

The Effect of Neurodiversity on State Defense and Cybersecurity

Muhammad Asrudin¹⁾ *, Anak Agung Banyu Perwita²⁾, Susilo Adi Purwantoro³⁾, Editha Praditya⁴⁾, Hikmat Zakky Almubaroq⁵⁾, Subarkah Hananto⁶⁾

^{1,2,3,4,5)} Defense Management Study Program, Faculty of Defense Management, Indonesia Defense University

⁶⁾ Occupational Therapist, Theragoo Pediatric Development Center, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author

Email: muhammad.asrudin@mp.idu.ac.id

Abstract

Neurodiversity is as much a part of human diversity as cultural or gender diversity. This perspective counters the traditional view of neurological conditions as deficits, and encourages recognition of the unique strengths of those with these conditions. The research method used is the critical analysis method. This method not only focuses on collecting empirical data, but also emphasizes a better understanding of the social, cultural and historical context. Neurodiversity encompasses a wide range of individuals with conditions such as autism and dyslexia. The main focus is to capitalize on their unique strengths. An inclusive design approach is essential to optimize the talents that individuals bring to the team. By implementing a strategic approach that supports the strengths of diverse team members, organizations can increase innovation and create an inclusive work environment. Workers with a diversity of intelligences report increased confidence when their job responsibilities match their skills and strengths. In addition, increasing understanding of neurodiversity in the workplace helps all staff members to better understand and appreciate neurodiverse coworkers, thereby increasing cooperation and morale. The cognitive diversity possessed by neurodiverse teams can increase productivity and innovation, which is particularly important in sectors such as state defense and cybersecurity.

Keywords: Neurodiversity, Inclusive Design, Diversity, State Defense, Cyber Security

INTRODUCTION

Individuals have a major role to the organization's behavior, whether they get along alone or as part of a group, in response to organizational expectations, or as a result of external pressures. Individual variations can generate innovation, fun, and happiness in the workplace, but they can also lead to conflict and dissatisfaction. Managers must be skilled in selecting and developing personnel who will be beneficial to the organization. They must be aware of individuals who are capable of successful performance, have the potential for growth, and collaborate effectively with others within the framework of the company as a whole. Maintaining harmonious relationships in the workplace has always been a critical ability, but the rapid pace of change in organizations and the external world puts additional strain on individuals at work. Sensitivity to individual needs and variations, particularly in terms of resilience, becomes increasingly important when businesses start on change projects. When change appears to be forced from without, it may require the development of new mindsets, attitudes, and perceptions that allow individuals to cope with and adjust to their new surroundings.

Effective human resource management requires not only a comprehension of individual personnel, but also an awareness of the organization's culture. What is expected and acceptable in one workplace may not be the same in another. For example, in one organization, innovation and uniqueness may be valued while bureaucracy undermines them in another. Individual distinctions must be recognised, respected, and valued, as well as being attentive to different requirements. In an organizational environment, neurodiversity refers to the inclusion and acceptance of people with a variety of neurological backgrounds, including those with developmental disabilities. It is believed that one in every seven persons is neurodivergent, therefore many organizations are already neurodiverse. Neurodiverse people provide various skill sets, perspectives, and backgrounds to common corporate goals. Organizations that actively

recruit, retain, and develop neurodiverse personnel may gain a competitive advantage. However, developing a neuroinclusive organization involves more than just sound recruiting practices: it must include a fundamental rethinking of how the organization perceives work and teamwork. This includes best practices for recruiting, training, development, retention, and progression (Mullins, 2019).

In today's increasingly varied and complex workplace, integrating neurodiverse individuals into teams has become a widely discussed and important topic. Neurodiversity refers to the natural range of neurological differences, including autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other cognitive variations. These differences provide diverse perspectives and skill sets that can significantly enhance team performance and creativity (Hewlett, Marshall, & Sherbin, 2024). However, it is crucial to address the potential challenges and constraints of managing neurodiverse teams effectively.

The neurodiversity paradigm recognizes these differences not as deficits but as variations that contribute unique strengths and perspectives. It emphasizes celebrating and harnessing neurodiversity as a valuable resource (Armstrong, 2011). Programs such as the DXC Dandelion Program illustrate this principle in action. As highlighted in the 2018 progress report of the DXC Dandelion Program (DXC Technology, 2018), its structured approach integrates individuals on the autism spectrum into IT, data science, and cybersecurity roles across Australia. This program not only enhances the skill sets of neurodiverse individuals but also fosters organizational understanding of neurodiversity within teams.

Recent research underscores the importance of inclusive workplace practices in maximizing the contributions of neurodiverse individuals. Botha and Frost (2020) emphasize tailored onboarding, mentorship, and supportive team environments to help neurodiverse employees thrive. Similarly, Scott et al. (2019) highlight the positive impact of workplace adjustments, such as flexible hours and clear communication strategies, in enabling neurodiverse employees to excel. By acknowledging and valuing these unique cognitive styles, organizations can unlock innovative solutions, enhance team dynamics, and improve overall performance. Neurodiversity in teams should not only be celebrated but also strategically harnessed as a source of competitive advantage in today's workforce.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research employs a critical analysis method, which, as highlighted by Gee (2011) and Fairclough (2013), examines and evaluates phenomena, texts, or ideas through diverse theoretical and critical lenses. This approach goes beyond the collection of empirical data, prioritizing a comprehensive understanding of the social, cultural, and historical contexts that shape the subject under study. Such methods are particularly effective in identifying embedded ideologies, discourses, and power structures within societal systems.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Amanda Kirby's concept of neurodiversity emphasizes the idea that neurological differences, such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia, and other conditions, are natural variations of the human brain rather than deficits or disorders. This perspective encourages recognizing and valuing the unique strengths and capabilities that neurodiverse individuals bring to the table. Kirby argues that traditional workplace environments are often ill-suited to accommodate neurodiverse employees, which can result in untapped potential and lost opportunities for innovation. By adopting a neurodiversity-friendly approach, employers can unlock the full potential of their workforce (Smith & Kirby, 2021). Accepting these differences as natural and

beneficial rather than problematic. Kirby's concept of neurodiversity challenges the traditional deficit-based model and advocates for a more inclusive and supportive approach. By embracing neurodiversity, organizations can benefit from a wider range of perspectives, drive innovation, and improve overall performance and productivity.

Neurodiversity is a valuable part of human diversity, similar to cultural or gender diversity. This perspective challenges the traditional view of neurological conditions as deficits, advocating instead for the recognition of unique strengths associated with these conditions. (Silberman, 2015). Neurodiverse teams encompass a broad spectrum of cognitive profiles, including individuals with conditions such as autism and dyslexia. When considering strategies to support such teams, it is crucial to shift focus from merely accommodating challenges to harnessing their unique strengths. The emerging field of neurodiversity in the workplace emphasises the need for inclusive design approaches that capitalise on the diverse talents neurodiverse individuals bring to the table. The Diversity for Design (D4D) framework offers a novel participatory design model tailored to neurodiverse children, emphasising the importance of leveraging their strengths while addressing potential difficulties. Moreover, successful initiatives like the DXC Dandelion Programme in Australia demonstrate the significant impact of fostering partnerships and incorporating neurodiverse talent into the workforce. By implementing strategic approaches that nurture the strengths of neurodiverse team members, organizations can unlock innovation and foster a truly inclusive work environment.

The emphasis of workplace neurodiversity support is on neurological differences. Environments that are inclusive are a result of an appreciation for the inherent diversity in human thought, learning, perception, and interaction. Stigmas are removed when companies and workers are able to have candid conversations about how to operate in a more inclusive environment. When their work responsibilities complement their skill set, abilities, and strengths, neurodivergent employees report feeling more confident and admiring of themselves. Many neurodivergent individuals may find that workplace inclusion boosts their confidence in other spheres as well, such interacting with others and taking part in community activities. Many workers who identify as neurotypical find it interesting to learn about neurodiversity and take satisfaction in working in inclusive environments (Smith & Kirby, 2021). They are better able to relate to and comprehend their neurodivergent coworkers as well as other friends, collaborators, and coworkers when they operate in an environment like this. The study's findings showed that during the analysis period, individuals with autism who took part in the assisted employment program significantly raised their quality of life (Sniderman, Buffi, Holdowski, & Buckley, 2023). The group who used the sheltered work paradigm, however, did not see a discernible increase in their standard of living. In conclusion, assisted employment has been shown to be an effective strategy for raising neurodivergent people's mental health and quality of life.

A healthy work culture is fostered by providing an inclusive atmosphere for those with neurodiverse backgrounds. The World Health Organization (WHO) supports this notion, stating that most mental health professionals concur that an individual's workplace environment can have a significant impact on their mental well-being, even though it is difficult to quantify the impact of work alone on personal identity, self-esteem, and social recognition. Establishing a diverse and inclusive corporate culture is essential to success. Every business should aspire to create a work environment where workers feel appreciated, included, valued, and at ease despite coming from a variety of backgrounds and life experiences. Increasing knowledge of neurodiversity in the workplace helps to inform all staff members about the difficulties that some coworkers may face. It also provides a chance to recognize and appreciate the unique qualities they bring to the team.

A neurodiverse workforce can increase output in general. A person with autism can have capabilities such as average to extremely high intellect, the capacity to think in pictures,

recognize patterns, execute repetitive jobs where precision, regularity, and norms are crucial, as well as traits like honesty, loyalty, and fairness (Marble, Chabria, & Jayaraman, 2024). Individuals with autism can have strengths that increase productivity and effectiveness. The ability to perceive the broad picture, technical aptitude, the ability to think creatively, and image thinking are among the characteristics linked to dyslexia. These qualities help to create a broad skill set, which may be beneficial in a variety of organizations by encouraging creativity, problem-solving talents, and a distinct viewpoint. Hyper-focus, increased levels of creativity and curiosity, originality, invention, leadership potential, and high levels of energy are among the qualities linked to ADHD (Marble, Chabria, & Jayaraman, 2024).

Those with exceptional intelligence and intellectual creativity who are willing to use their skills to tackle the most critical issues facing the country are needed by state defense agencies. Government officials and business representatives outline the seriousness of the state defense threats confronting the United States, the need for a workforce with STEM skills and technological know-how, and the necessity of filling positions requiring extreme precision, close attention to detail, and a low tolerance for error (Weinbaum, 2023). Officials and specialists discussed the need for neurodiversity in the state defense sector in both public and private settings. They spoke about missions that are too significant and too challenging to be left to those who merely apply conventional thinking to their minds. The word "neurodivergent" refers to a broad range of cognitive disorders, such as Tourette's syndrome, dyslexia, dyscalculia, attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and autism spectrum disorder. There are already neurodivergent workers in the state defense field. In addition to being military personnel, they are working as engineers, security clearance investigators, intelligence officials, and more. There are probably some high-ranking executives among them, as well as some senior managers. Many of these people, however, are afraid of prejudice and discrimination and deliberately try to conceal their neurodiversity, wasting energy that could be focused on their goal while depending on the gifts that their differences bring.

Neurodiversity in teamwork can significantly enhance a country's defense capabilities by fostering a more innovative and adaptable environment. Individuals with different cognitive styles, such as those found in autism, ADHD, and dyslexia, contribute unique perspectives and problem-solving approaches (Marble, Chabria, & Jayaraman, 2024). This diversity can lead to more creative and effective strategies in complex and unpredictable defense scenarios. For example, individuals with autism might excel in pattern recognition and data analysis, critical for cybersecurity and intelligence roles, while those with ADHD may bring high energy and quick decision-making skills vital in high-pressure situations. Dyslexic team members often demonstrate strong spatial reasoning and out-of-the-box thinking, invaluable for strategic planning and operations. Embracing neurodiversity ensures a broader range of skills and ideas, enhancing a nation's ability to respond to threats with agility and innovation. This inclusive approach not only leverages the full potential of all personnel but also promotes a culture of acceptance and collaboration, further strengthening team cohesion and morale, which are crucial for national defense. Several studies and reports provide data supporting the positive impact of neurodiversity on teamwork and defense capabilities, namely:

1. Increased Innovation

A study by Hewlett, Marshall, and Sherbin published in the Harvard Business Review found that companies with diverse teams, including neurodiverse individuals, were 45% more likely to report growth in market share and 70% more likely to capture a new market. This suggests that diversity, including neurodiversity, drives innovation and competitive advantage. By actively recruiting and supporting neurodiverse individuals, companies can access a broader talent base. Many neurodiverse individuals have high levels of intelligence and specialized skills but may struggle in traditional interview processes or conventional work environments. By

adjusting hiring practices and workplace settings to be more inclusive, organizations can attract and retain highly skilled employees who may otherwise be overlooked.

According to studies, people with ADHD are often more creative than their colleagues without the disorder. This creative capacity is intimately related to seeking novelty and alternative thinking (Marble, Chabria, & Jayaraman, 2024). Divergent thinking is the ability to come up with several options or solutions for a certain issue in addition to coming up with unique or creative concepts. Adults with ADHD who exhibit high divergent thinking are also more impulsive, allowing for more free-form and unrestricted thought. Because they are more prone to take chances, embrace uncertainty and ambiguity, and examine unique or unusual ideas, people with ADHD are also more likely to think outside the box and be extremely inventive. People with ADHD frequently succeed in brainstorming and creative problem-solving.

When there is competition for incentives with others, people with ADHD come up with more creative ideas than when there isn't any. Future research is needed to determine the precise mechanism underlying this impact, but goal-directed motivation may be the primary factor behind the more creative accomplishments in real life that people with ADHD experience. Furthermore, the persons with ADHD report higher levels of creativity in some areas, suggesting that these individuals may be particularly successful at particular creative endeavors that align with their interests and skills (Boot, Nevicka, & Baas, 2017).

2. Job Performance

Neurodiverse employees often have higher productivity and job performance in roles that match their strengths (Sniderman, Buffi, Holdowski, & Buckley, 2023). For example, individuals with dyslexia often excel in roles requiring strong spatial reasoning and creative problem-solving, contributing to more effective and innovative solutions. People with ADHD frequently succeed in fields that call for innovation and creativity, such as marketing, design, advertising, and the arts. They also frequently thrive in brainstorming and creative problem-solving. People who have ADHD might hyperfocus on some things while having difficulty focusing on others. Hyperfocus, also known as a state of flow where one is totally absorbed in a job or endeavor and tunes out the outside world, describes prolonged periods of intense focus.

People who identify as neurodivergent encounter particular difficulties in achieving professional success. This could be partially caused by the way that certain companies lack inclusive procedures for neurodivergent people and are universally designed for the "neurotypical". The neurodiversity movement acknowledges the competitive benefit that neurodivergent workers offer to organizations, which is especially helpful for digital firms. Although productivity levels are not always easily quantifiable and differ among people, JPMorgan Chase estimated that workers in tech roles hired through their neurodiversity program are 90% to 140% more productive than others and consistently produce error-free work (Pano, 2022). These data points illustrate that incorporating neurodiverse individuals into teams, particularly in defense and cybersecurity roles, can lead to significant improvements in innovation, problem-solving, and overall effectiveness. In cybersecurity, the ability to detect subtle anomalies and patterns in large datasets is crucial for identifying potential threats. Neurodiverse individuals, particularly those with conditions such as autism, often excel in recognizing patterns and anomalies that others might overlook. This can lead to earlier detection of security breaches and more effective responses to cyber threats, ultimately protecting sensitive information and maintaining the integrity of defense systems. Defense and cybersecurity roles require advanced analytical skills to assess complex data and make strategic decisions. Neurodiverse individuals often possess exceptional analytical abilities, enabling them to approach problems from unique angles and develop innovative solutions. This can enhance the overall analytical capabilities of the team, leading to more robust and effective strategies in defense operations. The diverse cognitive approaches brought by neurodiverse individuals can foster greater creativity and innovation within teams. In defense and cybersecurity, where

innovative solutions are constantly needed to address evolving threats, the inclusion of neurodiverse team members can lead to groundbreaking advancements. Their unique perspectives can inspire new methodologies and technologies that improve the effectiveness of defense mechanisms.

This is the reason our educational institutions need to adopt a new perspective on neurodiversity. Learners must be involved in student-centered learning, where the process is guided by their own interests and abilities. Each student may then identify and build upon their own talents. Their deficiencies can also be remedied when they feel powerful and self-assured as learners. However, if we give up on them before they can even begin the game, we've made them feel like losers from the beginning. To maximize the potential of neurodiverse employees, state defense organizations must adapt their recruitment, training, and management practices. This includes implementing supportive workplace accommodations and fostering an inclusive culture.

3. Cybersecurity

Efforts to maintain defense and security are not only carried out by the TNI and POLRI but also are the rights and obligations of all Indonesian citizens. Therefore, we must be able to empower neurodiversity to maintain the integrity of the unitary state of the republic of Indonesia, especially in the field of cybersecurity because it is the right and duty of all Indonesian citizens. The State Defense System is a universal state defense system that protects state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the safety of the entire country from all threats. It is defined by Law No. 3 of 2002 on State Defense as involving all citizens, territories, and other national resources, as well as being planned ahead of time by the government and carried out in a total, integrated, directed, and comprehensive manner (Indonesia, 2024).

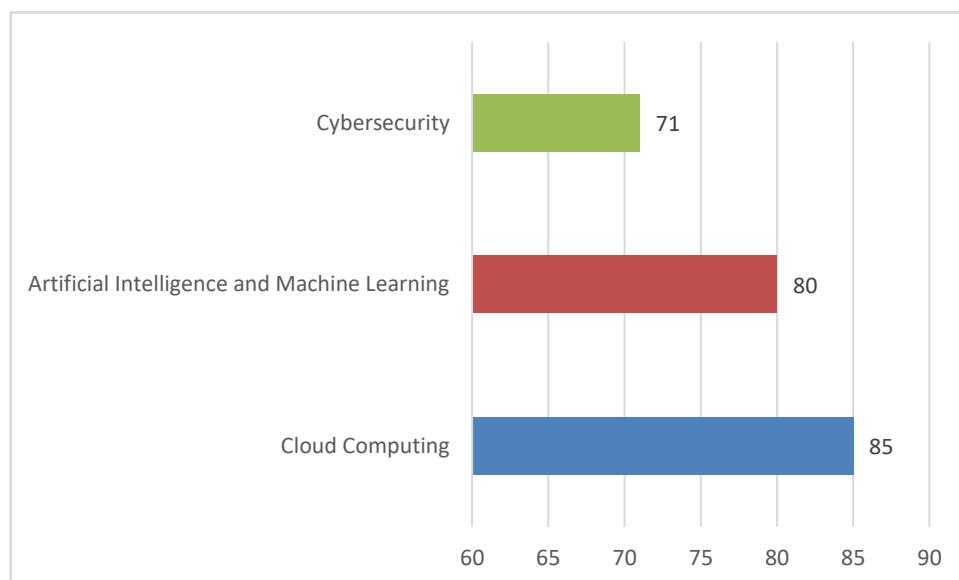


Figure 1. Current Digital Transformation Investment Areas (%)

Sources: (McKenzie, 2022)

Cyberattacks have impacted major technological corporations and vital national infrastructure in the last year. Thus, government and private institutions will always be at danger from cybersecurity attacks. It will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to totally prevent an incident. Investing in the development of cyber resilience can guarantee minimum interruption in the event of an attack and enable a quicker recovery following an incident. Although the possibility of a cyberattack is not new, its likelihood has grown due to the rapid digitalization of society. Since companies are frequently the targets of cyberattacks, they will be making significant investments in enhancing security in the future. Businesses understand that they must

invest in cyber preparation, which is why budgets for cybersecurity are just as crucial as those for cloud computing and AI. There is also a new threat in the future, Artificial Super Intelligence (ASI). A hypothetical software-based artificial intelligence (AI) system with cognitive capabilities beyond human intelligence is known as artificial superintelligence (ASI). Fundamentally, this superintelligent AI is capable of highly developed cognitive capabilities and reasoning abilities that are much above those of any human. Therefore, it takes extra effort to handle it (Mucci & Stryker, 2023). The goal of efforts to improve cybersecurity knowledge and abilities is to improve human resources and build a solid grasp of the field. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of this aspect since it has a direct influence on the country's development and competitiveness in the global cyberspace. Based on the quality and moral standards of the country's human resources, it is an essential component of cyber security and resilience at the national level (Praditya, et al., 2023).

Diverse teams bring a variety of perspectives and approaches to problem-solving. Research shows that neurodiverse individuals often possess unique cognitive abilities, such as attention to detail, pattern recognition, and exceptional memory, which are invaluable in fields such as data analysis, cybersecurity, and software development. By including neurodiverse team members, organizations can tap into these unique skills, resulting in more innovative solutions and improved performance (Hewlett, Marshall, & Sherbin, 2024). A report from the National Autism Network highlighted that individuals on the autism spectrum often excel in cybersecurity roles due to their heightened ability to focus on details and recognize patterns. This has led to initiatives like the collaboration between the UK Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) and the National Autistic Society to recruit neurodiverse individuals for cybersecurity positions. Neurodiverse individuals can excel in various professional environments, particularly those that value unique cognitive strengths. For instance, individuals with autism often exhibit exceptional attention to detail and pattern recognition skills, which are crucial in intelligence analysis and cybersecurity (Austin & Pisano, 2017).

Increased neurodiversity in the workforce is a goal for many of the leading science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) businesses, including Microsoft, SAP, and EY, even while many are concentrating on crucial diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts around race and gender. Neurodiversity refers to the inherent variance in our brains that results in variations in our cognitive, motor, and behavioral processes (Marble, Chabria, & Jayaraman, 2024). While autism was the primary focus of the first neurodiversity employment programs, many companies have now broadened their recruitment efforts to include people with dyslexia, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and other (often undiagnosed) disabilities that offer a fresh perspective to their workforce. To encourage economic growth and advancement, governments and economic developers have started to look to the high technology sector in recent decades. The IT industry is expanding steadily. In actuality, just 10 of these 161 jobs have middle annual incomes below the national median for all occupations by 2022, and high-tech occupations will increase more than 63% faster than all occupations, but a lot of Americans are either untrained or lack the skills required for jobs in IT or other related fields. Furthermore, in 2015, the percentage of people with disabilities employed in high-tech businesses was just 4.9% (Yang, 2017)

CONCLUSION

Neurodiversity should be seen as a valuable part of human diversity, similar to cultural or gender diversity, challenging traditional deficit-based views of neurological conditions. Embracing neurodiversity allows organizations to benefit from a wider range of perspectives and talents. Inclusive design approaches, such as the Diversity for Design (D4D) framework,

highlight the importance of capitalizing on the strengths of neurodiverse individuals while addressing the difficulties that may occur. Successful initiatives, such as the DXC Dandelion Program, demonstrate significant impact in integrating diverse talent into the workforce.

Creating an inclusive environment and encouraging honest conversations about working inclusively can boost the confidence and self-esteem of employees who are different. This inclusivity also enriches the experience of neurotypical employees, improving their understanding and collaboration with neurodivergent colleagues. Research shows that diverse teams, especially in areas such as cybersecurity and state defense, can significantly increase innovation and adaptability. Research shows that neurodiverse individuals often possess unique cognitive abilities, such as attention to detail and pattern recognition, which are particularly valuable in these fields. Overall, embracing neurodiversity in the workplace will foster a culture of acceptance and collaboration, leading to increased team cohesion and morale. By implementing practices that support and recognize the unique strengths of neurodiverse individuals, organizations can encourage innovation, improve performance and create a truly inclusive work environment. We believe cybersecurity is not something dark and exclusionary, we believe the future of cybersecurity is very bright, inclusive and powered by a new kind of brainpower which is neurodiversity.

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