The Role of HR in Supporting Neurodiverse Educators: Policies for Inclusion and Success in Schools

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Abstract: Neurodiversity has garnered increasing attention in workplace inclusion efforts, yet its implications in educational institutions remain underexplored. This study investigates the role of human resource (HR) practices in supporting neurodiverse educators by developing inclusive policies that foster equity and professional growth. Using a Delphi method, 20 experts, including HR professionals, educational administrators, and neurodiverse educators, participated in iterative rounds of surveys to identify challenges, effective strategies, and policy recommendations. Thematic analysis of Round 1 data revealed key challenges such as workplace stigma, insufficient accommodation, and limited professional development opportunities. In subsequent rounds, participants reached consensus on critical strategies, including neurodiversity awareness training programs, flexible work policies, and comprehensive mental health support systems. The findings underscore the importance of tailored HR initiatives and collaborative efforts between HR practitioners and school leaders to create inclusive educational environments. Practical recommendations include implementing individualized accommodation, interactive training sessions, and robust wellness programs. While the study focuses on a single cultural context, its insights provide a foundation for future cross-cultural research and the integration of technological solutions to enhance inclusivity. This research contributes to the broader discourse on diversity and inclusion in education, offering actionable strategies to support neurodiverse educators.

Keywords: Neurodiversity, Human Resource Management, Inclusion, Educators, Delphi Method
Jel Codes: I21, J53, M12, M54

İK'nin Nöroçeşitli Eğitimcileri Desteklemedeki Rolü: Okullarda Kapsayıcılık ve Başarı için Politikalar

Öz: Nöroçeşitlilik, iş yerlerinde kapsayıcılığı artırmaya yönelik çabalarda giderek daha fazla ilgi görmektedir; ancak eğitim kurumlarındaki yansımaları hâlâ yeterince araştırılmamıştır. Bu çalışma, insan kaynakları (İK) uygulamalarının nöroçeşitli eğitimcileri destekleme rolünü inceleyerek, eşitlik ve mesleki gelişimi teşvik eden kapsayıcı politikaların geliştirilmesini amaçlamaktadır. Delphi yöntemi kullanılarak, İK uzmanları, eğitim yöneticileri ve nöroçeşitli eğitimcilerden oluşan 20 uzman, zorlukların, etkili stratejilerin ve politika önerilerinin belirlenmesine yönelik anket turlarına katılmıştır. Birinci tur verilerinin tematik analizi; iş yerinde damgalanma, yetersiz uyum düzenlemeleri ve sınırlı mesleki gelişim fırsatları gibi temel zorlukları ortaya koymuştur. Takip eden turlarda, katılımcılar nöroçeşitlilik farkındalık eğitim programları, esnek çalışma politikaları ve kapsamlı ruh sağlığı destek sistemleri gibi kritik stratejiler üzerinde fikir birliğine varmıştır. Bulgular, kapsayıcı eğitim ortamları oluşturmak için özelleştirilmiş İK girişimlerinin ve İK uzmanlarıyla okul liderleri arasındaki iş birliğinin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Uygulamalı öneriler arasında bireyselleştirilmiş uyum düzenlemeleri, etkileşimli eğitim oturumları ve güçlü sağlık programlarının hayata geçirilmesi yer almaktadır. Çalışma tek bir kültürel bağlamda gerçekleştirilmiş olsa da, elde edilen bulgular gelecekteki kültürlerarası araştırmalar ve kapsayıcılığı artırmaya yönelik teknolojik çözümlerin entegrasyonu için bir temel sunmaktadır. Bu araştırma, eğitimde çeşitlilik ve kapsayıcılık konusundaki genel tartışmalara katkı sağlamakta ve nöroçeşitli eğitimcileri desteklemek için uygulanabilir stratejiler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Nöroçeşitlilik, İnsan Kaynakları Yönetimi, Kapsayıcılık, Eğitimciler, Delphi Yöntemi
Jel Kodları: I21, J53, M12, M54

1. Introduction

Neurodiversity, a term that recognizes the natural variation in human brain functioning, has emerged as a critical concept in conversations about diversity and inclusion across professional sectors. Rather than viewing neurological differences such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD), ADHD, dyslexia, and dyspraxia as disorders to be corrected, the neurodiversity paradigm reframes them as differences that contribute valuable perspectives and strengths to society. This shift in perception has encouraged organizations to reconsider traditional hiring, management, and development practices, particularly as research continues to highlight the innovative, analytical, and creative capacities of neurodiverse individuals. Rollnik-Sadowska and Grabińska (2024) argue that neurodiversity, when embraced within inclusive human resource frameworks, strengthens organizational performance by enhancing team problem-solving and broadening the spectrum of thought processes available within decision-making structures. Similarly, Volpone et al. (2022) emphasize that organizations with inclusive climates are more likely to harness the unique talents of neurodiverse employees, especially in innovation-driven industries where out-of-the-box thinking is prized.

However, while the corporate world has made strides in integrating neurodiversity into workplace diversity initiatives, educational institutions have yet to adopt comprehensive and inclusive approaches for supporting neurodiverse professionals—particularly educators. Research increasingly shows that neurodiverse educators face systemic and interpersonal challenges that hinder their ability to fully contribute and thrive within academic environments. These include not only persistent stigmas and biases but also a lack of formal accommodations, limited flexibility in job expectations, and restricted access to meaningful professional development (Clouder et al., 2020; Hamilton & Petty, 2023). Although educational institutions are often at the forefront of advocating for inclusive practices for students, these same values are inconsistently applied when it comes to their own staff. This discrepancy reveals a critical gap between the rhetoric of inclusion and the lived experiences of neurodiverse educators.

The underrepresentation of neurodiverse professionals in conversations about staff inclusion in education is particularly concerning given the essential role that educators play in shaping inclusive and future-oriented learning environments. While some progress has been made in higher education, where inclusive teaching practices and universal design for learning frameworks are increasingly discussed, the primary and secondary education sectors remain slow to implement formal HR strategies that support neurodiverse teachers (Acevedo & Nusbaum, 2020; Zahir et al., 2024). This is especially problematic considering that neurodiverse educators often bring valuable insights into inclusive pedagogical practices, empathy toward student needs, and creative problem-solving approaches. Yet, without institutional support through inclusive HR policies, their potential contributions remain underutilized. Educational institutions that neglect to implement equitable practices for their staff risk perpetuating exclusionary cultures and losing valuable human capital.

Despite increasing public awareness and academic interest in neurodiversity, many educators who identify as neurodiverse continue to face environments that are not designed to meet their unique needs. Common challenges include subtle or overt forms of workplace stigma, lack of individualized accommodations, and limited career development opportunities. Mirfin-Veitch et al. (2020) emphasize that even when institutions express a commitment to inclusion, actual practices often fail to address the daily lived realities of neurodiverse professionals. Similarly, Zhao et al. (2023) highlight the importance of psychological safety and inclusive leadership in fostering environments where neurodiverse individuals can perform at their best—conditions that are frequently missing in school settings. HR policies in education, which should ideally promote fairness, support, and accessibility, often fall short in addressing the systemic needs of neurodiverse educators. Fuentes and Lindsay (2023) argue that institutional cultures lacking awareness and structure perpetuate marginalization, while Wolbring and Nguyen

(2023) point to the absence of meaningful equity and inclusion frameworks within the internal operations of educational organizations.

In light of these challenges, this study aims to investigate the role of human resource (HR) practices in supporting neurodiverse educators within school environments. Specifically, the research will explore how HR departments and educational leaders can design and implement inclusive policies that foster equity, promote professional success, and enhance the overall well-being of neurodiverse educators. The study focuses on identifying both the barriers that neurodiverse professionals face and the strategies that can be used to mitigate those barriers through informed and structured HR interventions. Through this investigation, the research will contribute to a deeper understanding of how schools can become more inclusive not only for students but also for the staff who serve them. The study is guided by the following research questions:

- What are the key challenges neurodiverse educators face in educational institutions?
- Which HR strategies effectively support inclusion and professional growth for neurodiverse educators?
- How can inclusive policies be designed to address the specific needs of neurodiverse educators?

By addressing these questions, this research contributes to the growing discourse on diversity, equity, and inclusion in education by placing neurodiverse educators—an often-overlooked group—at the center of inquiry. It seeks to bridge the gap between organizational diversity initiatives and the specific, actionable needs of educational professionals with neurological differences. Drawing from the insights of recent research in HRM and neurodiversity (Kaliannan et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2023), the study proposes practical recommendations that can inform institutional HR strategies and foster a culture of inclusivity and professional growth. Ultimately, the findings aim to assist HR practitioners and school leaders in designing evidence-based frameworks that enhance not only staff experience and retention but also institutional resilience and innovation through diversity.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Understanding Neurodiversity and Its Relevance in Education

The concept of neurodiversity challenges conventional, deficit-based models of cognitive functioning by framing neurological differences—such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and dyslexia—as natural variations of the human brain rather than pathologies to be fixed. This perspective repositions individuals with these differences not as "disabled" but as contributors to cognitive and cultural diversity within various societal systems, including education. Le Cunff, Giampietro, and Dommett (2024), in their systematic review on cognitive load in online learning, emphasize that neurodiverse learners engage with information in fundamentally different ways. They argue for instructional designs that reduce cognitive overload and accommodate neurodiverse learning styles, indicating that a one-size-fits-all approach is insufficient for equitable education. Their findings highlight the importance of differentiated learning environments that take into account sensory processing, attention span, and working memory capacity—areas where neurodiverse individuals may face unique challenges.

Despite increasing awareness of neurodiversity in general society and the workplace, its application within educational institutions remains underdeveloped, especially concerning the roles and experiences of neurodiverse educators themselves. Mirfin-Veitch, Jalota, and Schmidt (2020) note that while educational systems have made progress in addressing the needs of neurodiverse students, institutional policies and practices often fail to extend the same level of consideration to neurodiverse staff. Their

integrative review reveals a significant lack of institutional readiness to create inclusive teaching environments that recognize and support educators with neurological differences. This gap not only restricts professional growth for neurodiverse teachers but also limits the broader potential of schools to model inclusion as a core institutional value.

Participatory approaches to educational program design have shown promise in enhancing inclusion. Zahir et al. (2024) evaluate a neurodiversity teaching program co-developed with community input and find that such collaborative efforts improve the relevance, accessibility, and overall impact of educational initiatives. Their study underscores that when neurodiverse individuals are actively involved in the design and delivery of training, the outcomes are more sustainable and meaningful. This approach is particularly relevant to supporting neurodiverse educators, who often face systemic barriers rooted in rigid institutional structures and limited representation in leadership and policy-making roles.

Sociocultural dimensions also shape how neurodiversity is perceived and integrated into educational environments. Lewis and Arday (2023) reflect on the intersectionality of race and neurodiversity in higher education, revealing that neurodiverse individual—especially those from marginalized racial backgrounds—face compounded layers of exclusion and misrecognition. They argue for a sociologically informed approach that addresses the institutional biases and power dynamics that disproportionately affect neurodiverse professionals. Their analysis calls for educational institutions to go beyond surface-level inclusion and commit to structural change that addresses systemic inequalities.

From a broader organizational perspective, Rollnik-Sadowska and Grabińska (2024) advocate for a sustainable human resource management framework that embraces neurodiversity as a strategic asset rather than a compliance issue. They highlight that inclusion initiatives often focus on student populations while overlooking the importance of supporting neurodiverse employees, including teachers, administrators, and academic staff. Similarly, Volpone, Avery, and Wayne (2022) emphasize the role of organizational climate in cultivating neurodiversity. They argue that inclusive climates are not accidental but require intentional design, policy alignment, and leadership commitment. In the context of education, this means embedding neurodiversity into professional development, evaluation, and promotion systems.

Digital transformation further complicates the inclusion of neurodiverse individuals in education. Walkowiak (2021) discusses how technological change has both expanded and limited opportunities for neurodiverse workers, depending on the presence or absence of inclusive design. In educational settings, where technology plays an increasingly central role in teaching and administration, the lack of accessible tools can inadvertently exclude neurodiverse educators. On the other hand, well-designed assistive technologies have the potential to empower these individuals and enhance their contributions.

In sum, understanding neurodiversity in education requires a multi-layered approach that combines cognitive science, inclusive pedagogy, organizational behavior, and social justice perspectives. The literature consistently points to a need for systemic change that not only supports neurodiverse learners but also acknowledges and empowers neurodiverse educators. This recognition is foundational for building truly inclusive educational institutions where diversity is not merely accommodated but actively valued.

2.2 Barriers Faced by Neurodiverse Educators

While the neurodiversity paradigm has gained increased attention in recent years, neurodiverse individuals—particularly educators—continue to face substantial challenges in the workplace. These barriers are often structural, cultural, and psychological, limiting their opportunities for professional development, leadership, and overall job satisfaction. One of the most pervasive obstacles is the persistence of workplace

stigma and stereotypes surrounding neurodiverse identities. Krzeminska and Hawse (2020) emphasize that despite growing awareness, many educational institutions are yet to mainstream neurodiversity as an integral part of their diversity and inclusion frameworks. They argue that autistic employees, in particular, are frequently perceived through a lens of deficiency, which contributes to their exclusion from collaborative projects, leadership roles, and advancement opportunities. These biases, often unintentional but deeply embedded in institutional culture, lead to the marginalization of neurodiverse educators who must constantly manage impression and performance anxieties to be seen as "competent" or "professional" by neurotypical standards.

A significant structural barrier lies in the inadequate provision and inconsistent implementation of workplace accommodations tailored to neurodiverse professionals. While policies may exist on paper, in practice, they often fall short of addressing the nuanced and individualized needs of neurodiverse educators. Lackey et al. (2023), in their systematic review of workplace accommodations for adults using augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), found that the availability of support was often dependent on managerial discretion, awareness levels, and institutional willingness to adapt. In educational settings, this challenge is exacerbated by rigid routines, standardized evaluation systems, and a lack of proactive inclusion strategies. For educators who rely on specific communication tools or environmental modifications, the absence of structured and consistent accommodations not only impedes job performance but also contributes to feelings of isolation and disengagement. Without institutionalized protocols that ensure equitable access to such supports, neurodiverse educators are often forced to self-advocate—an emotionally and mentally taxing task that can lead to burnout.

The psychological and emotional impact of these systemic challenges is profound, particularly in relation to the lack of psychological safety. Wen et al. (2024) highlight that even in organizations with formal inclusion initiatives, many neurodiverse employees report experiences of tokenism or surface-level support that fails to address deeper workplace integration. This is especially true in the education sector, where interpersonal dynamics and team cohesion are emphasized, and deviation from expected communication or behavioral norms is often penalized, whether explicitly or implicitly. The result is a pervasive sense of alienation that discourages disclosure and limits the potential for open dialogue around support needs. Additionally, Zhao et al. (2023) discuss the importance of inclusive leadership and psychological safety in enhancing innovation among employees. Their findings underscore that environments in which neurodiverse professionals feel safe, respected, and valued are more likely to benefit from the unique problem-solving skills and creative approaches that these individuals bring. However, when such psychological safety is absent—as is often the case for neurodiverse educators—their contributions are diminished, and their job satisfaction declines.

The challenge is not only psychological but also institutional. Römhild and Hollederer (2024), in their scoping review on the academic success of students with disabilities in higher education, indirectly shed light on broader issues related to systemic accessibility and the effectiveness of disability-related services. Their findings reveal that inconsistent accommodation strategies, lack of faculty training, and limited institutional accountability hinder the inclusion process. Though their focus is on students, these systemic shortcomings have clear parallels for neurodiverse educators, who often operate in the same environments and face similar obstacles. The failure to institutionalize inclusive practices affects the entire educational ecosystem, from learning to teaching. Without comprehensive, enforced, and monitored support structures, educational institutions risk perpetuating exclusionary practices that marginalize neurodiverse professionals.

Taken together, these studies paint a clear picture of the multi-layered barriers faced by neurodiverse educators. The absence of inclusive leadership, insufficient accommodations, persistent stigma, and lack of psychological safety form a complex web of challenges that restrict the potential of neurodiverse individuals in education.

Addressing these issues requires more than isolated interventions—it necessitates a cultural and structural shift grounded in empathy, equity, and intentional inclusion. Creating psychologically safe, flexible, and supportive work environments is not just a matter of compliance or ethics; it is central to empowering neurodiverse educators and unlocking the full range of their professional capabilities.

2.3 Human Resource Practices and Inclusive Strategies

The integration of inclusive human resource (HR) practices is vital for fostering equitable and supportive environments for neurodiverse professionals in education. Traditional HR systems have long been shaped by norms that implicitly cater to neurotypical individuals, often overlooking the diverse cognitive and behavioral expressions of neurodiverse employees. However, recent research has begun to emphasize the transformative potential of inclusive HR practices that are designed intentionally to accommodate, empower, and advance neurodiverse talent. Kaliannan et al. (2023) highlight inclusive talent development as a central pillar of modern HR management, arguing that organizations must shift from reactive compliance to proactive strategies that embrace diversity at all levels. Their systematic review reveals that inclusive talent development is not merely an ethical imperative but a strategic asset that enhances innovation, engagement, and organizational resilience.

Building on this foundation, Khan et al. (2023) present a multistage theoretical framework for managing neurodiversity in the workplace. They emphasize the importance of cultural competence, inclusive leadership, and structurally embedded support systems that enable neurodiverse individuals to thrive. The authors argue that piecemeal interventions or tokenistic gestures are insufficient; instead, institutions must adopt comprehensive strategies that include tailored onboarding processes, individualized accommodations, and opportunities for career advancement. This approach is particularly relevant in educational institutions, where neurodiverse educators may face unique challenges related to communication, sensory processing, and workload management. The adoption of frameworks that view neurodiversity not as a challenge to be managed, but as a dimension of human capital to be valued, represents a significant shift in organizational thinking.

Inclusive HR strategies are deeply interwoven with leadership practices, particularly those that emphasize psychological safety and empowerment. Shafaei and Nejati (2024) examine the role of inclusive leadership in fostering employee innovation within the framework of green human resource management. Their study finds that inclusive leaders who demonstrate empathy, transparency, and support are more likely to create environments where neurodiverse employees feel valued and motivated. These leaders contribute to a culture in which differences are embraced and leveraged for creativity and problem-solving. Similarly, Wang et al. (2023) highlight the effectiveness of employing individuals with lived experiences in mental health roles, noting that this practice enhances organizational empathy, trust, and psychological well-being. These insights suggest that educational institutions, by recruiting neurodiverse professionals into advisory or mentorship positions, can not only promote representation but also develop internal mechanisms for peer-led inclusion efforts.

A broader review of HR practices underscores the need for organizations to align inclusion strategies with their core objectives and operational frameworks. Rajput et al. (2023) present a comprehensive investigation into inclusive HRM as a driver of effective human capital utilization. They assert that inclusive practices must be embedded across the entire employee lifecycle—from recruitment and onboarding to performance evaluation and promotion. Similarly, Van den Groenendaal et al. (2023) examine inclusive HRM in non-traditional employment relationships, such as freelance or contract work, arguing that psychological contracts—informal, perceived agreements between employers and workers—play a critical role in shaping perceptions of inclusion and support. These perspectives are particularly pertinent in education, where part-time or

adjunct neurodiverse educators may lack access to full institutional resources, making equitable treatment across contract types a key priority.

Contextual sensitivity is also essential to the effective implementation of inclusion strategies. Umeh, Cornelius, and Wallace (2023) emphasize that HR practices must account for the social, cultural, and organizational context in which they are applied. Their study on diversity and inclusion in multiethnic settings reveals that a one-size-fits-all model can be counterproductive, especially when it ignores the intersectionality of identity factors such as race, gender, and neurodiversity. Patwary et al. (2023) further support this argument by demonstrating how inclusive leadership and green HRM can influence not only employee behavior but also broader organizational sustainability goals. These findings reinforce the idea that inclusive HR strategies must be adaptable, evidence-based, and responsive to the unique needs of both individuals and institutions.

In the hospitality and service sectors, where interpersonal interactions are paramount, inclusive HRM has shown clear benefits. Madera et al. (2023) find that organizations which prioritize employee inclusion often see a parallel increase in customer satisfaction and loyalty, illustrating a direct link between internal equity and external performance. Russen and Dawson (2023) similarly question whether diversity, equity, or inclusion should come first in HR planning, ultimately arguing that these elements are interdependent and must be addressed holistically. This integrated perspective can be meaningfully applied to educational settings, where the experiences of neurodiverse educators impact not only institutional culture but also student outcomes.

Finally, in an era increasingly shaped by technology, the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in HR decision-making raises new questions about bias and ethics. Shams, Zowghi, and Bano (2023) warn that AI systems, if not carefully designed, may inadvertently reinforce existing inequalities by replicating biased patterns in recruitment, evaluation, and promotion processes. Roche, Wall, and Lewis (2023) echo these concerns, calling for the integration of ethical diversity frameworks into AI policies and practices. As educational institutions adopt more digital tools for HR management, they must ensure that these systems are transparent, inclusive, and accountable, especially when making decisions that affect neurodiverse staff.

In sum, the literature reveals that inclusive HR strategies are most effective when they are comprehensive, context-sensitive, and aligned with both organizational values and individual needs. For neurodiverse educators, such strategies offer a pathway not only to professional success but also to meaningful participation in shaping the future of inclusive education. By embedding inclusivity into every layer of HR practice—from leadership and policy design to technology and ethics—educational institutions can create environments where all educators, regardless of neurological profile, are empowered to thrive.

In many educational and policy contexts, neurodiversity is frequently and inaccurately subsumed under broader disability categories. This conflation can result in neurodiverse individuals being considered primarily in relation to institutional compliance requirements or state-mandated hiring quotas, rather than as candidates for standard teaching or leadership positions. However, neurodiverse educators bring cognitive strengths, innovative thinking, and diverse problem-solving approaches that qualify them for the same posts as their neurotypical peers—without requiring exceptional treatment or segregated roles. Inclusive HR strategies must therefore move beyond a disability-centric model and recognize neurodiversity as part of workforce diversity, not as a marker of incapacity. This distinction is essential for dismantling the stigma of tokenism and affirming the legitimacy of neurodiverse professionals' roles within mainstream educational staffing structures.

2.4 The Role of Delphi Method in Policy Development

The Delphi Method is a structured, iterative process that facilitates expert consensus on complex or emerging issues where empirical data may be limited or fragmented. In

policy development—particularly in areas such as human resources and inclusion for neurodiverse professionals—this method offers a systematic framework to harness expert insights and translate them into actionable strategies. The value of the Delphi Method lies in its ability to generate collective intelligence through multiple rounds of anonymized feedback, refinement of responses, and convergence toward agreement on key themes or priorities. The method is especially suited to the dynamic and multifaceted nature of HR practices in education, where the lived experiences of diverse stakeholders—educators, administrators, and HR professionals—must be integrated into inclusive policy frameworks.

To evaluate the application and adaptability of the Delphi Method in policy development, four core studies were analyzed. The first step of the analysis involved identifying the structure and purpose of Delphi implementations across different fields. Hong and Lay (2023) conducted a Delphi study to explore factors influencing employee retention in private companies in Cambodia. Their work demonstrated the method's utility in addressing strategic human resource challenges in low-data environments. By using multiple rounds of surveys with HR experts, they were able to identify and prioritize key retention drivers, such as work-life balance, leadership style, and development opportunities. Their analysis emphasized the Delphi Method's strength in producing context-specific recommendations rooted in the knowledge and consensus of practitioners.

Similarly, Im, Son, and Kam (2012) used the Delphi Method to develop evaluation indices for horticultural therapy, providing a case of methodological adaptation in a specialized domain. Their multi-phase process involved generating potential evaluation elements, refining them through expert feedback, and finalizing a robust set of indicators. This study highlighted how the Delphi Method can operationalize abstract concepts— such as therapeutic value or workplace inclusion—by transforming them into measurable components. This approach is particularly relevant in HR policy research, where concepts like "inclusion," "accommodation," and "psychological safety" require nuanced and validated definitions before they can be embedded in policy.

In a more education-centered application, Yancik and Maklan (1981) demonstrated the use of Delphi in gerontological curriculum planning. Their research showed how expert consultation could guide educational innovation, even in the absence of consensus in the literature or precedent in institutional practice. The Delphi process enabled them to gather diverse viewpoints from educators and professionals and arrive at a coherent, evidence-informed curriculum structure. This model aligns closely with efforts to develop neurodiversity-informed training programs for educators and HR personnel, where stakeholder input is critical for aligning content with practical needs and values.

To complement these studies, a hybrid methodological study by Kardani Malekinezhad et al. (2025) employed a Fuzzy Delphi Method integrated with SWARA (Step-wise Weight Assessment Ratio Analysis) and bibliometric analysis. This approach offered a multi-dimensional strategy for identifying trends and formulating human resource analytics strategies. The authors first conducted a bibliometric analysis to map emerging themes in HR research, followed by rounds of Delphi surveys with experts to evaluate and validate those themes. The Fuzzy Delphi component allowed them to manage uncertainty and subjectivity in expert judgments, making it especially useful in complex policy areas such as inclusion, where experiences and priorities may vary widely. This hybrid methodology provides a useful model for developing inclusive HR policies that are both theoretically grounded and practically validated.

Through comparative analysis of these four sources, several key findings emerged. First, the Delphi Method is adaptable across domains—whether in corporate HR, therapeutic evaluation, curriculum development, or strategic analytics—demonstrating its versatility for diverse research and policy contexts. Second, its iterative nature allows for continuous refinement, making it particularly effective in complex, evolving environments such as inclusive education. Third, studies that combined Delphi with other

methods (e.g., fuzzy logic, bibliometrics) tended to produce more nuanced and actionable outputs, suggesting that hybrid approaches may be optimal when designing HR strategies for neurodiverse educators.

In summary, the Delphi Method represents a powerful tool in the development of HR policies that support neurodiverse professionals. By facilitating structured, collective reasoning among experts, it enables the translation of tacit knowledge and fragmented practices into coherent, evidence-informed strategies. Its applicability across disciplines and ability to accommodate diverse perspectives make it particularly well-suited to the educational sector, where inclusion requires balancing the needs of individuals with the constraints of institutional systems. Future research can build on these insights by integrating the Delphi Method with participatory and digital tools to ensure more inclusive, representative, and dynamic policy development processes.

3. Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to combine qualitative and quantitative analyses for a comprehensive understanding of HR practices supporting neurodiverse educators. By integrating qualitative insights with quantitative consensus-building, the research ensures robust and actionable findings.

Participants in this study included 20 experts selected based on their professional roles and expertise. The inclusion criteria focused on HR professionals (7 participants), educational administrators (6 participants), and neurodiverse educators (7 participants). HR professionals were selected for their direct role in policy-making, educational administrators for their knowledge of institutional challenges, and neurodiverse educators for their lived experiences and unique perspectives. The experts were recruited from Specifically, participants were drawn from various parts of Türkiye—including Istanbul (Marmara), Ankara (Central Anatolia), Izmir (Aegean), Diyarbakır (Southeastern Anatolia), and Van (Eastern Anatolia)—with most affiliated with higher education institutions. This diversity allowed the study to reflect differing regional practices and sensitivities regarding neurodivergence within the educational sector.

Data collection was conducted in three iterative rounds using the Delphi Method. In Round 1, open-ended surveys were distributed to gather qualitative data. Participants were asked questions such as:

- What are the primary challenges neurodiverse educators face in schools?
- What HR policies and practices have been effective in supporting neurodiverse educators?
- What specific accommodations or training programs would benefit neurodiverse educators?
- How can educational institutions foster a more inclusive environment for neurodiverse professionals?

The responses from Round 1 were analyzed thematically to identify recurring themes and key challenges. These findings informed the development of structured survey items for Rounds 2 and 3.

In Rounds 2 and 3, participants were presented with Likert-scale questions derived from the themes identified in Round 1. These rounds aimed to achieve consensus on the most critical HR strategies and policies. Examples of survey items included:

- The importance of providing flexible work arrangements for neurodiverse
- educators.
- The effectiveness of neurodiversity awareness training programs.
- The role of mental health support systems in fostering inclusion.

Data analysis involved thematic analysis for the qualitative responses in Round 1, ensuring a deep exploration of participant insights. Statistical methods, such as median and interquartile range calculations, were employed in Rounds 2 and 3 to measure consensus and identify priority strategies.
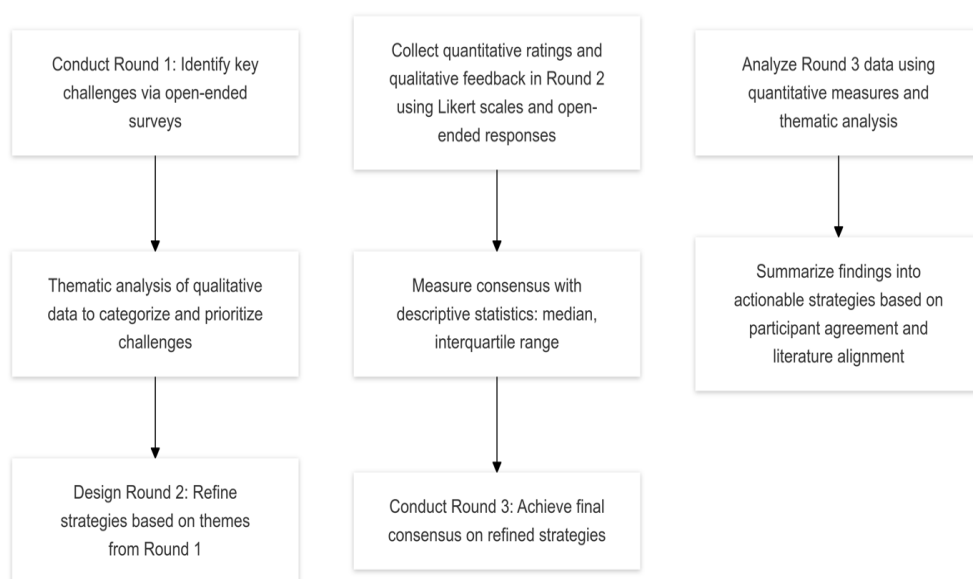
Figure 1. Workflow Chart

Ethical considerations were a critical component of this study. Participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, and informed consent was obtained before participation. Confidentiality was ensured by anonymizing responses and securely storing all data. Additionally, potential biases in data collection and interpretation were addressed by involving diverse experts and using iterative feedback loops to refine findings.

4. Findings

4.1 Key Challenges Identified in Round 1

The first round of the Delphi study provided valuable insights into the primary challenges faced by neurodiverse educators in their professional environments. Through thematic analysis of participant responses, three key issues emerged as particularly significant.

Workplace stigma and bias were identified as the most frequently reported challenge, with eighteen out of twenty participants emphasizing the prevalence of unconscious bias and discriminatory attitudes toward neurodiverse educators. One participant stated, *"There is a pervasive assumption that neurodiverse educators are less capable, which often results in exclusion from leadership opportunities and collaborative projects."* Another participant noted, *"I constantly feel the need to prove my worth because my colleagues seem to focus more on my differences than my contributions."* These biases were reported to impact professional growth and overall job satisfaction, creating a significant barrier to equity and inclusion.

A lack of sufficient accommodations tailored to the specific needs of neurodiverse educators was another prominent theme. Fifteen participants highlighted that while general policies often exist in schools and institutions, they are typically not customized to address the unique and varied requirements of neurodiverse individuals. One educator explained, *"Most accommodations are designed for students, not staff. We're expected to adapt to a one-size-fits-all approach that doesn't work for us."* Another participant emphasized, *"I've had to advocate for myself repeatedly to get basic accommodations, which is both exhausting and discouraging."* The absence of effective accommodations was seen as a major barrier to productivity and job satisfaction.

Limited professional development opportunities also emerged as a significant concern, as reported by thirteen participants. Many noted that existing training programs often overlook the needs of neurodiverse educators, leaving them underprepared to

navigate workplace challenges or access growth opportunities. One participant shared, *"Professional development sessions rarely address neurodiversity. They feel generic and unrelated to the specific challenges I face in my role."* Another stated, *"There's no clear pathway for neurodiverse educators to advance their careers, and the lack of tailored training reinforces this gap."* This lack of focus on neurodiverse needs contributes to a persistent underrepresentation in leadership positions and hampers career progression. The findings are summarized in Table 1, which outlines the frequency of responses for each identified challenge.

Table 1. Key Challenges Reported by Experts in Round 1

Key Challenges	Frequency Reported
Workplace stigma and bias against neurodiverse educators	18
Insufficient accommodations tailored to specific needs	15
Limited professional development opportunities	13

These findings highlight critical areas requiring immediate attention and intervention. Addressing stigma and bias, developing tailored accommodations, and ensuring equitable access to professional development are essential steps toward creating inclusive and supportive environments for neurodiverse educators. The direct accounts provided by participants underline the urgency of these issues and the profound impact they have on the well-being and career trajectories of neurodiverse educators.

4.2 Strategies Achieving Consensus in Rounds 2 and 3

The Delphi study employed a multi-round iterative process involving 20 participants, including HR professionals, neurodiverse educators, and educational administrators. In Round 1, qualitative data were collected through open-ended surveys, focusing on identifying key challenges. Thematic analysis was used to categorize and prioritize the challenges based on frequency and participant emphasis. Rounds 2 and 3 utilized a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to achieve consensus on effective strategies for addressing these challenges. Participants provided feedback through Likert scale ratings and open-ended responses, which were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic coding to determine agreement and refine strategies.

Consensus was defined as a high level of agreement among participants, indicated by a median rating of 4 or above on a 5-point scale and an interquartile range (IQR) of 1 or less. In cases of divergence, qualitative insights were used to clarify differences and adjust strategy recommendations. This section presents the strategies that achieved consensus across Rounds 2 and 3. Through the iterative rounds, three critical strategies emerged with strong participant agreement. These strategies reflect a shared understanding of the measures needed to support neurodiverse educators effectively.

The first strategy achieving consensus was the importance of training programs on neurodiversity awareness. Participants highlighted that such programs are vital for fostering empathy and understanding among colleagues and administrators. Training topics emphasized included recognizing unconscious bias, understanding mental health challenges specific to neurodiverse individuals, and creating inclusive classroom environments. One participant noted, *"Interactive training sessions, such as role-playing exercises, can help staff truly understand the experiences of neurodiverse educators, which is far more impactful than traditional lectures."* A hybrid approach combining in-person workshops and online modules was preferred to ensure accessibility and continuity.

The second strategy was the implementation of flexible work policies to support individual needs. Participants strongly agreed that flexible scheduling, such as adjustable start and end times and workload accommodations, is essential to enable neurodiverse educators to perform at their best. A participant emphasized, *"Flexibility is not a privilege but a necessity for neurodiverse staff. It allows us to align our work schedules with our cognitive*

rhythms." Additionally, the regular review of workload adjustments, preferably quarterly or semi-annually, was recommended to ensure these policies remain effective and relevant.

The third strategy achieving consensus was the establishment of comprehensive mental health and wellness support systems. Participants underscored the importance of providing tailored mental health resources, such as access to counselors familiar with neurodiversity, stress management workshops, and quiet spaces for decompression. Flexible leave policies for mental health needs also garnered strong support. One participant shared, "*Having a dedicated mental health counselor who understands neurodiversity has been transformative for my well-being and performance.*" These initiatives were viewed as critical for reducing stress and fostering a supportive work environment. Table 2 summarizes the strategies that achieved consensus in Rounds 2 and 3, along with their respective levels of agreement.

Table 2. Consensus-Based HR Strategies for Supporting Neurodiverse Educators Identified in Delphi Rounds 2 and 3

Strategy	Median Rating	Interquartile Range (IQR)	Key Features
Training programs on neurodiversity awareness	4.8	0.6	Interactive sessions, hybrid delivery, unconscious bias training
Flexible work policies	4.9	0.4	Flexible scheduling, workload adjustments, quarterly/semi-annual reviews
Comprehensive mental health and wellness support	4.8	0.5	Tailored counseling, quiet spaces, flexible leave policies

The consensus around these strategies reflects their perceived effectiveness in addressing the key challenges identified in Round 1. Together, they provide a comprehensive framework for creating a supportive and inclusive environment for neurodiverse educators. By implementing these strategies, institutions can take significant steps toward promoting equity and fostering professional growth.

5. Discussion

5.1 Implications for HR Practices

The findings of this study provide actionable insights for HR practices in educational institutions, particularly in creating more inclusive environments for neurodiverse educators. One of the most pressing needs identified was the implementation of inclusive policies that address the unique challenges faced by neurodiverse staff. These policies should not only focus on compliance with legal requirements but also aim to foster a culture of acceptance and support. A participant highlighted, "*The current policies are broad and fail to address the specific needs of neurodiverse educators. Tailored approaches are essential to ensure everyone can thrive.*" This perspective underscores the importance of moving beyond generic accommodations to develop individualized support frameworks. Such tailored approaches align with Acevedo and Nusbaum's (2020) findings, which emphasize the need for policies that respect and address the diverse experiences of neurodiverse individuals, fostering both their inclusion and success.

In practice, this could involve creating mechanisms for regular consultation with neurodiverse educators to ensure that policies remain relevant and effective. For instance, advisory committees comprising neurodiverse educators and HR professionals could be established to provide ongoing input into policy design and implementation. Additionally, institutions could invest in technologies and tools that enhance accessibility, such as assistive software or sensory-friendly workspaces. These actions would

demonstrate a commitment to inclusion beyond surface-level compliance, embedding equity into the fabric of organizational culture.

Education and awareness campaigns were also identified as pivotal in addressing stigma, which remains a significant barrier to inclusion. Participants emphasized that misconceptions about neurodiversity often stem from a lack of understanding and exposure. One HR professional noted, *"Interactive training programs and awareness campaigns can dismantle stereotypes and help colleagues recognize the strengths neurodiverse educators bring to the team."* Such programs could include role-playing exercises, case studies, and neurodiversity simulations to foster empathy and practical understanding. For example, training sessions could highlight the unique problem-solving approaches and creativity that neurodiverse individuals often bring to their roles. These initiatives align with Zhao et al.'s (2023) advocacy for inclusive leadership and ongoing training, which are shown to build psychologically safe workplaces where all employees feel valued and respected.

Moreover, integrating neurodiversity awareness into broader diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategies ensures that these efforts are not siloed but part of a comprehensive institutional commitment. Schools and educational institutions can also engage external neurodiversity experts to lead workshops and develop customized training content. A participant suggested, *"Bringing in specialists who understand neurodiversity firsthand makes a huge difference in how these sessions are received and implemented."* This recommendation is supported by Rajput et al. (2023), who highlight the role of external expertise in enriching internal DEI practices.

Finally, ongoing evaluation and feedback are essential for the success of HR practices aimed at supporting neurodiverse educators. Regular surveys and feedback loops can help HR professionals assess the impact of their policies and training programs, making adjustments based on the lived experiences of neurodiverse staff. Such iterative processes not only ensure continuous improvement but also reinforce trust and engagement between HR and educators. By addressing stigma, providing individualized support, and fostering a culture of understanding, HR practices can play a transformative role in promoting equity and inclusion in educational institutions.

5.2 Policy Recommendations

Developing flexible work arrangements and accommodations was a recurring theme in this study. Flexible scheduling and workload adjustments, tailored to individual needs, were consistently highlighted as critical by participants. One neurodiverse educator shared, *"Flexibility isn't just a convenience; it's a necessity for me to manage my workload effectively and avoid burnout."* Literature supports this need, with Kaliannan et al. (2023) emphasizing that flexible work policies enhance productivity and well-being for diverse workforces.

Creating neurodiversity-focused professional development programs emerged as another key recommendation. Participants advocated for training initiatives that not only improve teaching skills but also equip neurodiverse educators with strategies to navigate workplace challenges. One participant stated, *"Professional development should be tailored to our strengths and needs, not just a generic one-size-fits-all approach."* This finding resonates with Clouder et al. (2020), who highlight that professional development designed with neurodiversity in mind can significantly enhance educators' performance and job satisfaction.

Establishing robust mental health support systems was also prioritized. Access to counselors familiar with neurodiversity and the provision of quiet spaces for decompression were among the most endorsed strategies. A participant emphasized, *"Having a trained counselor who understands neurodiversity makes all the difference. It creates a safe space to navigate challenges without fear of judgment."* Research by Shafaei and Nejati (2024) similarly highlights the critical role of tailored mental health initiatives in supporting employee well-being.

5.3 Contribution to Diversity and Inclusion in Education

This study underscores the vital role HR practices play in promoting equity and diversity within educational institutions. By addressing key challenges such as stigma, insufficient accommodations, and limited professional development opportunities, HR professionals can significantly enhance the inclusion of neurodiverse educators. One participant noted, *"HR has the potential to lead the charge in creating a culture of inclusion, but this requires intentional strategies and collaboration with educational leaders."* This sentiment echoes Rollnik-Sadowska and Grabińska's (2024) assertion that inclusive HR policies are foundational to achieving sustainable diversity goals.

Collaboration between HR professionals and educational leaders emerged as a crucial factor in driving systemic change. Participants stressed the importance of joint efforts to design and implement policies that reflect the needs of neurodiverse educators. As one educational administrator put it, *"When HR and leadership work together, it creates a ripple effect that fosters inclusion across the entire institution."* Research by Van den Groenendaal et al. (2023) supports this perspective, highlighting the value of cross-functional collaboration in embedding inclusion into organizational frameworks.

By integrating these strategies and recommendations, educational institutions can create environments where neurodiverse educators feel valued and empowered. This not only strengthens the diversity and inclusivity of the workforce but also enhances the overall quality of education, as neurodiverse educators bring unique perspectives and strengths to their roles. The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of literature advocating for equity and inclusion in education, emphasizing the transformative potential of intentional HR practices.

6. Conclusion

This study offers a comprehensive examination of the unique challenges faced by neurodiverse educators and presents actionable strategies that human resource (HR) professionals and educational leaders can implement to foster inclusive, equitable, and supportive work environments. The findings underscore that neurodiverse educators often experience significant barriers that hinder their professional advancement and personal well-being. Chief among these challenges are persistent workplace stigma, unconscious bias, and systemic misunderstandings regarding neurological differences. In many cases, neurodiverse professionals are expected to conform to neurotypical norms, with little recognition of the distinct strengths and needs they bring to the educational context. Additionally, the lack of personalized accommodations, combined with limited access to targeted professional development opportunities, exacerbates feelings of exclusion and inhibits career growth. These challenges, if unaddressed, not only affect individual performance and satisfaction but also diminish the potential of educational institutions to benefit from a truly diverse workforce.

In response to these challenges, several HR strategies have emerged from this research as both effective and necessary for promoting the inclusion and success of neurodiverse educators. Among the most critical strategies is the implementation of neurodiversity awareness training for all staff and administrators. These programs are instrumental in fostering empathy, dismantling harmful stereotypes, and encouraging more inclusive interpersonal dynamics within school environments. Moreover, flexible work policies were identified as essential components of inclusive HR practice. The ability to adjust schedules, modify workloads, or access remote work options can make a substantial difference in enabling neurodiverse educators to perform at their best. In addition to these structural adjustments, the importance of robust mental health and wellness systems cannot be overstated. Access to counselors trained in neurodiversity, along with wellness programs that offer stress management tools and designated quiet spaces, provide crucial support that allows educators to maintain psychological resilience in demanding work environments.

The findings of this study lead to several practical recommendations for institutional implementation. HR departments should prioritize the development of individualized accommodation plans that are co-designed with the educator and reviewed periodically to ensure they remain relevant as roles and responsibilities evolve. These plans should not be static checklists, but dynamic frameworks grounded in ongoing dialogue, mutual respect, and evidence-based best practices. Additionally, training programs focused on neurodiversity should be embedded into broader professional development curricula, using interactive modules and hybrid formats to promote engagement and retention of key concepts. This commitment to awareness-building must be sustained over time rather than delivered as one-off initiatives, ensuring a culture of continuous learning and adaptability within schools.

Educational leadership also has a pivotal role to play. Leaders must champion policies that allow for flexible work environments, ensuring that neurodiverse educators are empowered to manage their time, energy, and responsibilities in ways that align with their cognitive strengths. Establishing dedicated mental health resources—such as access to neurodiversity-sensitive counseling services and private decompression areas—can greatly improve daily work experiences and overall job satisfaction. Furthermore, inclusive policymaking should involve direct input from neurodiverse educators themselves. Advisory boards, task forces, or feedback committees that include neurodiverse voices can provide critical insights into the effectiveness of current strategies and ensure future developments are grounded in lived experience. These collaborative structures can help transform inclusion from a top-down directive into a shared organizational value, ultimately benefiting the entire school community by fostering innovation, diversity of thought, and a more compassionate professional culture.

While this study offers valuable insights, it is important to consider its limitations. Conducted within a single cultural and institutional context, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other geographic regions or educational systems. Cultural norms, administrative structures, and societal attitudes toward neurodiversity vary widely, influencing how inclusion is understood and practiced across contexts. In addition, institutions that are unprepared or insufficiently resourced may face practical challenges when hiring neurodiverse professionals, such as misaligned support systems, unclear accommodation processes, or insufficiently trained leadership. While these risks should not discourage inclusive hiring, they underscore the need for proactive readiness assessments and policy frameworks to ensure sustainable and mutually beneficial outcomes. Future research should expand this inquiry across diverse educational and cultural settings to capture a more nuanced understanding of how neurodiversity is supported (or marginalized) globally. Such comparative studies could illuminate cross-cultural best practices and facilitate the creation of more universally adaptable inclusion frameworks.

In addition, the integration of technological solutions for supporting neurodiverse educators represents an underexplored frontier. Assistive technologies—such as speech-to-text tools, time management apps, and personalized learning platforms—hold immense potential for improving the daily experiences of neurodiverse staff. Likewise, digital professional development modules that allow self-paced learning and AI-powered mental health platforms tailored to neurodiverse users could significantly expand access to support. Future research should investigate the design, implementation, and effectiveness of such technological tools in educational environments, evaluating how they can be ethically and sustainably integrated into HR strategies. Exploring this dimension will deepen the understanding of how innovation can intersect with inclusion to create truly transformative outcomes.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the broader conversation on diversity and inclusion by centering neurodiverse educators—an often-overlooked group in educational discourse. Identifying their challenges and highlighting effective HR strategies provides a foundation for institutional change aimed at cultivating inclusive

and equitable workplaces. Implementing these findings will not only empower neurodiverse educators but also enrich the educational sector, paving the way for more adaptive, compassionate, and resilient learning communities.

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