ENCOURAGING NEURODIVERSITY IN THE EVOLVING WORKFORCE – THE NEXT FRONTIER TO A DIVERSE WORKPLACE

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Abstract: *Nowadays, organizations tend to focus on diversity in the workplace, aiming for true inclusion, and in this context, they cannot overlook a significant demographic as neurodiverse people tends to become. The human brain has no less than 86 billion neurons, this number unequivocally demonstrating that we are all different, and the genetic structure and environmental conditions predispose us to unique behaviors compared to our peers. Neurodiversity is a relatively recent term that covers multiple conditions, such as Autism, ADHD and dyslexia, which tend to affect the cognitive function of the brain. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the literature in the field of neurodiversity generally and the inclusion of neurodiversity in the workplace, particularly, and to identify a series of best practices of the various companies in this field. In order to achieve this goal, the secondary study started from defining the neurodiversity and presenting its various forms, continuing with pointing out the many benefits that the inclusion of neurodiverse people in certain positions can bring and the adjustments that should be made to allow these people to prosper in their work. The premise behind the study is that, once neurodiversity is understood as a reality of the natural variation of human neurocognition, organizations need to identify the ways to attract, to adapt themselves and to harness this potential, since neurodiversity inclusion is an area where "doing well" can also prove to be a good business, given that, although neurodiverse people may face specific challenges in the workplace or in performing certain tasks, with the right adaptations, they can become valuable and unique strengths for the company.*

Keywords: Neurodiversity, Diverse workplace, Inclusion, Adaptations.

JEL Classification Codes: J24, J70.

1. INTRODUCTION

The number of psychiatric disorders has reported an accelerated increase over the past years. If the first edition of The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, published by The American Psychiatric Association in 1952, listed a number of 128 disease categories, their number had already reached 541 in 2013 (Blashfield et al., 2014) (figure 1). Thus, the medical vocabulary now has terms defining conditions we knew nothing about 50 years ago, such as "learning disabilities", ADHD, "Asperger syndrome" and others.

The human brain has no less than 86 billion neurons (Herculano-Houzel, 2012), this figure unequivocally demonstrating that we are all different. The genetic structure, but also environmental conditions are the ones to makes us prone to singular behaviors as compared to our fellow human beings.

Also, the concept of neurodiversity, coined by the Australian Sociologist Judy Singer, recognizes the fact that some people can be introverted, extroverted, dyslexic or even autistic and they remain essential to the human species, just like as biodiversity is essential to the planet.
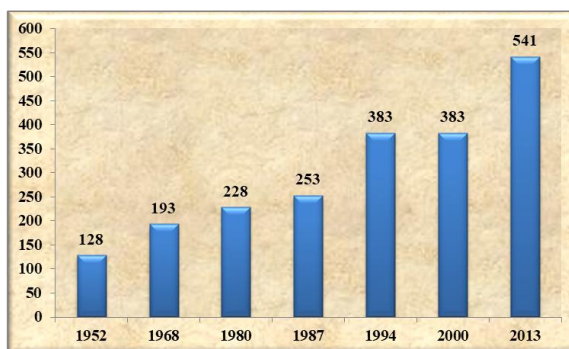
Figure 1 *The evolution of the number of mental disorders identified through the years*
Source: Blashfield Roger K., et al., 2014

Taking this aspect into account and considering the fact that approximately 10% of the population is neurodivergent in a way, employers cannot disregard this category of persons, as neurodiversity is beginning to gradually be part of the vocabulary used by the Human Resources department (Faragher, 2018).

2. PERCEPTIONS TOWARD DISABILITY

2.1 Rethinking disability

Disability- physical or other, such as mental or learning-related, can be characterized as a lack of ability to function according to personal and/or other norms (Rudnick, 2017).According to the so-called medical model of disability, such a lack is caused by one or more health impairments of persons; these impairments have to be remedied using medical treatments. According to the so-called social model of disability, created by persons with disabilities as a manner of seeing the world, disability is caused by the way in which society is organized, rather than by the impairment of a person. Barriers can be physical or they can be caused by people's attitudes towards these differences, such as the assumption that people with disabilities cannot do certain things. Thus, the social model helps identify the barriers impeding the life of people with disabilities and analyses the ways in which they can be removed, as such those individuals become more independent and gain control over their own lives. At the other end, the medical model identifies what is "wrong" with the respective person and not what they need, leading to loss of independence and reduction of control over their own lives (Haegele and Hodge, 2016) (figure2).
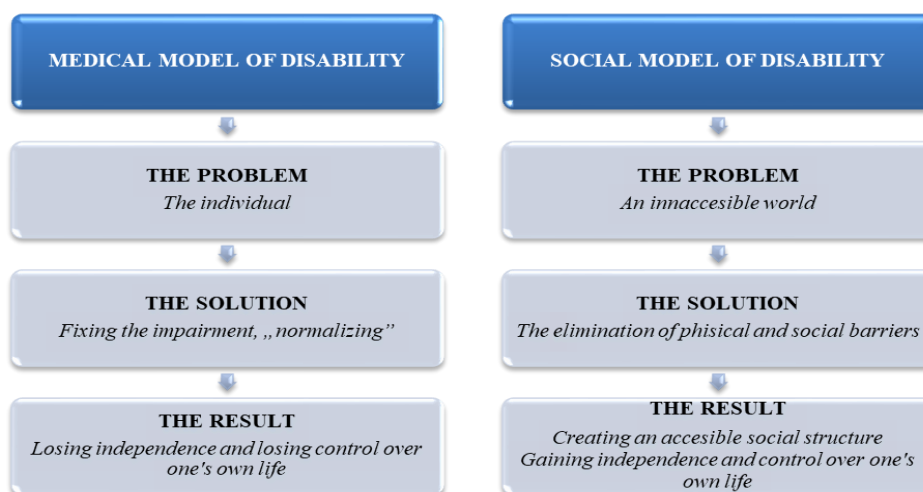

Figure 2 *The medical social model of disability vs. the social model of disability*
Source: Haegeleand Hodge, 2016.

2.2 EU citizens' perception toward disability

Special Eurobarometer no. 493 - "*Discrimination in the EU in 2019*" (European Commission, 2019) comes to bring a clear image of how the citizens of the European Union Member States view discrimination in general and its various forms in particular. Thus, according to this study, 44% of the European citizens believe that discrimination based on disability criteria is still widely spread, while in Romania, half of the respondents claim the same.

With regard to matters related to the place of work, an overwhelming rate of 84% of the people interviewed within the study among the EU citizens claim they would have no problem feeling at ease with a colleague with disabilities. In this chapter, Romania reported the lowest percentage of people who would feel comfortable working with a person with disabilities (60%) and the highest percentage in people to whom teamwork with such a person would cause discomfort (18%).

In the same work-related context, disability is perceived by the EU citizens, alongside general physical appearance (41%), as the third source factor of disadvantage upon employment, as incidence, after the applicants' look (48% and their age (47%). In such a circumstance, 28% of the Romanian respondents consider disability as a factor disadvantaging the candidate for a position.

In light of the above, a percentage of 57% of the European Union citizens believe that sufficient effort is made to promote diversity at the workplace with regard to disability, while 43% of the Romanian respondents agree to this matter. (table1)

Table 1. *Perceptions about disability in the EU countries*

			PERCEPTIONS ABOUT DISABILITY		
	Discrimination based on disability is still widespread	**The disability - a criteria of putting at a disadvantage a job candidate with equal skills and qualifications as the other applicants**	**The feeling working with a disabled colleague**		**Enough efforts to promote diversity in terms of disability in the workplace**
			Comfortable	**Uncomfortable**	
UE average	44%	41%	44%	4%	57%
Maximum percent	Finland – 64%	France – 63%	UK, Netherlands, Sweden – 95%	UK, Spain, Sweden, Ireland, France – 1%	UK– 75%
Romania	Romania – 50%	Romania – 28%	Romania – 60%	Romania – 18%	Romania – 43%
Minimum percent	Malta - 27%	Luxembourg - 19%			Portugal– 20%

Source: European Commission, „*Special Eurobarometer 493 - Discrimination in the EU in 2019*"

Although there are still residual perceptions toward disability among citizens, we may postulate that people with disabilities can perform nearly any type of work and, if the necessary adaptations were to be made available at the workplace, most persons with disabilities would be productive. However, their employment rates are lower than those of non-disabled persons (World Health Organization, The World Bank, 2011).

3. NEURODIVERSITY- CONCEPTUAL ROOTS

The term Neurodiversity is relatively recent, first used in the end of the '90s, as a result of some exchanges between Judy Singer, an Australian anthropology student and the American journalist, Harvey Blume, who published an article on this topic in the 1998 issue of The Atlantic.

Harvey Blume stated in that article that neurodiversity may be every bit as crucial for the human race as biodiversity is for life in general. He was asking rhetorically: "Who can say what form of wiring will prove best at any given moment? Cybernetics and computer culture, for example, may favor a somewhat autistic cast of mind" (Blume, 1998).

Singer' work on autism and neurodiversity became widely known as a result of her chapter "Why Can't You be Normal for Once in Your Life?" based on her thesis which was published in the UK in 1999 (Corker and French -Eds., 1999). In this chapter, Judy Singer stated that the key significance of the Autism Spectrum lies in its call for and anticipation of a politics of neurological diversity, or "neurodiversity". The term "neurologically different" represents, in Singer's belief, a new addition to the familiar political categories of class/gender/race and will augment the insights of the social model of disability.

In order to fully understand neurodiversity, the literature refers to numerous terms connected to this, such as: neurodiversity, neodiversity paradigm, neurodivergent, neurodivergence, neurodiverse, neurotypical, neurominority, whose definition can be found in figure 3.
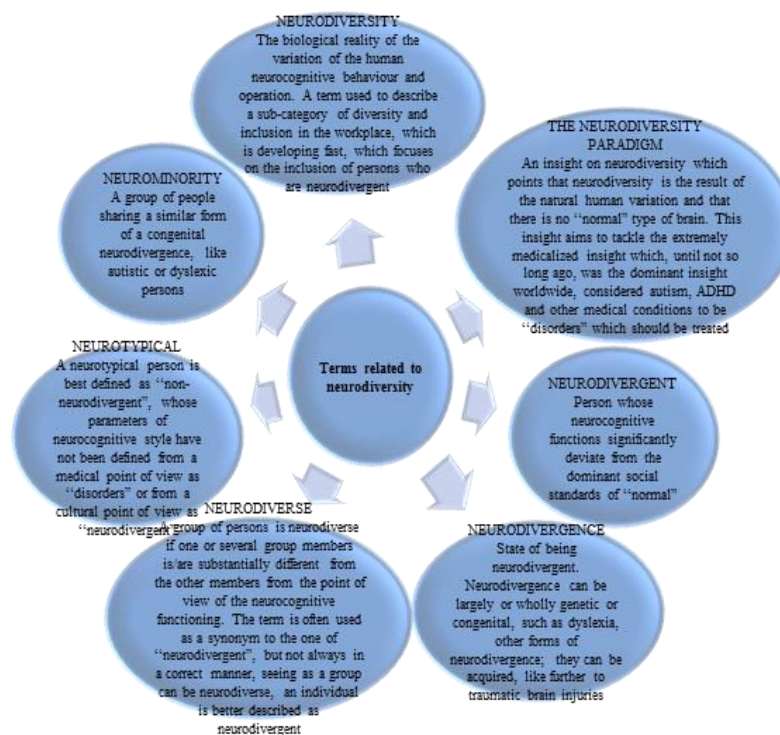

Figure 3 *Terms related to neurodiversity*

Source:Walker, 2014; CIPD, 2018

Nowadays, the notion of neurodiversity is used more often for a militant purpose, aiming to have the "neuro-atypical persons" recognized as a minority and, as such, accepted by society or even endowed with rights. Although the word was first used to describe and protect people with autism, it has since then expanded to comprise today, apart from the persons with autism-spectrum disorders, persons with other learning and behavioral disabilities, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD, dyscalculia and Tourette syndrome.

➢ **Autism Spectrum Disorders(ASD)** includes Autism, Asperger Syndrome and Pervasive Development Disorder. Autism Spectrum Disorders are neurodiverse conditions that affect the way people communicate and interact with other people being characterized by rigid thinking, restrictive and repetitive behaviors, and social communication challenges. People with ASD may be overly dependent on routines, highly sensitive to changes in their environment, to

bright lights, noises, smells, textures or tastes, may display inappropriate behavior, for example, interrupting conversation and limited imagination.

➢ **Dyslexia** causes difficulties with reading, writing and spelling, with working memory and short term memory, with rapid naming, concentration and time management and organization. (Cochran)

➢ **Dyspraxia**is a form of Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD). The disorder affects fine motor skills – the co-ordination of small muscles, such as the hands and fingers – and gross motor skills – the co-ordination of large muscles, such as the arms, legs and torso. People with dyspraxia experience difficulties with large and/or small movements which may affect balance, fatigue levels, hand-eye coordination, rhythm, hand movements or manipulation skills; reading and writing difficulties; over sensitive to taste, light, touch or noise; poor sense of time, speed, distance, weight, or sense of direction; organizational or planning difficulties; difficulties with accuracy, concentration or following instruction; slowly adaptation to new or unpredictable situations. (Barr, 2019)

➢ **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)** is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders of childhood lasting often into adulthood, it involves the part of the brain that controls impulses, self-regulation and inhibition and it is characterized by a persistent pattern of inattention (that makes it difficult for people to finish tasks) and/or hyperactivity and impulsivity (leading people to speak and act without thinking, to interrupt others and to have difficulty waiting their turn).Poor concentration may lead people with ADHD to become absent-minded, easily distracted and easily bored or having poor organizational skills. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019)

➢ **Dyscalculia**is a neurological condition that causes a specific and persistent difficulty in understanding numbers which can lead to a diverse range of difficulties with mathematics such as sizing, ordering, and reading and writing numbers. It can occur singly but often co-occurs with other specific learning difficulties, such dyslexia and/or dyspraxia. (British Dyslexia Association)

➢ **Tourette Syndrome**is a type of Tic Disorder, that causes a person to make involuntary, repetitive movements and vocalizations called tics. Individuals with Tourette Syndrome (TS) have had at least two motor tics (ex: blinking, eye rolling, grimacing, shoulder shrugging, jumping etc.) and at least one vocal/ phonic tic (whistling, coughing, tongue clicking, animal sounds, saying random words and phrases, swearing (NHS, 2018) in some combination (Tourette Association of America).

Neurodiversity is thus today a standard to fight against the stigma associated to these persons, especially insisting on the richness their view on the world may bring to a company.

4. THE NEURODIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

4.1 The benefits of the neurodiversity in the workplace

Along history, there are numerous examples of neurodivergent persons who, albeit having faced with unusual challenges for neurotypical persons, knew how to take advantage of their unique abilities and excelled in a certain field of activity: British Physicist Paul Dirac (autism and Asperger), Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Shakespeare (ADHD), physicist Albert Einstein (dyslexia), actor Peter Sellers (Asperger) (Kleiner, 2014), Steve Jobs (dyslexia), the Virgin Group founder, Richard Branson (dyslexia), the founder of Jet Blue Airways, David Neeleman, Canadian actor Dan Aykroyd (Asperger), Jim Carrey (ADHD) (State of Mind). Thus, using the neurodiversity concept to take account of individual neurological differences, a neurodivergent person's potential is meant to be highlighted, in terms of their

strengths, which could contribute to getting a competitive advantage when adequately appreciated and harnessed by employers.

Dyslexic persons, for instance, can be regarded in terms of their capacity to think visually and their skills in the entrepreneurship field, related to creativity and their ability to see the whole picture. Dyslexia is accompanied by high visual-spatial abilities, confirming the hypothesis according to which impairments of the left hemisphere of the brain accompany the right hemisphere's strengths. A series of studies conducted has identified an association of dyslexia to the speed of recognizing impossible figures, which suggests dyslexia is associated to a type of enhanced ability to process the visual-spatial information globally (holistically) rather than locally (part by part) (Károlyi et al., 2003); this ability can prove quite beneficial for workplaces requiring three-dimensional thinking, such as astrophysics, molecular biology, genetics and engineering (Armstrong, 2015). The Facebook Vice-President for Northern Europe states that dyslexics are often capable of seeing connections that others cannot and create narrations which can simplify complex tasks or products. The global head of human resources for retail banking and wealth management at HSBC points out that the abilities that companies need are evolving fast, with an accent laid more and more now on empathy, creative thinking, innovative problem-solving and the possibility to communicate and build relationships in more networks, all these representing fields in which dyslexics thrive (Taylor, 2019).

People with ADHD can be regarded as possessing a talent for new learning opportunities; they can easily perform multi-tasking, working better under stressful situations, with numerous inputs. Also, they are more susceptible for creativity and, given the right incentive, they can "hyperfocus".

People with autism spectrum disorders have an inclination toward working with computer systems, and they can be regarded in light of their ease in adapting to mathematical computation systems or programming activities. Autistic people and those with Asperger are more prone to get higher scores in musical intelligence, as they are better detail-oriented and they have enhanced visual-spatial skills than other people. According to a data analyst of the SAP SuccessFactors Company, diagnosed with autism, people on the autism spectrum have a various set of skills and they prove to be very skilled in a whole range of fields (Elias, 2017), apart from all these, turning out to be punctual, dedicated and loyal employees. The benefits from hiring an autistic person can be among the most varied, going from the possibility to cover some jobs that are hard to fill in among the neurotypicals (such as software testing, customer support); they register less products and services' flaws rate and their corporate communication is more direct and more effective, taking account of the fact that the neuroatypicals do not understand heavy, nuanced language and complicated speech (Kişescu, 2017) (figure4).

Nowadays, an increase in the weight of employers who are morefriendly toward neurodivergent persons is noticed, precisely because they are starting to see the advantages of this approach. For example, Auticon is an IT consulting company who exclusively hire people in the autism-spectrum; the company strongly believes autistic adults often have extraordinary cognitive skills, but many of them have trouble finding or holding on to a normal job.

This approach of the company had led to a significant growth both of its profit, and also of the work force, setting a major recruitment action in Great Britain as its high priority (Munn, 2019).
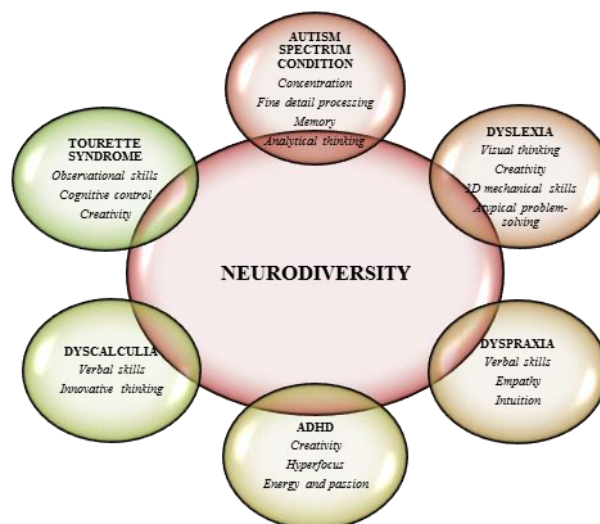
Figure 4 *Neurodiversity in terms of strengths*
Sources: Genius Within, *What is Neurodiversity?*;CIPD, 2018

4.2 Ways of creating a supportive and inclusive work environment for neurodiverse employees

Having regard to the fact that any employee wants to enjoy a workplace where there is a clear communication, a quiet space where to be able to focus and an inclusive management style who consider every person's needs, we may say that the adjustments made by organizations to support neurodivergent employees turn out to be beneficial for all employees (Morgan, 2018).

When talking about neurodiversity and neurodiverse work force, it is essential that, apart from taking into consideration potential benefits they can bring, the related challenges are also considered. Thus, when talking about recruitment, hiring, training and development ofneurodivergent persons we have to start from the understanding of the fact that each person is different and, as such, various accommodations to the workplace may be needed.

The literature in the field and examples of good practices of companies involved in hiring neurodivergent persons show that there are numerous ways of ensuring a supportive and inclusive work environment for them:

a) Rethinking recruitment

If employers tend to be too rigid in homogenizing the descriptions of competency-based places of work, there is the risk of excluding neurodivergent applicants which can excel in certain fields, but who show low performance in others. This is why it is essential that, when recruiting, companies ensure descriptions as clear and concise as possible of the roles to fulfil, ensuring a clear demarcation between skills and experience the applicant should possess or would be preferable to possess, facilitating easy identification of the basic competences the job requires from the applicant (CIPD, 2018). Another problematic matter may turn out to be the fact that conventional face-to-face job interview is often a test involving "social skills" (Lindzon, 2019). Such an assessment type may be a disadvantage for neurodivergent persons, making it more difficult for them to show their skills, and in fact excluding them from the roles they could have had. An eloquent example of this situation is the fact that candidates with Asperger can have difficulties looking the interviewer in the eye, and numerous autistic persons have an unusual tone of voice or peculiar cadence as compared to the rest of the world and all these things can be misinterpreted (Morgan, 2018; Love, 2019).

A way by which the company declares itself open to accept candidates with different styles of thinking is by including a statement of diversity and inclusion in the job description, by which it declares it is open to discuss reasonable workplace adjustments (CIPD, 2018).

An example of rethinking the way of recruiting comes from the SAP Company (2017) which replaced formal job interviews with recruitment discovery workshops. Starting from the idea that using traditional methods renders the evaluation of people on the autism spectrum difficult, the company requires applicants to fill out a questionnaire in which to enter their interests and experience outside work, instead of submitting CVs and participating in standard job interviews. After examining applications, candidates meeting the job description are invited to a discovery workshop within the company, consisting in completing as many tasks as possible, all the activities being designed with the purpose of creating a comfort zone around each individual, as such that their strengths may be determined. Thus, the focus switches from general communication and socialization skills to specific attributes and competences, needed to accomplish the work. This process enables the company to sell the way in which potential candidates initiate, solve problems and communicate in the job's context. Hiring managers are not present during recruitment workshops, which allows applicants to spend a day working on a project without any pressure, but at the end of a workshop, they are handed over a profile for each candidate before meeting any of the applicants.

b) Increasing awareness on neurodiversity

When managers are unaware of an employee's neurological state or when neurodivergent employees are not fully aware of the ways in which these states could affect their thinking capacity in fulfilling certain tasks at the workplace, a series of problems related to their low performance can arise. A solution to prevent performance-related problems which could turn out to be effective is ensuring an awareness about this state, since the key to success is ensuring a work environment where employees are accepted and are given the opportunity to assert their strengths. Employers should be proactive, providing information about neurodiversity to both employees with neurological conditions and those without such conditions (Morgan, 2018). In that regard, managers need training sessions, as such as to get acquainted with the support sources to neurodivergent employees, helping them recognize, facilitate and show their strengths in order to achieve greater individual productivity (Orduña, 2019). Also, such training sessions, various campaigns and workshops, as well as internal communication in the company may be of help to employees as well, making them better understand what to expect from new colleagues, in terms of differentiation or need to make workplace accommodations, thus leading to finding new ways to support and better work with them (Austin and Pisano, 2017).

c) Ensuring a supportive environment and workplace adjustments

Employers are bound by law to provide reasonable adjustments in the workplace to people with disabilities; however, having regard to the fact that the key to success for any company is securing a flexible workplace to enable each employee to assert their strengths, we can say that these adjustments need to be ensured to all employees, regardless of disability or neurodiversity status(Munn, 2019). In order to make the most of the neurodivergent employees' trumps and increase their productivity, it is essential to know that they have special needs to be considered, sometimes requiring individual accommodations. Once a neurodivergent person has been hired, organizations have to think about how work duties are assigned. Clear communication is essential and it has to concentrate both on the employee's strengths, and on their neuralgic areas. For instance, it can prove to be usefulfor an autism spectrum person to receive instructions in a clear, concise, simple speech, to utter what is necessary and when. Also, in order to avoid

unexpected asking of challenging questions for them, which could cause them discomfort, the company may deem it beneficial to convey questions in advance (Burnett, 2019).

Having regard to the fact that not everybody works best in the same conditions, the company may learn a great deal about an employee by observing them where they would rather work. As a consequence, enhanced attention should be paid to employees' sensory preferences and sensory environments which could turn out to be adverse, such as the example of open-space offices, involving a lot of background noise, strong lighting and congestion. A potential accommodation to these conditions could be the use of office compartments and low lighting, telephones that light when there is a caller and noise cancellation headphones. Persons with ADHD may require minor adjustments to the work environment with regard to the fact that they need quiet spaces to work and flexibility in working hours. According to an autistic employee's testimony, breaks to talk to someone, which occurs quite often in an office, appear to be stressful while they are highly concentrated on a certain project; this could be solved using a series of specific equipment, such as headphones to reduce auditory overstimulation. An autistic employee managed to solve this inconvenience, creating a signaling system for their colleagues who stopped to talk, by placing a three-color sign on the outer side of his office: Red-to indicate that heis concentrating and is not to be disturbed; Yellow-to indicate that heis working, but they can stop to talk to her; Green-to indicate that heis not busy (Orduña, 2019; Love, 2019).

A series of companies is designing and using simple support systems for their new neurodivergent employees. For example, SAP defines two "support circles", one out of which is for the employee's workplace. The support circle for the workplace includes a team manager, a team friend, a life and work skills coach, a work mentor and a "business partner in the human resources field" to oversee a group of participants in the program. Team friends are staff members of the same team who provide support for daily tasks, work volume management and prioritization of actions. Life and work skills coaches usually come from social organizationspartners. Hewlett Packard Enterprise adopts a different approach, the company having developed the Dandelion program, in which they place new neurodivergent employees into groups of approximately 15 persons each, where they work alongside neurotypical colleagues in an approximate percent, while two managers and a consultant are tasked with addressing neurodiversity-related issues (Austin and Pisano, 2017). (figure5)
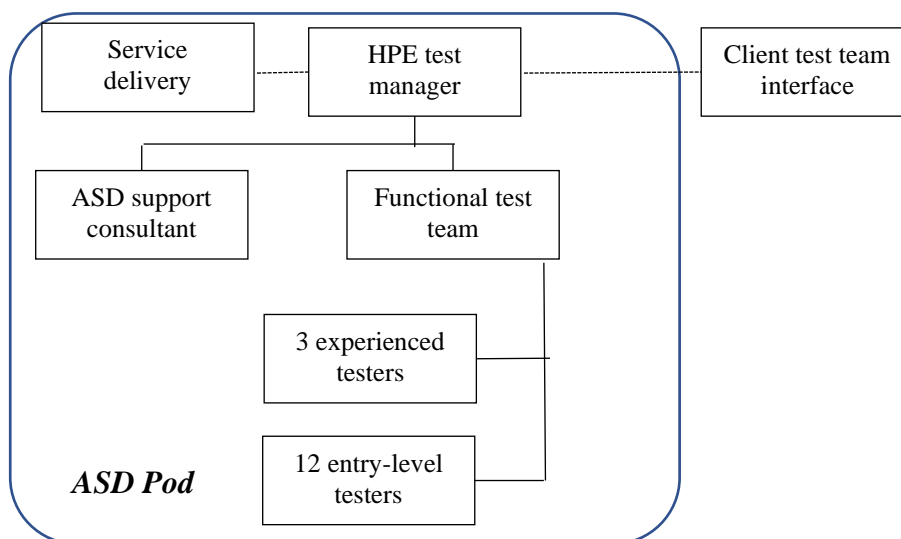

Figure 5 *Structure of a ASD Pod at Hewlett Packard Entreprise*
Source: Fieldhouse, 2015.

d) Customizing the opportunities for career development

Neurodivergent employees may feel that promotions are denied to them or that they are underestimated when it comes to undertaking greater responsibilities. (Burnett, 2019) Neurodivergent employees, like the other employees, need long-term career paths and it is crucial that the organization ensures equal development opportunities to the entire staff. This requires an approach of continuous assessment and development to take account of the special circumstances of neurodivergent persons' hiring, by objectively identifying all strengths and limitations of employees. For example, neurodivergent persons in companies embracing neurodiversity are submitted to the performance evaluations as the other employees, managers working, however, within these processes to determine specific objectives and even if some objectives may refer to the special conditions of participants, dissatisfactory performances are not accepted (Austin and Pisano, 2017).

4.2.1 Examples of programs developed by companies to support neurodiverse workforce

Neuroatypical persons, like the ones with autism, dyspraxia or dyslexia, have begun showing up on the lists of employers in companies; there are now companies like SAP, Microsoft, IBM, JPMorgan Chase & Co., Hewlett Packard Entreprise and others which sponsor programs to bring the autistic talent to the workforces.

JPMorgan Chase&Co, an American multinational investment bank and financial services holding company, after analyzing the permanent need for gifted employees – especially in fields related to technology, has focused on employing autistic persons, considering them to be an untapped talent pool.

Starting from this idea, the company launched an initiative called Autism at the workplace, a program focused on hiring autism spectrum persons and it hired more than 30 persons with autistic spectrum disorders, anticipating the hiring of several hundreds of such persons over the next years.

The company aims to look beyond the traditional interview process, by numerous partnerships with organizations which are more experienced in working with persons with autistic spectrum disorders, in order to find high qualification employees. Also, it works together with senior managers in the company to identify the jobs best suited to adults with autistic spectrum disorders and to be certain that they provide an inclusive work environment for these employees, helping them to excel. In this regard, the company's analyst who deals with quality assurance declares that their major attribute is to assess situations and come up with the best possible solutions in order to help these persons be more organized and more efficient.

Studies carried out by the company show that autistic persons' performance in certain jobs exceeds their co-workers' without autism; thus, the company demonstrated that including this untapped workforce enabled it to enjoy a unique mix of talents provided by these persons oriented toward details, rules, logic and with an independent thinking (Mahoney, 2017)

In 2013, the SAP Company started the Autism at the workplace program, which focuses on hiring persons on the autism spectrum. By this program, the company succeeded to incorporate over 175 employees on the autism spectrum in its organization and its objective for the future is to hire 650 other such persons.

In order to encourage a more inclusive workplace, the company has had to carefully examine its employment and management practices and see where neurodivergent candidates and employees could face difficulties. The company is aware that hiring a person on the autism spectrum is the just the first step in the process of creating a welcoming work environment for neurodivergent employees, as managers may need to have to adjust some of their practices to have an employee on the spectrum feel more comfortable in the work environment, also

assuming that team members should pay more attention to the way in which they communicate to one another (Woo, 2019).

SAP's Autism at the workplace program recorded a 90% retention rate of the hiring in the autism spectrum, further to creating a support system around these employees, which materializes by the presence of mentors, whenever they are needed, by the possibilities of the program's members to connect and share experiences.

To conclude, we may say that there is a series of practices which can apply to all employees in general, not just the ones with neurological conditions, as such that both sides benefit from it: providing clear instructions, management assurance that the staff is not overloaded, ensuring a beneficial work environment, free from distractions, allowing employees to channel on duties where they can excel, rather than mandating the continuous carry out of duties for which they are less suitable (Morgan, 2018).

5. CONCLUSIONS

Nowadays, both the neurodiversity term, and potential benefits from including it in the workplace are still at an early stage, of tapping and understanding; however, it becomes more and more clear that they should not be overlooked, and in this context, more and more companies are beginning to recognize that a neurodiverse workforce may bring a different perspective, coming with positive attributes such as creativity, lateral thinking, turning the workplace into one where persons with a series of strengths, different backgrounds and points of view contribute to their success, which could constitute a competitive advantage. However, like Munn (2019) says, the unique talents that neurodivergent persons can put to use at the workplace may be nipped by neurotypical ways of recruitment, communication and design of workplaces, aiming to identify the ways in which any weakness areas can be minimized.

This paper shows that adjustments made to enable neurodivergent persons to excel at the workplace may make a significant difference in a person's life at work, considerably increasing their potential to contribute to the company's success and build a long-lasting career.

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