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## **Neuroinclusive HRM and Employee Creativity: The Mediating Role of Psychological Safety in the IT Industry of Sri Lanka**

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### **A B S T R A C T**

The increasing recognition of neurodiversity in modern workplaces has created a growing need for inclusive Human Resource Management (HRM) practices that support neurodivergent employees and enhance their contribution to organisational performance. This study examined the relationship between neuroinclusive HRM practices and employee creativity, while investigating the mediating role of psychological safety among neurodivergent employees in the IT industry of Sri Lanka. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory and Psychological Safety Theory, the study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional research design. Primary data were collected from 153 neurodivergent employees working in Sri Lankan IT organisations using a structured online questionnaire administered through Google Forms. Purposive sampling combined with snowball sampling techniques was employed to identify suitable respondents. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and the Sobel test with the support of SPSS software. The findings revealed that neuroinclusive HRM practices significantly and positively influenced employee creativity and psychological safety. Furthermore, psychological safety demonstrated a significant positive effect on employee creativity and significantly mediated the relationship between neuroinclusive HRM practices and employee creativity. The study highlights the strategic importance of creating psychologically safe and neuroinclusive workplaces to foster creativity, innovation, and sustainable organisational performance within the IT industry.

**Keywords:** Employee Creativity; IT Industry; Neurodivergent Employees; Neuroinclusive HRM; Psychological Safety

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### **1. Introduction**

Contemporary organisations have increasingly recognised that workforce diversity extends beyond visible demographic characteristics (Nair et al., 2025) to include cognitive diversity and neurological differences. The concept of neurodiversity acknowledges that variations in neurological functioning, such as Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, and related conditions, are natural forms

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of human diversity rather than disorders requiring treatment or medication (Hennekam & Follmer, 2024). Within this perspective, neurodivergent employees are increasingly viewed as valuable contributors capable of demonstrating exceptional strengths in creativity, pattern recognition, analytical thinking, problem-solving, and innovation (Rollnik-Sadowska & Grabińska, 2024). Consequently, organisations worldwide have begun integrating neuroinclusive Human Resource Management (HRM) practices to attract, support, and retain neurodivergent talent (Hennekam & Follmer, 2024).

The growing interest in neurodiversity is mainly significant in knowledge-intensive industries such as the Information Technology (IT) sector. IT organisations rely heavily on creativity, innovation, problem-solving capability, and complex cognitive processing, all of which are competencies often associated with neurodivergent individuals (Kersten et al., 2025). Previous studies suggest that neurodivergent employees can contribute unique perspectives and have enhanced creative capacities that improve organisational innovation and competitive advantage (Rollnik-Sadowska & Grabińska, 2024). As a result, global organisations such as Microsoft, SAP, IBM, and Dell Technologies have introduced neurodiversity hiring initiatives and inclusive workplace programs to harness the strengths of neurodivergent employees (Shalley et al., 2004). However, despite increasing organisational attention, the successful inclusion of neurodivergent employees remains a substantial challenge in many workplaces (Vargas-Salas et al., 2025).

Traditional HRM systems are often designed around neurotypical assumptions regarding communication styles, teamwork, sensory tolerance, multitasking ability, and workplace socialisation (Hennekam & Follmer, 2024; Nair et al., 2025). Such conventional systems may unintentionally marginalise neurodivergent employees and create barriers to recruitment, onboarding, performance evaluation, career development, and social integration (Nair et al., 2025). Research has shown that neurodivergent employees frequently encounter stigma, misunderstanding, masking pressure, social exclusion, inadequate managerial support, and difficulties obtaining reasonable workplace accommodations (Ali et al., 2022). These workplace barriers not only undermine employee wellbeing but may also prevent organisations from fully utilising the innovative potential of neurodivergent talent (Kersten et al., 2025).

In response to these challenges, scholars and practitioners have increasingly emphasised the importance of neuroinclusive HRM practices. Neuroinclusive HRM refers to organisational policies and practices that accommodate and support diverse cognitive styles through inclusive recruitment, flexible work arrangements, structured onboarding, individualised support mechanisms, accessible communication methods, inclusive training, and psychologically supportive work environments (Hennekam & Follmer, 2024). Existing literature suggests that such inclusive practices can improve employee engagement, belonging, retention, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment among neurodivergent employees (Rollnik-Sadowska & Grabińska, 2024). However, empirical evidence regarding how neuroinclusive HRM practices influence employee creativity remains limited.

On the other hand, employee creativity has become a critical organisational capability in the digital economy, mainly within the IT industry where continuous innovation is essential for organisational survival and competitiveness (Vargas-Salas et al., 2025). Employee creativity refers to the generation of novel and useful ideas related to products, services, processes, or work methods (Amabile, 1988; Shalley et al., 2004). Psychological and organisational research consistently demonstrates that supportive workplace environments significantly influence employee willingness to engage in creative behaviours (Carmeli et al., 2010). In particular, psychological safety has emerged as an important antecedent of creativity because employees

are more likely to express new ideas, experiment, and take interpersonal risks when they feel safe from ridicule, discrimination, or negative consequences (Edmondson, 1999; Carmeli et al., 2010; Ali et al., 2022; Hennekam & Follmer, 2024).

Psychological safety may be particularly relevant to neurodivergent employees because workplace stigma, misunderstanding, and exclusion may create additional interpersonal risks; however, the present study does not compare neurodivergent and neurotypical employees. Studies indicate that psychologically safe workplaces encourage neurodivergent employees to disclose their needs, seek support, and participate more openly in collaborative work environments (Ali et al., 2022). However, despite the theoretical relevance of psychological safety, limited empirical research has examined its mediating role between neuroinclusive HRM practices and employee creativity. Much of the existing neurodiversity literature remains conceptual, descriptive, or practice-oriented, with insufficient quantitative examination of the behavioural mechanisms through which inclusive HRM practices influence organisational outcomes (Ali et al., 2022; Hennekam & Follmer, 2024; Kersten et al., 2025; Nair et al., 2025).

Furthermore, several important contextual gaps remain evident in the literature. First, the majority of neurodiversity research has been conducted in Western countries, while empirical evidence from developing economies remains limited (Nair et al., 2025). Second, there is limited research focusing specifically on the IT industry despite its strong reliance on creativity, innovation, and cognitive diversity (Kersten et al., 2025). Third, existing studies have largely emphasised employment barriers, stigma, and accommodations, whereas relatively few studies investigate positive organisational outcomes such as creativity and innovation among neurodivergent employees (Rollnik-Sadowska & Grabińska, 2024). Fourth, the mediating mechanisms linking HR practices and employee outcomes remain underexplored, mainly the role of psychological safety in fostering creativity within neuroinclusive workplaces (Carmeli et al., 2010).

These gaps are mainly relevant for the Sri Lankan context. The Sri Lankan IT industry has experienced rapid growth and increasing integration into the global digital economy. Organisations within this sector face growing pressure to enhance innovation, creativity, and talent retention. However, discussions regarding neurodiversity inclusion within Sri Lankan HRM practices remain highly limited, and empirical evidence on neuroinclusive workplaces is almost non-existent. Consequently, organisations may lack awareness regarding how inclusive HR practices can create psychologically safe environments that enable neurodivergent employees to contribute creatively and productively. Addressing this gap is important not only from an organisational performance perspective but also from a broader Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) standpoint.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine the relationship between neuroinclusive HRM practices and employee creativity among neurodivergent employees in the IT industry of Sri Lanka, while investigating the mediating role of psychological safety. By addressing the identified theoretical, empirical, and contextual gaps, this study contributes to the emerging literature on neurodiversity and HRM and provides practical insights for organisations seeking to create more inclusive and innovative workplaces in the future.

In this study, neurodivergent employees are treated as an umbrella population because the unit of analysis is the shared workplace experience of neuroinclusive HRM practices. This scope does not assume that ASC, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, or other forms of neurodivergence have identical cognitive or social profiles, and condition-specific effects are beyond the scope of the present study.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

The following four objectives were established to be achieved in the current study.

- a. To examine the impact of neuroinclusive HRM practices on employee creativity in the IT industry of Sri Lanka.
- b. To investigate the relationship between neuroinclusive HRM practices and psychological safety among neurodivergent employees.
- c. To assess the effect of psychological safety on employee creativity in the IT industry of Sri Lanka.
- d. To examine the mediating role of psychological safety in the relationship between neuroinclusive HRM practices and employee creativity.

## 3. Significance of the Study

This study is significant both theoretically and practically. It contributes to the emerging field of neurodiversity and HRM by empirically examining how neuroinclusive HRM practices influence employee creativity through psychological safety within the IT industry of Sri Lanka. Although neurodiversity has recently gained attention in global organisational research, empirical studies investigating the behavioural and psychological outcomes of neuroinclusive HRM practices remain limited, particularly in developing countries and South Asian contexts (Hennekam & Follmer, 2024; Rollnik-Sadowska & Grabińska, 2024). By focusing on the mediating role of psychological safety, this study extends existing HRM and organisational behaviour literature by explaining the underlying mechanism through which inclusive HRM practices enhance creativity among neurodivergent employees. The study also provides contextual evidence from the Sri Lankan IT industry, where innovation, problem-solving, and creativity are critical for organisational competitiveness, yet neurodiversity inclusion practices remain largely unexplored. Practically, the findings of this study will assist HR professionals, organisational leaders, and policymakers in designing neuroinclusive recruitment, training, communication, performance management, and workplace support systems that foster psychologically safe and inclusive work environments. Furthermore, the study supports broader Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives by promoting greater awareness regarding the value of cognitive diversity and the strategic importance of leveraging neurodivergent talent for organisational innovation and sustainable performance. Accordingly, the conceptual contribution of this study is not the proposal of a new mediation pathway; rather, it is the empirical examination of an established HRM–psychological safety–creativity mechanism within the under-researched population of neurodivergent employees in the Sri Lankan IT context.

## 4. Literature Review

### 4.1. Neuroinclusive HRM Practices

Neuroinclusive HRM refers to organisational policies and practices designed to accommodate, support, and leverage the strengths of neurodivergent employees through inclusive recruitment, onboarding, communication, training, performance management, and workplace support systems (Hennekam & Follmer, 2024). Unlike traditional diversity initiatives that primarily focus on demographic diversity, neuroinclusive HRM emphasises cognitive diversity and recognises neurological differences as valuable organisational assets rather than deficiencies (Rollnik-Sadowska & Grabińska, 2024).

The growing interest in neuroinclusive HRM has been driven by increasing recognition that neurodivergent employees often possess unique strengths like analytical thinking, creativity, pattern recognition, sustained concentration, and innovative problem-solving capabilities (Kersten et al., 2025). Consequently, organisations have begun introducing inclusive hiring

programs, sensory-friendly workplaces, structured onboarding processes, flexible communication methods, and individualised support systems to facilitate the inclusion and productivity of neurodivergent employees (Vargas-Salas et al., 2025). However, conventional HR systems are frequently developed around neurotypical expectations regarding communication, social interaction, multitasking, and workplace behaviour (Nair et al., 2025). Such practices may unintentionally create barriers for neurodivergent employees, leading to exclusion, psychological discomfort, underemployment, and reduced participation in organisational processes (Ali et al., 2022). Research further indicates that inadequate organisational support can suppress the creative and innovative potential of neurodivergent employees despite their valuable cognitive capabilities (Kersten et al., 2025). Recent HRM literature increasingly emphasises the strategic importance of neuroinclusive practices for enhancing employee wellbeing, organisational commitment, engagement, and innovation outcomes (Rollnik-Sadowska & Grabińska, 2024).

#### **4.2. Employee Creativity**

Employee creativity refers to the generation of novel and useful ideas, solutions, products, or work methods within organisational settings (Amabile, 1988). Creativity has become a critical organisational capability in contemporary business environments because organisations increasingly depend on innovation to maintain competitiveness and adaptability (Shalley et al., 2004). In the IT industry, employee creativity is of utmost importance due to rapid technological changes, dynamic customer demands, and continuous digital innovation.

Previous studies suggest that organisational environments significantly influence employee creativity. Supportive leadership, autonomy, knowledge sharing, inclusive climates, and psychological support have been identified as important organisational antecedents of creativity (Carmeli et al., 2010). Employees are more likely to express creative ideas when they perceive their work environment as safe, supportive, and inclusive.

The literature also suggests that neurodivergent employees may possess cognitive characteristics that support creative thinking and innovation. For example, some neurodivergent individuals demonstrate high levels of divergent thinking, unconventional problem-solving approaches, and enhanced attention to detail (Kersten et al., 2025). However, workplace exclusion, stigma, communication barriers, and inadequate HR support may restrict the ability of neurodivergent employees to fully contribute their creative potential (Nair et al., 2025).

#### **4.3. Psychological Safety**

Psychological safety refers to an individual's perception that the work environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking without fear of embarrassment, rejection, discrimination, or punishment (Edmondson, 1999). Psychological safety enables employees to openly express ideas, ask questions, seek support, admit mistakes, and participate in collaborative activities. Psychological safety is mainly important in creative and innovative work environments because creativity often requires employees to challenge existing assumptions, propose unconventional ideas, and engage in experimentation (Carmeli et al., 2010). When employees perceive low psychological safety, they may avoid sharing ideas due to fear of criticism or negative evaluation.

For neurodivergent employees, psychological safety may be even more critical because many experience social stigma, masking pressure, communication anxiety, and exclusion within workplace environments (Ali et al., 2022). Neurodivergent employees may hesitate to disclose their needs or express creative perspectives if they fear misunderstanding or discrimination

from colleagues and supervisors. Research suggests that inclusive organisational practices positively influence psychological safety by fostering respect, acceptance, fairness, and support (Frazier et al., 2017). HRM practices such as inclusive communication systems, flexible accommodations, manager awareness training, and supportive organisational climates may therefore enhance psychological safety among neurodivergent employees.

Taken together, the literature converges on the view that inclusive HR practices can reduce workplace barriers and support psychological safety, while psychological safety facilitates creative expression; however, the evidence remains fragmented across separate literature. The unresolved issue is therefore not whether these relationships are theoretically plausible, but whether this established mechanism operates among neurodivergent employees in the Sri Lankan IT context.

## **5. Theoretical Perspective**

Social Exchange Theory serves as the overarching theoretical framework in this study, while Psychological Safety Theory is nested within this framework to explain the proximal psychological mechanism through which supportive and inclusive HRM practices may translate into creative behaviour.

### **5.1. Social Exchange Theory**

This study is primarily grounded in Social Exchange Theory (SET), which explains that employees develop reciprocal attitudes and behaviours based on the quality of organisational treatment they receive (Blau, 1964). According to SET, when organisations provide supportive and inclusive HR practices, employees perceive that the organisation values and respects them, leading to positive reciprocal behaviours such as increased commitment, engagement, and creativity. Within the context of neuroinclusive HRM, organisations that provide equitable opportunities, workplace accommodations, inclusive communication systems, and supportive managerial practices may foster positive employee perceptions and encourage neurodivergent employees to contribute more actively to organisational goals. Neuroinclusive HRM practices may therefore strengthen employees' willingness to share ideas, engage collaboratively, and participate creatively within the workplace. SET further implies that psychological safety may emerge as a relational outcome of supportive organisational treatment. When employees perceive organisational support and inclusion, they are more likely to feel psychologically secure expressing themselves without fear of negative consequences. Consequently, psychological safety may serve as an important mechanism linking neuroinclusive HRM practices with employee creativity.

### **5.2. Psychological Safety Theory**

The study also draws upon Psychological Safety Theory proposed by Edmondson (1999). It emphasises that employees are more likely to engage in learning, collaboration, innovation, and creative behaviours when they perceive the work environment as psychologically safe. Psychological safety reduces interpersonal fear and enables employees to express ideas, experiment, and challenge existing practices. Within neurodiverse workplaces, psychological safety is particularly important because neurodivergent employees may experience social uncertainty, communication challenges, or fear of stigma. Inclusive HRM practices that create respectful and supportive environments may enhance psychological safety and subsequently encourage creativity and innovative work behaviours.

## **6. Hypothesis Development**

### **6.1. Neuroinclusive HRM Practices and Employee Creativity**

Neuroinclusive HRM practices create supportive organisational environments that recognise and accommodate cognitive diversity. Such practices may encourage neurodivergent employees to contribute unique perspectives, ideas, and problem-solving approaches within organisational settings. Previous research suggests that inclusive organisational climates positively influence employee creativity by promoting participation, openness, and collaboration (Carmeli et al., 2010).

Furthermore, neurodivergent employees often possess strengths associated with innovation and creative thinking, but these strengths may remain underutilised in non-inclusive work environments (Kersten et al., 2025). Inclusive HR practices such as flexible communication methods, structured support systems, equitable opportunities, and individualised accommodations may reduce workplace barriers and facilitate greater creative contribution.

According to Social Exchange Theory, supportive organisational practices generate positive reciprocal behaviours among employees (Blau, 1964). When neurodivergent employees perceive that their organisation values and supports them, they may respond through increased engagement in creative activities. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H1: Neuroinclusive HRM practices have a significant positive effect on employee creativity.*

### **6.2. Neuroinclusive HRM Practices and Psychological Safety**

Inclusive HR practices may strengthen psychological safety by fostering acceptance, fairness, and supportive interpersonal relationships within the workplace. Research indicates that employees are more likely to feel psychologically safe when organisations promote inclusion, respect diversity, and provide supportive managerial practices (Frazier et al., 2017).

For neurodivergent employees, workplace inclusion is especially important because they may experience fear of misunderstanding, discrimination, or social exclusion (Ali et al., 2022). Neuroinclusive HR practices such as manager awareness training, accessible communication systems, flexible accommodations, and inclusive organisational policies may reduce interpersonal anxiety and create environments where neurodivergent employees feel safe expressing themselves authentically. Moreover, Psychological Safety Theory suggests that supportive work environments reduce interpersonal fear and encourage openness and participation (Edmondson, 1999). Therefore, neuroinclusive HRM practices are likely to enhance psychological safety among neurodivergent employees.

*H2: Neuroinclusive HRM practices have a significant positive effect on psychological safety.*

### **6.3. Psychological Safety and Employee Creativity**

Psychological safety has been consistently identified as an important antecedent of employee creativity because employees are more willing to express novel ideas and engage in experimentation when they feel safe from criticism or negative consequences (Carmeli et al., 2010). Creative work inherently involves uncertainty and interpersonal risk-taking, making psychological safety particularly important in innovation-oriented environments such as the IT industry. Previous empirical studies demonstrate that psychologically safe workplaces encourage idea sharing, collaborative learning, and innovative behaviour (Frazier et al., 2017). For neurodivergent employees, psychological safety may be especially important because fear of stigma or misunderstanding may suppress creative expression and participation. Also, according to Psychological Safety Theory, employees who perceive high psychological safety

are more likely to engage confidently in creative and innovative activities (Edmondson, 1999). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H3*: Psychological safety has a significant positive effect on employee creativity.

The hypothesised relationships are depicted in Figure 1, the conceptual framework of the study.

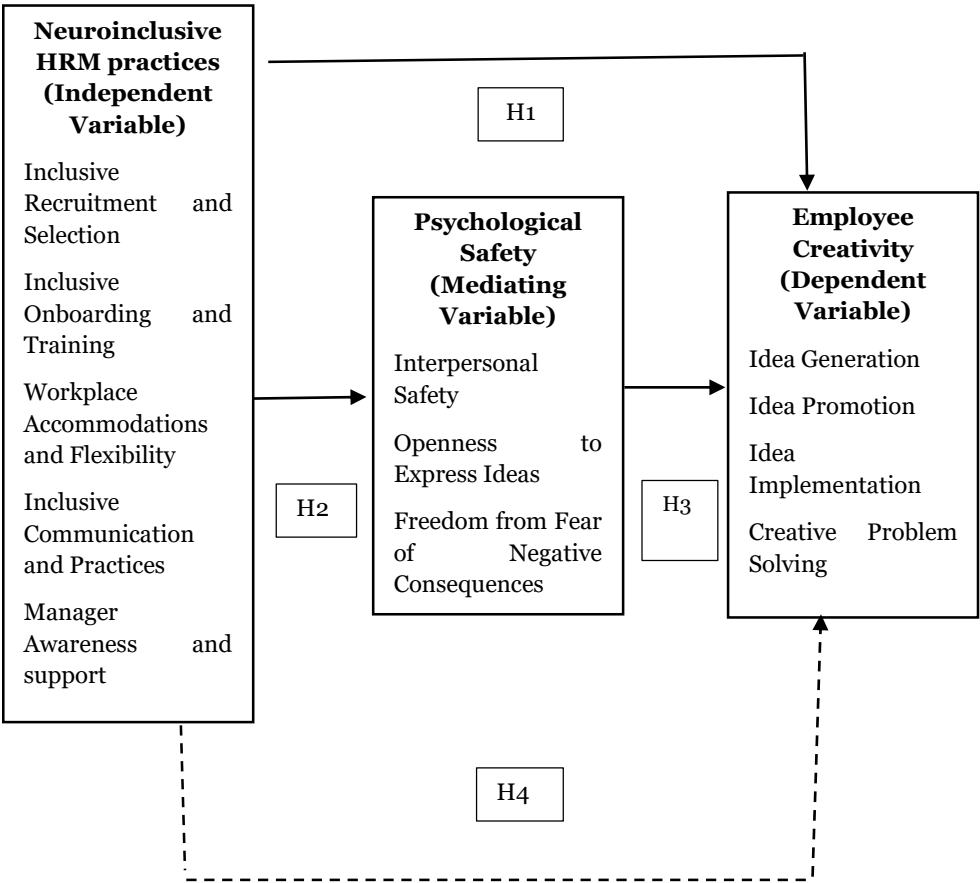


**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study**

## 7. Methodology

This study was conducted based on the positivist research philosophy, which emphasises objective measurement, empirical observation, and statistical examination of relationships among variables (Saunders et al., 2019). In line with this philosophy, the study adopted a deductive research approach whereby hypotheses were formulated based on existing theories and prior empirical findings and subsequently tested using statistical analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Hair et al., 2019). Accordingly, the study employed a quantitative cross-sectional explanatory research design.

### 7.1. Population and Sample

The target population of the study consisted of neurodivergent employees working in IT organisations in Sri Lanka. Since neurodivergent employees represent a relatively specialised and difficult-to-identify population, the study employed purposive sampling combined with

snowball sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to intentionally select participants who met the specific inclusion criteria relevant to the study objectives, namely self-identified neurodivergent employees employed within the IT industry (Etikan et al., 2016). This approach ensured that the collected data were directly relevant to the research problem and conceptual framework.

In addition, snowball sampling was utilised to access additional eligible respondents through professional and social networks. Snowball sampling is considered particularly effective when researching hidden or hard-to-reach populations where formal sampling frames are unavailable (Wright, 2005; Parker et al., 2019). Existing participants assisted in identifying and referring other neurodivergent employees within the IT sector, thereby improving accessibility and participant reach. Eligibility was based on respondents' self-identification as neurodivergent rather than a requirement for formal clinical diagnosis, and this criterion was used to protect accessibility and participant privacy. A total of 153 employees participated in the study. The sample size was considered adequate for regression-based mediation analysis because social science research commonly accepts sample sizes exceeding 150 respondents for explanatory quantitative studies involving multiple variables and mediation testing (Wright, 2005; Hair et al., 2019). Moreover, previous organisational behaviour studies employing regression and mediation analysis have successfully utilised comparable sample sizes (Wright, 2005; Hayes, 2018). The sample size was evaluated against the requirements of regression-based mediation analysis; however, a prospectively documented *a priori* power analysis was not available for the present study and is acknowledged as a methodological limitation.

## **7.2. Data Collection**

Primary data were collected using a structured online questionnaire administered through Google Forms. The questionnaire link was distributed electronically through professional networks, organisational contacts, LinkedIn communities, and participant referrals. (Wright, 2005). The survey instrument was prepared in English. Prior to the main data collection process, the questionnaire was reviewed by the experts to ensure clarity, readability, and relevance to the study context.

## **7.3. Measurement of Variables**

The Neuroinclusive HRM practices were measured using adapted items derived from inclusive HRM and workplace inclusion literature, particularly the inclusion framework proposed by Shore et al. (2011). The scale assessed organisational practices related to inclusive recruitment, workplace accommodations, managerial support, inclusive communication, and equitable career development opportunities and performance management. Psychological safety was measured using the scale developed by Edmondson (1999), which is one of the most extensively validated instruments in organisational behaviour research. The scale measures employees' perceptions regarding interpersonal safety, openness, and freedom from fear within workplace interactions. Employee creativity was measured using the scale developed by Zhou and George (2001), which has been widely applied in studies related to innovative work behaviour and creativity. The scale assesses employees' tendency to generate novel ideas, propose creative solutions, and engage in innovative problem-solving behaviours within organisational settings. All variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

## **7.4. Ethical Considerations**

Ethical principles were carefully maintained throughout the research process. Prior to participation, respondents were informed about the purpose and nature of the study, and

informed consent was obtained electronically through the online survey form. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences. Special attention was given to confidentiality and anonymity because the study involved neurodivergence-related information, which may be considered sensitive in workplace contexts. No personally identifiable information was collected from respondents, and all responses were treated with strict confidentiality. The study also ensured respectful and non-discriminatory treatment of all participants throughout the data collection and analysis process. The collected data were electronically stored with no access to anyone other than the researcher and used only for research purposes.

## 7.5. Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Initially, data were screened for missing values and outliers. Then, descriptive statistics were employed to summarise the demographic characteristics of respondents and provide an overview of the study variables. Next, validity and reliability analysis was done, and tested for multivariate assumptions before employing inferential statistics. Pearson correlation analysis was subsequently conducted to examine the strength and direction of relationships among neuroinclusive HRM practices, psychological safety, and employee creativity. Regression analysis was utilised to test the hypothesised direct relationships among the variables. The mediating effect of psychological safety was examined using the Sobel test. The model adequacy and the model fitness were ensured through the residual analysis. The primary models were specified to test the theoretically hypothesised relationships without demographic control variables; age, gender, and work experience were nevertheless retained as descriptive characteristics and are identified as candidates for robustness testing in future analyses. Moreover, as all constructs were measured from the same respondent at one time point, the possibility of common method bias was considered; VIF values were examined as a collinearity diagnostic, while the single-source design is acknowledged as a limitation.

## 8. Findings

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 153)**

| Variable        | Category          | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Gender          | Male              | 92        | 60.1           |
|                 | Female            | 61        | 39.9           |
| Age             | 18–25 Years       | 29        | 19.0           |
|                 | 26–35 Years       | 78        | 51.0           |
|                 | 36–45 Years       | 35        | 22.9           |
|                 | Above 45 Years    | 11        | 7.1            |
| Education Level | Diploma           | 17        | 11.1           |
|                 | Bachelor's Degree | 96        | 62.7           |
|                 | Master's Degree   | 36        | 23.5           |
|                 | Doctoral Degree   | 4         | 2.7            |
| Work Experience | Less than 2 Years | 24        | 15.7           |
|                 | 2–5 Years         | 61        | 39.9           |
|                 | 6–10 Years        | 48        | 31.4           |
|                 | Above 10 Years    | 20        | 13.0           |
| Job Position    | Executive Level   | 89        | 58.2           |
|                 | Middle Management | 46        | 30.1           |
|                 | Senior Management | 18        | 11.7           |

A total of 153 respondents participated in the study. The analysis indicates that the majority of respondents were male employees, reflecting the gender composition commonly observed within the Sri Lankan IT industry. Most respondents were within the age category of 26–35

years, indicating that the sample primarily consisted of young and mid-career professionals actively engaged in the IT sector. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of respondents.

The educational profile of the respondents revealed that most participants possessed bachelor's degrees, while a considerable proportion held postgraduate qualifications. Furthermore, the majority of respondents had between two and ten years of work experience, indicating that the sample consisted of experienced employees capable of providing meaningful responses regarding organisational practices and workplace experiences.

Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha coefficients to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales. According to Hair et al. (2019), Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.70 indicate acceptable reliability. Table 2 depicts the reliability statistics.

**Table 2: Reliability Statistics**

| Variable                     | Number of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Neuroinclusive HRM Practices | 8               | 0.903            |
| Psychological Safety         | 7               | 0.881            |
| Employee Creativity          | 6               | 0.917            |

All the variables demonstrated strong internal consistency reliability, as all Cronbach's alpha values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70. Employee creativity reported the highest reliability coefficient ( $\alpha = 0.917$ ), followed by neuroinclusive HRM practices ( $\alpha = 0.903$ ) and psychological safety ( $\alpha = 0.881$ ).

Content validity was ensured through the adoption of previously validated scales from established literature, including Edmondson (1999) and Zhou and George (2001). Furthermore, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts to ensure clarity, relevance, and appropriateness to the Sri Lankan IT industry context. Construct validity was ensured through an Exploratory Factor Analysis in which Factor Loadings  $> 0.7$  [for individual items] loaded correctly at the theoretically defined locations, and Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings (ESSL)  $> 50\%$  were obtained for all three variables.

Descriptive statistics were calculated to examine the central tendency and dispersion of the study variables. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of variables.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics**

| Variable                     | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Neuroinclusive HRM Practices | 3.84 | 0.67               |
| Psychological Safety         | 3.76 | 0.71               |
| Employee Creativity          | 3.91 | 0.65               |

The findings indicate that respondents generally reported moderate to high perceptions regarding neuroinclusive HRM practices, psychological safety, and employee creativity. Employee creativity recorded the highest mean value ( $M = 3.91$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ), suggesting that respondents perceived themselves as actively engaging in creative and innovative work behaviours. Similarly, neuroinclusive HRM practices demonstrated a relatively high mean value ( $M = 3.84$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ), indicating positive perceptions regarding inclusive organisational practices within the IT sector.

Prior to conducting inferential statistical analyses, several multivariate assumptions were examined to ensure the appropriateness of the data for correlation and regression analysis.

Normality was assessed using skewness and kurtosis statistics. According to Hair et al. (2019), skewness and kurtosis values between  $\pm 2$  are considered acceptable for a normal distribution. As depicted in Table 4, all skewness and kurtosis values were within the acceptable range, confirming that the data were approximately normally distributed.

**Table 4: Normality Statistics**

| Variable                     | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Neuroinclusive HRM Practices | -0.624   | 0.487    |
| Psychological Safety         | -0.518   | 0.351    |
| Employee Creativity          | -0.592   | 0.421    |

Multicollinearity was assessed using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance values. The VIF values, as presented in Table 5, are below the threshold value of 5.0, while tolerance values exceed 0.20, indicating the absence of multicollinearity issues among the predictor variables.

**Table 5: Multicollinearity Statistics**

| Predictor Variable           | Tolerance | VIF   |
|------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Neuroinclusive HRM Practices | 0.641     | 1.560 |
| Psychological Safety         | 0.641     | 1.560 |

Moreover, scatterplot analysis indicated that the residuals were randomly distributed without any clear patterns, confirming that the assumptions of homoscedasticity and linearity were satisfied. Thus, parametric tests were used for hypothesis testing.

### 8.1. Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships among all study variables. Neuroinclusive HRM practices demonstrated a strong positive relationship with psychological safety ( $r = 0.642, p < 0.01$ ) and employee creativity ( $r = 0.598, p < 0.01$ ). Further, psychological safety exhibited a strong positive relationship with employee creativity ( $r = 0.691, p < 0.01$ ). Correlation statistics are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Correlation Statistics**

| Variable                        | 1      | 2      | 3 |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|---|
| 1. Neuroinclusive HRM Practices | 1      |        |   |
| 2. Psychological Safety         | .642** | 1      |   |
| 3. Employee Creativity          | .598** | .691** | 1 |

Note:  $p < 0.01$  [\*\*]

### 8.2. Regression Analysis

The regression results indicate that neuroinclusive HRM practices had a significant positive effect on employee creativity ( $\beta = 0.598, p < 0.001$ ). The model explains 35.8% of the variance in employee creativity. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is supported. Further, the findings reveal that neuroinclusive HRM practices significantly and positively influenced psychological safety ( $\beta = 0.642, p < 0.001$ ). The model explains 41.2% of the variance in psychological safety. Thus, hypothesis 2 is also supported. Similarly, the regression analysis demonstrates that psychological safety significantly and positively affected employee creativity ( $\beta = 0.691, p < 0.001$ ). Psychological safety explains 47.7% of the variance in employee creativity. Accordingly, hypothesis 3 is supported. Regression results are presented in Table 7.

Moreover, the Sobel test results reveal that psychological safety significantly mediated the relationship between neuroinclusive HRM practices and employee creativity ( $z = 6.721, p < 0.001$ ). This finding indicates that neuroinclusive HRM practices enhance employee creativity

not only directly but also indirectly through the development of psychologically safe workplace environments. Therefore, hypothesis 4 is also supported. Sobel test results are depicted in Table 8.

**Table 7: Regression Results**

| Hypothesis | Relationship                                        | $\beta$ | t-value | Sig.  | R <sup>2</sup> | Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | F-value | Decision  |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|-------|----------------|-------------------------|---------|-----------|
| H1         | Neuroinclusive HRM Practices → Employee Creativity  | 0.598   | 9.167   | 0.000 | 0.358          | 0.354                   | 84.041  | Supported |
| H2         | Neuroinclusive HRM Practices → Psychological Safety | 0.642   | 10.292  | 0.000 | 0.412          | 0.408                   | 105.925 | Supported |
| H3         | Psychological Safety → Employee Creativity          | 0.691   | 11.767  | 0.000 | 0.477          | 0.474                   | 138.454 | Supported |

Note: Dependent variables were tested using simple linear regression analysis. All regression coefficients were statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$ .

The R<sup>2</sup> values of 0.358, 0.412, and 0.477 indicate that the models explain meaningful proportions of variance in the study outcomes; therefore, the findings should be interpreted in terms of practical explanatory value as well as statistical significance.

**Table 8: Sobel Test Results**

| Path                                                | Coefficient | Standard Error |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Neuroinclusive HRM Practices → Psychological Safety | 0.642       | 0.062          |
| Psychological Safety → Employee Creativity          | 0.691       | 0.058          |
| Sobel Test Statistic                                | 6.721       |                |
| p-value                                             | 0.000       |                |

## 9. Discussion

The findings of the study provide strong empirical support for the proposed conceptual framework. The results demonstrate that neuroinclusive HRM practices positively influenced employee creativity among neurodivergent employees within the Sri Lankan IT industry. This finding supports previous studies emphasising that inclusive organisational practices facilitate employee engagement, innovation, and creative contribution by reducing workplace barriers and promoting supportive environments (Kersten et al., 2025).

The study further reveals that neuroinclusive HRM practices significantly enhanced psychological safety. This finding aligns with Psychological Safety Theory (Edmondson, 1999), which suggests that supportive and inclusive organisational environments foster interpersonal trust, openness, and acceptance. Neurodivergent employees who perceive inclusive HR practices are more likely to feel safe expressing their ideas, needs, and perspectives within workplace settings. Additionally, psychological safety demonstrated a strong positive effect on employee creativity. This result confirms that employees are more willing to engage in creative behaviours when they feel psychologically secure and free from fear of criticism or discrimination. The finding is consistent with prior studies that identified psychological safety as a key predictor of creativity and innovative work behaviour (Carmeli et al., 2010).

Most importantly, the mediation analysis confirms that psychological safety significantly mediated the relationship between neuroinclusive HRM practices and employee creativity. This suggests that inclusive HR practices contribute to employee creativity by creating psychologically safe work environments where neurodivergent employees feel accepted, respected, and empowered to express innovative ideas. The findings therefore support both Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) and Psychological Safety Theory (Edmondson, 1999), highlighting the importance of inclusive and supportive workplace environments in fostering organisational creativity.

## **10. Conclusion**

The findings of this study highlight the critical importance of neuroinclusive HRM practices in fostering psychologically supportive and innovation-oriented workplaces within the Sri Lankan IT industry. The study confirms that inclusive organisational practices that recognise and accommodate cognitive diversity contribute significantly to enhancing employee creativity by cultivating psychologically safe work environments where neurodivergent employees feel respected, valued, and confident in expressing their ideas and capabilities. The results further demonstrate that psychological safety serves as a crucial behavioural mechanism through which inclusive HR practices translate into higher levels of creativity and innovative work behaviour. These findings reinforce the growing argument that neurodiversity should not merely be viewed through a compliance or accommodation perspective, but rather as a strategic organisational resource capable of enhancing innovation, adaptability, and long-term organisational competitiveness. Accordingly, organisations that prioritise neuroinclusive HRM practices are more likely to create supportive and inclusive workplace cultures that unlock the creative potential of neurodivergent employees while simultaneously strengthening employee wellbeing, engagement, and organisational sustainability.

## **11. Implications**

The findings of this study provide several important theoretical implications for the fields of human resource management and organisational behaviour. First, the study contributes to the emerging neurodiversity literature by empirically demonstrating that neuroinclusive HRM practices positively influence employee creativity through psychological safety. While prior studies on neurodiversity have largely focused on workplace barriers, stigma, and accommodation challenges, this study advances the literature by emphasising positive organisational outcomes associated with neuroinclusive practices, particularly creativity and innovation. The study also extends the application of Social Exchange Theory and Psychological Safety Theory within neurodiverse workplace contexts by explaining how supportive organisational practices foster psychologically safe environments that encourage neurodivergent employees to contribute creatively. Furthermore, the study contributes contextual evidence from a developing country setting, addressing the limited empirical research on neurodiversity and inclusive HRM practices within South Asian organisational environments.

The study also offers important practical implications for HR professionals, organisational leaders, and policymakers within the IT industry. The findings suggest that organisations should move beyond traditional diversity initiatives and adopt neuroinclusive HRM practices that actively recognise and support cognitive diversity within the workplace. HR departments should therefore implement inclusive recruitment procedures, flexible communication systems, manager awareness training, individualised workplace accommodations, and supportive performance management systems that enhance psychological safety among neurodivergent employees. Creating psychologically safe work environments is particularly

important because it encourages neurodivergent employees to openly express ideas, engage in collaborative interactions, and contribute innovative solutions without fear of discrimination or negative judgement. Consequently, organisations that invest in neuroinclusive HRM practices are likely to strengthen employee creativity, improve workplace inclusion, enhance talent retention, and achieve greater organisational innovation and competitiveness in the rapidly evolving digital economy.

## 12. Limitations and Directions for Future Studies

Despite its theoretical and practical contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the study employed a cross-sectional research design, which limits the ability to establish causal relationships among neuroinclusive HRM practices, psychological safety, and employee creativity over time. Future studies could therefore adopt longitudinal designs to examine how these relationships evolve within organisational settings. Second, the study relied on self-reported data collected through an online survey, which may increase the possibility of common method bias and subjective response tendencies. Future researchers may address this limitation by incorporating multi-source data, supervisor evaluations, or mixed-method approaches. Third, the study focused exclusively on neurodivergent employees within the Sri Lankan IT industry, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other industries and cultural contexts. Future studies should therefore examine neuroinclusive HRM practices across different sectors, countries, and organisational environments to improve external validity. Furthermore, the present study examined psychological safety as the sole mediating variable; however, future research could investigate additional mediating and moderating mechanisms such as organisational support, inclusive leadership, employee resilience, workplace belonging, or diversity climate to develop a more comprehensive understanding of neuroinclusive workplace dynamics. Finally, future studies may also explore comparative perspectives between neurodivergent and neurotypical employees to better understand how inclusive HRM practices influence diverse employee groups within modern organisations.

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