is significant in promoting this sense of empowerment and ensuring that inclusivity within companies is prioritised. This perspective emphasises the significance of unions in creating an environment where workers are encouraged and protected in expressing their concerns.

This collective advocacy underscores the importance of structural support in promoting workplace fairness and inclusion, demonstrating that while personal responsibility is valued, systemic mechanisms are equally significant in fostering inclusive work environments. In Sweden, inclusion is not just a matter of corporate goodwill, it is regulated by law, reinforcing its integration into organisational culture. All interviewees indicated that their companies have internal diversity policies, emphasising that their commitment to inclusion is deeply embedded rather than solely driven by external mandates. Rather than implementing diversity initiatives merely to comply with government regulations, Swedish companies embrace inclusivity as a fundamental aspect of their corporate identity. While legal frameworks provide the foundation, the true drivers of workplace inclusion in Sweden are internal policies and collective efforts that actively shape company culture and employee experiences.

Several of the Swedish interviewees emphasised that companies in Sweden often offer significant flexibility in how and where employees work. However, this flexibility comes with an expectation of individual accountability, requiring employees to ensure their work remains uninterrupted. As IN 8 explained, *"I don't care how you work or where you are when you work. Do you have a certain need you need to cover? Fine, do it, but as long as you notice that it affects the daily, then you have to tell me"* (IN 8). This perspective emphasises a result-driven approach, granting employees autonomy while holding them responsible for managing their accommodations and notifying management if their needs start to impact daily operations.

While such flexibility promotes independence, it may inadvertently discourage neurodivergent employees from seeking support, as they are responsible for monitoring and communicating their challenges. In IN 6's company, a neurodivergent employee displayed inappropriate behaviour in social settings, which the leaders excused due to the employee's neurodivergent condition. However, such an approach can unintentionally create imbalances and exclude other employees, highlighting the importance of maintaining fairness for all. Accommodations are essential for fostering inclusivity, but clear boundaries are needed to ensure that they do not inadvertently excuse inappropriate behaviour or create disparities among staff. By maintaining this balance, leaders can build workplaces that support employees with diverse needs while ensuring equitable treatment and mutual accountability across the organisation.

Employers in Sweden prioritise competencies, experiences, and qualifications over personal characteristics or backgrounds. Interviewees consistently highlighted that the primary criteria for candidate selection are knowledge, experience, and the relevance of a candidate's CV to the job requirement. IN 8 noted that personal attributes unrelated to job performance are

not assessed or considered because the focus during interviews is on knowledge, merit, and whether the CV fits the job, and that concerns about these attributes usually come from the candidates themselves rather than the interviewers. This perspective reflects a predominantly meritocratic approach, where objectivity in candidate evaluation is prioritised, and organisational culture appears to value competence over subjective or personal factors.

5.2. Perceived Discrimination

In both Indonesia and Sweden, where awareness of neurodivergence is still evolving, voluntary disclosure of neurodivergent traits may be perceived as a significant risk due to the persistent stigma surrounding these conditions. This stigma often deters candidates from revealing their neurodivergent characteristics during the hiring process, potentially limiting opportunities for understanding and accommodation.

The barriers to inclusion are shaped by several factors, including a general lack of awareness or prioritisation of neuro-inclusivity, which effectively undermines efforts to address these challenges. Furthermore, the reluctance to disclose neurodivergence fosters workplace "masking" behaviour, wherein individuals suppress their neurodivergent traits to conform to perceived norms, often at the expense of their well-being. Misconceptions about neurodiversity exacerbate the issue, as these misunderstandings can lead to inaccurate judgments about the strengths and abilities of neurodivergent individuals.

Indonesia

According to IN 1, in Indonesia, there is a strong reluctance to address issues related to neurodivergence openly. These topics are often treated as gossip in the workplace or avoided altogether, with discussions only occurring when the individual's challenges visibly impact others. Neurodivergent employees frequently remain unnoticed, except by their direct managers, who may observe specific behaviours. Disclosure of neurodivergent conditions is rare, as addressing such challenges is typically perceived as intrusive or unnecessary unless work performance is visibly impacted. This absence of open dialogue and support fosters feelings of exclusion and discourages individuals from disclosing their neurodivergence. Consequently, many neurodivergent employees engage in "masking," concealing their struggles, particularly when they can meet performance expectations.

Furthermore, IN 2 also highlighted that mental health conditions still carry a significant stigma, making individuals hesitant to disclose their struggles. As IN 2 put it: *“Having a mental illness is something that means that you are at the front line of judgment. It's still there.*

So, it's something that few people are comfortable communicating in these kinds of conditions, much less to their employer, due to fear. Obviously, they worry that their careers might be negatively affected." (IN 2). This concern is amplified when it comes to informing employers, as many worry that disclosure could negatively affect their career prospects. Despite efforts to provide support, there remains uncertainty about how others, especially decision-makers, will perceive and respond to such disclosures. This stigma and hesitation underscore the pervasive issue of perceived discrimination in the workplace. Individuals with mental health challenges often face the dual burden of managing their condition while navigating concerns about unfair treatment or biased perceptions, which can further hinder their willingness to seek support or accommodations.

IN 4 expressed concerns about managerial perceptions of neurodivergent employees, suggesting that they are often seen as less capable in their professional roles. They observed that the existing supply and demand gap makes it challenging to align required skills with available talent. As a result, managers may prioritise hiring individuals they perceive as "highly skilled," often overlooking the value of diverse perspectives. This viewpoint reflects a common misconception that neurodivergent employees are less competent or may require more accommodations or time off. Such biases, rooted in a lack of understanding, can lead managers to dismiss the potential contributions of neurodivergent employees, further hindering their career growth and equitable treatment in the workplace. This dynamic underscore the need for increased awareness, structural support, and inclusive practices to overcome persistent barriers.

The presence of hidden criteria, also highlighted by IN 3, further exacerbates the challenges faced by neurodivergent employees in the workplace. Specifically, the disproportionate emphasis on basic communication skills creates an implicit bias that favours conventional interpersonal abilities aligned with neurotypical norms. This can unintentionally discourage neurodivergent employees from applying for positions, particularly those who may struggle with traditional social interactions. While effective communication is undoubtedly important, this narrow focus overlooks the unique strengths and talents that neurodivergent candidates can offer. The stigma surrounding neurodivergence perpetuates "masking" behaviour, where neurodivergent employees feel compelled to suppress or alter their natural behaviours to meet these unspoken expectations.

Furthermore, IN 2 noted a tendency for neurodivergent employees in Indonesia to be placed in technical roles rather than customer-facing or socially intensive positions. Some neurodivergent employees may adopt “masking” behaviours to integrate into fields like finance, legal, or marketing, though their traits often go unrecognised in these environments. Masking

is especially prevalent in non-technical departments, where employees may conceal their neurodivergent traits to blend in, making it more challenging to identify and address their needs. Conversely, software engineering departments tend to be more tolerant and accommodating, likely due to greater awareness of neurodivergence within the field. These roles, which focus on technical tasks rather than interpersonal interactions, often provide greater flexibility for neurodivergent employees. On the other hand, positions requiring frequent human interaction tend to enforce stricter communication norms, leading hiring managers to favour candidates who naturally fit these expectations.

Thus, the experience stated by IN 2 and IN 3 may contribute to systemic obstacles that hinder full inclusion, highlighting the necessity of adopting more inclusive hiring practices that embrace diverse communication styles and perspectives. By prioritising conventional communication norms without considering neurodivergent or culturally varied ways of interacting, organisations may inadvertently perpetuate indirect discrimination. This unintentional bias can disadvantage individuals whose strengths and qualifications are overshadowed by rigid expectations, ultimately limiting opportunities for equitable participation in the workforce.

The growing recognition of the strengths of neurodivergent employees marks an important shift toward more inclusive workplaces. As IN 1 observed, the ability of neurodivergent professionals to handle tight deadlines, particularly in high-pressure fields such as finance, demonstrates their capability to thrive under structured routines and demanding tasks. Their capacity for deep focus and pattern recognition allows them to navigate complex financial processes with precision. This challenges traditional assumptions that neurodivergence is a limitation, instead positioning it as an asset in environments that require analytical rigor. IN 2 further emphasised resilience and endurance as defining strengths of neurodivergent employees, particularly their ability to identify risks and develop mitigation strategies across different projects. Their aptitude for pattern recognition not only enhances problem-solving but also contributes to proactive decision-making, potentially preventing operational challenges before they escalate. Moreover, their collaborative mindset, which prioritises teamwork over workplace politics, can serve as a model for fostering transparency and cooperation, making organisations more effective in achieving their goals.

Despite these benefits, IN 3 highlighted that misconceptions and a lack of awareness continue to hinder true inclusion, stating, *"So everyone needs to have awareness, have a level of the same urgency, that this is our goal also, as a big company, to support this diversity program."* (IN 3). Many neurodivergent employees face exclusion or stereotyping due to

misunderstandings about their capabilities. These biases can limit their career advancement and prevent organisations from fully leveraging their strengths. The tendency to focus on perceived challenges rather than the distinct advantages neurodivergent employees bring results in missed opportunities for both individuals and businesses. Addressing these gaps through awareness, education, and inclusive practices is essential to unlocking their full potential and fostering a truly equitable workplace.

Sweden

Similar to Indonesia, Swedish organisations also adopt a reactive rather than proactive approach to addressing neurodivergence. Awareness of neurodivergent conditions within workplaces is primarily driven by employees themselves, rather than through organisational efforts to identify or assess these conditions. IN 8 pointed out that the burden of disclosure largely falls on employees, reflecting the passive stance of organisations in identifying neurodivergent employees. While employers may intuitively recognise that candidates or employees have specific needs, their capacity to address these needs, particularly during the hiring process, remains limited. IN 7 emphasised the importance of communication and self-disclosure, noting that when employees openly share their needs, the organisation is better equipped and willing to provide the appropriate support. As they explained, *"Communication is really important for us. So, when she said that she thrives in certain conditions, we're happy to help with that. But we don't really pry around or ask if you have some specific conditions"* (IN 7). This reliance on self-disclosure means that support for neurodivergent employees is available but primarily hinges on employees feeling secure enough to communicate their needs openly. Without proactive initiatives from organisations, these dynamics risk leaving individuals without the accommodations they require.

A common misconception about neurodivergent employees is the belief that they struggle with tasks due to poor time management or a lack of competence. IN 7 noted that when neurodivergent individuals express feeling overwhelmed, it is often interpreted as a lack of ability to manage tasks or work. This highlights a broader pattern in which feelings of overwhelm are often perceived as personal weaknesses rather than natural responses to cognitive differences and environmental influences. A key factor contributing to these misconceptions is the invisibility of certain neurodivergent conditions. Unlike physical conditions, cognitive and sensory differences are not always outwardly apparent, making them more prone to scepticism or misunderstanding from colleagues and supervisors. When workplace norms prioritise conventional, neurotypical behaviours, the absence of visible

indicators can lead to assumptions that neurodivergent challenges are exaggerated or non-existent. This dynamic reinforces workplace biases and contributes to indirect discrimination, as neurodivergent employees may be unfairly judged, excluded from opportunities, or denied necessary support due to misconceptions. Without proactive efforts to acknowledge and accommodate these hidden differences, organisations risk perpetuating exclusion under the guise of neutrality and fairness.

The findings from the Swedish context also reveal a growing recognition among managers and colleagues of the strengths of neurodivergent employees, with a focus on qualities like creativity, innovation, and reliability. IN 9, for example, emphasised the innovative nature of neurodivergent employees, noting, *"When it comes to neurodivergent people, they are really creative and innovative."* (IN 9). This demonstrates an awareness of the distinctive ways in which neurodivergent employees approach problem-solving, offering fresh perspectives that others may overlook, especially in tasks that require innovation and originality.

In addition to creativity, reliability and consistent performance were also noted as key strengths. IN 10 shared an example of a neurodivergent employee who consistently showed up and delivered high-quality work. Despite any internal challenges the employee may have faced, their dependable performance was what truly mattered to colleagues and managers. This illustrates how neurodivergent employees are highly valued for their strong work ethic and dependable performance, which often outweighs personal differences or the need for additional support. IN 10 also highlighted a strength-based perception in Swedish workplaces, emphasising that if neurodivergent employees meet their performance targets, neurodivergence is not regarded as a barrier. The focus remains on their ability to deliver results and fulfil responsibilities independently, with neurodivergent traits viewed as inconsequential to their professional success. While this perspective recognises the strengths and contributions of neurodivergent employees, it also reflects a less proactive approach to inclusion. Organisations may rely on employees meeting expectations without actively addressing potential barriers or providing accommodations that could enhance their performance and well-being. This performance-driven and reactive stance underscores the need for Swedish organisations to adopt more proactive measures that go beyond simply valuing results, fostering a more inclusive environment that actively supports neurodivergent employees in achieving their workplace full potential.

5.3. Accommodations and Challenges

In examining the current implementation of workplace accommodations for neurodivergent employees in Indonesia and Sweden, several factors influence organisational decision-making processes. These include existing policies, workload evaluations, the involvement of trade unions, and the level of openness from employees regarding their neurodivergent conditions. However, the accommodations offered are not yet explicitly tailored to neurodivergent employees. Instead, they tend to benefit the general workforce, with some provisions, such as flexible work arrangements, changes to workplace settings, leadership and manager support, and access to external professionals, providing only indirect support to neurodivergent employees. Despite these efforts, the lack of targeted and personalised accommodations highlights the need for more specialised and proactive approaches to neuro-inclusion.

This section discusses how organisations currently implement workplace accommodations to support neurodivergent employees. It explores the types of adjustments offered, such as flexible working arrangements and environmental modifications, and examines the extent to which these accommodations are personalised. Drawing on insights from both Indonesian and Swedish contexts, this study explores the key factors that shape workplace inclusion. Leadership support, DEI commitments, and peer advocacy function as espoused values, reflecting an organisation's dedication to fostering inclusivity beyond mere compliance. Meanwhile, tangible elements such as office layout, flexible work arrangements, and formal accommodations serve as observable artefacts, demonstrating how inclusion is physically integrated into the work environment.

Despite these efforts, persistent barriers remain, including a performance-first mindset, a lack of targeted policies, and limited awareness of the unique needs of neurodivergent employees, all of which hinder the effectiveness of accommodations. Addressing these challenges requires a deeper alignment between organisational values and visible workplace practices to ensure that neuroinclusive efforts are truly embedded in corporate culture.

Indonesia

In the Indonesian companies interviewed, several participants stated that workplace accommodations are primarily influenced by employee openness, business priorities, existing laws and policies, and employee feedback, typically gathered through engagement surveys or one-on-one meetings. However, the success and depth of these accommodations depend on leadership support. When top management fails to prioritise neurodiversity, companies rarely

achieve meaningful or lasting change. Key obstacles to effective implementation include insufficient leadership engagement, a lack of defined inclusion metrics, and minimal attempts to tailor support specifically for neurodivergent employees. In the absence of stronger leadership advocacy and more focused policies, neurodivergent employees are likely to continue encountering barriers to receiving appropriate and impactful workplace accommodations.

Flexible work arrangements, such as one day of remote work per week with additional remote options in urgent cases, are widely available to all employees, regardless of their neurodivergence condition, as noted by IN 1 and IN 2. Similarly, IN 5 noted that workplace flexibility, whether through workspace modifications, structured communication, or tailored work arrangements, at home or in the office, is offered to all employees requiring adjustments. However, these accommodations tend to be standardised and focused on the work setting rather than job design, flexible hours, or individualised support mechanisms.

Rather than implementing proactive support systems, companies often adopt a reactive approach, considering workplace accommodations only when a neurodivergent employee's needs are seen to impact business performance, as noted by IN 3 & IN 4. This performance-first mindset means that accommodations are treated as secondary to broader business goals. While this may prevent outright discrimination, it results in minimal proactive inclusion, leaving many neurodivergent employees without the personalised accommodations they require.

Leadership commitment emerged as the most critical factor influencing the implementation of adequate accommodations. Without clear directives or accountability from top management, support measures tend to remain surface-level and inconsistently applied (IN 2). The absence of specific objectives key results related to neurodivergent inclusion often leads companies to overlook these issues in favour of initiatives deemed more directly impactful to business outcomes. Additionally, IN 2 highlighted that neurodivergent employees often struggle to attain leadership roles due to perceived deficits in social skills, limiting their career advancement. They stressed the need to re-evaluate leadership frameworks and develop inclusive pathways to accommodate diverse abilities.

Establishing truly inclusive hiring practices remains a continuous challenge, especially since neurodivergence is usually disclosed at the candidate's discretion rather than being openly addressed from the start, with its consideration often depending on an organisation's commitment to inclusivity. IN 1 stated that neurodivergence is usually disclosed voluntarily at later stages of the recruitment process, limiting opportunities to accommodate candidates

earlier. Moreover, few companies have formal goals or strategies for recruiting neurodivergent employees. IN 1 suggested that inclusive hiring, be integrated into broader organisational goals through measurable objective key results Reflecting on their prior experience at a Europe-based company, they described how clear hiring targets and support systems, including training for managers, contributed to a more inclusive workforce. They recommended similar strategies for Indonesian companies, including forming dedicated teams to lead diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Some companies have already begun adjusting their recruitment approaches to better accommodate neurodivergent candidates, reflecting a growing awareness to inclusivity. In IN 2's company, recruiters have adopted flexible interview approaches to accommodate neurodivergent candidates. These include repeating questions, helping structure responses, and breaking down technical tasks to assess problem-solving abilities effectively. Recruiters also communicate the work styles of neurodivergent employees to their teams to foster patience and understanding. Technical and engineering roles are seen as naturally aligned with neurodivergent strengths, but IN 2 advocated for standardised accommodation practices across all functions to ensure equity throughout the recruitment process.

IN 5 also employs flexible hiring approaches, such as offering additional time, providing written assessments, or sending questions in advance, rather than relying solely on verbal interviews, which allows for extra time during evaluations. While they have not knowingly encountered neurodivergent applicants, they believe these accommodations would be broadly beneficial. Their recruitment strategy is built around skill-based hiring and flexible formats that focus on candidates' competencies rather than conventional communication styles. However, they acknowledged the need for a more structured neurodiversity strategy, including internal capacity building and external benchmarking. Interviewees also observed that neurodivergent employees bring valuable strengths to the workplace. IN 2 noted: *"They also have a strong ability in pattern recognition. So, if they have worked on a previous project and are assigned to a new one with similar elements, they can usually anticipate potential challenges and already have mitigation strategies in mind." (IN 2).* This reflects a growing appreciation for the cognitive advantages associated with neurodivergent thinking.

Broader societal and educational limitations also affect workplace inclusion. The Indonesian education system places limited emphasis on diversity and inclusion, which translates into occupational contexts that are often unprepared to fully embrace neurodiversity. This cultural backdrop presents an additional challenge for employers aiming to create inclusive environments. According to IN 1 and IN 4, leadership and peer support are essential in helping

neurodivergent employees feel a sense of belonging. They advocated for training programs that go beyond awareness and focus on real-world interactions and inclusive practices. These would equip managers and teams with the skills to engage effectively with neurodivergent colleagues and reduce isolation. A commitment to continuous learning and inclusive values would empower all employees and foster a more supportive workplace culture.

Although diversity efforts in Indonesian companies have traditionally focused on gender and ethnicity, IN 5 sees neurodiversity as an emerging area of opportunity. Encouraging employee involvement in neurodiversity awareness campaigns could contribute to internal culture-building and external social impact. As noted, *"We aim to provide equal opportunities for all employees, and moving forward, this will be one of the key areas we focus on" (IN 5).* This growing awareness marks a shift toward more inclusive and informed practices, with the potential to foster systemic change both within organisations and across Indonesian society.

Sweden

Swedish workplaces generally demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting neurodivergent employees through personalised workplace adjustments and flexible working arrangements. Common accommodations include remote work options, silent rooms, and personalised environmental modifications, all aimed at enhancing employee well-being and performance. Flexibility in working hours is particularly emphasised, allowing employees to adjust their schedules based on personal productivity rather than adhering to a fixed timetable. IN 8 highlighted the significance of this flexibility, stating that as long as work is completed, the location or method is not a concern. IN 7 emphasised that flexible hours allow employees to manage overwhelming situations by enabling them to work from home or take time off without judgment. They explained: *"It's easy to ask the manager. I'm not feeling focused today. I'm feeling a bit overwhelmed. So, I will continue from home or maybe take a sick day tomorrow." (IN 7).* This approach fosters a culture of trust and autonomy, reinforcing the idea that employees are responsible for balancing their needs with organisational requirements.

However, effective communication remains essential to ensure adjustments do not negatively impact daily operations. In addition to flexible hours, physical work environments were also addressed. IN 10 highlighted the importance of tailoring workspaces to support employee focus and productivity, noting the need for environments that accommodate individual preferences and reduce distractions: *"It is about the work environment. 'I need it to be quiet when I work. I need to work from home more often. I need good headphones to block out noise" (IN 10).* These modifications, including noise reduction and catering to individual

needs, reflect the organisation's commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive work environment.

Despite these efforts, workplace accommodations are often designed as broad policies rather than targeted initiatives for neurodivergent employees. IN 9 pointed out that while support systems exist, they are not specifically tailored to neurodivergent employees, potentially overlooking their unique challenges. This lack of targeted policies suggests that while inclusivity is encouraged, neurodivergent employees may not always receive the specific support they require.

Additionally, while the organisations promote flexibility, it is closely tied to individual accountability. Employees are expected to self-manage their accommodations and communicate any challenges affecting their performance. As noted by IN 8, they do not mind how or where employees work as long as their needs are met, and daily operations remain unaffected. This result-driven flexibility grants employees' autonomy but also places the responsibility on them to advocate for their needs. While this approach promotes independence, it may also discourage neurodivergent employees from seeking support. Trade unions also play a significant role in advancing workplace inclusivity. According to IN 7, unions are instrumental in pioneering inclusivity within Swedish companies. Unions actively collaborate with organisations to ensure fair treatment and equal opportunities for all employees, including neurodivergent employees. By advocating for reasonable accommodations, they help bridge the gap between organisational goals and employee well-being, reinforcing Sweden’s commitment to workplace inclusion.

In Sweden, hiring practices emphasise a skill-based approach, prioritising candidates’ qualifications, experience, and suitability for the role. This reflects an ongoing commitment to promoting meritocracy and minimising bias in recruitment processes. Employers prioritise objective criteria such as expertise, professional background, and demonstrated competence to ensure fair and transparent hiring decisions. IN 9 highlights that their organisation pays particular attention to the language used in job advertisements to enhance inclusivity. They consciously avoid potentially discriminatory or exclusionary wording that could discourage certain groups from applying. By maintaining neutral and inclusive language, employers aim to create equal opportunities for all candidates. Additionally, the organisation invests in training hiring managers to conduct unbiased and structured interviews, focusing on effective questioning techniques and identifying which questions should be avoided to ensure fairness. Overall, Swedish companies demonstrate a strong commitment to equitable hiring practices by integrating competence-based assessments, inclusive communication, and structured interview

training. IN 8 explains that interviews are conducted based on knowledge, merit, and the relevance of a candidate's CV to the job. This approach reflects a broader cultural readiness for neuro-inclusion and workplace diversity.

From the empirical findings of Swedish workplaces in this study, workplace education is a well-established practice in most organisations, reflecting a broader cultural emphasis on continuous employee learning and development. Organisations offer training programs to enhance employees' competencies and adapt to evolving workplace demands. An important feature of this educational approach is, as mentioned by IN 8, the accessibility of resources such as continuous access to an intranet platform, which serves as a hub for organisational learning and development. This platform not only provides training but also delivers vital information relevant to the organisation, ensuring employees stay informed about updates, best practices, and other resources that contribute to their professional growth and the organisation's overall goals. As IN 8 mentioned, *"We have created our own intranet. Where you can say I need to have management. A course diversion for people in need. I will find it right away. I can get training whenever I want." (IN 8).*

IN 7, 8, and 9 further stressed the need for mandatory, company-wide leadership training programs, rather than optional self-study materials, to equip leaders with the skills needed to support neurodivergent employees. Such structured training would also help improve teamwork, promote mutual understanding, and raise awareness across the organisation by fostering inclusive leadership from the top down.

Despite this recognition, there is a lack of prioritisation of neurodiversity-specific inclusion in the workplace. While all Swedish interviewees confirmed that neurodivergent employees are included in DEI policies, the practical implementation of support tailored to their specific needs are limited. IN 10 pointed out that although their training is not neurodiverse-focused, HR supports these individuals. One of the key challenges mentioned is the wide spectrum of neurodivergent conditions, which makes it difficult to address everyone's individual needs, especially given the time and resources required to provide tailored support, as highlighted by IN 8.

6. Discussion

To achieve sustainable neuro-inclusion, it would be beneficial for MNCs to rethink neurodiversity as cognitive diversity rather than a deficit (Jefferies et al., 2025). This shift challenges assumptions about talent recruitment and support across global operations. In both Indonesia and Sweden, the landscape of neuro-inclusion in multinational corporations (MNCs) presents unique opportunities alongside structural challenges. In Indonesia, the relational leadership culture and strong informal support networks foster an environment where empathetic leadership can thrive. While formal diversity policies may be limited, the emphasis on personal connections within workplaces provides avenues for neurodivergent employees to receive individualized support. However, professionalism norms and societal stigma restrict open discussions on neurodivergence, limiting visibility and advocacy efforts. The absence of legal protections further complicates efforts to establish systemic, organisation-led inclusion.

Sweden, on the other hand, benefits from a progressive legal and organisational framework that formally integrates diversity initiatives. Companies actively invest in structured training programs, competence-based hiring, and accessible workplace education platforms, reinforcing a commitment to inclusion. Despite these strengths, reliance on self-disclosure and standardised procedures may unintentionally exclude neurodivergent employees who are unwilling or unable to disclose their needs. Moreover, Sweden's meritocratic hiring practices, which prioritise conventional career paths and structured CV evaluations, can disadvantage neurodivergent candidates, reinforcing exclusion under the guise of neutrality.

These contrasting contexts reveal the limitations of one-size-fits-all approaches, underscoring Benson et al.'s (2023) argument that neuro-inclusion should be deeply contextualised. By acknowledging the specific strengths and barriers within each setting, HR professionals in MNCs can tailor neuro-inclusion efforts to create work environments where neurodivergent employees are valued, supported, and empowered to thrive.

Applying Schein's (1990) cultural model, MNCs can catalyse transformation by addressing three interconnected levels. First, they must challenge underlying assumptions by recognising neurodiversity as a cognitive asset rather than a deficit. Second, they should implement their espoused values to prioritise fairness, belonging, and psychological safety, embedding these principles in leadership development, peer support mechanisms, and talent management systems. Third, these values must manifest in observable artefacts through inclusive policies, flexible job and workspace design, and ongoing neuroinclusive training, thus fostering proactive support structures that promote autonomy, competence, and relatedness

among neurodivergent employees. As Khan et al. (2022) note, inclusive leadership and proactive systems are vital for improving engagement, retention, and performance. Without systemic change, MNCs risk reinforcing exclusion and overlooking the innovation, adaptability, and problem-solving potential that cognitive diversity offers (Benson et al., 2023). Conversely, companies that genuinely invest in context-sensitive neuro-inclusion can build more resilient and inclusive cultures, retain diverse talent, and maintain a competitive advantage in an increasingly globalised workforce (Benson et al., 2023).

6.1. Influence of Organisational Culture on Neuro-inclusion Practices: A Comparison Between Indonesia and Sweden

Understanding how organisational culture shapes neuro-inclusion is critical, especially within MNCs operating across culturally distinct contexts. Schein's (1990) model of organisational culture, comprising artefacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions, provides a useful framework for interpreting how cultural elements influence the barriers and facilitators to neuro-inclusion in both countries.

When comparing the approaches of MNCs in Indonesia and Sweden, there are notable similarities and differences in how neuro-inclusion is implemented. Both countries face challenges in fully integrating neurodivergent inclusion into their organisational practices. In Indonesia and Sweden, the focus on business outcomes remains a significant barrier to stronger implementation. Neurodivergent inclusion, in both contexts, often takes a back seat to performance metrics and is sometimes treated as a secondary concern rather than a core value driving organisational culture. Additionally, in both countries, neurodiversity is not yet a mainstream topic in diversity initiatives, with inclusion efforts primarily focusing on other aspects such as gender, ethnicity, or visible conditions.

At the artefact level (Schein, 1990), HR decision-making in Indonesian and Swedish MNCs is shaped by visibly different organisational priorities. In Indonesia, the lack of formal DEI artefacts, such as inclusive recruitment procedures, accommodation protocols, or internal education platforms, leads HR professionals to rely on informal networks and leadership preferences when managing neurodiversity. As noted by IN 1 and IN 3, decisions related to recruiting or evaluating neurodivergent employees are made case-by-case, often without clear policy direction. This creates ambiguity in HR roles, where inclusion efforts are driven more by personal initiative than organisational mandate.

Similarly, in Sweden, HR professionals also encounter inclusion as a reactive task, particularly due to the limited visibility of neurodiversity-specific content in mainstream

processes. However, Swedish MNCs typically have foundational artefacts in place, such as diversity policies, e-learning platforms, DEI steering groups, and inclusive onboarding flows, as described by IN 7 and IN 8. These artefacts are not always tailored to neurodiversity, but their presence creates a culture of preparedness and openness that enables HR professionals to act more confidently and equitably when the need arises. Furthermore, the influence of early education and public discourse around diversity equips Swedish HR with greater baseline awareness, reducing stigma and encouraging internal dialogue. Thus, while both contexts show a reactive orientation in practice, the artefactual infrastructure in Sweden allows for more structured and potentially scalable inclusion efforts over time.

At the espoused values level (Schein, 1990), both Indonesian and Swedish MNCs demonstrate a strong business and performance-oriented mindset that shapes how neurodiversity is perceived and managed in HR decisions. Across both contexts, if a neurodivergent employee meets expected performance standards, their condition is typically not viewed as problematic. However, HR professionals and managers accommodate their support based on the employee's request. HR professionals in Indonesia reveal that while performance remains the main benchmark, employees are often reluctant to disclose neurodivergent conditions due to fear of being rejected, misunderstood, or becoming the subject of workplace gossip, as stated by IN 2 and IN 4. This creates a hidden barrier to open dialogue and support, despite formal commitments to diversity. As a result, while both settings uphold performance as a key value, the emotional and psychological climate around neurodiversity differs, fostering proactive engagement in Sweden and reinforcing silence or avoidance in Indonesia. In contrast, In Swedish MNCs, discussions around neurodiversity tend to be grounded in values such as fairness, psychological safety, and non-discrimination, as noted by IN 6 and IN 8. These values, often reinforced by national policy and workplace culture, enable HR professionals to engage in inclusion conversations with greater sensitivity and less stigma, even when accommodations are not yet fully defined.

At the level of underlying assumptions, the contrast between Swedish and Indonesian MNCs becomes more apparent in how inclusion is fundamentally understood and enacted. In Indonesian settings, as reflected by insights from IN 1 and IN 5, there remains a deeply embedded belief that neurodivergence is a sensitive personal issue rather than an organisational responsibility. This assumption positions neurodivergent employees as "exceptions" that require extra handling, leading HR to perceive accommodations as a form of special treatment rather than a right. As a result, decisions around disclosure, recruitment, and retention often hinge on informal negotiations and the perceived "fit" of the individual, rather than a systemic

approach to inclusion. In contrast, Swedish HR professionals operate within a framework shaped by the underlying belief that equity is integral to organisational legitimacy and long-term performance. As noted by IN 7 and IN 9, neurodiversity is viewed less as an individual difference to manage, and more as a natural aspect of human variation that the organisation should be equipped to support. This assumption is informed by early education, public discourse on inclusivity rights, and broader social norms that frame inclusion as an ethical imperative rather than an operational burden. Therefore, while both contexts may lack perfect implementation, the underlying cognitive lens through which HR professionals interpret neurodiversity differs significantly, problem-oriented and individualised in Indonesia, versus principle-driven and systemic in Sweden.

These cultural layers, artefacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions are not isolated but deeply shaped by broader institutional and legal contexts. While both Indonesian and Swedish MNCs exhibit similar tensions at each cultural level, the structural differences between the two countries create distinct differences in how inclusion is enacted. In Indonesia, the absence of legal frameworks specific to neuro-inclusion, combined with a business-centric approach, limits both resources and accountability for diversity programs. As a result, efforts tend to be reactive and driven by leadership preferences or external perceptions such as employer branding, rather than being embedded in sustainable, formal DEI policies.

In contrast, Sweden benefits from a more robust legal and organisational infrastructure that supports inclusion, even if neurodivergent-specific policies remain underdeveloped. While its individualistic culture places responsibility on employees to self-advocate, the strong role of unions and comprehensive legal systems ensures that policies, once established, are more consistently enforced. However, similar to Indonesia, diversity efforts in many Swedish MNCs remain compliance-driven, and neurodiversity often receives less attention than other diversity dimensions. Thus, although both contexts face similar implementation challenges, the structural support and institutional resources available differ, ultimately shaping the depth and sustainability of inclusion efforts.

As a result, organisational culture and the structural frameworks in each country significantly influence the way neurodivergent employees are perceived and supported within the workplace. For instance, the cultural mindset in Indonesia, where inclusion is often treated reactively and driven by external perceptions, contributes to an environment where neurodivergent employees may fear disclosure and face implicit biases. In contrast, Sweden's more structured approach to inclusion, although still not fully developed for neurodivergent employees, is rooted in values of fairness and safety, which can help mitigate discrimination.

However, despite these differences, the challenges related to perceived discrimination against neurodivergent employees remain prominent in both countries. It would be favourable for organisations to incorporate neurodiversity into their communications, values, and mission statements while undertaking cultural audits to identify and address hidden biases that may contribute to the marginalisation of neurodivergent employees. These cultural and structural factors will be further explored in the next section, where we examine how perceived discrimination manifests in neurodivergent employees' experience in Indonesia and Sweden.

The table below illustrates comparison of Indonesia and Sweden through the lens of Schein's (1990) cultural model, highlighting key differences in organisational approaches to neurodiversity. Underlying assumptions, which represent the implicit beliefs and biases of HR professionals, are linked to the theme of perceived discrimination, capturing how HR professionals perceive neurodivergent employees' capabilities, reasons for non-disclosure.

Table 2: Underlying Assumptions and its connection to perceived discrimination.

Schein's level	Elements	Indonesia	Sweden
Underlying assumptions: Perceived Discrimination	Perceptions of Neuro-Inclusion	There is a limited focus on diversity and inclusion education in general. Neurodivergent individuals are often perceived as needing "extra care." Perceived as a branding effort, business-centric. Resources and costs are seen as critical factors in driving inclusion. HR recognised the Neurodivergent employee's strength.	Stronger emphasis on diversity, but workplace neurodiversity remains underdeveloped. Neurodiversity is seen through a medical lens, but is also increasingly normalised as part of human variation. Inclusion is framed as systemic equity, but the approach to inclusion is also business-centric. HR recognised neurodivergent employee's strength.
	Disclosure of Diagnosis	Discouraged due to fear of stigma or exclusion. Religious or patriarchal influence disclosure. The prevailing collectivist norms may inadvertently discourage individuals from disclosing their neurodivergence due to concerns about disrupting group cohesion.	Safer to disclose, but still rely on individuals' self-advocacy. No religious influence. Collective advocacy from unions plays a role in employee empowerment.
		Lack of visible neurodivergent employees.	More visibility in some organisations.

Espoused values and observable artefacts fall under the theme of workplace accommodation, focusing on the tangible policies, strategies, and visible practices organisations implement to support neurodivergent employees.

Table 3: Observable Artefacts as part of workplace accommodation.

Schein's level	Elements	Indonesia	Sweden
Observable artefacts: Workplace Accommodation	Diversity and Inclusivity Policy	No formal DEI policies; ad-hoc, leader-driven. No specific neurodiversity is mentioned; most HR departments recognise physical disability inclusion, but only one company has a visible effort in that inclusion.	General inclusion laws: Neurodiversity is not explicitly mentioned, but it is supported through broad DEI frameworks.
	Recruitment Process	Adjustments exist but are disclosure-dependent.	Some standardised inclusive practices exist regardless of disclosure.
		Lack of visible neurodivergent employees.	More visibility in some organisations.
	Retention Strategy	Flexibility work arrangement: Moderate flexibility, depends on leadership priorities → Autonomy.	Flexibility work arrangement: High flexibility, but with strong accountability expectation → Autonomy
		Some physical adjustments like quiet rooms exist in select organisations; assistive tools are typically provided upon individual request → Autonomy	Some physical adjustments like quiet rooms exist in select organisations; assistive tools are typically provided upon individual request → Autonomy
		Training & Development; Skill-based training is the norm; inclusion-related content is limited and not tailored for neurodivergence → Competence	Training & Development: Inclusion training is more common, but specific focus on neurodivergence remains limited → Competence
		Union Influence: Minimal to none → Relatedness	Union Influence: Strong union presence; employee voice protected → Relatedness

Table 4: Espoused Values as part of workplace accommodation.

Schein's level	Elements	Indonesia	Sweden
Espoused Values: Workplace Accommodation	DEI Commitment in Vision/Mission	Often not mentioned; beginning to include gender diversity due to global HQ pressure or business branding. Often business-centric; diversity is promoted to improve company image, attract clients or meet investor/stakeholder expectations.	Commonly embedded in company values and public communication. Framed as part of organisational integrity and long-term cultural vision.
	Leadership/peer support	Support depends on individual leader awareness and sensitivity: peers are rarely involved.	Leaders expect to model inclusion; peer support is cultivated through culture and training.
	View on Flexibility	Flexibility is seen as a privilege; it is often performance linked.	Flexibility is seen as part of work-life balance commitment.

6.2. Perceived Discrimination Against Neurodivergent Employees in Indonesia and Sweden

Underlying assumptions (Schein, 1990) fall under the theme of perceived discrimination, reflecting the implicit beliefs, unconscious biases, and unspoken perceptions held by HR professionals. These assumptions typically surface not through explicit statements, but through recurring patterns observed in interviews. Examples include beliefs about the abilities of neurodivergent employees, reasons for non-disclosure of diagnoses, and whether accommodations are viewed as burdens or strategic advantages. Additionally, these assumptions involve perceptions of the strengths of neurodivergent employees and the decision-making drivers behind inclusion strategies. Furthermore, HR professionals' personal beliefs, professional training, and workplace experiences shape how they interpret and implement inclusion strategies.

The influence of perceived discrimination significantly shapes neuro-inclusion practices in both Indonesia and Sweden, revealing shared challenges yet distinct cultural nuances. The experiences of neurodivergent employees in both countries can be analysed through the lenses of SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and ODT (Brewer, 1991). Both countries maintain performance-centric work environments, where neurodivergent employees may be overlooked unless they consistently meet high-performance expectations. While HR professionals in both contexts increasingly recognise the unique strengths of neurodivergent employees, such as creativity,

reliability, and analytical skills, the broader approach to neuro-inclusion remains largely reactive rather than proactive. This limited approach to neuro-inclusion is influenced by how neurodivergent employees are perceived in the workplace and how they navigate social identity within these environments.

SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1981) suggests that individuals derive part of their self-concept from the groups they belong to, and this group membership can significantly influence their behaviours, attitudes, and perceptions. According to this theory, individuals strive to maintain positive distinctiveness for their in-group by differentiating themselves from out-groups. In the context of neurodivergence, neurodivergent employees' social identity can be shaped by how their traits align or conflict with dominant workplace norms, leading to either inclusion or exclusion. When neurodivergent employees are perceived as part of an out-group, they may experience social marginalisation, which can result in discrimination, biases, and challenges in accessing the support they need.

In the Indonesian context, societal stigma surrounding neurodivergence frames neurodivergent employees as part of an out-group, portraying their cognitive differences as weaknesses. This stigma is reflected in the workplace, where discussions about neurodiversity often carry undertones of taboo or gossip. IN 1 highlighted that while overt discrimination is not always explicit, the social atmosphere can be unwelcoming for neurodivergent employees. This environment pressures individuals to mask their traits or avoid disclosure altogether, limiting their ability to seek necessary accommodations. Furthermore, IN 2 shared that HR professionals often overlook the specific needs of neurodivergent employees, acknowledging their strengths but not fully embracing neuro-inclusion. The hiring process, according to IN 3, frequently involves hidden criteria, such as strong verbal communication skills or adaptability in high-pressure settings, that disproportionately exclude neurodivergent candidates, even if they meet the formal job qualifications. Peer discrimination, as noted by IN 4, also plays a more pronounced role in Indonesia, where traditional notions of teamwork and interpersonal harmony can lead to the social marginalisation of neurodivergent employees, further reinforcing their out-group status. For instance, managers lacked awareness of what neurodiversity entails, and there was a tendency to treat differences as a personal issue rather than a workplace matter. This can lead to indirect exclusion, for example, not being considered for a leadership role or being left out of developmental opportunities due to assumptions about incapability.

In contrast, Sweden demonstrates a more open acceptance of cognitive diversity, where overt discrimination is less common, and workplace culture tends to be more accommodating. However, social identity processes still influence neurodivergent employees’ experiences in

Swedish workplaces. IN 8 pointed out that while neurodivergent employees are less likely to face direct social exclusion, the reliance on self-disclosure as the primary means of accessing accommodations can still create challenges. This approach places the burden on neurodivergent employees to advocate for themselves, which can be uncomfortable for those who fear judgment or feel reluctant to discuss their conditions. Although organisations often publicly champion diversity and psychological safety, neurodivergent employees may face a paradox: although formal support systems exist, implicit biases persist. Thus, unless a diagnosis is disclosed, accommodations are rarely offered, and disclosure itself may carry unspoken risks. IN 9 and 10 noted that while Swedish HR professionals are generally more aware of neurodivergent strengths, support structures are often conditional, only activated when an individual comes forward with specific needs, thus it can inadvertently disadvantage neurodivergent employees who require tailored accommodations.

SIT (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) helps illuminate the role of group dynamics in shaping the experiences of neurodivergent employees in both Indonesia and Sweden. While the degree of overt discrimination may differ between the two countries, both contexts display forms of exclusion rooted in social identity processes. In Indonesia, neurodivergent employees face subtle stigma and exclusion, which marginalises them within the workplace, while in Sweden, the reliance on self-disclosure creates a barrier for neurodivergent employees to access support. Interviewees from both countries highlighted how societal and organisational expectations influence neurodivergent employees' ability to thrive. Only a small fraction, just 1 in 10, of interviewees reported that employees openly disclose their condition from the outset, while others choose to reveal it only when workplace challenges arise. This pattern underscores the significant influence of societal and organisational expectations on the ability of neurodivergent employees to succeed. Recognising these social identity dynamics is significant for developing more inclusive policies and practices that go beyond self-disclosure, ensuring that neurodivergent employees receive the tailored support they need without the burden of navigating exclusion or assimilation. Thus, SIT helps to understand how these employees navigate between self-identifying with their neurodivergent traits and the desire to be accepted by the mainstream, neurotypical group.

While there is growing awareness of individuals with functional impairments and gender inclusion in the workplace, neurodivergence remains largely overlooked, as none of the interviewees in this study explicitly mentioned neuro-inclusion. This absence reflects a persistent gap in diversity efforts, where neurodivergent employees are often left out despite the significant impact of their experiences at work. Neurodiversity cannot be considered in

isolation; it intersects with other aspects of identity such as race, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status (Botha & Gillespie-Lynch, 2022). Findings from interviews in both Indonesia and Sweden reveal that neurodivergent employees often face unique pressures to conform to neurotypical norms, making it socially acceptable to expect them to mask or suppress their authentic selves. These expectations reinforce systemic inequities, as social constructs determine who is advantaged and who is marginalised. Given that many organisations interviewed in this study already work with mental health providers, they are well-positioned to take meaningful action, such as auditing and expanding diagnostic and support criteria to reflect cultural, gender, and linguistic differences, and partnering with experts trained in intersectional neurodiversity. By addressing these gaps, organisations can create more inclusive workplaces where neurodivergent employees are recognised, supported, and empowered without the pressure to 'mask' their differences.

It is also essential to explore the psychological tensions that neurodivergent employees face when navigating workplace cultures. ODT (Brewer, 1991) posits that individuals strive to balance their need for inclusion with their desire for uniqueness. This theory suggests that people seek a middle ground between fitting into a group and standing out as distinct individuals. For neurodivergent employees, this dynamic becomes particularly complex as they navigate workplaces where their cognitive differences can either be embraced or stigmatised.

In the Indonesian context, as highlighted by IN 2, the stigma surrounding mental health and neurodivergence creates an environment where neurodivergent employees feel compelled to mask their identity in order to fit in. The societal norms in Indonesia emphasise conformity, particularly in the workplace, where there is a strong expectation for individuals to adhere to social and behavioural standards. This results in neurodivergent employees suppressing their uniqueness to avoid potential exclusion. As IN 2 pointed out, this behaviour reflects a balancing act where neurodivergent employees are trying to avoid the risks associated with standing out. The reluctance to disclose neurodivergent traits further underscores the tension between inclusion and distinctiveness, as individuals fear being marginalised for expressing their true selves.

In contrast, Sweden demonstrates a more open attitude toward cognitive diversity, but as noted by IN 7, there is still a reliance on self-disclosure as the primary mechanism for accessing support. While the workplace may be more accommodating, the burden of advocating for oneself remains on the neurodivergent employee. As IN 7 mentioned, organisations will only provide accommodations when employees clearly communicate their needs, placing neurodivergent employees in a position where they must choose how much of their

distinctiveness they wish to reveal. The desire for inclusion thus intersects with the desire for uniqueness, creating a tension where individuals are uncertain about whether disclosing their neurodivergence will lead to acceptance or judgment. EY (2023) supports this finding, reporting that only 48 per cent of neurodivergent employees are employed, compared to 73 per cent of the general population, with many employers lacking awareness of how to effectively support neurodivergent employees, ultimately leading to missed opportunities for both workers and businesses.

The tension between inclusion and distinctiveness is evident in both Indonesia and Sweden, though it takes different forms. In Indonesia, strong social pressure to conform and the fear of exclusion often lead neurodivergent employees to conceal their traits. In Sweden, while cognitive diversity is more widely accepted, the expectation that neurodivergent employees must self-advocate can present challenges. Both contexts underscore the delicate balance between fitting in and standing out, highlighting the need for tailored approaches to workplace inclusion.

These findings emphasise that neuro-inclusion must go beyond legal compliance or policy implementation, especially in culturally diverse contexts like Indonesia and Sweden. Multinational corporations (MNCs) must address not only overt discrimination but also subtle, implicit biases that contribute to exclusion. In Indonesia, where societal stigma around neurodiversity is more pronounced, MNCs would benefit from embracing diversity and cultivating an inclusive culture that goes beyond regulatory compliance. In Sweden, despite progressive attitudes toward neurodiversity, the reliance on self-disclosure can leave employees feeling exposed or unsupported. This underscores the importance of cultivating environments where neurodivergent employees feel empowered to express their needs without fear of judgment, ensuring inclusion is embedded in workplace culture rather than treated as an individual responsibility.

Empowering organisations in both countries to identify signs of exclusion, respond with empathy, and adopt inclusive communication practices hence appears to be essential. Moreover, transitioning from reactive accommodations to proactive inclusion is significant. In both Indonesia and Sweden, neurodivergent employees should not have to depend on self-disclosure to obtain the support they require. Instead, inclusive practices should be integrated into organisational policies from the outset, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all employees. To reduce perceived discrimination, organisations must challenge existing social and cultural narratives and place a stronger emphasis on valuing cognitive diversity (Benson et al., 2023). By doing so, they can move beyond conventional norms and cultivate an

environment of genuine inclusion, offering meaningful support to neurodivergent employees rather than relying on reactive approaches.

Furthermore, raising awareness is essential not only within companies but also across the broader community, where societal perceptions shape workplace inclusion efforts. In the context of MNCs, fostering neuro-inclusion requires engagement beyond internal policies, extending to industry-wide initiatives, educational outreach, and public discourse (City and Guilds Foundation, 2025). Awareness empowers organisations to implement more effective strategies, such as leadership-driven programs, tailored training, and diversity-focused partnerships with trade unions and external advocacy groups. By actively promoting neuroinclusive values within the larger community, companies can contribute to shifting societal assumptions, embedding inclusion into both corporate cultures and public consciousness. This broader engagement helps challenge stereotypes, normalise neurodiversity, and create an environment where neurodivergent employees are not only supported within the workplace but also understood and valued in society.

Next, we will explore how workplace accommodations can be implemented more proactively to address these inequities and better support neurodivergent employees. By moving beyond the reliance on self-disclosure and instead integrating tailored accommodations from the beginning, organisations can significantly reduce the barriers to inclusion. This shift involves not only understanding the unique needs of neurodivergent employees but also embedding inclusive practices into organisational policies that provide equitable support for all employees. By prioritizing personalised accommodations, organisations have the potential to cultivate an environment that supports neurodivergent employees in reaching their potential, promoting equity and fostering an inclusive workplace culture.

6.3. Workplace Accommodations for a Neuroinclusive Workplace

The findings from this study provide valuable insights into how HR professionals perceive and address discrimination and workplace accommodations for neurodivergent employees, as well as how these practices vary across culturally distinct contexts. By examining these dynamics through the lens of HR professionals' experiences, the research sheds light on both the progress made and the persistent challenges in creating inclusive workplaces for neurodivergent employees. The discussion that follows integrates these findings with existing literature, reflects on unexpected outcomes, acknowledges limitations, and proposes avenues for future research, culminating in a reflection on the study's broader significance for the field of DEI.

Through Schein's (1990) Model of Organisational Culture, workplace accommodations can be understood as both observable artefacts and expressions of espoused values. This distinction provides a nuanced understanding of how organisational culture supports, or fails to support, neuro-inclusion in practice. Observable artefacts include workplace accommodations such as policies, legal frameworks, tailored facilities, and HR processes (Schein, 1990). Similarly, espoused values are also linked to the workplace accommodation theme, highlighting the organisation's expressed commitments and shared beliefs (Schein, 1990). These can be seen in value statements, inclusive employer branding, and stated attitudes toward flexibility and inclusion. In addition, espoused values are reflected through leader and peer support toward neurodivergent employees, particularly in how inclusive attitudes are modelled in daily interactions and workplace norms.

HR professionals in both Indonesia and Sweden demonstrate an appreciation for the unique cognitive strengths of neurodivergent employees, such as their ability to recognise patterns and problem-solving (IN 1; IN 2; IN 9; IN 10), which resonates with prior studies highlighting the innovative potential of neurodiverse teams (Austin & Pisano, 2017; Waisman-Nitzan et al., 2018). However, the translation of this recognition into effective accommodations varies significantly. In Indonesia, however, this recognition does not consistently translate into robust support. Workplace accommodations such as flexible work arrangements and workspace modifications are offered, but tend to be standardised and reactive, often implemented only when the needs of neurodivergent employees visibly impact business performance (IN 1; IN 2; IN 4). This performance-first mindset, as noted by several interviewees, where accommodations are secondary to organisational goals, reflects a broader cultural and societal context in which awareness of neurodiversity remains limited, and legal enforcement of inclusion is weak (Aliyah, 2024). Biases, such as assumptions about the social skills of neurodivergent employees, restrict their access to leadership roles, while late disclosure during recruitment hinders the provision of early, tailored support (IN 1; IN 2). The lack of leadership engagement and clear inclusion metrics further widens the gap between organisational commitments and actual practices, a disconnect that Schein's (1990) model of organisational culture frames as a misalignment between the espoused values of inclusivity and underlying assumptions that prioritise neurotypical norms. This reactive approach, contrary to global neurodiversity advocacy (City and Guilds Foundation, 2025), may stem from cultural norms that value conformity and a limited societal infrastructure, prioritising business goals over individual unique needs.

In Sweden, the landscape is different, shaped by progressive social policies and a cultural emphasis on equity. HR professionals facilitate more advanced accommodations, including sensory-friendly workspaces, quiet rooms, flexible hours (IN 7; IN 8; IN 10), and activity-based working environments which aligns with previous research finding that enable employees to choose spaces tailored to their tasks (Nanayakkara et al., 2021). These physical adjustments, alongside skill-based hiring and inclusive job advertisement language, reflect observable artefacts of inclusion (Schein, 1990), and are supported by active trade union advocacy and a meritocratic approach to hiring (IN 7), which also aligned with (Gjertsen et al., 2021). However, across all interviewees, these accommodations are often designed for the general workforce rather than tailored to the needs of neurodivergent employees, relying heavily on employees to self-advocate, creating unnecessary barriers for neurodivergent candidates. However, inclusive hiring should proactively accommodate candidates without requiring them to disclose their condition. Organisations can achieve this by communicating adjustment options upfront, such as offering prior access to interview questions, providing alternative assessment formats, or allowing flexible interview environments (IN 5). These standardised practices ensure fair opportunities for all applicants while reducing pressure on candidates to disclose their neurodivergence. Additionally, increasing visibility or representation around neurodiversity in the workplace helps create a more welcoming and supportive hiring experience. The generalisation of accommodations limits their impact. This approach can deter disclosure due to fears of stigma, as employees weigh the risks of revealing their neurodivergence against the potential benefits of support (Farquhar, 2024). The absence of targeted policies, compounded by resource constraints and the diverse spectrum of neurodivergent conditions, suggests that even advanced systems struggle to address the unique needs of individuals (Weber et al., 2022).

Across both contexts, the reliance on disclosure to initiate accommodations stands out as a shared challenge, placing the burden on neurodivergent employees and risking masking behaviours that reinforce exclusion, a systemic issue the SMD frames as rooted in organisational structures that fail to accommodate employee needs (Kudlick, 2003). For instance, Indonesia's lack of targeted policies reflects broader societal and regulatory challenges, while Sweden's broad policies, despite union advocacy, overlook neurodivergent-specific challenges. These contrasting practices reflect the profound influence of cultural and legal contexts. Indonesia's emerging awareness, shaped by an education system with minimal diversity focus, creates barriers to proactive inclusion, aligning with challenges in non-Western

countries (Hirota et al., 2024), while Sweden is already more advanced in diversity education (IN 8).

Cognitive Evaluation Theory illuminates these dynamics, emphasising autonomy, competence, and relatedness as drivers of employees' motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). However, embracing neurodiversity also requires not only accommodations but also structural changes. Inclusive organisational cultures support this shift by offering specialised training, redesigning hiring practices, and fostering environments where neurodiverse individuals feel supported (Houdek, 2022). As a result, while espoused values of inclusion are visible in organisational artefacts, persistent underlying assumptions continue to prioritise neurotypical norms, echoing Schein's (1990) argument that true cultural transformation requires addressing these deeper layers. Flexible work arrangements that promote autonomy allow employees to manage their schedules while maintaining accountability. Both contexts underutilise competence-building measures, such as tailored training and relatedness-enhancing strategies like peer networks, which the City and Guilds Foundation (2025) identifies as critical elements for neurodivergent employees to thrive. Universal accommodations, such as offering flexible interview formats to all candidates without requiring disclosure, could reduce this burden (Praslova et al., 2023).

To retain neurodivergent talent, organisations must go beyond reactive measures and build truly neuro-inclusive workplaces (City and Guilds Foundation, 2025). This involves ongoing inclusive leadership training, proactive physical accommodations like quiet rooms and assistive tools, and role design that supports diverse work styles and sensory needs. Unions also play a crucial role in providing advocacy and fostering connections. However, true inclusion requires a cultural shift, HR professionals must challenge neurotypical norms and embed neurodiversity into daily operations (City and Guilds Foundation, 2025). Proactive and empowering support should meet the psychological needs outlined in Cognitive Evaluation Theory, which include autonomy through flexible structures, competence via tailored training, and relatedness through empathetic leadership and strong support networks (Ryan & Deci, 2017). By embedding these principles, organisations create environments where neurodivergent employees feel valued, supported, and able to thrive, transforming neurodiversity into a driver of innovation and long-term success.

The finding extends Biswas et al.'s (2017) insight that cultural variations shape HR strategies, which can be applicable to neuro-inclusion. We posit the need for systemic change to align the espoused values of fairness, belonging, and psychological safety with observable artefacts, like sensory-friendly spaces and neurodiversity hiring initiatives. The findings

resonate with existing literature while offering new insights. The pivotal role of leadership, particularly in fostering psychological safety where employees feel empowered to voice needs (Clarke et al., 2024), aligns with Wen et al.'s (2023) call for HR interventions to enhance neurodivergent support. The prevalence of a performance-driven culture and limited leadership engagement contributes to a gap between espoused values and underlying assumptions. This reinforces Schein's (1990) assertion that sustainable culture change necessitates alignment between surface-level expressions and deeply held beliefs. Indonesia's performance-driven approach echoes Omanović's (2013) critique of prioritising informational diversity over holistic inclusion, while Sweden's practices partially reflect Doyle and McDowall's (2022) advocacy for removing systemic barriers to foster innovation. SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and ODT (Brewer, 1991) explain how group biases and the tension between differentiation and belonging shape experiences, particularly in Indonesia's late disclosure and Sweden's self-advocacy expectations. The study addresses a gap noted by Weber et al. (2022) by providing comparative insights into accommodation challenges, enriched by strategies like inclusive leadership training and proactive physical accommodations, such as quiet rooms and assistive tools, to ensure accessibility without employee-initiated requests.

By integrating the insights of CET and the SMD, HR professionals can take a dual approach to workplace accommodation. Fostering the autonomy, competence, and relatedness of neurodivergent employees will strengthen their intrinsic motivation and engagement. On the other hand, addressing structural barriers ensures that neurodivergent employees are not disadvantaged by workplace norms that fail to account for cognitive diversity. Together, these perspectives provide a roadmap for building more inclusive workplaces where all employees can thrive regardless of neurocognitive differences.

7. Conclusion and Future Research

This study explores how HR professionals in multinational corporations (MNCs) perceive and address discrimination and workplace accommodations for neurodivergent employees, and how these perceptions and practices differ between Indonesia and Sweden. The findings reveal notable contrasts shaped by national, legal, cultural, and organisational contexts.

In Indonesia, limited social awareness and less developed legal mandates often lead HR professionals to rely on informal approaches and individual discretion when addressing neurodiversity-related concerns. Discrimination may not always be explicitly recognised or addressed, and accommodations are typically provided reactively, once challenges become visible or a diagnosis is disclosed. The stigma surrounding neurodivergence contributes to masking behaviours and reluctance to disclose. Nevertheless, there is growing recognition among some HR professionals in Indonesia of the need to promote awareness and develop more structured support.

In contrast, Swedish HR professionals typically operate within well-established legal frameworks and structured diversity policies. These professionals generally perceive the inclusion of neurodivergent employees as both a legal and ethical imperative. They tend to address discrimination and accommodations through formal processes that are embedded into HR systems. However, the implementation of accommodations often relies heavily on employee self-disclosure, and the support provided can remain procedural rather than holistic, potentially overlooking deep cultural inclusion. As a result, neurodivergent employees may still encounter indirect discrimination when judged against neurotypical standards of behaviour and performance.

These differences reveal that in Indonesia, despite limited formal mechanisms, there is potential for meaningful progress through increased awareness and cultural change, while Swedish MNCs may have more advanced formal structures, inclusion often remains shallow without cultural reinforcement. Across both contexts, HR professionals play a pivotal role in shaping inclusive workplace environments, and their approaches significantly influence whether neurodivergence is acknowledged, embraced, or marginalised.

Meaningful neuro-inclusivity requires a proactive rather than reactive approach, ensuring that structural, resource, and leadership barriers are dismantled. True inclusion extends beyond formal accommodations; it must be embedded in workplace culture, leadership practices, and daily interactions. By challenging implicit biases, fostering open dialogue, and integrating neuro-inclusion values into decision-making, HR professionals can ensure that

neurodivergence is acknowledged, embraced, and actively supported, rather than marginalised, thereby fostering environments where all employees thrive.

7.1. Theoretical and Practical Contribution

Theoretically, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how inclusion for neurodivergent employees is shaped not only by formal policies but by organisational culture. Building on Schein's organisational culture model, this thesis highlights how underlying assumptions, espoused values, and observable artefacts shape inclusion. Deep-rooted beliefs about neurodivergence often perpetuate indirect discrimination when neurotypical standards evaluate neurodivergent employees. When neurotypical norms dominate at the level of assumptions, even well-structured policies may perpetuate exclusion. This insight is reinforced by integrating SIT, ODT, and the SMD, which help explain how belonging, autonomy, and categorisation affect the experiences of neurodivergent employees in the workplace.

This study provides practical strategies for HR professionals and leaders to foster inclusive workplaces for neurodivergent employees. Our findings suggest that HR professionals and organisational leaders should adopt proactive, rather than reactive, strategies. Universal design principles, such as skill-based hiring and sensory-friendly workspaces, can reduce the need for disclosure by embedding inclusivity into the very structure of the workplace. These initiatives create environments where support is naturally integrated into the workplace, reducing the need for self-disclosure. Given the distinct challenges in different cultural contexts, tailored approaches are necessary. In Indonesia, initiatives such as awareness campaigns, peer advocacy, and community engagement can reduce stigma and open dialogue. In Sweden, refining frameworks to go beyond legal compliance and engaging trade unions can enhance the impact of existing policies and strengthen accountability, ensuring that inclusion becomes deeply embedded into the company culture. The study also underscores the importance of leadership. Leaders who embody neuro-inclusive values through their decisions, communication, and engagement reinforce inclusive assumptions and encourage behavioural change across the organisation. Training managers to foster a deeper understanding of neurodiversity is key, as it enables personalising accommodations to address individual needs rather than relying on broad policies.

Additionally, adapting global diversity initiatives to align with local cultural and legal contexts is significant for inclusive practices. As awareness grows, it reshapes underlying assumptions, embedding neuro-inclusive principles into the core of organisational values. This shift recognises neurodiversity as a strength rather than viewing it through the lens of personal

difficulties or limitations. Leadership support, as a key component of espoused values, reinforces these principles by actively championing inclusion and modelling commitment through decisions, policies, and engagement with employees. This shift ensures that inclusion is not just a policy but a deeply integrated aspect of company identity, reflected in observable workplace artefacts such as office design, communication practices, and daily interactions. This shift ensures that inclusion is not just a policy but a deeply integrated aspect of company identity, reflected in observable workplace artefacts such as office design, communication practices, and daily interactions.

7.2. Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, there is a potential risk of HR response bias. Participants may have shaped their responses to align with socially acceptable narratives or dominant organisational culture, influenced by perceptions of social desirability (Bergen & Labonté, 2020). This could affect the accuracy and authenticity of the insights gathered. Second, the qualitative approach relies on a small sample of HR professionals from MNCs in only two countries, limiting the generalisability of the findings to smaller organisations or different regional contexts. The small sample size also means the results may not be representative of the broader population of HR professionals. Third, the study focuses exclusively on HR professionals' perspectives, excluding the experiences of neurodivergent employees. This narrow scope may overlook critical insights into accommodation effectiveness and the lived realities of neurodivergent individuals in the workplace, which could impact the broader applicability of the findings. Finally, researcher interpretation during data collection and analysis may have introduced unintended bias, influenced in part by the researcher's own cultural background.

7.3. Future Research

Future research could adopt a more holistic approach by incorporating the perspectives of both employers and neurodivergent employees to better understand shared challenges and differing needs in the workplace. This mixed-perspective exploration would provide a more comprehensive view of neuro-inclusion beyond the lens of HR professionals alone. Given that the majority of the sample in this study is drawn from the technology sector, future research could benefit from comparative studies across other industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, or education. Exploring these sectors may reveal sector-specific barriers and challenges to neurodiversity inclusion that remain underexplored relative to the tech industry.

Such cross-industry analysis would deepen understanding of how contextual factors shape how neuro-inclusion practices are implemented. Additionally, a pilot study within a company committed to inclusive practices could offer the opportunity to observe the short-term impact of tailored strategies, such as inclusive job design or onboarding adjustments, on employee engagement and experience over a defined period. Such research would generate practical, evidence-based insights into how neuroinclusive initiatives influence both individual and organisational outcomes, offering grounded recommendations for broader implementation.

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Appendix

1. Interview Guide For HR professionals

1. Demographics

1. Can you tell me about your role and responsibilities in the organisation?
2. How long have you been working in HR/management within this organisation?
3. What is the organisation's size?
4. Does your organisation currently employ neurodivergent employees? If so, approximately how many? How do you know they are neurodivergent?

2. Discrimination

1. How does your organisation understand diversity?
2. What are their roles?
3. What challenges have you experienced in supporting neurodivergent employees in ways that enhance their engagement and productivity in your organisation? → to those who have prior experience in managing neurodivergent employees
4. Are there any stereotypes or misconceptions about neurodivergence in your workplace that might hinder neurodivergent employees' engagement or inclusion?
5. What steps has your organisation taken to address and mitigate discrimination and promote engagement among neurodivergent employees?
6. Can you share specific examples of successful or unsuccessful initiatives to reduce workplace discrimination?
7. How do workplace perceptions of neurodiversity impact the acceptance of neurodivergent employees in your organisation?

3. Workplace Accommodation

1. How does your organisation identify the specific needs of neurodivergent employees

for workplace accommodations?

2. What types of accommodations are most commonly requested by neurodivergent employees?
3. How are managers and teams trained to support neurodivergent employees?
4. What cultural challenges do you face in providing adequate organisational support for neurodivergent employees?
5. Are there any organisational policies or frameworks you find particularly effective or ineffective in supporting neurodivergent employees?
6. What opportunities or initiatives have been implemented to foster higher engagement levels among neurodivergent employees?

4. Engagement

1. How do you measure employee engagement in your organisation?
2. Can you share any examples of neurodivergent employees who have demonstrated high engagement and what contributed to their success?

5. Closing Questions

1. If you could implement one policy or initiative to enhance neurodivergent employee engagement, what would it be? that hasn't been implemented yet
2. Do you have any additional thoughts or suggestions regarding this topic?