



Autism @ Work

New insights on effective autism employment practices from a world-first global study

Dr. Anna Krzeminska
Associate Professor of
Management & Entrepreneurship

Dr. Charmine E. J. Härtel
Distinguished Professor of
Management & Work Psychology



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Study Background

- Research focus: identify challenges, learnings, and best practices in sustaining and scaling autism employment.
- Global reach: 12 countries across 5 continents.
- Quantitative design, surveyed 169 individuals in 33 organizations comprised of MNC, Government and Social Enterprise organisations.
- Five respondent groups: autistic individual, co-worker, supervisor, HR manager, executive/program director.



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Agenda

Mythbusting- surprising findings regarding

- Recruitment practices
- Full-time employment
- Adjustment compared to NT colleagues

Implications for future research

- Individual and contextual differences matter



Recruitment & Hiring

- While task-based recruitment was rated high, being given an individual interview was reported as being most helpful for both female and male employees.
- Other useful practices were: being offered a trial to see if work was suitable and communication that the job was designed for autistic people.
- Full-time and disclosed employees rated their satisfaction with recruitment practices much higher.

Recruitment practice	Female	Male
Advertised roles encouraging autistic people to apply	4.2 (3.8, 4.6)	3.2 (2.6, 3.8)
Advertised jobs exclusively for autistic people	4.2 (3.8, 4.6)	3.1 (2.4, 3.7)
Communicated that the job you applied for was designed for autistic employees	4.2 (3.8, 4.6)	3.1 (2.4, 3.7)
Gave you an individual interview (e.g., panel of people and just you - and maybe a support person)	4.4 (4.1, 4.7)	3.9 (3.4, 4.3)
Asked you to do a task instead of a formal interview (e.g., code a program, make/design something)	4.3 (3.9, 4.7)	3.1 (2.6, 3.7)
Offered a trial so you could work in the job to see if it was suitable	4.3 (3.9, 4.8)	3.5 (2.9, 4.1)



Full-time Employment and Workplace Satisfaction

- Employment type of autistic employees in our data:
 - 47% ongoing part-time employment
 - 24% ongoing full-time employment
 - 23% fixed term,
 - 6% seasonal/casual work
- Full-time autistic workers were
 - more satisfied with their work environment feature and organisational practices than part-time autistic workers
 - report more positive experiences of workplace inclusion than autistic workers in part-time employment

Work environment feature / Organisational practice	Full-time*	Part-time*
Autistic employee's satisfaction with job security	4.2 (3.9, 4.4)	3.6 (3.3, 3.9)
Autistic employee's satisfaction with organisation's commitment to your professional development	4.2 (3.9, 4.4)	3.7 (3.3, 4.0)
Autistic employee's satisfaction with workplace environment generally (e.g., lights, noise, smell, clutter, colours, patterns, etc.)	4.1 (3.8, 4.3)	3.3 (2.9, 3.6)
Autistic employee's satisfaction with workplace including you in most activities (the extent to which you feel included)	4.3 (4.1, 4.6)	3.6 (3.3, 4.0)
Autistic employee's satisfaction with career advancement opportunities	3.7 (3.5, 4.0)	2.9 (2.6, 3.3)
Autistic employee's satisfaction with workplace's accommodation of your needs	4.2 (3.9, 4.5)	3.6 (3.2, 4.0)
Autistic employee's satisfaction with relationship with your co-workers (generally)	4.3 (4.1, 4.5)	3.9 (3.7, 4.2)
Autistic employee's satisfaction with work team's acceptance and understanding of you	4.4 (4.1, 4.6)	3.8 (3.4, 4.1)
Autistic employee's satisfaction with ability to be yourself at work	4.2 (3.9, 4.5)	3.6 (3.2, 3.9)
Autistic employee's satisfaction with number of average weekly hours worked	4.4 (4.1, 4.6)	3.8 (3.5, 4.2)

Full-time Employment and Job Security



- Autistic employees consistently reported a higher average of feeling secure when employed full-time compared to part-time.
- Protection against working excessive hours and a fair employment contract received the highest average rating.

Feeling secure about:	Full-time*	Part-time*
Access to work that provides the income I require	4.2 (3.9, 4.5)	3.6 (3.2, 4.0)
Protection against unfair dismissal from employment	4.2 (3.8, 4.5)	3.5 (3.1, 3.9)
A fair employment contract	4.3 (4.1, 4.6)	3.8 (3.4, 4.1)
Having a job I want (being able to do work that interests me)	4.0 (3.7, 4.3)	3.5 (3.1, 3.8)
Control over my work tasks	4.0 (3.8, 4.3)	3.4 (3.1, 3.7)
Opportunities to gain, retain and use skills for work	4.1 (3.8, 4.3)	3.3 (2.9, 3.6)
Protection against accidents and ill-health linked to work	4.3 (4.0, 4.6)	3.4 (3.1, 3.8)
Protection against having to work excessive or “anti-social” hours	4.4 (4.1, 4.6)	4.0 (3.7, 4.3)



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Adjustments

- Overwhelmingly, *both* autistic and non-autistic employees requested the same adjustments.
- Access to a job coach and a customised job design were most frequently requested by autistic employees.
- Job autonomy and good ergonomics were requested most frequently by non-autistic employees.

Adjustment requested	Only autistic employees request this		Only non-autistic employees request this		Both autistic and non-autistic employees request this	
	N	% of Total	N	% of Total	N	% of Total
Customised job design to suit their skills and interests	6	33.3%	1	5.6%	9	50.0%
Autonomy to schedule when they work	3	16.7%	2	11.1%	11	61.1%
Autonomy to decide how they carry out work	1	5.6%	2	11.1%	12	66.7%
Doing only one task at a time	6	31.6%	1	5.3%	10	52.6%
Asking for a great deal of information from their manager and co-workers about their job performance	5	27.8%	3	16.7%	8	44.4%
Good ergonomics	1	5.3%	2	10.5%	15	78.9%
A workplace free from excessive noise	6	31.6%	1	5.3%	11	57.9%
A comfortable climate at work in terms of temperature and humidity	1	5.3%	0	0.0%	15	78.9%
A job that occurs in a clean environment		5.3%	1	5.3%	14	73.7%
Having only one person to report to	5	26.3%	2	10.5%	6	31.6%
Having a job coach	8	42.1%	1	5.3%	5	26.3%
Support (like a buddy/mentor)	5	27.8%	0	0.0%	11	61.1%
Instructions in writing	3	16.7%	1	5.6%	12	66.7%



Individual and Contextual Differences Matter

- Autistic employees who are **employed full-time** are **more secure and satisfied** in their roles compared to part-time employees
- Autistic employees report to be **more satisfied** with **work environment** as well as various **organisational practices** and **adjustments** when they are **female** or are **disclosed** or have **no primary care giving responsibilities** or require **less than substantial support**.
- **Social enterprises** were reported as having the **most satisfied and secure employees**. This was **followed by private sector businesses**, non-profit, and then government/education sector
- Compared to other geographical regions, **autistic employees are least satisfied and secure in their role in ANZ**

Disclosure and Workplace Satisfaction

- Employees who disclosed their condition also reported an increased average of workplace satisfaction.
- Fairness of job performance assessment by immediate supervisor and acceptance by supervisor were reported as most significant.

Work environment feature / Organisational practice	Not Disclosed to Employer*	Disclosed to Employer*
Autistic employee's satisfaction with workplace's accommodation of your needs	3.1 (2.4, 3.8)	4.1 (3.8, 4.3)
Autistic employee's satisfaction with direct supervisor's performance rating of you (the fairness to which it's assessed)	3.5 (2.9, 4.1)	4.4 (4.2, 4.6)
Autistic employee's satisfaction with relationship with your direct supervisor	3.7 (3.2, 4.1)	4.4 (4.2, 4.6)
Autistic employee's satisfaction with communication between you and your direct supervisor	3.3 (2.7, 3.8)	4.2 (4.0, 4.4)
Autistic employee's satisfaction with work team's acceptance and understanding of you	3.4 (2.7, 4.0)	4.2 (4.0, 4.5)
Autistic employee's satisfaction with direct supervisor's acceptance and understanding of you	3.5 (2.9, 4.2)	4.4 (4.1, 4.6)
Autistic employee's satisfaction with ability to be yourself at work	3.3 (2.6, 3.9)	4.0 (3.8, 4.3)
Autistic employee's satisfaction with work hours (time of day / night)	3.5 (3.0, 4.1)	4.3 (4.1, 4.5)
Autistic employee's satisfaction with number of average weekly hours worked	3.5 (2.8, 4.1)	4.2 (4.0, 4.5)

Disclosure and Job Security



Employees who disclosed their condition reported an increased sense of security compared to those who did not.

Feeling secure about:	Not Disclosed to Employer*	Disclosed to Employer*
Protection against unfair dismissal from employment	3.1 (2.4, 3.8)	4.0 (3.7, 4.2)
A fair employment contract	3.4 (2.8, 4.0)	4.2 (4.0, 4.4)
Protection against having to work excessive or “anti-social” hours	3.4 (2.8, 4.0)	4.3 (4.1, 4.5)



What Is Most Helpful In The Workplace?

Autistic employees indicated a job that:



Requires a variety of skills



Requires depth of knowledge and expertise



Has a low risk of accidents

What autistic workers say helps them in the workplace	N Full-time	N Part-time	Percentage of Full-time workers that say helpful	Percentage of Part-time workers that say helpful
Customised job design to suit skills and interests	88	62	61%	45%
Work activities that have direct and clear information about their performance	57	38	82%	55%
A job that requires unique ideas or solutions to problems	48	30	83%	57%
A job that requires a variety of skills	50	34	90%	65%
A job requiring depth of knowledge and expertise	55	31	84%	65%
The opportunity to develop close friendships at work	47	25	81%	52%
A job that has a low risk of accidents	57	36	95%	75%
Support like a buddy/mentor	52	34	69%	44%



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What Is Most Helpful In The Workplace?



Helpful to the majority of female autistic employees was instructions in writing, work activities that have direct & clear information about their performance, support like a buddy/mentor, and customised job design to suit skills and interests.



Helpful to the majority of male autistic employees was activities that have direct and clear information about their performance.

What autistic workers say helps them in the workplace	N Female	N Male	Percent of Females Saying This is Helpful	Percent of Males Saying This Is Helpful
Customised job design to suit skills and interests	90	58	62%	45%
Work activities that have direct and clear information about their performance	56	35	79%	57%
Support (like a buddy/mentor)	53	31	74%	39%
Instructions in writing	57	31	81%	42%



Thank you

autismcrc.com.au

A/Professor Anna Krzeminska

Anna.Krzeminska@mq.edu.au

Professor Charmine E. J. Härtel

Charmine.Hartel@monash.edu



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Autism CRC is the world's first national, cooperative research centre focused on autism. We are taking a whole-of-life approach to autism focusing on early years, school years and adulthood.