

# Call for Papers

for a Special Issue of the *International Journal of Management Reviews*

## Neurodiversity in Organisations: Taking Stock and Shaping Future Research

### Guest Editors

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### Introduction

Coined and defined by Australian sociologist Judy Singer in 1998, the term ‘neurodiversity’ – often described as an ‘invisible inequality’ – refers to the idea that neurological differences that are considered atypical are variations within the diversity of the human genome; thus, balancing the narrative with the positive aspects of differences rather than a sole focus on developmental or social ‘deficits’ (Doyle, McDowall, & Waseem, 2022; Krzeminska, Austin, Bruyère, & Hedley, 2019). With an estimated 15-20% of the population being neurodivergent (Doyle, 2020), neurodiversity covers a plethora of conditions that can vary in severity. The most common are: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (or ADHD), which manifests as inattention, distractibility and impulsivity; Autism Spectrum Disorder (or ASD), typically involving degrees of difficulty in communicating with others and sensory overload; Dyslexia, or difficulties with reading and spelling; Dyspraxia (or Developmental Coordination Disorder), which refers to challenges with coordinating physical movement including muscles for speaking; Dyscalculia, or challenges with numbers; and Tourette Syndrome, a condition which causes involuntary physical and vocal “tics” (Jaarsma & Welin, 2012; Loiacono & Ren, 2018).

The neurodiversity movement (Kapp, Gillespie-Lynch, Sherman, & Hutman, 2012) relies on a positive strengths-based approach grounded in three major principles. The first is that neurological deviations are specialist variations (Jaarsma & Welin, 2012), not illnesses, and form a part of a person’s (social) identity, consequently providing them with specific strengths (Baron-Cohen, 2017). For example, neurodivergent people may have an unwavering focus and pattern recognition capabilities, excellent analytical and problem-solving abilities, and superior memory and mathematical skills to name a few (Austin & Pisano, 2017); this makes them a valuable pool of talent for managers and a unique resource for organisations (Doyle & McDowall, 2021; Khan, Grabarski, Ali, & Buckmaster, 2022; Russo, Ott, & Moeller, 2022). The second is that since neurological differences are merely variations, neurodivergent and neurotypical individuals should be treated equally and equitably (Lorenz, Reznik, & Heinitz, 2017), especially in management and organisation

science (Bernick, 2022). Third, the recognition that discourse is important and hence more “ethical, non-stigmatising language and concepts for thinking about people who are different and/or who have disabilities” are needed (Baron-Cohen, 2017), given the performative nature of discourses and narratives on social and organisational inequalities and inequities (Dwertmann & Boehm, 2016).

Neurodivergent individuals remain disproportionately un- or under-employed (Hendricks, 2010; Roux, Shattuck, Rast, Rava, & Anderson, 2015; The National Autistic Society, 2021), often because of stigmatisation that influences perceptions of ‘fit’ by individuals within organisations (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010). This fact is complicated by the reality that little is known about why some neurodivergent individuals choose to disclose to their employers while others do not (von Schrader, Malzer, & Bruyère, 2014). Disclosure is needed as it enables employers to understand who may require support and adjustments (Sumner & Brown, 2015), because it may be difficult for employers to recognise who may need support. Providing accommodations enables organisations to leverage neurodivergent employees’ unique abilities to meaningfully, productively, and, in some cases, to disproportionately contribute to their organisations’ (Austin & Pisano, 2017) and the wider communities’ success. Furthermore, neurodivergence diagnoses and acceptance in westernised countries is often incongruent to the paradigms in other, non-western countries (Green, 2020). In South Korea, for example, autism is considered a ‘genetic taint’ diminishing an individual’s personal and professional prospects. As such, the roles of cultural interpretations and institutional logics are not well understood, yet their management at the organisational-level have implications on workforce and broader organisational performance (Ineland, 2020; Levine, 2020; Ott, Russo, & Moeller, 2022).

We have arrived at a critical juncture where the neurodiversity literature is unambiguously dispersed across multiple disciplines including sociology, psychology, management, organisation studies, psychiatry, neuroscience, higher education, disability, and others (Macdonald, Rutter, Howlin, Rios, Le Conteur, Evered, & Folstein, 1989; Singer, 1999; Sumner & Brown, 2015, Doyle & McDowall, 2021) displaying disparate momentum in each. Contributions in management and organisation science are only gradually emerging (Khan et al., 2022) and remain fragmented with most focusing on the autism spectrum dimension of neurodiversity (e.g., Loiacono & Ren, 2018 in *MIS Quarterly Executive*; Sumner & Brown, 2015 in the *Psychologist-Manager Journal*; Patton, 2019 in *Personnel Review*). This drastically limits contributions to neurodiversity research in the management and organisation domains. To move this conversation forward, however, we must have theoretical guidance and conceptual frameworks to follow. Thus, literature reviews, meta-analyses, and conceptual works provide unique opportunities to borrow and review knowledge from within the management and organisation science domains as well as other disciplines to assist with setting a future research agenda for meaningful neurodiversity research in management and within organisations (Doyle & McDowall, 2021).

### **Special Issue Main Themes**

As neurodiversity in organisations is still grossly under-researched (Hennekam, Volpone, & Pullen, 2022; Shore, Randel, Chung, Dean, Ehrhart, & Singh, 2011), we invite researchers and practitioners alike to cogitate the lived experiences of the neurodivergent and likewise the neurotypical in the presence of the neurodivergent. Thus, we speak to those who carry a sense of responsibility of devising a working environment that is considered a ‘safe space’ and enables neurodivergent employees to thrive and contribute to the bottom line of organisations (Ely & Thomas, 2020; Russo, Ott, & Moeller, forthcoming) and their

communities by making a significant and novel theoretical contribution (Breslin, Gatrell, & Bailey, 2020). We invite reviews of literature informed by other domains (e.g., stigmatisation, power relations, organisational climates, critical disabilities), disciplines (e.g., sociology, social psychology, neuroscience) and/or diversities/communities (e.g., the broader disability inclusion literature, LGBTQIA+, generations, minoritised groups) that can guide future research. Just as the Guest Editor team is neurodiverse (both neurodivergent and neurotypical), we encourage co-creation, co-production and contributions from neurodivergent and neurotypical scholars.

We seek submissions that include, but also go beyond, systematic reviews to provide conceptual or theoretical contributions and those that propose and discuss fresh, forward-thinking research opportunities to progress the existing literature. Such submissions might include critical reviews or meta-analyses that problematise theory as critical management discourse, apply or validate theory from other disciplines, or build new theory. Contributions should provide new understandings of neurodiversity within the context of organisations including by providing conceptual clarity and/or frameworks of its dimensions and nomological network. Additionally, providing theory-informed explanations of neurodiversity in organisations that synthesize and analyse current theoretical perspectives but also integrate and compare those of related topics is welcome. Contributions that significantly synthesize the current fragmentation across literatures and aim to establish impactful ways forward by changing readers' perspectives through innovative conceptual contributions will be particularly relevant (Alegre, Callahan, & Iszatt-White, 2023). Thus, we anticipate submissions that make a strong business case for neurodiversity in terms of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). We value varying methodological approaches (Fan, Breslin, Callahan, & Iszatt-White, 2022), cross-country collaborations, multi-level insights, and cross- or interdisciplinary perspectives.

Insightful, academically oriented submissions with solid conceptual grounding and actionable practical implications should look for, but are not limited to, addressing the following issues:

- Advancing our understanding of neurodiversity in the context of today's workplaces and organisations such as the consideration of neurodivergent talent.
- Understanding neurodiversity in the context of DEIB.
- Neurodiversity in a global context, including the role culture and institutional logics play in managing neurodiversity across industries, markets, and communities.
- Connections between neurodiversity, entrepreneurship, and innovation.
- Intersectionality of neurodiversity and other diversity dimensions such as race, ethnicity, or gender.
- Exclusion and exploitations of neurodivergent people, including stigmatisation and performativity.
- Opportunities and challenges of neurodiversity programmes, including disability accommodations for neurodivergent individuals as forms of intervention.
- Conceptual models and frameworks that outline how policy change progresses organisations' efforts from tokenistic inclusion to systematic inclusion and belonging.
- How organisations can operate around the need for disclosure.
- Neurodiversity and leadership, with a focus on both neurodivergent leaders (at all levels including middle and executive management as well as the board level) and the relationship between neurodivergent employees and leaders in the organisation.

- The development of theoretical framing, and the co-opting of existing theories in management and organisation science to explain neurodivergence and neuroinclusion at work, for example job crafting and the psychological contract.

### **Submission Process**

Authors can submit papers between **15<sup>th</sup> January – 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024** to *International Journal of Management Reviews* for review. Based on IJMR editorial policy, there will be no extensions for submission due date. Manuscripts should follow the Author Guidelines set out by the *International Journal of Management Reviews* available at:

[http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1468-2370/homepage/ForAuthors.html](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1468-2370/homepage/ForAuthors.html)

Additionally, see also the Editorials at the below site:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/14682370/homepage/editorials>

Manuscripts should be submitted online via <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ijmr> highlighting that you wish to be considered for the Special Issue 'Neurodiversity in Organisations: Taking Stock and Sharpening Future Research'.

All papers will be subject to the same double-blind peer review process as regular issues of *International Journal of Management Reviews*. If you have questions about a potential submission, please contact Dr Miriam Moeller via [m.moeller@uq.edu.au](mailto:m.moeller@uq.edu.au).

**Submission window: 15<sup>th</sup> January – 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

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