Bachelorarbeit

Autismus und die Arbeitswelt

Inklusion im Arbeitskontext: eine qualitative Untersuchung und Handlungsempfehlungen für Unternehmen

Verfasst von
Baris Can

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Betreut von	Dr.in Gloria-Sophia Warmuth MSc.

Abstract

This bachelor's thesis examines how companies can create inclusive work environments for individuals on the autism spectrum, addressing a research gap in the Austrian and German-speaking context.

The theoretical framework covers the fundamentals of autism spectrum disorder, stigmatisation, masking, barriers in recruitment and disclosure, as well as HR measures and best practices, drawing on the Canary Code (Praslova, 2022) and the strategic model of Whelpley and Perrault (2021). A qualitative research design was applied, using six semi-structured expert interviews with two groups: three autistic individuals (Group A) and three HR professionals and diversity specialists (Group B), analysed through qualitative analysis by Meuser und Nagel (2009).

The findings reveal barriers across multiple levels. For example in recruitment, in everyday working life and disclosure. All three participants with autism reported long-term masking and avoided disclosing their diagnosis due to fear of negative consequences. Both groups identified a lack of knowledge among HR professionals and top management as a central obstacle to inclusion. A key finding is the gap between the inclusive measures described by the theoretical literature and HR specialists and the absence of such measures as experienced by individuals with autism.

Four recommendations for HR are derived: inclusive redesign of recruitment processes, knowledge-building and awareness-raising at all hierarchical levels, individual workplace adjustments as a standard offering independent of prior disclosure and the strategic embedding of inclusion in organisational culture. Central to all four is the principle of participation decisions should be made with, not for, employees with autism.