

Strategies to Provide Organizational Support to Neurodivergent Employees on Work Teams

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Abstract

Ineffective strategies for supporting neurodivergent employees can lead to decreased productivity, talent loss, and stifled innovation, ultimately harming a company's operational efficiency. Industry training managers who struggle to improve productivity, retention, and innovation may find their businesses facing instability as a result. Grounded in attribution theory, the purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry research project was to identify and explore effective strategies used by industry training managers to support neurodivergent employees to increase productivity, talent retention, and innovation. The participants were nine industry training managers who had implemented supportive strategies. Data were collected through semistructured interviews, public websites, and public documents—both current and archival. Using thematic analysis, five themes were identified: 1) making reasonable accommodations, 2) acknowledging the individual's condition, 3) communicating and building rapport, 4) changing culture, and 5) measuring the effectiveness of the strategy. A key recommendation is for industry training managers to increase organizational performance through the creation of a safe work environment and support for the individuals on their respective teams. The implications for positive social change include the potential for industry training managers and organizations to implement the identified strategies, thereby expanding meaningful employment opportunities for neurodivergent individuals and strengthening local workforce inclusion.

Keywords

Neurodivergent, Neurodiversity, Neurodiverse, Neuroatypical, Industry Training Managers, Training Managers, Support, Organizational Support, Employees, Work Team, Workforce

1. Introduction

Some industry training managers do not know how to support neurodivergent employees on their work teams, resulting in loss of productivity, talent, and innovation. Employee engagement is a physical and psychological condition related to work cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally to achieve the goals of the organization (Satata, 2021). Neurodiversity is atypical neurological development resulting in a difference in how the brain works. A neurodivergent person's thinking is a biological variation, deserving both understanding and support (Hutson & Hutson, 2023). Industry training managers have difficulties tailoring employment programs to support the special needs of neurodivergent employees (Weber et al., 2024). Industry training managers do not know how to support neurodivergent employees, resulting in reduced productivity, innovation, and employee attrition. The Tolerance Test of Creative Thinking, used to measure employees' creativity, demonstrated that 30% of neurodivergent employees scored above the average cut, showing their potential in innovation and creativity (Hoogman et al., 2020). The findings of this project might help managers and organization leaders incorporate neurodivergent people into their workforce, thereby improving employee performance, engagement, and loyalty.

This study advances the literature on workplace neurodiversity and human resource development in three keyways. First, whereas prior research has primarily emphasized organizational policies, supervisors, or employee perspectives, this study foregrounds industry training managers as distinct organizational actors who translate inclusive intentions into day-to-day learning, performance, and evaluation practices. Second, by applying attribution theory as an interpretive framework, the study moves beyond descriptive accounts of workplace accommodations to explain how training managers' interpretations of performance challenges shape the design and implementation of support strategies for neurodivergent employees. Third, the findings offer a multi-level perspective linking individual accommodations, relational practices, and organizational culture to outcomes related to productivity, talent retention, and innovation. Together, these contributions extend existing empirical work by clarifying how attribution-informed managerial sensemaking operates as a practical mechanism for neuroinclusive workforce development.

Although prior research has examined workplace accommodations and inclusive practices for neurodivergent employees, much of this literature emphasizes organizational policies, employee experiences, or general managerial support, with limited attention to the role of industry training managers as key agents of implementation. This study extends existing scholarship by foregrounding training managers' perspectives and practices, highlighting how they interpret and respond to neurodivergent employees' performance through attributional processes. By applying attribution theory as an analytic lens, this research advances understanding of how managers' causal explanations, particularly related to locus of control, stability, and controllability, influence the design of accommodations,

communication practices, and cultural interventions.

Empirically, the study contributes qualitative evidence identifying five actionable strategies that training managers use to enhance productivity, retention, and innovation among neurodivergent employees. Unlike prior studies that focus primarily on individual accommodations or organizational programs, this research demonstrates how attribution-informed managerial interpretations operate across individual, team, and organizational levels. Collectively, these findings refine attribution theory within a workplace neurodiversity context and offer a practice-oriented framework that bridges theory and application in human resource development and organizational behavior.

2. Methods

The researchers conducted a qualitative pragmatic inquiry to identify and explore effective strategies used by some industry training managers to support neurodivergent employees on their work teams to increase productivity, talent retention, and innovation. The research approach focused on developing practical insights and strategies for industry training managers. The sampling method was purposeful sampling to select nine industry training managers with more than two years of experience and have implemented effective strategies to support neurodivergent employees. The researchers recruited participants through social media, professional connections and professional associations. The project reached data saturation after seven interviews, with two additional interviews for confirmation.

The primary data collection method was semistructured interviews, with secondary data supplementing findings from public documents, websites, and social media pages. The researchers audio-recorded all interviews. To ensure consistency and reduce bias, the researchers followed a standardized interview protocol. Member-checking sessions verified the interpretation accuracy of participant responses. The interview protocol was used to maintain consistency throughout the data collection process while allowing exploration of unique perspectives and experiences.

The researchers employed thematic analysis to provide the analytic lens for this study, as it supports the identification, examination, and reporting of patterns of meaning within qualitative datasets. The analysis involved translating and transcribing interviews, developing codes to categorize data, identifying recurring themes, interconnecting findings to identify sub-themes, and merging findings to eliminate redundancy. All data was organized in labeled and password-protected files, logs, interview translations and transcriptions to enhance tracking and quality interpretations. The thematic analysis correlated key themes with the conceptual framework and existing literature. The data analysis followed a systematic thematic analysis process. Initial coding was conducted inductively, allowing patterns and meanings to emerge directly from participants' accounts rather than being imposed a priori. Attribution theory was then used as a sensitizing framework during subsequent stages of analysis to interpret how training managers ex-

plained performance challenges and support decisions. The primary researcher conducted the initial coding across all transcripts, iteratively reviewing codes to identify similarities, differences, and recurring patterns. Related codes were clustered into broader categories, which were refined into higher-order themes through repeated comparison across interviews and data sources. This iterative process supported the development of a coherent thematic structure that remained grounded in the data while being theoretically informed.

The researchers employed member checking with participants, consistent interview protocols, and verification steps within translations and transcriptions to enhance transparency, accuracy and reliability. and verify that interpretations accurately represented their perspectives, thereby supporting dependability. Additionally, the researchers ensured validity and credibility through member checking and data triangulation, confirmability through probing questions and data saturation. These aspects reinforced the project's methodological rigor and dependability of findings.

The researchers' professional backgrounds in organizational training, workforce development, and management informed their interest in understanding how training managers support neurodivergent employees in applied workplace contexts. This familiarity with organizational settings provided insight into training practices while also necessitating reflexive awareness of potential assumptions regarding managerial effectiveness and inclusion. To mitigate bias, the researchers employed strategies such as member checking, systematic documentation of analytic decisions, and iterative engagement with the data to ensure that interpretations remained grounded in participants' accounts rather than preconceived expectations. These practices supported the credibility, transparency, and trustworthiness of the findings.

The researchers' professional experience in organizational training and workforce development shaped their interest in examining how training managers support neurodivergent employees in applied workplace settings. While this background provided contextual understanding of training practices, it also required ongoing reflexivity to avoid privileging managerial perspectives or normative assumptions about performance. To address potential bias, the researchers engaged in reflexive memoing, maintained an audit trail of analytic decisions, and used member checking to ensure that interpretations accurately reflected participants' intended meanings. These strategies enhanced the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the findings. Data triangulation across interviews, public documents, and organizational websites further strengthened the credibility of the findings by corroborating themes across multiple sources.

3. The Attribution Theory in Effective Strategies to Support Neurodivergent Employees

Weiner's (1972) attribution theory establishes how humans interpret and understand events and how these interpretations can affect how individuals think and

behave. According to this theory, we attribute our successes and failures to certain external factors like effort, luck, the difficulty of the work, and the abilities we have. We tend to ascribe causes to our actions and the way we react to a particular situation. Weiner believed that current actions and reactions to a particular event might determine how people will act on similar future related events (Weiner, 1972). Common-sense psychology theory proposed by Heider (1958), covariation theory proposed by Kelley (1967), and Weiner's attributional theory are attribution theories. This conceptual framework includes discussions of the tenets from the theories proposed by Heider and Kelley as contributors to Weiner's attribution theory.

Heider (1958) is the founder of the attribution theory. Heider based their theory on how humans show their need to make sense of the world around them and their environment in which they live to predict or control effects, events or problems. Heider's theory first tenet suggests that people make attributions dependent upon the internal or external causality, or both. The internal is related to the person's abilities and the external is related to the environment in which they live or their immediate surroundings (Heider, 1958). Using this first tenet, an industry training manager would try to understand a situation surrounding an employee based on internal and external factors of ability, motivation, and environment. His second tenet is attribution errors. These errors can be fundamental or actor-observer error. A fundamental error is when using internal versus external factors to explain how and why an individual acts a certain way. The actor-observer error is when the actor's actions are a result of external forces of the observer, or where the observer's actions are a result of internal factors of the actor (Hewett et al., 2018). The third tenet of Heider's theory is self-serving bias. This means that individuals tend to take personal responsibility for desired results and externalize responsibilities for no desired results (Larsen, 2021).

Kelley's (1967) argued how individuals determine what causes a person's behavior, events, or situations (see also Hewett et al., 2018). They introduced the use of a covariation principle to determine the cause of a person's actions based on previous behavior in similar situations. Kelley observed three aspects that influence how an observer assigns a person's behavior or reaction to internal or external forces. The first aspect is distinctiveness; this refers to the pattern of behavior in similar situations. The second is consensus, which occurs when various observers have the same opinion about a person's behavior, given that similar situations will be the same every time; the observers understand that the behavior is because of internal factors. The third and final aspect in Kelley's theory is consistency. It develops when a person acts, reacts or behaves in the same way to a situation every time; no matter the event or situation, the internal factor reacts regardless of the environmental factors acting upon them.

Weiner (1972) established that the achievement of motivation is directly proportional and dependent on the person's ability to learn, representing the value of their effort. His research demonstrated that a person's effort could develop along-

side and in accordance with achievement motivation. Weiner proposed a parallel relationship between achievement motivation and effort. The parallelism represents the interaction between the abilities and the intention of a person to do a certain activity.

Another concept discussed by [Weiner \(1972\)](#) is attributional conflict, which emerges when two or more entities have different positions about an event. They attributed this type of conflict to external or environmental factors that affect the achievement based on ability versus effort. Attributional conflict might be between a training manager and an employee, teacher, and learner. Another attributional conflict discussed in Weiner's theory is the personal behavior attributional conflict, which emerges when individuals perceive their actions, or lack of action affected by external or environmental factors instead of their characteristics. A final attributional conflict arises when the educator's observation differs from the participant's observations in terms of achievement.

Achievement motivation has two factors: "can" and "try". [Weiner \(1972\)](#) demonstrated that achievement motivation is proportional and dependent on a person's ability to learn impacted by effort. Weiner's research proved that effort develops and improves with achievement motivation. It is important for organizations, managers, supervisors, and trainers to decide if neurodivergent employees' performance is not as expected because of lack of desire (try) or inability (can). Leaders should know how to mitigate attributional conflict among neurodivergent employees effectively.

Attributional conflict might arise from experiences in the following areas: 1) successes and failures, 2) performance, 3) social expectations, 4) time on assignment, and 5) other environmental and personal aspects. Attributional conflict may also arise between learner (employee) and educator (supervisor or manager) ([Weiner, 1972](#)). Managers, supervisors, trainers, educators, and others in training areas must be aware of neurodivergent employees' expectancies at work. Settling expectations on neurodivergent employees might lead to the assumption that they lack abilities for the job.

An attributional conflict concerns observation conflict. Observations from the educator, trainer, manager or supervisor's perspective may differ from the participant's when making observations related to achievement. Trainers, supervisors, managers, educators, and others must not take false credit on an employees' achievement success or failure as their own success or failure ([Weiner, 1972](#)). The attribution process might explain the role of the factors "try" and "can" play in performance, development, and retention on neurodivergent employees. It is important to understand that an employee who spends more time than others on a particular task or job may not show a cause or relationship to ability, knowledge, success or failure, or motivation.

Recent empirical studies underscore the critical need for organizational leaders to address employment disparities affecting neurodivergent employees. [Branicki et al. \(2024\)](#) examined employment data from more than 25,000 individuals in the United Kingdom and found that neurodivergent employees were significantly

more likely to experience underemployment, precarious work, and shorter job tenure compared to neurotypical peers. Branicki et al.'s (2024) study further revealed that flexible working arrangements and remote work practices helped mitigate these disparities by improving job stability and retention. Similarly, Khan et al. (2023) demonstrated that organizations implementing neurodiversity-affirming practices, such as redesigned recruitment processes, strength-based role allocation, and equitable supervision, reported notable improvements in both employee retention and productivity. Together, these findings suggest that workplace inequities are not inevitable but can be effectively reduced through strategic, inclusive management practices. By adopting policies that recognize individual strengths and promote flexibility, organizations can create environments where neurodivergent employees are empowered to sustain meaningful and productive careers, reinforcing the broader importance of neuroinclusive strategies for organizational success and social sustainability.

In the present study, attribution theory is applied through three central dimensions: locus of causality (internal versus external explanations for performance), stability (whether causes are viewed as fixed or changeable), and controllability (the extent to which causes are perceived as modifiable through managerial or organizational action). These dimensions informed the analytic process by illuminating how training managers made sense of neurodivergent employees' work-related challenges and determined appropriate responses. Specifically, managers' tendencies to attribute performance difficulties to external, unstable, and controllable factors, such as task design, communication practices, or workplace structures, were reflected in the types of accommodations, relational strategies, and cultural interventions they implemented. This focused application of attribution theory provides a coherent lens for interpreting the strategies identified in the findings and linking managerial sensemaking to organizational outcomes.

In this study, attribution theory is applied through three core dimensions: locus of causality, stability, and controllability. These dimensions guided how training managers' interpretations of neurodivergent employees' performance challenges were analyzed and understood. When managers attributed challenges to external causes, such as task design, communication structures, or organizational systems, rather than to internal employee limitations, they were more likely to implement inclusive and adaptive support strategies. Similarly, when performance challenges were viewed as unstable and changeable rather than fixed, managers emphasized learning, development, and environmental modification. Finally, perceptions of controllability shaped whether managers took active responsibility for implementing accommodations, adjusting training practices, and evaluating outcomes. Together, these attribution dimensions provided a focused theoretical lens for interpreting how managerial sensemaking influenced the strategies identified in the findings.

4. Professional Practice in Industry Training Management

Guided by attribution theory, the analysis examined how training managers' in-

terpretations of performance challenges, particularly regarding locus of causality, stability, and controllability, informed the strategies they used to support neurodivergent employees. The purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry was to identify and explore effective strategies used by some industry training managers to support neurodivergent employees to increase productivity, talent retention, and innovation. Thematic analysis of data collected from nine participants revealed five major themes: 1) make reasonable accommodations, 2) acknowledge the individual's condition, 3) communicate and build rapport, 4) change culture, and 5) measure effectiveness of strategy.

The overarching question was: What effective strategies do some industry training managers use to support neurodivergent employees to increase productivity, talent retention and innovation? Sources of data included semistructured interviews with nine participants and secondary corroborating evidence from websites available to the public and social media pages dedicated to support neurodivergent individuals. I transcribed data from interviewees using Microsoft Word and named them, according to the pseudonym I assigned to each participant. I used Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel to conduct manual data analysis. **Table 1** highlights the major emerging themes in answering the overarching question using the attribution theory. references made to each theme. Thus, industry training managers can rely on these insights to support neurodivergent employees to increase productivity, talent retention and innovation.

Table 1. Summary of themes.

Major theme	Summary
Make Reasonable Accommodations	
Acknowledge the Individual's Condition	
Communicate and Build Rapport	
Change Culture	
Measure Effectiveness of Strategy	

Attribution theory emphasizes that individuals' explanations for success or failure shape their motivation and workplace behavior, directly influencing organizational outcomes. [Lin \(2024\)](#) demonstrated that attributional processes affect employee engagement by determining whether employees perceive workplace conditions as fair and supportive. When managers attribute performance difficulties to controllable organizational factors, such as unclear task instructions or insufficient training resources, employees interpret feedback as fair and constructive. For instance, if a manager identifies that reduced task performance results from inadequate procedural guidance rather than a lack of ability, the employee perceives the challenge as solvable and responds with greater motivation and effort. This attributional shift from viewing performance challenges as internal and stable traits, such as low capability or motivation, to interpreting them as external and controllable factors, such as inadequate task structure, limited resources, or

unclear communication, strengthens perceptions of fairness and inclusion among neurodivergent employees because it acknowledges that success can be improved through organizational adjustments and supportive management practices. As a result, they experience higher job satisfaction, increased trust in management, and sustained commitment to organizational goals, reinforcing a culture that supports both equity and productivity.

Training managers can improve employee retention by applying attributional strategies that focus on effort, learning, and organizational support as the primary causes of performance outcomes. [Branicki et al. \(2024\)](#) found that adaptive workplace structures and flexible management approaches enhance retention by shaping how employees interpret success and challenges. When neurodivergent employees perceive that their performance depends on factors such as effective training, access to accommodations, and supportive leadership, they attribute outcomes to controllable and external conditions rather than to personal limitations. A managerial emphasis on environmental supports and opportunities for growth, fosters optimism and engagement. As a result, neurodivergent employees develop a stronger commitment and belonging, which reduces turnover and promotes organizational continuity. Attribution-informed practices, therefore, help organizations retain skilled employees while embedding inclusivity within their workforce development strategies.

Innovation outcomes also depend on how managers interpret and communicate the causes of employee performance, as supportive explanations promote confidence and openness to experimentation. [Lauder et al. \(2022a\)](#) found that coaching and targeted interventions enhanced self-efficacy among neurodivergent employees, which in turn increased their engagement in creative tasks. When managers reframe performance challenges as opportunities for skill development and contextual learning rather than as indicators of fixed ability, employees experience a constructive change in causal perspective. These reframing nurtures resilience and creative confidence, encouraging behaviors such as proactive problem solving, idea generation, and cross-team collaboration. The resulting innovation not only strengthens organizational adaptability and competitiveness but also demonstrates how attribution-informed management practices can simultaneously advance inclusion and performance excellence.

Thematic analysis of data collected from nine participants revealed five central themes: making reasonable accommodations, acknowledging the individual's condition, communicating and building rapport, changing culture, and measuring the effectiveness of strategy. These themes align with [Weiner's \(1972\)](#) attribution theory, which explains how managerial interpretations of performance outcomes influence employee attitudes and behaviors.

In making reasonable accommodations, managers attributed performance challenges to external and modifiable factors, reflecting locus of control and stability dimensions, which led to equitable workplace adjustments that improved retention and engagement. [Bury et al. \(2024\)](#) found that organizations that imple-

mented accommodations tailored to neurodivergent employees' needs enhanced both employee morale and sustained performance outcomes. Romualdez et al. (2021) similarly reported that providing structured workplace accommodations and support improved engagement and persistence among employees with autism. These findings indicate that when challenges are framed as situational rather than inherent, employees respond with greater motivation, demonstrating the practical value of attribution-informed strategies. Consequently, managers who implement external, controllable interventions foster inclusive workplaces that reinforce retention, engagement, and organizational effectiveness. One participant, PA, noted that "the supervisor identifies if his employees have areas of opportunity that can be address by making reasonable accommodations for them. A reasonable accommodation might be breaking a task into 10 steps and identify which ones that person can do." PC stated, "Some individuals may struggle in some areas and other individuals may struggle in other areas. We need to modify and take care of that area that individual is struggling in." PD expressed,

Ninety percent of accommodations are free, and they can be implemented by one person. A reasonable adjustments or accommodations is done through the individual person and how they respond to and work with different people. I think that's kind of a very important point too, because people just have these assumed barriers, which is why sometimes it's their excuse to not even start.

PE mentioned, "I believe the key is creating an environment where people feel value and heard. I maintain open communication to make reasonable accommodations that the company allows." PF conveyed, "If the employee has an issue, we first ask how they feel about that task or area, then we look into reasonable accommodations or task adjustments to make it easier for them." This theme and the collected data reflects training managers' tendency to attribute performance challenges to external and controllable factors, such as task structure and environmental conditions, rather than to fixed individual limitations.

Acknowledging the individual's condition corresponds to controllability, as recognizing neurodivergent employees' unique characteristics validates their lived experiences and enhances productivity. Szulc (2024) emphasized that positive relationships between neurodivergent employees and neurotypical leaders, grounded in understanding individual strengths and needs, contribute to higher job satisfaction and workplace inclusion. Zindell (2024) found that organizations that actively recognize neurodiverse identities and provide individualized support report improved psychological safety and employee commitment. A total of 56% of participants reported that acknowledging the individual's condition is crucial to support neurodivergent employees on their work teams to increase productivity, talent retention, and innovation. PB mentioned, "I believe this strategy acknowledging the individual's condition while integrating them fully into the teams helps both the employee and the team grow." PD conveyed, "I start all my sessions ac-

cepting that people in the room are different and have different ways of learning.” PE mentioned, “Is important to understand where someone’s tendencies lie, whether they are more directive, analytical, stable or sociable, and then tailor your approach.” This suggests that acknowledging employees’ distinct characteristics reduces frustration and promotes active participation, which aligns with attribution theory by framing performance outcomes as influenced by modifiable, external factors rather than fixed personal traits. Altogether, these studies reinforce that interpretation-based leadership strategies not only address performance barriers but also strengthen inclusion, engagement, and long-term organizational sustainability, highlighting the importance of attribution-informed managerial practices in optimizing outcomes for neurodivergent employees.

Communicating and building rapport reflected stable and internal attributions, as managers who prioritized trust, clarity, and consistent engagement fostered higher employee motivation and reduced turnover. [Nair et al. \(2025\)](#) and [Santuzzi et al. \(2022\)](#) demonstrated that leaders who maintain transparent communication, demonstrate empathy, and cultivate inclusive workplace cultures strengthen employees’ sense of belonging and commitment while lowering social barriers. A total of 78% of the participants reported they implemented a strong communication system to build rapport to support neurodivergent employees on their work teams to increase productivity, talent retention, and innovation. For example, PA mentioned that talking to the whole team to create a healthy work culture based on communication, clear instructions, and standardization leads to productivity and efficiency within the company. PB and PC explained that it is important to listen to what neurodivergent employees have to say and provide feedback in order to establish effective communication. This suggests that when employees perceive managerial behavior as supportive and reliable, they internalize positive attitudes, persist in their roles, and contribute to team cohesion, innovation, and overall performance. Changing culture represented locus of causality at the organizational level, illustrating that systemic interventions reduce stigma and enable neurodivergent employees to apply their skills creatively. Finally, measuring the effectiveness of strategy aligned with stability and controllability, as consistent evaluation reinforced accountability and demonstrated the benefits of inclusive practices over time. [Rollnik-Sadowska and Grabińska \(2024\)](#) noted that organizations conducting regular assessments of diversity initiatives sustain trust, innovation, and measurable performance improvements. Analysis of these findings shows that linking evaluation to outcomes strengthens managerial decision-making and signals to neurodivergent employees that their contributions are recognized and supported. On the whole, the evidence indicates that attribution-informed strategies allow managers to address performance challenges constructively, enhance retention, and embed inclusion and innovation into organizational systems, creating sustainable value for both employees and the business. This theme illustrates how stable yet positive internal attributions, such as trust, reliability, and mutual understanding, shaped ongoing communication and relationship-build-

ing practices.

Implementing targeted, evidence-based strategies to support neurodivergent employees can significantly enhance organizational productivity, innovation, and talent retention while establishing a model of professional practice for the broader business industry. Research underscores personalized work structures, such as the use of pictorial instructions, task segmentation, and structured checklists tailored to individual strengths, improve task accuracy, efficiency, and overall performance, especially for employees with autism and ADHD (Albright et al., 2020; Silver et al., 2023). Modular training programs that adapt to different learning styles, combined with strengths-based coaching and neuroinclusive practices, have been shown to increase engagement and autonomy among neurodivergent employees (Román-Urrestarazu et al., 2021; Vargas-Salas et al., 2025). Business leaders can further enhance outcomes by matching tasks to employees' unique abilities, environmental preferences, and sensory needs through job carving techniques and task rotation. These approaches not only create best-fit roles but also lead to reductions in turnover and improvements in employee well-being and organizational performance (Austin & Pisano, 2021; Doyle & McDowall, 2022). Changing organizational culture reflects a shift in locus of causality from the individual to the organization, emphasizing systemic responsibility for inclusion and performance. According to 33% of the participants, a change in the organizational culture is vital to support neurodivergent employees on their work teams to increase productivity, talent retention and innovation. PA explained that "if the organization has an old culture, you adapt to it, make friends with it, and then slowly start to implement your training, or work design strategy." PB mentioned that the integration of neurodivergent employees often depends on the organization's culture; some look at them strangely, and others are 100% supportive. These perceptions emphasize that transforming organizational culture creates an inclusive environment where neurodivergent employees can thrive, which in turn enhances overall team performance and innovation.

Equally critical to the successful implementation of these strategies is the cultivation of psychologically safe, structured, and stigma-free work environments where neurodivergent employees can thrive. A psychologically safe workplace provides predictable routines, low-pressure conditions, and an inclusive culture that fosters creativity and sustained performance (Botha & Frost, 2020; Romualdez et al., 2021). Inclusive communication practices, such as providing clear, consistent instructions, using multimodal formats, and actively listening, have been shown to support comprehension and task execution, whereas phased change models that involve neurodivergent employees in the design and rollout of workplace adaptations help reduce resistance and enhance acceptance across organizational levels (Lauder et al., 2022b; Vincent, 2019). When organizations integrate this communication and change management strategies, they not only strengthen employees' sense of belonging and self-efficacy but also create scalable models for sustainable inclusion that can be replicated in different sectors.

Finally, leveraging external support systems further strengthens workplace neu-

roinclusion initiatives. Collaboration with family members and specialized social workers provides critical insights into employees' abilities, sensory preferences, and personal support needs, enabling the development of tailored schedules, work tasks, and accommodations that enhance job retention and integration (Ghano-uni & Raphael, 2022). These collaborative approaches complement internal strategies by ensuring that workplace adaptations reflect the employee's broader support ecosystem. Collectively, the integration of personalized work structures, inclusive communication, psychological safety, and family and community involvement align with contemporary research advocating for individualized, strengths-based, and systemic approaches to neuroinclusion in the workplace. By embedding these practices into organizational policies and daily operations, businesses can unlock the unique potential of neurodivergent talent while setting a replicable standard for inclusive and innovative professional practice across industries (Vargas-Salas et al., 2025).

Theoretical Implications

This study extends attribution theory by demonstrating its relevance for understanding managerial support strategies within neurodiverse workplace contexts. The findings suggest that training managers' interpretations of performance challenges along the dimensions of locus of causality, stability, and controllability shape the types of accommodations, relational practices, and cultural interventions they implement. By showing how attribution-informed managerial sense-making operates across individual, relational, and organizational levels, this study refines attribution theory beyond individual cognition to include applied organizational decision-making. The framework developed in this study offers a foundation for future research to test attribution-based propositions quantitatively or longitudinally, such as examining whether managers who emphasize external, changeable, and controllable explanations for performance outcomes produce more sustainable inclusion, retention, and innovation over time.

Practical Implications

The findings offer actionable guidance for industry training managers and organizations seeking to enhance productivity, retention, and innovation through neuroinclusive practices. Training managers can apply attribution-informed strategies by designing learning environments that emphasize flexibility, clarity, and strengths-based development rather than deficit-oriented performance assessments. For example, organizations can implement manager training modules that focus on reframing performance challenges as opportunities for environmental adjustment, such as modifying task sequencing, providing multimodal instructional materials, or offering flexible timelines. Additionally, organizations can incorporate regular evaluation metrics—such as employee feedback, retention trends, and performance indicators—to assess the effectiveness of support strategies and make iterative improvements. These practices enable organizations to embed inclusion into daily operations while aligning neurodivergent support strategies with broader workforce development and performance goals.

5. Social Change in the Business Community

Supporting neurodivergent employees through individualized development plans and inclusive task design enhances their confidence, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. [De Clercq et al. \(2018\)](#) found that employees whose unique skills and preferences were acknowledged experienced higher self-efficacy and motivation, which contributed to improved performance. Valuing employees' individual attributes and preferences has a positive impact on their confidence, drive, and ultimately, their work performance. [Botha and Frost \(2020\)](#) also showed that inclusive environments that reduce workplace anxiety and burnout promoted mental health stability and long-term retention. These findings indicate that when workplaces implement structured support and recognize individual needs, neurodivergent employees are better able to engage, persist, and perform effectively. Therefore, individualized workplace strategies not only foster personal growth but also create the foundation for sustainable organizational success.

Inclusive practices at the community level enhance team collaboration, communication, and empathy by exposing employees to diverse cognitive approaches. [Santuzzi et al. \(2022\)](#) found that organizations that invested in retaining neurodivergent talent reduced local underemployment and strengthened economic resilience. These results suggest that inclusion at the community level not only improves team functioning but also generates broader social and economic benefits. Consequently, by fostering collaborative environments, organizations can promote sustainable change that extends beyond individual employees to the wider workforce and community.

At the societal level, embracing neurodiversity promotes a shift from deficit-based to strengths-based frameworks, influencing policy and cultural norms. [Thomas et al. \(2023\)](#) demonstrated that inclusive workplace systems enhance productivity and innovation by unlocking the potential of historically marginalized groups. This evidence highlights that systemic adoption of neuroinclusive practices generates benefits that transcend individual and organizational outcomes. As a result, fostering workplace inclusion contributes to societal equity, economic participation, and sustainable growth, reinforcing the importance of embedding neurodiversity at all levels of employment and policy-making.

6. Directions for Future Research

Future research can extend the attribution-based framework developed in this study by examining how training managers' causal interpretations of neurodivergent employees' performance influence outcomes over time and across organizational contexts. Longitudinal research designs would be particularly valuable for assessing whether managerial attributions emphasizing external, changeable, and controllable factors lead to sustained improvements in productivity, retention, innovation, and employee well-being. Such studies could also explore how attribution patterns evolve as managers gain experience working with neurodivergent employees and as organizational cultures become more inclusive.

To strengthen the empirical generalizability of the framework, future studies may employ mixed-methods or quantitative approaches to test relationships suggested by the findings. For example, survey-based research could examine whether training managers who attribute performance challenges to organizational conditions rather than fixed individual traits are more likely to implement adaptive training strategies and report higher team-level performance outcomes. Experimental or quasi-experimental designs could further test how attribution-focused manager training influences decision-making, feedback practices, and accommodation effectiveness.

Future research should also incorporate multiple stakeholder perspectives to enrich the attributional framework. Including neurodivergent employees, coworkers, human resource professionals, and senior leaders would enable researchers to examine alignment or misalignment in attribution processes across organizational levels. Such multi-perspective designs could clarify how attribution-related interpretations are communicated, negotiated, and reinforced within teams and how these processes affect psychological safety, engagement, and trust.

Cross-industry and cross-cultural studies represent another important direction for extending the framework. Attribution processes are shaped by cultural norms, legal contexts, and institutional expectations; therefore, examining how attribution-informed support strategies operate in different industries or national settings could reveal contextual boundary conditions. Comparative studies may identify whether certain attribution patterns are more effective in specific organizational environments or cultural contexts.

Finally, future research could integrate attribution theory with complementary frameworks, such as social cognitive theory or institutional theory, to examine how individual managerial sensemaking interacts with organizational norms and external pressures. Integrating these perspectives would allow scholars to explore how attribution-informed practices become embedded within organizational systems and sustained over time, thereby advancing both theory and practice in neuroinclusive workforce development.

7. Conclusion

This body of research demonstrates that supporting neurodivergent employees through attribution-informed managerial practices, individualized development plans, and inclusive workplace structures generates positive outcomes at multiple levels. At the individual level, recognizing employees' unique strengths, providing tailored accommodations, and fostering self-efficacy and motivation improve job satisfaction, mental health, and long-term retention. Attribution theory underscores that when managers frame performance challenges as controllable and situational, rather than inherent traits, neurodivergent employees respond with greater engagement, persistence, and productivity.

At the organizational and community levels, inclusive practices enhance team collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving while reducing underemployment

and turnover. Evidence indicates that workplaces investing in neurodivergent talent contribute to stronger team cohesion, more equitable employment opportunities, and local economic resilience. Furthermore, successful inclusion strategies serve as models for other organizations, promoting broader cultural shifts toward neurodiversity-affirming practices.

At the societal level, adopting neurodiversity-inclusive frameworks aligns with global initiatives promoting equity and social inclusion. Organizations that implement systemic supports for neurodivergent employees not only enhance national productivity and innovation but also influence policy, cultural norms, and industry standards. In aggregate, these findings demonstrate that workplace inclusion extends far beyond immediate performance outcomes, fostering sustainable growth, social equity, and economic participation at multiple levels.

Future researchers should expand longitudinally to examine the long-term effects of neuroinclusive strategies on performance, retention, and well-being, while exploring the influence of managerial attitudes, cultural norms, and policy frameworks. Utilizing diverse theoretical lenses, such as SCT, TPB, and institutional theory, can deepen understanding of how organizational and societal factors shape inclusive practices. By integrating empirical evidence with strategic interventions, organizations can not only optimize outcomes for neurodivergent employees but also create lasting value for teams, communities, and society.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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