



Original Article (Qualitative)

Presenting a model for managing human resource diversity in the administrative environment of education in Guilan province

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to present a model for managing the neurodiversity of human resources in the administrative environment of the education and training department of Gilan Province. The research method is applicable in terms of its purpose, and qualitative in terms of its implementation method. The statistical population of the study includes 1- 28 senior managers and heads of the general administration; 2- heads and deputies of cities and regions; 3- heads and deputies of the exceptional administration; 4- school counselors and career counselors; 5- human resources managers and administrative affairs officials; and 6- administrative employees of the organization. The sampling was carried out in a purposeful and snowball manner. The data collection tool is a semi-structured interview. The data collection and analysis method was used to collect and analyze data. Data analysis and model design were carried out in three stages: open, axial, and selective coding. MAXQDA 2020 software was used to analyze the data. The results showed that 8 core codes and 33 indicators were identified from the analysis of the interviews. The findings of the study indicate that the existing recruitment processes in the above institution for individuals with ADHD face problems such as lack of sufficient awareness of the special needs of these individuals, lack of clear anti-discrimination policies, and design of unsupportive work environments. This study suggests that in order to improve the employment conditions of individuals with neurodiversity, this organization needs to review its recruitment processes and design flexible and supportive work environments.

Keywords:

Neurodiversity,
Disorder,
Organizational
Support,
Job Motivation,
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Extended abstract

Introduction

In addition to transferring values, ethics, knowledge, and skills, the Education and Training is responsible for the growth and excellence of human resources. This organization, like other organizational communities, usually regulates management and training planning based on the characteristics of normal human resources and organizes it in a way that is suitable for most employees. Meanwhile, some employees cannot properly benefit from the necessary facilities of normal human resources for various cognitive and behavioral reasons. As a result, these individuals face challenges in the workplace and various social and emotional consequences (Noruzifard & Zamani, 2016). Advances in psychology and management knowledge in recent decades and awareness of individual differences in the nervous system have shown that many of the challenges of individuals with neurodiversity behavior, which have a great impact on the organizational and social fate of employees, can be managed. Accordingly, employees with neurodiversity behavior need experiences in managing neurodiversity individuals to achieve social and organizational advancement capabilities (Coetzer, 2016; Robins, 2017). Neurodiversity is a biological fact, meaning that some people's brain functions are different from what society's standards consider normal. This term implies a difference that should be accepted, considered, and valued (Austin & Pisano, 2017). Office and educational environments provide opportunities for growth and excellence by providing these experiences. Neurodiversity is the individual differences of employees in benefiting from management experiences in organizational communities. Receiving correct information from the environment is a necessary condition for attention and appropriate behavior in the organizational environment. Employee progress depends on the proper functioning of the nervous system, which allows individuals to pay attention, integrate information in the brain, and achieve appropriate behavior while avoiding distracting factors. Accordingly, the present study seeks to answer this question: What is the model for managing human resource neurodiversity in the administrative environment of education in Gilan Province?

Theoretical framework

Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity refers to the concept that the cognitive characteristics of apparently impaired individuals are not necessarily deficiencies and should be recognized like any other human diversity and considered like normal behaviors. Autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit, and hyperactivity are considered to be among the most important categories of neurodiversity. This disorder is a subgroup of neurodevelopmental disorders that manifest with levels of inattention or hyperactivity and impulsivity in childhood and often persist throughout adolescence and adulthood (Bodrozic et al., 2018.)

Ndindeng (2024) examined the impact of inclusive neurodiversity policies on performance, employee retention, and organizational culture in the workplace. Significant improvements in employee performance, increased employee retention rates, and positive changes in organizational culture were found in workplaces with inclusive neurodiversity policies. Organizations can benefit from implementing inclusive neurodiversity policies through increased productivity, reduced turnover, and a more inclusive work environment.

Rollnik-Sadowska & Grabinska (2024) examined the management of neurodiversity in the workplace. The results indicate that neurodiversity individuals offer unique talents if appropriate management strategies are implemented. Research identified in the reviewed literature on managing neurodiversity in the workplace primarily focuses on four areas: the well-being of individuals with autism, inclusion strategies, employment challenges, and employment developments. The results indicated that more theories, methods, and context are



needed to support employees with neurodiversity. Future research should develop integrated solutions to increase employment rates and reduce job turnover by utilizing theories such as self-determination theory and globally designed synergistic supervision. Integrating neurodiversity into sustainable human resource management practices can increase innovation, employee satisfaction, and organizational reputation. Continuous policy improvement is critical to long-term success and inclusiveness.

Research Methodology

The research method is applicable in terms of its purpose, and qualitative in terms of its implementation method. The statistical population of the research includes: 1- 28 senior managers and heads of the general administration; 2- heads and deputies of cities and regions; 3- heads and deputies of the exceptional administration; 4- school counselors and career counselors; 5- human resources managers and administrative officials; and 6- administrative employees of the organization, and the sampling was carried out in a purposeful and snowball manner. The data collection tool is a semi-structured interview. The data-driven method was used to collect and analyze data. Data analysis and model design were carried out in three stages of open, axial, and selective coding.

Research findings

MAXQDA 2020 software was used to analyze data. The results showed that 8 core codes and 33 indicators were identified from the analysis of the interviews. The findings of the study indicate that the existing recruitment processes for individuals with ADHD in the above institution face problems such as lack of sufficient awareness about the special needs of these individuals, lack of clear anti-discrimination policies, and designing unsupportive work environments. This study suggests that in order to improve the employment conditions of individuals with neurodiversity, this organization needs to review its recruitment processes and design flexible and supportive work environments.

Conclusion

The present study was conducted with the aim of presenting a model for managing neurodiversity of human resources in the administrative environment of education and training in Gilan province. The results of this study are consistent with the results of Ndindeng (2024), Rollnik-Sadowska & Grabinska (2024), Hotte-Meunier et al. (2024), Hajkarimi et al. (2023), Song et al. (2021), Yu et al. (2021), Wismans et al (2020), and Nancy & Almuth McDowall (2020). Ndindeng (2024) showed significant improvements in employee performance, increased employee retention rates, and positive changes in organizational culture in workplaces with inclusive neurodiversity policies. Organizations can benefit from implementing inclusive neurodiversity policies through increased productivity, reduced turnover, and a more inclusive work environment.

Based on the results of the study, the following suggestion was made:

-By providing psychological services and specialized counseling, the organization can prevent the negative consequences of behavioral challenges of neurodiversity employees in their work lives. In this context, holding on-the-job training courses and workshops in line with the cognitive characteristics of these individuals can increase awareness, understanding, and interaction within the organization, and in this regard, align the organization with a diversity and inclusion policy in recruiting and retaining human resources.