

New insights on effective autism employment practices



Background

According to ABS 2018 data, more than one third of people on the autism spectrum are unemployed. This is more than three times the rate for people with disability and almost eight times the rate for people without disability.



Aim

The purpose of this global survey study was to investigate the challenges, learnings and best practices organisations have in sustaining and scaling skilled autism employment.

Project findings will benefit autistic adults who seek employment by identifying and developing recommendations for effective, sustainable, and scalable autism employment practices/models that are both applicable to a wide range of organisations, and improve the opportunities and workplace outcomes of autistic adults when applying and participating in such programs.



Who took part?

169

autistic employees, co-workers and supervisors of autistic employees as well as HR directors and executives from 33 for-profit, non-profit and social enterprise organisations across 12 countries.



How we did the research

Prior to developing this study, we conducted a thorough analysis of the existing research centred on autism-inclusive employment, including hiring practices, management processes, barriers to equitable and sustainable employment, perceptions of inclusive hiring, and others. We found that **most studies were small scale qualitative studies.**

This study represents **the first large scale, global quantitative study** in the area and thus an important contribution to the available research evidence in that it **provides the opportunity to develop evidence-based conclusions that go beyond single cases** and compare different employer types and locations.

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What did we find?

Helpful organisation practices



Most workplace practices (e.g., recruitment, accommodation, inclusion) included in the survey were considered important, but respondents reported differences in how helpful they were.



Top three helpful recruitment practices as perceived by autistic workers are an individual interview, a task instead of a formal interview, and communication that the job was designed for autistic employees, although notable differences between female and male autistic employees were reported.



Compared with co-workers, autistic workers reported similar levels of employment-related security; requested and received very similar workplace adjustments, and were more satisfied with their relationship with their direct supervisor, although differences were reported in gender, employment/ employer type and other factors.

Individual and contextual differences matter



Autistic employees are more likely to be satisfied with their work environment, organisational practices and adjustments if they are female, disclosed, have no primary care giving responsibilities, or require less than substantial support.



Autistic employees who are employed full-time are more secure and satisfied in their roles compared to part-time employees.



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.

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Who did the research?



MACQUARIE
University
SYDNEY · AUSTRALIA

MONASH
BUSINESS
SCHOOL

The research was led by A/Prof Anna Krzeminska (Macquarie Business School) and Prof Charmine Härtel (Monash Business School).

Find out more

Download the final report and executive summary on the Autism CRC website:
autismcrc.com.au/reports/autism-at-work

