Mapping the lacunae between neurodivergent individuals and work organizations

Vasundharaa S. Nair ⬤, Sudipt Kumar , Sushant Bhargava *,1

Jindal Institute of Behavioural Sciences, O. P. Jindal Global University, India

A B S T R A C T

The evolving workplace landscape necessitates a shift from conventional talent acquisition and retention strategies to practices that foster genuine Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). This study examines neurodiversity within Human Resource Management (HRM) through a comprehensive scoping review of literature, aiming to (i) identify critical gaps in the integration of neurodivergent individuals into workplaces and (ii) propose actionable strategies to promote inclusivity and organizational adaptability.

Analyzing 17 studies from an initial pool of 60, the authors have identified six key psychosocial domains that highlight significant barriers neurodivergent individuals face, including stigma, fear, and inadequate accommodations, inter alia. Simultaneously, the findings underscore the unique strengths of neurodivergent employees, such as pattern recognition and innovative problem-solving skills, which are increasingly valuable in modern organizations.

The review emphasizes the need for nuanced HRM practices that go beyond deficit-based approaches, advocating for proactive interventions such as manager training, tailored accommodations, and cultural shifts to foster neurodivergent inclusive workplaces. By synthesizing existing research and identifying pressing gaps, this study provides a roadmap for future research and practical interventions, contributing to a deeper understanding of neurodiversity's role in reshaping modern organizational DEI practices.

1. Introduction

In the contemporary landscape of work organizations, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives have increasingly become pivotal as ethical imperatives and strategic drivers of innovation, productivity, and competitive advantage (Bernstein et al., 2020). However, recent sociopolitical events—especially in the United States—have severely impeded these initiatives. Corporations have been under pressure to rethink or even cancel DEI initiatives from constant scrutiny and resistance from dominant political factions and select sections of corporate leadership (Murray, 2025). Despite these challenges, the importance of continuing and strengthening DEI commitments, especially regarding neurodiversity, cannot be overstated because of their inherent value. Neurodiversity refers to the naturally occurring variation in neurological functioning within the human population, encompassing conditions such as autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or, as some members of the community prefer, Attention Dysregulation Hyperactivity Development (ADHD), dyslexia, dysgraphia, and Tourette

syndrome, among others (Chapman, 2019; LeFevre-Levy et al., 2023). Current estimates indicate that around 15–20 % of the population worldwide is neurodivergent (Doyle, 2020). The neurodiversity proposition challenges the ideal of "normalcy," asserting that neurological differences should be recognized as an organic aspect of human diversity rather than being categorized as deficits. Elsherif et al. (2022) further emphasize that neurodivergent individuals contribute unique skills and perspectives. Along similar lines, Pellicano and den Houting (2022) foreground the importance of embracing neurodiversity in the workplace, where neurodivergent individuals offer valuable strengths such as attention to detail, pattern recognition, and creative problem-solving, competencies are increasingly recognized as critical to driving innovation and productivity in modern organizations (Khan et al., 2023).

Neurodivergent individuals have been recognized for their contribution to enhancing organizational creativity and productivity and are now seen as a valuable asset that enhances creativity and problem-solving within teams (Khan et al., 2023; Krzeminska et al., 2019). However, existing research on neurodiversity, particularly within the

context of DEI that encompasses relevant contexts such as sheltered employment and reasonable accommodation, remains more or less diverse and variegated (Blackburn, 2023; Gelashvili et al., 2019; Ybema et al., 2020). Therefore, a focused review of the literature (like the present one) within this area is essential for synthesis, whereby one would need to explore key themes and highlight some of the existing research gaps (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The necessity for this review also stems from its potential to systematically organize existing research, identify gap areas, propose directions for future studies, and ultimately aid in creating more inclusive employment strategies and policies (Munn et al., 2018). By doing so, we intend to actively support the integration of neurodivergent individuals in the workplace, advocating toward fostering an inclusive environment where every employee, regardless of their background, can thrive and contribute meaningfully. Besides, our review may also help in devising appropriate policies and programs, which could subsequently facilitate more productive diversity within the workplace.

Specifically, through this review, we seek to investigate two pivotal aspects of neurodiversity in the workplace. The first aspect centers on identifying the challenges that neurodivergent individuals face in the work context, viz. under-employment and unemployment. The second aspect encompasses a critical examination of both the availability and the effectiveness of accommodations in support of neurodivergent individuals. Notably, the first aspect is anchored in the growing body of research that underscores the unique competencies of neurodivergent individuals, such as enhanced pattern recognition, attention to detail, and innovative problem-solving skills (Grandin & Duffy, 2008; Cope & Remington, 2022) (Austin & Pisano, 2017). Ironically, though, despite these 'strengths,' neurodivergent individuals often face significant employment challenges (above-mentioned) primarily due to social communication difficulties and sensory sensitivities (Roux et al., 2024; Dwyer, 2022). It is imperative that integrative and informed HRM interventions be designed through the amalgamation of academic and practical insights in modern workplaces to mitigate challenges.

As for the second aspect (i.e., accommodations), the primary focus is to create supportive and accommodating work environments for neurodivergent individuals to serve as additional help to them (Bend & Priola, 2023). In fact, in our efforts to cover this aspect, we conduct an in-depth analysis of the extent to which accommodations are actually accessible to these individuals and how effectively they provide meaningful work opportunities (Ybema et al., 2020). Besides, we also explore whether work settings restrict their career progression, albeit inadvertently, and in the process, contribute to their segregation from mainstream employment (Corby et al., 2019; Gelashvili et al., 2022). In this context, the very recent destabilizing influences on the DEI arrangements and accommodations lead to experiential patterns similar to that of dual vulnerability for neurodivergent individuals at the workplace (Vandecar-Burdin & Akpinar-Elci, 2023). Our ultimate quest for this review is to provide insights into how present or future workplace arrangements and interventions can be optimized to support reasonable accommodations coupled with professional development toward an equitable workforce. Hence, the requirement arises for a scoping review that is simultaneously broad-based and expansive (Munn et al., 2018). Additionally, some researchers have pointed out the importance of sustainable workplaces, and equitable or inclusive workplaces are a bare minimum for sustainability (Stazyk et al., 2016; Viljoen, 2016). Hence, organizations must realize the importance of better inclusion to get sustainability benefits.

Our review synthesizes findings from 60 select research papers, with a specific focus on 17 studies based on the inclusion criteria discussed later in the methodology section. These studies include both empirical and review papers from across the globe; they provide valuable insights into the varied dimensions of neurodiversity in the workplace.

Broadly, the literature that we analyze presents diverse interpretations of neurodiversity (de Beer et al., 2022; Doyle, 2020; Tomczak, 2022), underscoring how employment challenges, even in accommodative settings, are often amplified by deficit-focused approaches (Halder & Bruyere, 2022; Tomczak, 2022). The studies also highlight the negative impacts of fear, stigma, and aversion that neurodivergent individuals experience within these sheltered work environments (de Beer et al., 2022; Halder & Bruyere, 2022; Pryke-Hobbes et al., 2023). Some of the other workplace challenges identified in our review include the communication difficulties of these individuals and the necessity for adaptable and supportive environments within reasonable accommodation employment settings (Halder & Bruyere, 2022; Mellifont, 2022; Tomczak, 2022). Besides, we explore the theoretical perspective, e.g., the evolution toward a neurodivergent model (Doyle, 2020; Halder & Bruyere, 2022). This perspective promises to provide crucial insights into the complexities of integrating neurodivergent individuals in varied employment settings. Furthermore, the review suggests interventions aimed at enhancing the employment prospects of neurodivergent individuals in the context of work arrangements and policy-based interventions. These include virtual reality training, game-based assessments, and tailored adjustments in the workplace (Davies et al., 2023; Doyle, 2020; Kim et al., 2022; McVey et al., 2023; Willis et al., 2021). Holistically, this comprehensive analysis contributes to a more nuanced understanding of neurodiversity in the context of the modern workplace, thereby highlighting the importance of both inclusive and adaptive practices and, eventually, more sustainability in the workplace and the workforce.

2. Overview of literature

While all individuals who come under the blanket of neurodiversity face unique challenges in securing and maintaining employment (particularly when seeking specific profiles or locations), some types of neurodiversity in the workplace are more commonly studied than others, such as Autism (McVey et al., 2023; Pryke-Hobbes et al., 2023). This pattern is reflected in the increased research focus on autism spectrum disorders (ASD) by researchers (e.g., Davies et al., 2022; Tomczak, 2022). As a matter of fact, neurodivergent candidates seeking and securing employment may require particular conditions and added infrastructure for effectively discharging their duties. Such conditions may be challenging to create in remote work environments that are a norm post-COVID-19 pandemic. There are some significant differences in the productivity of neurodivergent populations that are also observed in comparison to other employees (Krzeminska et al., 2019). However, as with other employee concerns, the precise source of these differentials may be challenging to identify and even more complicated to resolve. The differences here are in productivity as per the organizational interpretation. Both neurotypicality and neurodiversity have pros and cons in the eyes of the organization, as per their parameters, and they must attempt to utilize their potential within their boundaries. Moreover, as these workplaces attempt to look at the strengths and capabilities of the employees while shaping their work practices with due regard to employee wellbeing and quality of life, differences may arise in terms of immediate or long-term benefits, even where remote work is concerned (Das et al., 2021). Some remedies may possibly lie in arrangements relating to organizational diversity management with the inclusion of neurodivergent people, as pointed out by research (Tomczak, 2022). Theoretical models, such as the biopsychosocial model (Doyle, 2020) and the social model of disability (Shakespeare, 2010), are prominent in characterizing neurodiversity from the scientific or medical viewpoint. Yet, given the current advancements in practices and conceptualizations, these cannot be applied to modern workplaces or used to resolve emerging challenges unchanged.

If neurodiversity is viewed from the lens of difference in ability, the organization may consider provisions of specific institutional arrangements such as 'sheltered employment' for the neurodivergent candidates. Integration of specificity of tasks and supervision relating to work for the neurodivergent is even more critical to support such arrangements, given that significant costs could be attached to getting a similar

quality of work from neurodivergent people as others not dealing from the same or similar physical or mental conditions (Cimera, 2008). Sheltered employment arrangements refer to workplaces where a significant number of people working are those otherwise unable to participate in securing and performing regular work (Bend & Priola, 2023). The term usually describes workplaces where enhanced cultural or material support is provided by institutional arrangements/ accommodations to create conducive work conditions. Since one of our objectives is to show how the neurodivergent working population has been represented in the literature in the context of employment, the distinction between neurodiversity and the more widely found forms of disability in relation to workplace functioning is critical. Also significant is the connotation of co-location of the neurodivergent and the differently-abled and of the distinction between the two.

For the neurodivergent candidates, barriers in employment can be of varied nature, as also indicated by research in other domains of workplace design and dynamics coupled with the variety of individual or social differences among employees (e.g., Anderson et al., 2013; Lindsay, 2011; Shier et al., 2009). The Conservation of Resources (COR) model has been particularly significant since its inception in predicting and controlling work-related outcomes and the design of workplaces (Hobfoll et al., 2018). However, its applications vis-a-vis the needs of neurodivergent individuals at the workplace have been limited and non-integrated for neurodiversity in general (e.g., Arnold et al., 2023). Generally, organizations fall back upon diversity and inclusion policy measures to ensure a conducive work environment for their employees. However, it is also crucial to address the fears and stigma that neurodivergent individuals may experience, which adds another layer to maintaining a healthy workplace (Allen et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2023). This means that organizations have a responsibility not only to encourage neurodivergent candidates to apply but also to focus on retention once they are part of the workforce. One significant challenge across industries is developing job descriptions that are suitable for neurodivergent candidates, ensuring they are not biased against these individuals (Molloy et al., 2022; Rao & Polepeddi, 2019). Additionally, organizations can adopt measures to eliminate potentially harmful aspects of the workplace or make general changes to cultural norms and practices to foster inclusivity (Halder & Bruyere, 2022; Szulc, 2022).

Moreover, creating supportive work environments for neurodivergent individuals isn't just about overcoming challenges; it's about unlocking their unique strengths and capabilities, such as a) higher-order reasoning ability and creative thinking in persons with ADHD (Willis et al., 2021), b) the ability to memorize better among the persons with autism (Desaunay et al., 2020), c) being innovative and focusing on a multisensory enhancement of skills (visual, writing labs, technology etc.,) in the persons with Specific Learning Disability (SLD) (Obradovich et al., 2018), etc. Their inclusion enriches the workforce in numerous ways. However, as neurodiversity encompasses a spectrum of conditions with varying individual manifestations, measuring and quantifying these strengths remains an open area of research. Studies like Doyle (2020) suggest that neurodivergent individuals may excel in specific roles due to their distinctive neurocognitive strengths. This contrast not only necessitates an understanding of general accommodations but also tailoring them to different job requirements and neurodivergent profiles. While Corby et al. (2019) and Runswick-Cole (2014) explore support structures for more severe impairments that qualify as disabilities, the need of the hour is to distinguish them from the necessary support for neurodivergent employees in mainstream jobs. In the same vein, segregation does not constitute enablement or support. Hence, modern organizations require explorations of potentially non-segregated options for both traditional and non-traditional job roles. Beyond specific accommodations, promoting a truly inclusive and supportive environment requires broader cultural shifts. Policies that contribute to a productive and integrated work climate are crucial,

dismantling negative perceptions and fostering understanding (Härtel, 2004; Härtel & Fujimoto, 2000). The policies should focus on recognizing strengths, tailoring support, exploring various employment models, and fostering an inclusive workplace culture.

Hence, the current understanding of neurodiversity at the workplace, while informative, remains restricted and could be enhanced by addressing two key limitations:

i) The research often prioritizes a limited set of neurodiversity conditions, neglecting the vast spectrum (e.g., ADHD and Dyslexia, among others) of experiences within the neurodivergent community. This shortcoming is exemplified by the work of Halder and Bruyere (2022), whose findings likely apply to a broader range of neurodivergent employees than just the specific condition studied. By focusing on a select few conditions, the research potentially overlooks significant challenges faced by individuals with less-represented neurodivergent conditions, creating an incomplete picture of their needs and contributions.

ii) The current body of research is also constricted in the context of the specific "enabling factors" (or facilitative measures) that create supportive environments for neurodivergent employees within their workplaces. These enabling factors can potentially go beyond mere accommodations and encompass the specific processes and practices that foster learning, integration, and engagement for neurodivergent individuals (Ezerins et al., 2023; Patton, 2019). Studies by Doyle and McDowall (2022), Krzeminska et al. (2019), and Walkowiak (2024) exemplify this gap in the research, as they focus more on general challenges and recommendations instead of exploring the nuanced factors that create veritably inclusive environments.

3. Methodology

We conducted a scoping review following the recommendations of Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) framework on the databases of PubMed and Scopus. The scoping review approach was selected as it is best suited to map the research landscape comprehensively, pinpoint existing knowledge gaps, and offer recommendations specifically from a workplace perspective, where further exploration is warranted (Pham et al., 2014).

Based on the stated aims and objectives, this scoping review aimed to understand the issues, concerns, and the nature of existing/ anticipated interventions in the workplace. We also looked to map the lacunae between neurodivergent individuals and the workplace. Specifically, our objectives were to understand the meaning and perception of neurodiversity in workplaces, explore the challenges that neurodivergent individuals face at the workplace, and examine plausible interventions for better inclusion and incorporation of these individuals.

Studies in English, published from 2013 to 2023, were included. Notably, all these studies focused on the working conditions of neurodivergent individuals and their dynamics (e.g., wellbeing, culture, policies, contribution, accessibility, and efficacy). Also, all these studies focused on job opportunities within the neurodivergent populace. Studies that were published in other languages or focused on mental health conditions (e.g., anxiety, depression, etc.) and studies that focused on differing perspectives of neurodiversity other than within the realms of the social sciences, psychology and HRM were excluded from the review.

The review was conducted using the following keywords: sheltered employment, reasonable accommodation, neurodiversity, and workplace organization; the databases searched included PubMed and Scopus. MeSH terms used included employment AND neurodiversity, barriers in employment AND neurodiversity, facilitators in employment AND neurodiversity, neurodiversity AND workplace organization, roles at workplace AND neurodiversity, organization contribution AND neurodiversity, workplace policies AND neurodiversity, and finally, interventions in workplace AND neurodiversity.

3.1. Author information

At the time of the study, the first, second, and third authors had about six combined years of clinical and industrial experience working with the neurodivergent population. The first author has clinical experience focussing her work on wellbeing at the workplace, while the second and third authors have experience at the intersection of industrial participation of neurodiversity. All authors designed the study together and have equal contributions. While developing the study, the authors brought in their clinical and industrial exposure to meeting and interacting with the neurodivergent population in clinical and workplace settings, which helped lay the groundwork for the study. We spoke together to 6 individuals who identified themselves as neurodivergent, bringing the learnings and the lived experiences to use while designing the study. While this cohort has not verified the findings of the study as it was a gap-oriented study, their insights enriched the study's foundational approach to identifying and exploring existing gaps.

3.2. Screening of articles

After the initial filtering from the electronic databases, we stored the references in the Zotero database. Then, they were screened further by reviewing the abstracts and the title of the articles; after this level of screening, they were further filtered based on the relevance of the articles. Notably, while the primary researcher conducted the initial search and screening, the co-authors later reviewed it. Finally, the papers identified were evaluated to meet the criteria established by the primary researcher, which the co-authors cross-checked further to ensure scientific rigor.

3.3. Data extraction

The documents selected based on the inclusion criteria were then assessed, and information was captured using the data extraction form following the PRISMA-ScR checklist items [see Fig. 1]. The information

captured was entered into a data extraction list and was later synthesized in a summary format using a Microsoft Excel form. At this point, specific information regarding workplace conditions for neurodivergent individuals from the articles, such as sheltered employment, reasonable accommodation, neurodiversity, and workplace culture, was also included. Notably, these documents were subjected to a quality assessment, after which all eligible documents were included in the review as shown below:

3.4. Data synthesis and analysis

We then summarized the collected information under different themes to chart the findings of extant literature [see Fig. 2, Table 1, and Table 2]; herein, we grouped the articles under six broader psychosocial dimensions. These themes were identified using established guidelines (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Byrne, 2022) and a deductive approach from the papers that were finally included through the PRISMA-ScR guidelines for a Reflexive Thematic Analysis. The first author conducted the search and identified the themes manually, which the second and third authors then cross-checked.

To synthesize the reviewed articles, we conducted a content analysis wherein each article was considered a separate case and was categorized under one of the six dimensions. The dimensions include conceptualization of neurodiversity; employment barriers; fear, stigma, and disgust; workplace challenges; strength of the neurodivergent; and theoretical underpinnings.

4. Results

We retrieved 60 documents, of which 32 were further screened, and 17 were finally included in the review. Fig. 1 describes the process followed in the review. In these 17 articles, we had papers from the USA (5), UK (6), Poland (4), Netherlands (1), Australia (1). These articles are predominantly original research papers (11), followed by empirical (2) and review articles (4).
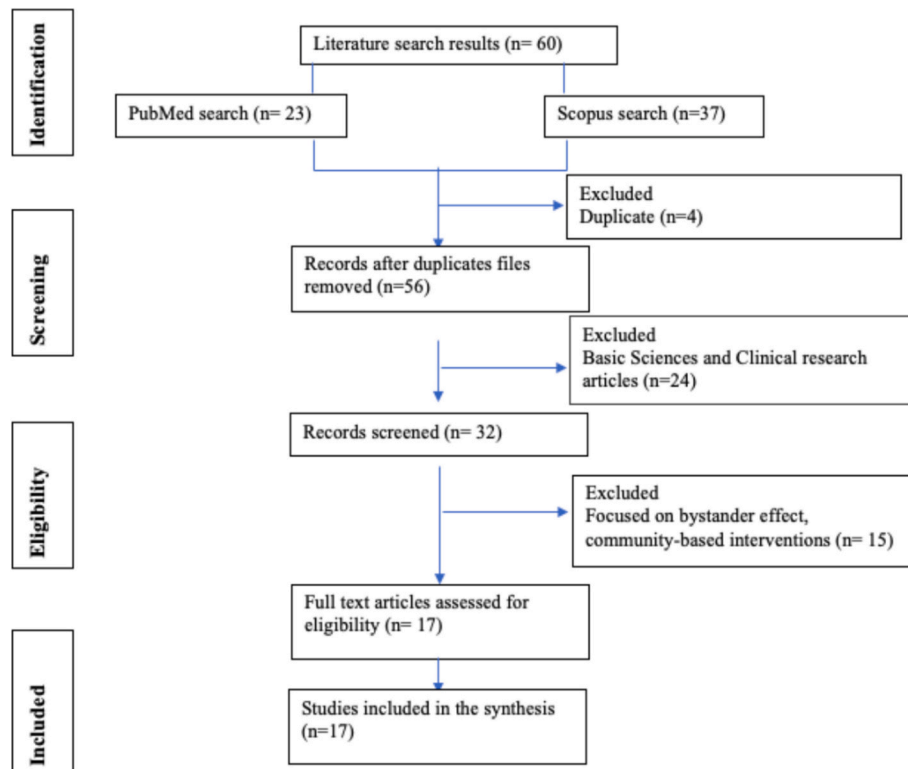

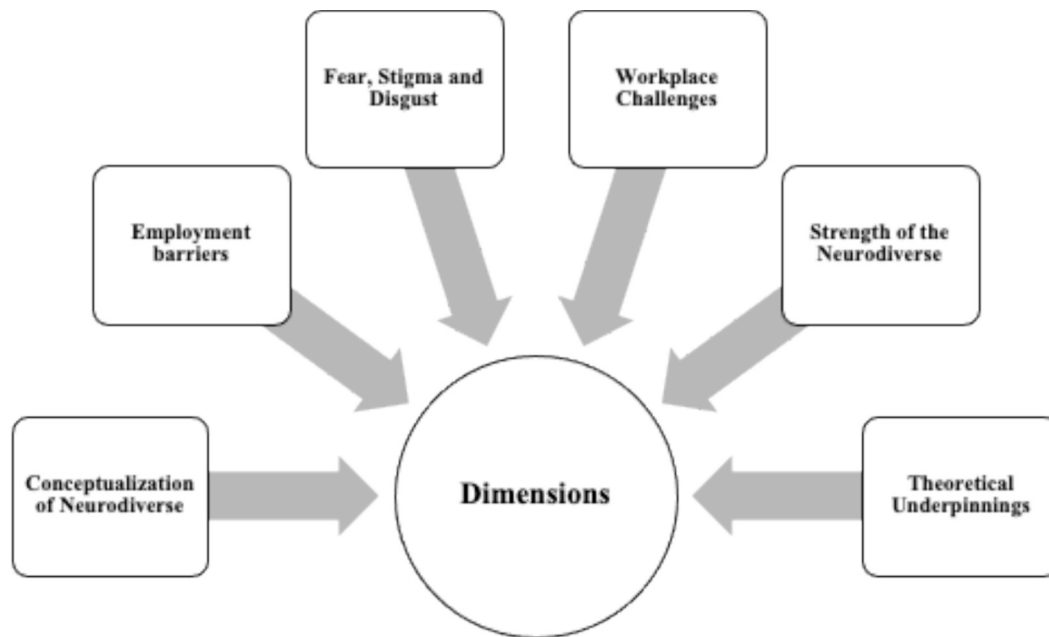**Fig. 1.** PRISMA flow diagram for the selection of articles.

Fig. 2. Synthesis of the collected articles.

4.1. Conceptualization of neurodiversity

Of the 17 articles, three focused on defining neurodiversity; broadly, it has been defined as 'between individuals', which effectively alludes to the fact that it is the diversity within the individuals' 'cognitive ability,' thereby focussing on the strengths and the peak points rather than the "deviations" from the 'normal' (Chapman, 2021; Doyle, 2020). Tomczak (2022) echoed similar thoughts while proposing that neurodiversity may be understood as diversity in human cognition, a natural phenomenon rather than any kind of cognitive processing or way of making sense of the world that deviates from 'typical' ways of thinking and being. To represent this standpoint, de Beer et al. (2022) termed neurodiversity a 'diamond in the rough.'

4.2. Employment barriers

Thirty-five percent of the articles focused on employment barriers in neurodivergent individuals. The traditional viewpoints toward employment have made it difficult for neurodivergent people to be treated as prospective candidates for employment, resulting in increased stigma and disgust from mainstream society, thereby prohibiting work opportunities (Halder & Bruyere, 2022). Further, while elaborating upon neurodivergent individuals, Tomczak (2022) proposed that an absence of practical communication skills, challenges in time management, difficulties in emotional control, and the presence of sensory hypersensitivity might result in poor stress management for these individuals. Thus, to be more inclusive of these neurodivergent individuals, there is a need to understand occupational symptomatology in specific tasks, provide accommodations for others, and make adequate adjustments (in line with the social model of disability). Further, it may be noted that once these adjustments are made accessible, they will help reduce the challenges these individuals face during employment (Doyle, 2020; Tomczak & Ziemiański, 2023). The adjustments could also help in the measurement of the behavioural as well as the psychophysiologically prominent signals, thereby leading to enhanced usage of the strengths of these individuals and helping them feel included (Kim et al., 2022).

4.3. Fear, stigma, and disgust

Four articles identified the presence of fear, stigma, and disgust in neurodivergent individuals in the workplace. The major contributors toward internal fear, perceived stigma, and attitude of disgust from the work environment include striving to be neurotypical, increased rejections and discrimination, the presence of a conventional rigid environment and interests, and finding a suitable match for the neurodivergent individuals (Halder & Bruyere, 2022). Talking about them, de Beer et al. (2022) posited that they greatly suffer from fear of uncertainty and lack of security. The articles further state that because neurodivergent individuals are generally stigmatized and laughed/mocked at the workplace, they develop a fear of failure or exposure as they feel 'different' from the rest. Hence, the neurodivergent population builds value in their workplace through openness, perceived desire to integrate socially, avoidance of discriminatory and prejudicial treatment, and an understanding of the detrimental effects on their well-being, eventually resulting in better employment outcomes (Pryke-Hobbes et al., 2023). To address these concerns, employment-focused interventions, psychological therapies, mixed interventions, and approaches are expected to be helpful (Curnow et al., 2023).

4.4. Workplace challenges

Six articles presented the different workplace challenges that neurodivergent individuals face; for instance, a lack of opportunities for growth in social skills, a (usually unstated) preference for structured, consistent behavior, and a need for additional support for adapting to change and navigating sensory experiences (Halder & Bruyere, 2022). Tomczak (2022) proposed another set of challenges, albeit in the context of 'remote work.' Some of those relate to and/or elaborate upon the ones mentioned above; for instance, the authors stated that these neurodivergent individuals typically tend to socialize less, lack stimulus or motivation from supervisors, have limited opportunities to learn from peers, and face a vast differentiation or divide between work and home. Some of the significant workplace challenges for these individuals include recruitment and retention (Mellifont, 2022); anxiety,

Table 1

Summary of the articles.

Themes	Articles	Contributions/suggestions
Theoretical Underpinnings	Doyle, 2020	Work-related intervention and treatment given to neurodivergent individuals are important, also hinting at the relevance of the biopsychosocial model.
	Tomczak et al., 2021	The COR theory can help in understanding the rationale behind the negative consequences being experienced by people living with autism in a workplace context.
	Halder & Bruyere, 2022	The shift from the medical to the neurodiverse paradigm has been explored, stating the need to bring the neurodivergent individuals into the mainstream.
Strength of the Neurodiverse	Kim et al., 2022; Willis et al., 2021.	Use of Virtual Reality (VR) is an effective intervention for supporting neurodivergent individuals.
	Halder & Bruyere, 2022	Assessments could help both neurodivergent and "normal" individuals to be hired.
	Tomczak et al., 2021	Remote working opportunities could help in limiting sensory overload.
	McVey et al., 2023	Focusing on the lived experiences shall help better reframing in a neurodivergent affirming language, which shall help leverage broader systems and more significant system change.
	Davies et., 2023	There is a need to: • have more exclusive recruitment tests for the neurodivergent, • deal with the complicated discomfort around disclosure, • have a flexible hiring process, • deal with the pervasive uncertainty and ambiguity, and, • importantly, understand and consider the environment.
Workplace Challenges	Halder & Bruyere, 2022	There are difficulties in communication, deficiencies in social skills, repetitive behaviours, and difficulty in accepting change, coupled with other sensory challenges among the neurodivergent individuals.
	Tomczak, 2022	Context of "remote work" to workplace challenges.
	Mellifont, 2022	Recruitment and retention challenges.
	Doyle & Bradley, 2023; Weinbaum et al., 2023	Anxiety, depression, and insomnia, especially in the daily lives of neurodivergent individuals, are not just individual but also social concerns to be acknowledged.
	Davies et al., 2022	Importance of changes to the physical environment and equipment, changes to job roles and supports, and changes to socio-cultural practices.
Fear, Stigma, and Disgust	de Beer et al., 2022	Neurodivergent individuals greatly suffer from fear of uncertainty and lack of security.
	Halder & Bruyere, 2022	Striving to be typical, increased rejections and discrimination, the presence of the conventional rigid environment and interests, and finding a suitable match for neurodivergent individuals in the workplace,
	Curnow et al., 2023	Employment-focused interventions, psychological therapies, mixed interventions, and approaches shall help.
	Pryke-Hobbes et al., 2023	Need to value openness, desire to integrate socially, avoidance of discriminatory and prejudicial treatment.
Employment Barriers	Doyle, 2020; Tomczak & Ziemiański, 2023	Once adjustments are made accessible, they will help reduce the challenges that the neurodivergent individuals face during employment.
	Tomczak, 2022	The absence of effective communication skills, challenges in time management, difficulties in emotional control, and the presence of sensory hypersensitivity do result in poor stress management for the neurodivergent individuals.
	Halder & Bruyere, 2022	Increased stigma and disgust from mainstream society prohibit work opportunities.
	Kim et al., 2022; Tomczak et al., 2021	Adjustments could help in the measurement of the behavioural as well as the psychophysiological signals, thereby leading to enhanced usage of the strengths of the neurodivergent individuals and helping them feel included within the mainstream.
Conceptualization of Neurodiverse	Chapman, 2021; Doyle, 2020; Tomczak et al., 2021	Focussing on the strengths and the peak points rather than the ""deviations""from the "normal"The adjustments could also help in the measurement of the behavioural as well as the psychophysiological signals, thereby leading to enhanced usage of the strengths of these individuals and helping them feel included within the mainstream.
	Tomczak, 2022; Chapman, 2021; Doyle, 2020	Neurodiversity may be understood as diversity in human cognition, which in itself is a natural phenomenon rather than any kind of cognitive processing or way of making sense of the world that deviates from "typical" ways of thinking and being. Focussing on the strengths and the peak points rather than the "deviations" from the 'normal.'
	de Beer et al., 2022; Tomczak, 2022	Neurodiversity is termed as a "diamond in the rough." wherein it may be understood as diversity in human cognition, in itself a natural phenomenon rather than any kind of cognitive processing or way of making sense of the world that deviates from 'typical' ways of thinking and being.

depression, and insomnia, especially in their daily lives (Doyle & Bradley, 2023; Weinbaum et al., 2023); changes to the physical environment and equipment, changes to job roles and supports, and changes to socio-cultural practices, among others (Davies et al., 2022). For instance, one of the remedies suggested for mitigating the challenges faced by neurodivergent individuals in navigating interview processes is to have interview questions sent to them in advance to reduce anxiety.

4.5. Strength of the neurodiverse

Kim et al. (2022) proposed using Virtual Reality (VR) as an effective intervention for supporting neurodivergent individuals. The authors suggested that the technology could assist in honing their social and communication skills, thereby making them feel less restricted compared to other workers through interactive learning environments that could help them prepare well for appearing for interviews and performing the tasks assigned to them. Other authors explored game-based assessments (e.g., shape-dance, digit span, and disco numbers).

The authors posited that these assessments could help both neuro-divergent and 'normal' individuals to be hired (Willis et al., 2021). Tomczak (2022) posited that remote working opportunities could help limit the sensory overload of these persons with disability, as they limit their socialization only through interpersonal contacts and electronic mediums. Besides, flexible working hours make individuals more capable and eliminate the need for and risk of travel.

Evidence also suggests that accommodations that utilize the strength of neurodivergent individuals are beneficial from the point of view of organizations. These could include additional work environment flexibility, schedule flexibility, support from supervisors, co-workers, or other stakeholders, and necessary executive functions such as coaching, training, literacy coaching, and workstation adjustments using necessary assistive technology and tools (Doyle, 2020). The need for reframing goals by valuing people's lived experiences and viewing support and accommodation not as a sympathetic gesture but as a human right enables the functioning of neurodivergent people in ableist systems. The reframing, if done in a neurodivergent affirming language,

Table 2
Synthesis of articles.

Article	Conceptualization of Neurodivergent	Employment Barriers	Fear, Stigma, and Disgust	Workplace Challenges	Strength of the Neurodivergent	Theoretical Underpinnings
Doyle, 2020	✔	✔			✔	✔
Tomczak, 2022	✔	✔				
de Beer et al., 2022	✔		✔			
Halder & Bruyere, 2022		✔	✔`	✔`	✔	
Tomczak & Ziemiański, 2023		✔				
(Kim et al., 2023)		✔				✔
Tomczak et al., 2021		✔			✔	
Curnow et al.,2023			✔			
Tomczak, 2022				✔`		✔
(Mellifont, 2022)				✔`		
(Doyle & Bradley, 2023)				✔`		
Davies et al., 2022				✔		
(Willis et al., 2021)						✔
McVey et al., 2023						✔
(J. Davies et al., 2023)						✔
Pryke-Hobbes et al., 2023			✔			
Weinbaum et al., 2023				✔		
	3 articles	6 articles	4 articles	6 articles	3 srticles	6 articles

shall help in leveraging more profound systems change (McVey et al., 2023). There is also a need to have more exclusive recruitment tests for the neurodivergent, to deal with the complicated discomfort around disclosure, to have a flexible hiring process, to deal with the pervasive uncertainty and ambiguity, and, importantly, to understand and consider the environment (Davies et al., 2023).

4.6. Theoretical underpinnings

Three studies touched upon the different theoretical underpinnings associated with neurodiversity; for instance, one of them focused on the shift from the medical model to the biopsychosocial model and then to the neurodivergent paradigm [see https://neuroqueer.com/neurodiversity-terms-and-definitions/], which is in line with the suggestions of the social model of disability and is essential to focus as these underpinnings bring the neurodivergent population and their continuum of conditions under the umbrella to the mainstream (Halder & Bruyere, 2022; Willis et al., 2021). Another study focused on the importance of the biopsychosocial model, which states the importance of work-related intervention and treatment. This study helps adjust the fit between the neurodivergent person and the workplace environment (Doyle, 2020). The COR theory can help in understanding the rationale behind such negative consequences being experienced by people living with autism in the workplace context (Tomczak et al., 2021). It is also to be understood that the current models are looking at the inclusive approaches to neurodiversity by focussing on including and providing opportunities for all, especially in workplace settings, thereby challenging the medical model, which seems stigmatizing and ableist in its connotations.

5. Discussion

The increasing focus on neurodiversity within workforce diversity (the DEI framework) highlights the need to understand the specific challenges and opportunities neurodivergent individuals encounter (Hutson & Hutson, 2023). Despite valuable insights from geography-specific studies, there is a gap in integrating these findings into a comprehensive theoretical framework or addressing the broad challenges neurodivergent workers face, including workplace stigma and disgust (Khan et al., 2023; Volpone et al., 2022). This review emphasizes that beyond addressing these barriers, organizations must also focus on the long-term implications of neurodiversity inclusion, such as

enhancing innovation, retention, and organizational reputation, which align with broader DEI goals.

Our review of the challenges of employment for neurodivergent individuals and their significance at the workplace addresses critical questions on its current state and viability in the future. Though neurodivergent individuals hold great potential for meaningful integration and distinctive contributions as a significant section of the workforce, they do remain marginalized in terms of the representation of their work conditions and enabling arrangements put in place by the organizational setup across industries (Hutson & Hutson, 2022; Richard et al., 2021). Our review attempts to bridge this gap by outlining the objectives of immediate import while using extant literature to assess the extent of realization of those objectives. We also offer key integrative themes that can guide research and practical interventions in support of mitigating the outlined challenges. The dimensions that came across from the review are more psychosocial in nature, indicating thereby that their 'employment structure' doesn't only require strategy but also empathy. Empathy-driven strategies not only improve workplace inclusion but also result in measurable business benefits, including enhanced employee satisfaction and increased innovation (Ortiz, 2020; Pisano & Austin, 2016). Each sub-section in this section discusses distinct crucial aspects of neurodiversity and work organizations based on our analysis of the literature.

5.1. Neurodiversity, in contrast with other disabilities in the workplace

Both neurodivergent individuals and those with other disabilities (viz., difficulties in the usage of motor or cognitive capabilities) face similar challenges in integrating into the workforce, requiring organizations to provide support for their smooth inclusion. Negative attitudes and stereotypes from colleagues and supervisors are common barriers that limit access to work experience and skill development for both groups (Härtel & Fujimoto, 2000; Lindsay, 2011; Mitra, 2006). Traditionally, arguments for including historically disadvantaged groups have revolved around both ethical principles of fairness and human rights, as well as the need to unlock individual potential for all (Mitra, 2006; Neesham et al., 2010). From the perspective of employment and its necessity for survival within the society or its satisfaction of social needs, it is imperative to consider that employment should not devolve into a mechanism to drive the industrial "machine" (Raymaker et al., 2023) but rather as a means toward greater equitability and self-

realization. The nature of the challenges faced by neurodivergent individuals and those with other disabilities necessitates the adoption of the latter view in modern society. However, recent discussions on neurodiversity employment increasingly emphasize the potential for improved competitiveness within companies (Austin & Pisano, 2017). Major corporations with neurodiversity programs often cite business benefits as their primary motivation, and the business case for neurodiversity applies to broader disability employment as well (Kulkarni & Lengnick-Hall, 2014; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2008). Organizations that effectively integrate neurodiversity initiatives have also observed significant gains in reputation and employer branding, creating a ripple effect that attracts top talent and builds customer trust (Ortiz, 2020; Pisano & Austin, 2016). Some organizations have reported improved public relations and marketing benefits associated with being seen as socially responsible (Pisano & Austin, 2018).

5.2. Neurodiversity and enhanced workplace productivity

Neurodivergence can easily be clubbed with other forms of diversity in the organization, resulting in organizations seeking to include working arrangements for neurodivergent individuals with other DEI initiatives. However, such a coarse classification would prevent recognition of neurodiversity as naturally occurring differences that can be leveraged positively. In fact, both can be better subsumed under an umbrella of a "sense of identity" that is more inclusive and holistic rather than exclusionary or divisive while precluding any assumptions that one is better than the other. Further, business benefits associated with neurodivergent conditions are intricately linked to the unique abilities of ADHDers and dyslexics, including precision in executing exacting and repetitive tasks, keen observation and recall of detail, and pattern recognition (Austin & Busquets, 2008; Boucher, 2009). These attributes enable them to contribute value in areas where patience and similar skills are essential. For example, neurodivergent employees at SAP have demonstrated exceptional talents in data analytics and cybersecurity, addressing critical talent shortages and exceeding performance expectations in key business areas (Pisano & Austin, 2016). The ability of neurodivergent individuals to singularly focus on tasks has been observed to yield substantial productivity benefits in specific contexts (e.g., Austin, 2018). Moreover, the discomfort experienced by some neurodivergent individuals when confronted with disorder or illogical business systems has been strategically leveraged to initiate process improvement efforts (Austin, 2018). For instance, managers at SAP highlight the positive impact on the company's talent scarcity issues in key areas, such as cybersecurity and business analytics, coinciding with the talents possessed by some neurodivergent individuals. They also report access to significantly higher levels of talent than initially anticipated, with some neurodivergent employees exceeding performance expectations (Pisano & Austin, 2016). Other subtle and intriguing business benefits include claims by managers that participation in neurodiversity employment programs enhances their managerial skills (Austin & Pisano, 2017). Moreover, the inclusivity of neurodiversity initiatives has been associated with increased innovation, as diverse cognitive approaches foster creative problem-solving and novel solutions to complex challenges (Ortiz, 2020).

An additional perspective regarding productivity as emergent from this review is that of the fear, stigma, and disgust experienced by neurodivergent individuals. These issues can be addressed using the double empathy perspective (Milton, 2012; Milton et al., 2022). The drivers of productivity or the results thereof are indicative of the workplace experiences of the neurodivergent individuals as reflected in their experience of fear or other adverse emotions and in the ecosystem of challenges vis-à-vis their work and status. Thus, the organization's point of view regarding the productivity of neurodivergent individuals can be complemented by accounting for the latter's perceptions using double-empathy considerations.

5.3. Effective integration of neurodivergent individuals within the workplace

Managing neurodivergent employees (or any employee, for that matter) requires managers to adapt specific approaches, creating personalized work arrangements that leverage each individual's strengths (Austin & Pisano, 2017). This focus on individualization, initially implemented for some neurodivergent employees, can yield meta-level benefits. For example, more transparent communication and documented processes can improve understanding and efficiency for all stakeholders (Austin & Pisano, 2017). Evidence suggests that personalized accommodations, such as flexible work schedules or sensory-friendly environments, enhance not only the performance of neurodivergent employees but also overall team collaboration and productivity (Doyle, 2020). Some companies even report overall productivity gains when adopting these practices. While the long-term effects of neurodiversity inclusion are still under investigation, early evidence suggests benefits beyond social good. Companies embracing neurodiversity claim increased innovation due to diverse perspectives and problem-solving approaches. These innovation propensities align with research showcasing the success of "marginal"-ized individuals in tackling complex problems (Jeppesen & Lakhani, 2010). Additionally, managers report skill development and improved empathy when engaging with neurodivergent employees, contributing to stronger leadership and team dynamics (Ortiz, 2020).

Overall, although more research is needed, the potential benefits of integrating neurodiversity in the workplace are evident. Further developments hold promise for fostering a future-ready workforce equipped with diverse abilities and perspectives, creating value through both individual and organizational growth.

5.4. Managers and neurodivergent individuals in the workplace

Acknowledging and making diversity work to benefit the organization is managers' responsibility in the long- and short term. In the operational context, although extant studies extensively explore and explicate the needs and experiences of neurodivergent job seekers (Szulc, 2022), a critical gap exists in understanding the managerial challenges of integrating them into the workforce. While acknowledging the complexities faced by managers, mirroring those of neurodivergent employees themselves, the literature remains largely silent on these crucial managerial perspectives. As scholars like Tomczak and Ziemiański (2023) and Whelpley and May (2023) emphasize, forging connections between training & development and other HRM practices becomes imperative for fostering inclusivity. Beyond mere acknowledgments of behavioural factors and attendant difficulties (Krempley & Schmidt, 2021; Tomczak et al., 2021), this connection's underlying assumptions remain unclear. This disconnect creates a metaphorical research barrier, where the inclusion movement stands distinct from the managerial perspective burdened by practical constraints on productivity. While commendable progress has been made to overcome this lacuna, the managerial responses to and acknowledgment of neurodiversity in the workplace remain inadequately explored, with limited studies addressing this critical aspect. Thus, further research is warranted to comprehensively understand and address the challenges faced by managers in facilitating the inclusion of neurodivergent individuals.

5.5. Formation and sustenance of an inclusive culture through conceptualization of neurodiversity

Forming and sustaining an inclusive culture within organizations are crucial for employment inclusivity. As Seitz and Smith (2016) discussed, facilitation involves creating an environment that actively manages differences and promotes collaboration. Political and attitudinal factors in the workplace, as explored by Runswick-Cole (2014), significantly influence the success of neurodiversity programs. An inclusive

workplace culture, though difficult to implement or design directly, could be a critical contributor to the success of DEI initiatives. With the dimension of sustained 'employment barriers' for neurodivergent individuals, our analysis underscores a significant concentration of scholarly attention on autism within extant literature, with notable exceptions identified in specific studies (Curnow et al., 2023; de Beer et al., 2022; Mellifont, 2022). This pronounced focus raises critical questions relating to the broader neurodivergent spectrum and assesses whether the prevalence of autism research could be attributed to factors such as non-detection or societal reluctance to disclose neurodiversity. Recognizing neurodiversity as a multifaceted concept beyond the confines of one or two conditions is essential to inclusivity. Regrettably, other neurodivergent conditions have not received commensurate scholarly attention, highlighting a crucial gap in understanding the nuanced challenges faced by individuals across diverse neurodivergent categories. As such, we have attempted to translate our understanding from the skewed perspectives sourced from the literature to the varied neurodiversity at the workplace through the usage of standard models. Moreover, the literature underscores the existence of myriad loopholes and problems within legislations, policies, and norms governing neurodiversity employment, necessitating a more nuanced examination of these issues. The lacunae of research in the non-Western or Indian context, coupled with the conspicuous absence of oriental literature and case studies exploring various types of neurodiversity, further accentuates the need for a more comprehensive and globally inclusive exploration of neurodiversity-related employment challenges.

5.6. Toward an inclusive future (in theory and practice)

As the field of neurodiversity in employment expands, exploring diverse areas like burnout in autistic individuals (Tomczak & Kulikowski, 2024) and technology-enabled entrepreneurship opportunities for neurodivergent populations (Stenn et al., 2023), a critical need emerges also to develop frameworks for practical interventions that focus on fostering a culture of inclusivity and respect while aligning organizational goals with the well-being of neurodivergent employees (Ortiz, 2020). We lack theoretical and universally applicable studies that solidify our understanding of neurodiversity integration in the modern workplace. This gap hinders the development of evidence-based interventions and inclusive practices. The studies by Hutson and Hutson (2022) and Rao and Polepeddi (2019) showcase the strong connection between reasonable accommodation employment initiatives for neurodivergent individuals and HRM practices. This connection underscores the crucial need for developing inclusive HRM strategies that recognize the diverse roles neurodivergent individuals can play in the workforce. Addressing this gap in theoretical and universally applicable research is crucial for building a future-proof approach to neurodiversity in employment settings. It will enable the development of evidence-based interventions, inform the design of inclusive HRM strategies, and ultimately lead to the creation of work environments that unlock the full potential of all individuals, regardless of their neurological markup.

Additionally, integrating neurodiversity effectively with modern workplace constraints requires thoughtful job design, as Rao and Polepeddi (2019) highlighted, creating an environment that leverages the unique strengths of neurodivergent individuals while also addressing potential challenges. We must also acknowledge the ethical implications, such as the need for data privacy, considering informed consent as the most crucial element to help them take responsibility for the shared data and create a safe environment. One also needs to consider the potential biases that could come into the picture with the diverse experiences of the recruiters, supervisors, peers, and the neurodivergent individuals themselves due to a lack of awareness or relevant information. Hence, the need to constantly have proper KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices) training within HRM practices becomes mandatory, especially while focusing on the different cultural contexts that may co-exist within the organization.

Furthermore, the long-term integration of neurodivergent employees requires the involvement of all stakeholders, from leadership to peers, in fostering a genuinely inclusive environment. Promoting awareness campaigns and skill-building workshops is critical to dismantling stigma and creating neurodiverse-friendly workplaces (Doyle, 2020; Hutson & Hutson, 2023). The dual vulnerability model is especially suited to the explication of the nature of impediments faced by neurodivergent employees at the workplace with the recent politically motivated and destabilizing attacks on DEI environments emanating from advanced economies such as the United States of America, whence volatility in the social conditions exacerbate their difficulties faced on account of neurodivergent conditions in navigating the landscape of the modern workplace.

6. Future directions for research and practice

Our study underscores critical gaps in knowledge regarding neurodiversity within the workplace. A key area for future research lies in deconstructing the complex factors that contribute to the disadvantages faced by neurodivergent employees (Dwyer, 2022). Deeper examinations should consider not only workplace systems and structures but also the potential role of implicit biases and social stigma. Understanding these challenges will, in turn, illuminate the specific benefits their inclusion brings to organizations, highlighting the unique contributions neurodivergent talent can offer. Our results provide valuable signposts in these directions. Developing evidence-based frameworks for neurodiversity talent management emerges as another crucial area of inquiry. While organizations express a desire to hire neurodivergent individuals (Krzeminska et al., 2019), they often lack the tools and strategies needed for effective recruitment, development, and retention (Szulc, 2022). Research-based frameworks would provide a roadmap for organizations, ensuring sustainable and fulfilling employment for neurodivergent individuals.

The actual progressive design of modern workplaces and related procedures in the near future falls outside the purview of our study, wherein we only seek to locate the lacune in HRM practices and their view from the perspective of neurodivergent individuals. Some of these design processes can guide future research in the area. As such, the actual detection of neurodiversity or the development of ways to identify them as per the accentuation or detriment of physical capabilities is something future research can focus on. Also interesting would be insights into co-occurrences of multiple diagnoses within the same individual and their impact on workplace outcomes. The needs and diverse experiences of neurodivergent individuals in different workplace settings (e.g., virtual environments) need to be explored to reduce the stigma and build inclusivity in workplace structures. The organic inculcation of these experiences shall also ideally come with the provision of skills to scaffold the knowledge, attitudes, and practices among the managers that can be further built upon. The eventual expected result is effective organizational support toward neurodivergent employees similar to others, ultimately enhancing productivity.

Future research should prioritize developing sustainable and inclusive workplace practices encompassing the full spectrum of neurodiversity. This includes generating concrete, actionable recommendations for organizations and reasonable accommodation employment models for successful integration. Additionally, disseminating research findings in accessible formats to practitioners is crucial for improved understanding and dismantling the misconception of neurodiversity as a disability. Finally, examining the intersectionality of neurodiversity with factors like gender, race, and other sociopsychological aspects within DEI efforts is essential. This intersectionality, if formalized, is likely to prevent tokenism and foster truly inclusive practices.

We can also focus on impactful and scientific interventions to make neurodiversity a norm rather than an exception in modern organizations with a suitable theoretical foundation. Hence, considering our findings

and understanding from the review, we *propose the* following intervention structure for overhauling HRM systems [Fig. 3]. The model uses three existing and established theoretical structures to bridge the gap between our findings and actual practice orientation. The models can be considered collectivistic in their orientation, as explained. The biopsychosocial model stresses the interplay between biological, psychological, and social factors for people and collectives within the organization. Therefore, workplace experiences are shaped by both individual traits and external environments. The social model of disability shifts the focus from individual impairments to the structural and attitudinal barriers that create adverse conditions. The conservation of

resources model explains how stress arises when individuals perceive a loss of personal, social, or environmental resources. Applying these models to neurodiversity underscores the need for HR professionals to consider not only neurological differences but also to redesign work environments, policies, and communication styles to be more accommodating, fostering a culture of inclusion that benefits all employees. Additionally, HRM strategies prioritizing resource-building—such as mentorship programs, workplace flexibility, and supportive leadership—can create environments where neurodiverse employees thrive.

With the biopsychosocial model as its basis, the structure attempts to focus on acknowledging the complex interplay of the biological, social,
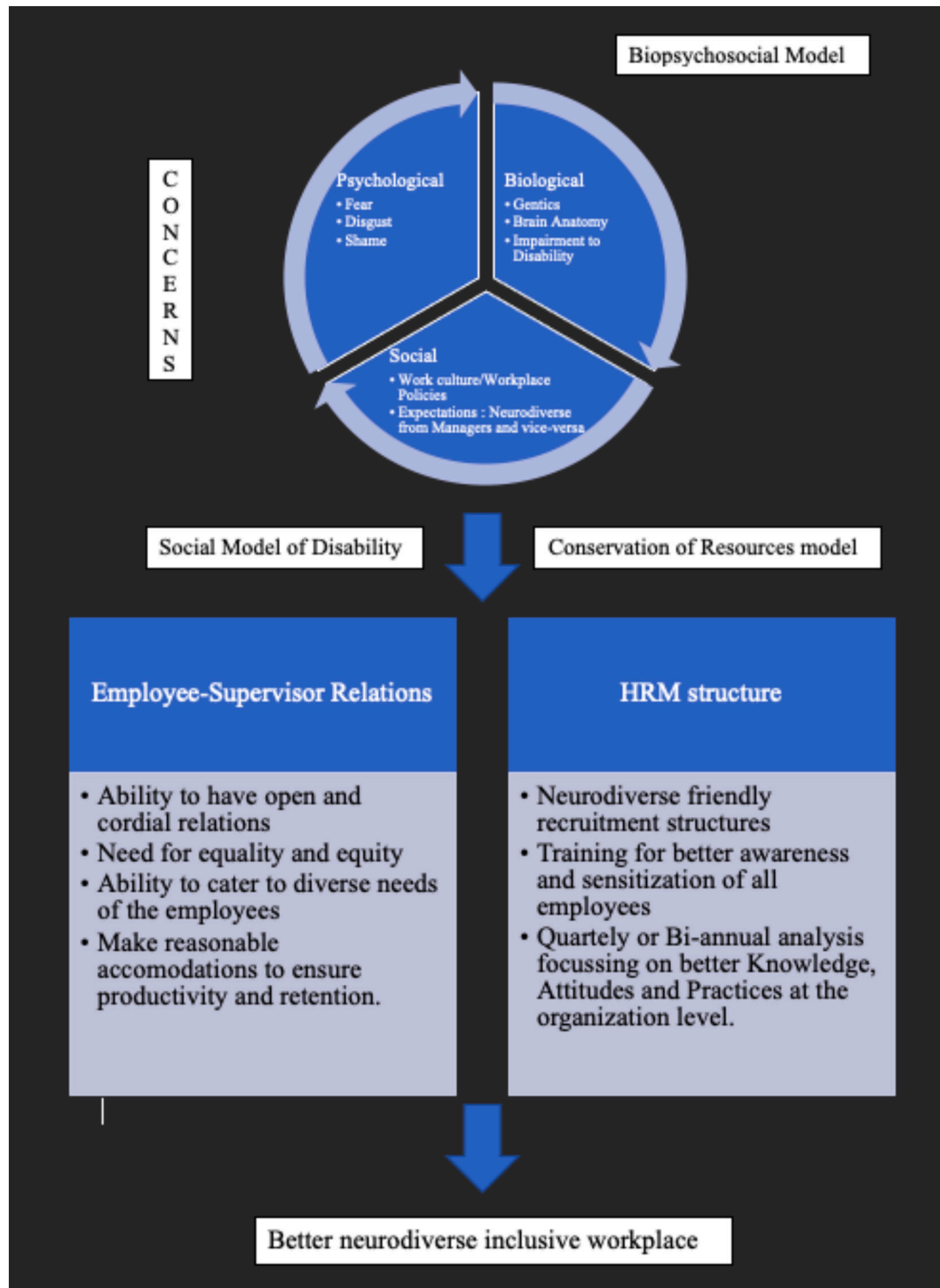

Fig. 3. Intervention structure.

and psychological elements that remain the predisposing concerns toward neurodiversity. We also propose using the social model of disability, a prominent model under which neurodiversity is studied globally by clinical professionals (Shakespeare, 2010), to enhance Employee-Supervisor Relations. Additionally, we suggest the usage of the Conservation of Resources model (Hobfoll et al., 2018) to focus on overhauling HRM practices. The two models together derive from fundamental theoretical conceptualizations of neurodiversity for more direct and observable workplace outcomes.

Conditions like ASD and ADHD, though coming under the continuum of neurodiversity conditions as per the literature, were usually attached to psychological adjectives of fear, shame, and guilt, thereby affecting the self-confidence and productivity of the employees in the workspaces (Thapar, 2018). At the same time, it is also important to note that no two neurodivergent people are the same, which is why we consider neurodiversity on a spectrum. Socially, there is a perceived concern regarding the work culture set to work smoothly for the "so-called normal" population. Additionally, as discussed in our results, there are expectations of the neurodivergent individuals from the system that are not understood, and also expectations of the managers from them that are not always understood. However, while critically examining the findings from the literature, we see that these individuals are proud to accept their labels. Hence, this paper also calls on neurotypical individuals at the workplace to examine their attitudes and behavior to establish a more inclusive and holistic environment.

By utilizing the social model of disability, we propose that successful and organic integration of the neurodivergent population could be achieved in modern organizations (Raymaker et al., 2023). Understanding the concerns, we move to provide interventions where we categorize them as needing to be two-fold. Interventions must be provided to ensure better employee-supervisor relations such that the bond, freedom of speech, and attrition are taken care of by building interpersonal skills between them. At the same time, the organization's HRM organ needs to conduct more extensive overall training and skill-building to ensure that attitudinal changes happen at the micro, *meso*, and macro levels. The conservation of social resources is particularly interesting to HRM practices in general (Hobfoll et al., 1990). The position and experience of neurodiverse individuals are, therefore, also relevant to their work and experiences in organizations, given the specifics brought forth by this review. Therefore, the derivation of future research agendas and interventions is possible from its usage as indicated by our framework.

However, addressing neurodiversity within organizational DEI frameworks, contemporarily, also requires an acknowledgment of the evolving and challenging global socio-political climate. Recent geopolitical developments have led companies to scale back on DEI efforts due to directives exerted by dominant political factions and select corporations, especially in North America (Murray, 2025), which has already started spreading to other continents. Despite this challenging context, the strategic importance of integrating neurodiverse talent within DEI frameworks remains advantageous. It is well evidenced by global corporations like SAP and Microsoft, which have significantly benefited from integrating neurodivergent employees (Microsoft, 2024; Pisano & Austin, 2016). SAP's "Autism at Work" initiative demonstrates the value neurodivergent individuals offer through enhanced performance and innovation at the workplace (Pisano & Austin, 2016). Similarly, Microsoft's Neurodiversity Hiring Program highlights effective recruitment strategies tailored to leverage neurodivergent strengths, improving organizational effectiveness and innovation potentiality (Microsoft, 2024). Moreover, organizational commitments to DEI and neurodiversity not only enhance organizational culture but also positively contribute toward employer branding, employee morale, and retention (Ortiz, 2020).

Future research should address systemic barriers and intersectional challenges faced by neurodivergent employees, emphasizing workplace biases, structures, socio-cultural contexts, and policy changes due to the evolving geopolitical environment. It is critical to create evidence-based frameworks for effective recruiting, accommodation, and retention that have measurable results, such as creativity and satisfaction. Expanding research to non-Western contexts will offer broader insights into inclusive practices. Utilizing assistive technologies and AI and engaging stakeholders through participatory research will further ensure inclusive practices driven by neurodivergent perspectives.

7. Limitations

While our review of peer-reviewed articles provides a strong foundation for understanding neurodiversity in workplaces, it is necessarily limited in scope. Focusing on academic sources may overlook valuable insights from news media, where neurodiversity issues are often discussed. Additionally, excluding dissertations omits potentially rich sources of novel findings and nuanced perspectives on the challenges faced by neurodivergent employees.

Moreover, the field of neurodiversity in employment is multifaceted, encompassing various disciplines such as psychological, social, business, legal, and sometimes even biological interpretations of the conditions in the spectrum. The review primarily draws from sources within the field of psychology and organizational behavior, potentially neglecting valuable insights from other disciplines. To address this limitation, future research endeavors should strive for a more interdisciplinary approach, synthesizing knowledge from different domains to foster a holistic understanding of neurodiversity and employment.

The authors would like to reiterate that this exercise was considered necessary by them as authors teaching clinical and organizational papers realized the need to improve the learning curve for themselves, such that they are able to cater to the needs of the students who themselves identify as neurodivergent and are training themselves to be company ready. At no point is the focus on stating that one is better than the other, but merely stating the need to understand and build an inclusive environment for all. Further, the authors have refrained from distinguishing among the conditions in the neurodiversity continuum beyond where necessitated by other places in the literature to keep the value of neurodiversity focused for modern workplaces.

8. Conclusion

In this paper, we have attempted to meet our objective of mapping the lacunae in the literature between the reality of neurodiversity at the workplace on the one hand and the development of HRM practices on the other. Neurodiversity acknowledges the natural variation in human brains, and the movement advocates for the inclusion of individuals with different neurological profiles. There's a growing shift toward recognizing the unique strengths of neurodivergent individuals, fostering a more inclusive workplace culture. However, this study highlights a significant challenge: limited understanding of neurodiversity among managers can hinder efforts to provide support on their behalf. The lack of research in this area emphasizes the need for interventions and a more structured HRM approach. The neurodiversity paradigm and existing theoretical models also offer some utility in this regard.

Moreover, in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ethical practices, research should focus on building inclusive, sustainable, and values-driven workplaces. Businesses should actively spread awareness about neurodiversity and design HRM practices that cater to the needs of both neurodivergent employees and their managers. Sensitization initiatives must extend across all organizational

levels (micro, *meso*, macro) and emphasize appreciation for the unique contributions of neurodivergent individuals. These steps will foster sustainable and meaningful employment for a more inclusive, future-proof workplace.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Vasundharaa S. Nair: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Sudipt Kumar:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Validation, Methodology, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Sushant Bhargava:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Project administration, Conceptualization.

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All the authors contributed equally to the development of the manuscript.

Data availability

No data was used for the research described in the article.

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