Hidden Discrimination?

How Autism Disclosure Affects Job Market Opportunities

A Quantitative Study Exploring How Openness about One's Autism Diagnosis affect people's Chances of Getting Job Opportunities

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of disclosing a neurodevelopmental diagnosis, specifically autism, in the job application process on the likelihood of receiving an interview invitation. This research examines whether job applicants who disclose their neurodevelopmental diagnoses in their cover letters experience different outcomes compared to those who do not disclose such information. To explore this, we created a survey in which identical cover letters were shown to the respondents with and without a disclosed diagnosis. The results were analyzed to determine if disclosure affected the chances of in the recruitment process. The study aims to contribute to the understanding of how disclosure of neurodevelopmental diagnoses can influence employment opportunities, even in the context of legal protections. Findings from this research may have implications for both job seekers with neurodevelopmental conditions and organizations seeking to create more inclusive hiring practices.

Key words: *Discrimination, Neurodevelopmental Condition, Disability Disclosure, Job Application Process, Employment Opportunities, Hiring Bias, Autism, Implicit Bias, Equal Employment Opportunity, Neurodiversity, Workplace Diversity, Job Interview Response, Psychological, Disability, Employer Perception*

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1.0 Introduction

A fundamental principle of today's labour market is that of equal opportunities. Regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race or disability, you should have a fair shot of gaining employment.

However, some disabled people, such as autistic people, are simply forgotten due to having disabilities that are not clearly visible. Unlike physical impairments that might be immediately apparent, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) often presents itself in subtle ways, such as differences in sensory processing, emotional regulation, or social interaction. These characteristics are not always clearly visible to others and may be misunderstood as rudeness, disinterest, awkwardness, or lack of competence. Instead, it should be understood as a different mode of operating in the world.

Swedish law prohibits discrimination based on disability. This means that discrimination on the basis of ASD is prohibited as it is considered a disability by the Swedish discrimination ombudsman. Swedish law even requires employers to take reasonable measures to ensure that disabled people can participate in the workforce on equal terms. These accommodations can include ramps, computers with reading aids and audio induction loops in meeting rooms (Akademikerförbundet SSR, 2024). However, Swedish discrimination law does not mean that an employer needs to employ someone for a job they cannot perform due to a disability. (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2025).

An example of that exception in action could be a person with severe anxiety, who is applying for a position as a paramedic. Paramedics work in high-stress, fast-paced environments that require immediate decision making and the person to remain calm under pressure and during life-or-death situations. In this case, even with reasonable accommodations, the individual's condition makes it impossible for them to perform these core tasks safely and reliably. Therefore, if an employer decides not to hire the individual based on these specific job-related limitations, the decision is not defined as a discrimination under the law.

Despite legal regulations about discrimination and the unlikeliness of the diagnosis affecting essential job duties, autistic people continue to face significant barriers in securing

employment. These barriers are not related to job performance but rather stem from social attitudes, stigma, and biases in hiring practices.

When the risk of discrimination exists, people might avoid disclosing an autism diagnosis even if it is a big part of who they are and how they function. While openness about one's diagnosis can lead to necessary accommodations and support, it risks exposing people to prejudice and misconceptions that limit career opportunities.

This highlights a key question: how does disclosing a diagnosis affect someone in the workplace? What impact does it have on hiring intention, and how does it interplay with the perception of the candidate? Understanding the barriers for employment that autistic people face can help them understand whether they should be afraid of disclosing their diagnosis or not.

Additionally, gender could amplify the negative effects of an autism disclosure. Even when Sweden is ranked among the highest in the EU on Gender Equality Index (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2022), discrimination on the basis of gender is still an issue. In 2023 the EIGE found that a higher proportion of women (9.8 percent) than of men (4.9 percent) stated that in the past three months they were subjected to discrimination.

Autistic women are at the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination, where both gender and neurodiversity bias intersect. This not only undermines their right to equal opportunity but also poses a serious challenge to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, such as gender equality and reduced inequalities. Recognizing and addressing these overlapping forms of disadvantage in policy, practice, and perception is crucial to achieve global SDGs.

The challenges that women face can interplay with challenges that autistic people in general face. Understanding how a disclosure of an autism diagnosis differently affects women and men is therefore important.

1.1 Conceptual Background

1.1.1 Autism as a disability

To understand how disclosing an autism diagnosis might be judged during the initial stages of the recruitment process, it is important to first understand what autism is and the various forms it can take.

Autism is a widely recognized disability. The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention defines ASD as a neurodevelopmental disability, and notes that it can cause significant social, communication and behavioural challenges (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.). The National Autistic Society defines it as "a lifelong neurodivergence and disability" (National Autistic Society, n.d.). The World Health Organization (WHO) states that some autistic people can live independently, while others need lifelong care and support (World Health Organization, 2023).

To understand how people might judge autistic people it is important to know how the diagnosis takes form. Autism is a neurodevelopmental condition that you are born with and have for life. Autism is a spectrum without clear boundaries. The exact cause of the condition is unknown, but often runs in families. Every autistic person has a different experience of the condition, but the common themes include (1177, n.d.):

- Difficulty with social interactions, especially with peers.
- Intense focus on specific interests or activities
- Struggle with change or unclear situations
- Varying language abilities, from limited to highly developed.

1.1.2 Challenges for those with disabilities

In the Swedish labour market, autistic people often face significant difficulties when securing employment. According to *Statistic Sweden (2024),* only 52% of people with disabilities are employed, notably lower than the 81% employment among the general population. Other studies indicate that autistic people have an employment rate of 14% (The Treetop, 2024), which highlights systematic barriers that autistic people face when trying to find a job. The

*statistics of Swede*n *(2022)* also documented that the most disability-related types discrimination were not getting the job applied for (Statistics Sweden, 2023).

Discrimination can lead to severe psychological consequences. A study by Michelle Cleary et al (2023), shows that discrimination against autistic people can lead to significant psychological distress, including symptoms of trauma and increased stress levels (Clearly et al., 2023).

Having a disability is hard, even without the discrimination. Unemployment associated with a disability might in turn lead to several psychological conditions including: depression and anxiety. Persistent unemployment also correlates with diminishing overall quality of life, contributing to social isolation and reduced self-esteem (Taylor et al., 2022) .

1.1.3 Swedish legal framework regarding discrimination

The consequences of discrimination makes it clear why Swedish legal frameworks exist and are structured the way they are. However, even with extensive legal protections in place, discrimination —especially unconscious ones— still happens. The current legal framework that is in place in Sweden states that discrimination in working life is not permitted and that employers are responsible for ensuring that jobseekers, as well as, employees are not subjected to any form of discrimination.

If the employment agency shifts out a jobseeker because they are, for example, pregnant, in a wheelchair, has a diagnosis, or are subjected to any other discriminatory treatment, the employer may be held liable for violating the Discrimination Act.

However, there are several exemptions from the prohibition of discrimination, but these are strictly tied to the requirements of the job description. In these certain cases it may be permitted for an employer to give special treatment to people in the way that are associated with grounds of discrimination. It applies in the following:

1) Specific professional requirements that are relevant to the position
2) Affirmative action associated with sex
3) Special treatment due to age

4) Application of certain age limits, such as age limit for retirement benefits.

(Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2024)

1.1.4 Willingness of disclosure of diagnosis

When there is an evident risk of discrimination it is clear why people find themselves in the decision to not disclose their autism diagnosis. One study by Brohan et al (2014) about disclosure of mental health problems in the employment context showed that participants reported not disclosing their illness because they didn't want to be treated differently or because they did not need any adjustments, while others only reported disclosing when necessary.

To further explain the thought process when deciding to disclose or not disclose their diagnosis the Disclosure Decision-Making Model can come to use. Disclosure decision-making model (DDM) is a physiological framework that explains how individuals decide whether or not to disclose personal information, especially in situations where stigma or discrimination may be a concern. DDM suggest that people consider three factors before deciding:

1) Information Assessment
2) Target Assessment
3) Disclosure Assessment

Information assessment is when the individual assesses if it is necessary to disclose the information and how it may affect their situation. Target assessment is when they predict what type of reaction they will get for disclosing the information. Disclosure assessment is about how much they should disclose, full, partial or non-disclosure.

In the case of disclosing autism, the candidate would first assess if it is necessary for the recruiter to know about their diagnosis. Then they would predict if they would have any biases regarding the diagnosis, and lastly if it is necessary to disclose the full story, such as what diagnosis or just disclosing that they have a diagnosis (Greene et al., 2011).

There are further studies that could argue why people might not want to disclose their diagnosis. The Buckland Review of Autism Employment from the UK Government has found that autistic individuals have reduced employment opportunities despite strong qualifications. They found that autistic graduates are the group most likely to be overqualified for their jobs, which suggests that despite having the qualification required, autistic individuals are often not perceived as sufficiently qualified despite their capabilities. (Government UK, 2024).

The review indicates that autistic individuals are frequently perceived and treated as less qualified for jobs, even when their actual qualifications match or exceed those of non-autistic peers. This is a perception not rooted in lack of skills or education, but rather systematic barriers and biases.

This is confirmed by Davies et al (2024) that also found that underemployment is common within the autistic population. One barrier mentioned was that openness with an autism diagnosis leads to fewer opportunities for career advancement.

1.1.5 Seeing is disliking

Whelpley & May (2023) has investigated bias against individuals of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in traditional job interviews. The study was carried out by allowing participants to read a transcript of an interview or watching the video of an interview. The study then allowed the participants to rate the candidates on certain metrics: trustworthy, likeable, straightforward, qualified, attractive, awkward, confident, enthusiastic, captivating, overall and "would you hire".

On each metric with exception for qualified, autistic candidates received a more negative rating than non-autistic candidates when the participant watched a video of the interview. However, when the participant read the transcript, autistic candidates scored more positive results than those without on most metrics.

This indicates that much of the disadvantage for autistic job-applicants arise from visual and audio cues, rather than from the content of what they are saying (ibid).

1.2 Purpose & contributions

The research objective is to assess whether a disclosure of an ASD diagnosis in a job application affects the applicant's chances of getting that job. The theory being that the mere disclosure of a diagnosis causes the recruiter to make subconscious associations or assumptions about the applicant. This by implicitly associating the applicant with the visual and audio cues that autistic people exhibit. These associations can lead to biased evaluations and negatively affect the outcome of the job application. Further, the study also examines how perceptions of an individual's ability to manage ASD may differ based on their gender.

This contribution of this study is the significant value it brings to the field of disability and employment research by addressing a specific gap in the existing literature. While previous studies have explored disability-related recruitment issues that are either based in other countries than Sweden, such as the U.K (Romualdez et al., 2021), Australia (Hampson, et al. 2020) and the U.S (Russinova, et al. 2011). These studies offer findings that may not reflect the cultural and societal dynamics specific to the country Sweden. Moreover, other similar studies to ours conducted in Sweden insteads investigates broad societal attitudes, such as how disabled people in general are treated in Sweden (Antoine & Åberg, 2022). However, these studies do not provide insights specifically for individuals with ASD regarding whether disclosing their diagnosis may put them at a disadvantage.

Previous research has examined the impact of ASD in the recruitment process (Whelpley & May, 2023). However, it has been focused around the interview stage. In comparison, this study examines how merely disclosing an ASD diagnosis in the cover letter affects the recruitment process.

The goal is to understand what effect a disclosure of autism has, removed from the effect of any visual and audio cues that are associated with autism. We examine this to know whether individuals should be afraid of disclosing their diagnosis and the effects of it.

This research contributes valuable insights for autistic people, their advocacy organizations as well as for recruiters. The results can help inform autistic job seekers on how to navigate the employment landscape with the current challenges they might be subject to. This may also guide employers in how to create fairer and more inclusive recruitment practices.

Additionally, it might offer key insights for researchers on how negatively or positively charged autism is as a condition. Shedding light on these perceptions can help inform future studies and interventions aimed at reducing stigma and promoting greater acceptance of individuals with autism.

1.3 Research questions

To establish the purpose of this study, the following research question has been formulated. Our research questions are based on one main and further small questions. The main research question was:

> *How does openness about an ASD diagnosis affect perception of a job applicant's social skills and their likelihood of getting a job with perceived social skills as a mediator?*

Further, deepening the understanding of what further variables affect the likelihood of getting job opportunities was complemented by following subquestion:

> *Does the gender of a job applicant impact how openness about an ASD diagnosis affects perception of the applicant and their likelihood of getting a job?*

1.4 Focus and delimitations

The delimitations of this study will be to focus on a specific geographic region, Sweden, and on the specific diagnosis of ASD. Additionally, the study uses only common Swedish names in the job applications to minimize the risk of confounding variables such as ethnic or national origin-related discrimination. This approach helps ensure that any differences in employer response can be more accurately attributed to the disclosed neurodevelopmental condition and gender, rather than to biases related to the applicant's perceived cultural background.

Further, the study specifically focuses on the impact of disclosing autism in a cover letter. At the same time it avoids looking at other stages of the hiring process (such as interviews or follow-up communications) to keep the focus on the disclosure itself. The theory is that a cover letter provides the cleanest way to disclose an autism diagnosis in a way that does not

include any other informational differences about the candidate between the treatment and control group.

1.5 Thesis outline

The thesis is structured into six chapters: introduction, hypothesis formulation, methodology, results, discussion and conclusion. The introduction provides an introduction to the topic and a background on the issues at hand. Following this, the hypothesis section provides the specific hypothesis of the study, and their theoretical background. The methodology section details what research method is used as well as articulates how the method addresses the research question. The results chapter provides the results while the discussion explores how to interpret the results and potential implications. The conclusion chapter summarises the study and potential for future research.

2.0 Hypothesis formulation and theoretical justification

2.1 Main research question

> *"How does openness about an ASD diagnosis affect perception of a job applicant's social skills and their likelihood of getting a job with perceived social skills as a mediator?"*

This study investigates the impact of disclosure of an autism diagnosis on the probability of gaining employment. Specifically, we examine whether being open about an autism diagnosis affects how a candidate is perceived and in consequence how likely they are to be considered for employment.

Research suggests that pre-existing behaviours and societal perceptions strongly influence how individuals are evaluated and treated, often resulting in unconscious biases, particularly in contexts like recruitment. These biases can shape decisions in subtle yet impactful ways.

We believe that the disclosure of ASD negatively impacts the likelihood of being called to a job interview via a mediator. The mediator being the perception of social ability. Finally, we believe these mediators impact the intention to employ the candidate as expressed by employment indicators. This is the process by which we expect the disclosure of an autism diagnosis will decrease the likelihood of getting a job.
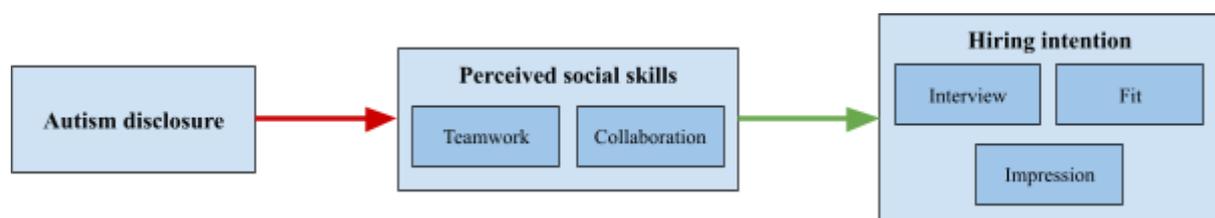
Figure 1
Figure outlining the different stages a recruiter goes through when forming a perception of the applicant.

2.1.1 Perceived social skills

Firstly it is important to understand how a disclosure of autism would impact perceived social ability. To understand this, consider the continuum-model of impression formation from Fiske and Neuberg.

They (Fiske and Neuberg, 1999) proposed a model that outlines under which conditions the personal impressions of an individual are dominated by category-related information and under which they are dominated by person-specific information. The core idea of the model is that the processes people use to form opinions about others operate along a continuum. This continuum reflects the degree to which perceivers use category-related information compared to person-specific information.

The model outlines how individuals form impressions through a three-step process:

1. **Initial Categorization** - Upon encountering a person, perceivers automatically classify them based on obvious traits (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity), using minimal effort.

2. **Relevance Check** - The perceiver then assesses whether the individual is worth further attention, using stereotypes as a cognitive shortcut.

3. **Processing Divergence** - If the person is not deemed **relevant**, impression formation stops at the category level, relying on stereotypes. Otherwise deeper processing occurs, and the perceiver actively considers individual attributes for a more nuanced impression.

Impressions of an applicant for a position will therefore be based both on individual and categorical assessments. This means that disclosing an autism diagnosis will lead to categorical assumptions about autistic people affecting the recruiters perception of the candidate.

This might be especially true during the initial stages of a recruitment process, such as the cover-letter screening, where the recruiter hasn't yet invested too much effort in getting to know the applicant.

The impression of a candidate's social abilities will therefore depend on the initial categorization and what the person associates an autism diagnosis with.

A condition for an ASD diagnosis according to DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) is "persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts, including deficits in social reciprocity, nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction, and skills in developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships". If the recruiter is aware of this, they may categorize the candidate in a way that lowers perceptions of social ability.

There is also research that suggests that autistic people have lower teamwork abilities. For example Drexler (2024) concluded that autistic students have a more difficult time with fast-paced group communication and self-advocacy in academic group work. Additionally, White et al (2011) found that autistic adolescents initially struggled with cooperative task completion, often repeating steps or working independently instead of collaborating.

As a result, it is probable that a categorical assumption about autistic people is that they have poor social skills which impact their ability to work with others in team settings negatively. A disclosure of an autism diagnosis will therefore lower perceptions of the person's social skills.

The first hypothesis of the study is therefore:

- **H1:** A disclosure of an autism diagnosis will lead to lower perceived social skills as measured by perceived ability to collaborate and work in teams

2.1.2 Hiring intentions

The mediator (perceived social skills) are expected to drop at the disclosure of an autism diagnosis. That should in turn lead to a negative impact on employment intentions as a candidate with high social skills are more employable than those with low social skills.

This is especially true in recent times as there has been a growing emphasis on social skills in the modern labor market. Between 1980 and 2012, jobs requiring a high level of social interaction increased by nearly 12 percentage points. David J. Deming (2017) highlights that for more recent cohorts social skills have become a stronger predictor of both full-time employment and higher wages. The demand is especially high in well-paying and

automation-resistant jobs, where abilities like cooperation, communication, and adaptability are crucial.

Given the growing emphasis on social competence within the contemporary job market, candidates perceived as deficient in social competence may be judged negatively early in the impression formation process.

Even if other qualifications are strong, perceived deficiencies in social interaction can lead recruiters to form an early unfavorable overall impression, potentially stopping deeper evaluation altogether. This in turn can decrease perceived suitability for the role and in consequence lower

Lower perceptions of social skills caused by the exposure to an autism diagnosis may thereby lead to lower employment intention.

In order to measure these employment intentions three questions will be asked to the participants. They have been used by Derous et al (2017) to measure the effect of stimuli on employment intentions. The different questions were originally used for measuring ethnic discrimination, however the methodology could be applicable, in principle, to study any form of discrimination. In this case it will be used to study how disclosure of ASD affects job opportunities.

The three questions are:

1) *Given all information you read about this applicant, how suitable do you believe this applicant is for this job?*
2) *Given all information you read about this applicant, how likely is it that you would invite this applicant for a job interview?*
3) *Given all information you read about this applicant, what is your general impression of this applicant for the job?*

These questions directly capture three different perspectives of the same fundamental variable: employment intention. Firstly, whether the candidate makes a good general impression, secondly whether they would make a good fit in the position and finally whether they should be summoned for an interview.. In the context of this study, these three questions

would reveal if and how disclosing ASD in a cover letter would influence employment intention from these three perspectives.

The second hypothesis of the study is therefore:

-**H2**: As a consequence of lower perceived social skills from an autism disclosure, employment intention will decrease as measured by perceived suitability of the candidate, probability to call for an interview and general perception of the candidate.

2.2 Secondary research question

> "*Does the gender of a job applicant impact how openness about an ASD diagnosis* affects perception of the applicant and their likelihood of getting a job?*"*

The second research question primarily draws on differences in prevalence between the genders, gender bias in workplace discrimination, and differences in social skills between the genders.

To answer this, we assess how the disclosure affects the following **independent variable**:

- Gender disclosement

Trying to find out if the applicant disclosed gender would affect the applicant's chances of being called for an interview or not, investigating the role of gender being a moderator.
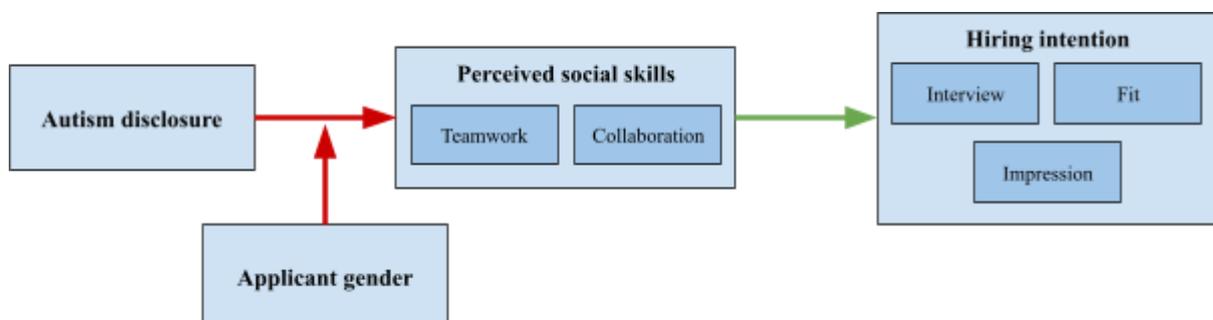
Figure 2
Figure outlining the different stages a recruiter goes through when forming a perception of the applicant. Gender acting as a moderator of the perceived social skills.

2.2.1 Moderator

The model above proposes that the effect of disclosing an autism diagnosis is moderated by the gender of the applicant. The theoretical biases for this moderation lies in gender-based differences in autism diagnosis and presentation, societal expectations of female social competence, and documented workplace gender discrimination.

2.2.2 Gender workplace discrimination

There is gender bias when it comes to discrimination, where females are more targeted than males. The study made by Tiwari et al (2018), identifies several factors contributing to this discrimination. The most significant factors were stereotypes and prejudices, including favouritism in promotions, jealousy, political behaviour from male colleagues, unequal leadership opportunities, men receiving more credit and higher salaries and management viewing men as more suitable for leadership positions. Gender orientation was also a contributing factor, including imbalances in worklife and the perception by male colleagues that females are incompetent and meant for housework. Work-family factors also contribute to the discrimination, specifically regarding family support for work, however to a lesser extent (Tiwari et al., 2018).

2.2.3 Gender differences in social skills

Gender can further influence hiring outcomes due to differing societal perceptions and expectations associated with each gender.

Sources suggest that females are seen as having certain strengths in communicating compared to men. According to Briton et al (1995), women are perceived as good listeners and better at decoding non-verbal and verbal communication. Women were described as fluent, skilled and effective communicators, while men were perceived as loud, less talkative verbally, dysfluent, less skilled and restless. A study by Vasyura (2008) found that women display stronger internal regulation of communicative activity, and generally put more effort into communication, while having a clearer understanding of the role communication plays in life (Briton et al., 1995) (Vasyura, 2008).

2.2.4 Gender influences autism diagnosis

There are several key differences between females and males in the context of autism spectrum disorder diagnosis and presentation. The prevailing understanding of autism has historically been based on the male phenotype, contributing to potential bias in diagnosis. Autistic women, with normal intelligence and milder forms of autism, are better able to employ social skills and mimic socially acceptable behaviours that autistic men cannot. This ability to minimise social impairments of the disorder may hinder diagnosis (Haney, 2016).

In the context of recruitment, this dynamic poses a unique challenge: when a woman discloses her autism diagnosis, recruiters may struggle to reconcile her socially competent appearance with their stereotypical understanding of autism. This mismatch can result in disbelief, skepticism, or minimized recognition of the challenges she may face. When gender-based bias intersects with stigma related to neurodivergence the negative impact may be compounded. A woman disclosing an autism diagnosis may be penalized twice: once for her gender, and again for her neurodivergence. Where a man might be seen as "quirky" or even "brilliant but difficult," a woman could instead be viewed as emotionally unstable, socially inept, or/and untrustworthiness. These gendered stereotypes can significantly diminish her perceived employability, especially in roles that emphasize communication, leadership, or/and emotional intelligence.

Based on the theories above, the following moderation hypotheses are proposed:

- **H3:** Female applicants who disclose an autism diagnosis will be evaluated with regard to their social skills than male applicants

3.0 Research methodology

This study was conducted through a quantitative approach. The insights were gathered through an experiment via a digital survey. Respondents assumed the role of a recruiter and were asked to read a cover letter. Some respondents read a cover letter disclosing an autism diagnosis and others read one that didn't disclose any diagnosis.

Later the respondents are exposed to closed questions that ask the respondent to analyze the applicant. This collects numerical data that can be statistically analyzed to understand the impact of an autism diagnosis on job opportunities.

The respondents are asked to read a cover letter and later decide if they would hire the cover letter person. Afterwards the respondent is asked to evaluate how much the person is believed to work well in teams as well as with others. After that we ask questions regarding the respondents age, gender and if they study or work in HR, all this to see if these variables could affect the result. To get an overview of the survey see appendix.

3.1 Survey setup

In order to study the effects of stigma against autistic people we designed an experimental survey that aimed to study the pure stigma effects of autism. That is, the effects only obtained from disclosing that you have autism, rather than the effects that might be observed when an individual exhibits behavior that is consistent with an autism diagnosis.

In order to do this we designed a survey with a job description and a set of 4 cover letters. After reading both the job description and the cover letters (see appendix), the respondent was asked to rate the individual applying for the job using a set of questions.

The cover letters were the exact same, except for the fact that half of them had a male name *(Karl Nilsson)*, and half of them a female name *(Alma Nilsson)*. Further, half of them briefly disclosed an autism diagnosis;

- "One thing I want to be open about is that I am autistic. For me, it means that I appreciate structure, am thorough, and find it easy to focus on details.",

while half did not;

"I appreciate structure, am meticulous, and have an eye for detail.".

This meant that we could analyze the ratings for the following groups: man disclosing autism, woman disclosing autism, man not disclosing autism, and woman not disclosing autism.

3.2 Measurement of impact

After reading the cover letter, respondents were asked to answer the questions provided (see appendix). The measurements of interest are our end results variable and our mediator: employment intention and social skills perception. In order to measure them, we have two sets of questions.

The first set of questions were related to the intention to employ the candidate in question. They were lifted from Derous et al (2017) which measured ethnic discrimination by employers by measuring the impact of ethnic sounding and non-ethnic-sounding names on employment intention as measured by their three questions:

- 'Given all information you read about this applicant, how suitable do you believe this applicant is for this job?' (1= not suitable at all; 7 = very suitable) *(See Appendix, Question 5)*

- 'Given all information you read about this applicant, how likely is it that you would invite this applicant for a job interview?' (1 = not likely at all; 7 = very likely) *(See Appendix, Question 4)*

- 'Given all information you read about this applicant, what is your general impression of this applicant for the job?' (1 = not good at all; 7 = very good) *(See Appendix, Question 3)*.

For Derous et al (2017) the internal consistency was .95, for this study consistency was lower at .814.

The second set of questions were to understand the impact of disclosing an ASD diagnosis on perceived social abilities. As key social skills is hypothesized to be a key mediator for the impact of an autism disclosure on hiring intention, it should be measured.

We did not find any useful survey questions we could lift from existing literature on perceived social ability from an employer perspective, and therefore designed our own measurement. This measurement consisted of two questions where the survey respondent stated their agreement with two statements on a scale of 1-5, ranging from "little" to "alot". The statements in question were *(See Appendix, Question 7)*:

- "I believe the candidate will work well with others"

- "I believe the candidate will work well in a team"

These two measurements were chosen as they highlight the two aspects of social skills that are key in the workplace. The ability to collaborate, and to work in a team. As previously highlighted, these are skills that autistic people can experience challenges with (Drexler, 2024; White et al, 2011).

The internal consistency of this measurement was .843.

3.3 Data reliability

There are several controlling measures implemented to check whether the data collected could be relied on. To begin, in the questionnaire there are controlling questions in place to verify whether the respondent truly read the text *(See Appendix, Question 1 & 2)*.

Additionally, responses from individuals who completed the survey within 2 minutes were excluded. After testing the survey, 2 minutes was determined to be too short of a time in order to complete the survey properly. In total, 217 people responded to the survey, with 115 completing it from start to finish and with the correct answer to the control question. Finally 102 completed it in 2 minutes or longer. Out of 217 responses only the 102 will therefore be considered in this analysis.

3.4 Respondents

In addition to the questions measuring perception of the candidate, the survey collected some independent variables, including whether the respondent had studied or worked in HR, their gender, and their age. The mean age was 37.3, with a standard deviation of 18. Of all the valid respondents, only 12 (11.8%) had any experience of HR. The gender and age of respondents varied somewhat between the four different groups based on gender of applicant and treatment.

Discloses autism	Gender of applicant	Mean age	Proportion female
Yes	Female	41.54	0.73
Yes	Male	36.43	0.6
No	Female	33.08	0.4
No	Male	37.3	0.53

Table 1
Table disclosing the demographics of survey respondents by experimental group: whether the applicant disclosed autism and the applicant's gender. For each group, the mean age and proportion of female respondents are reported.

4.0 Results

The data was found to be non-normally distributed across the various metrics, with a strong clustering towards the positive extreme of each metric. This means that instead of doing the traditional t-test, a wilcoxon signed-rank test was used in order to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the treatment and control sample in our measurements.

In addition to the default wilcoxon p-values, holm-adjusted p-values are needed to take account of the fact that multiple comparisons are done. Holm is a conservative adjustment, therefore, even Holm-adjusted p-values above 5% might be seen as interesting.

4.1 Employability questions

Metric	Mean treatment	Mean control	Z-score difference	P-value	Adjusted p-value
Impression	5.85	5.88	-0.04	.92	1.
Interview	5.79	6.08	-0.26	.20	1.
Fit	5.49	5.67	-0.15	.37	1.

Table 2
Table disclosing the results from the three core questions used to measure employment intent: overall impression, likelihood of being invited to an interview, and perceived fit for the role. For each metric, the table displays the mean score for the treatment group (where the applicant disclosed an autism diagnosis) and the control group (no disclosure), along with the Z-score, raw p-value, and adjusted p-value (corrected for multiple testing).

Small differences between the control group and treatment group were found when it comes to interview and fit, however, they are not statistically significant. Especially not when adjusting with the holm method for multiple comparisons.

4.2 Social skills

Metric	Mean treatment	Mean control	Z-score difference	P-value	Adjusted p-value
Teamwork	3.74	4.16	-0.59	<0.01	0.02
Collaboration	3.58	4.12	-0.71	<0.01	<0.01

Table 3
Table disclosing the results from the three core questions used to measure perceived social skills: teamwork and collaboration. For each metric, the table displays the mean score for the treatment group (where the applicant disclosed an autism diagnosis) and the control group (no disclosure), along with the Z-score, raw p-value, and adjusted p-value (corrected for multiple testing).

When it comes to perceived social skills a significant difference between the treatment and control group can be observed. Among the treatment group, perceptions of social skills are much lower than in control. This difference is held at a p-value and holm-adjusted p-value at or below 0.02 makes it extremely significant.

4.3 Mediation analysis
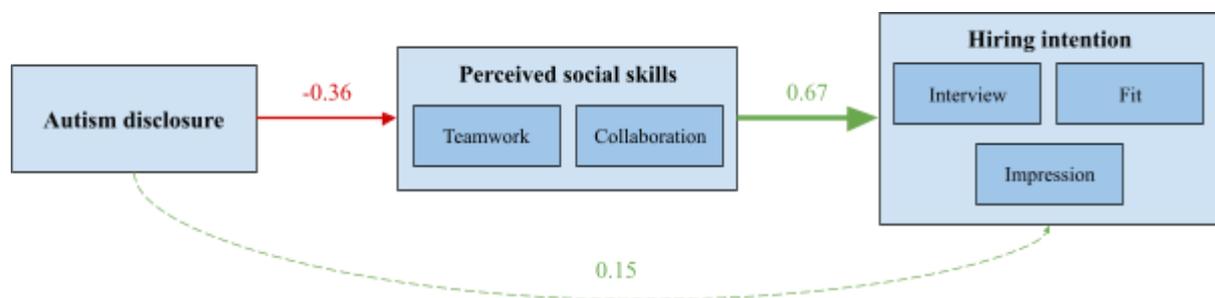
Figure 3
Figure describing how autism negatively affects perceived social skills which in turn influences hiring intentions. The figure also displays the direct effect of autism disclosure on hiring intention.

A bootstrapped (n=5000) mediation analysis was used in order to understand the mediation between autism disclosure and hiring intentions. Model fit was excellent (CFI = 1.000, RMSEA = 0.000, SRMR = 0.022), supporting the robustness of the mediation structure.

Disclosure of autism has a significant standardized estimated impact of -0.36 (p < .001) on perceived social skills. In turn, perceived social skills have a significant standardized estimated impact of .67 (p < .001) on hiring intention. This creates a clear link where an autism disclosure has a negative impact on perceived social skills which in turn has a negative impact on hiring intention. Beyond this, the direct impact of autism disclosure on hiring intention is 0.15 (p=.124), however this was not statistically significant.

In summary, the indirect effect was -0.243 (p=.005), indicating that their autism disclosure negatively affected hiring intention through perceived social skills as a mediator.

4.4 Impact of gender

One of the questions to be answered was whether gender has any impact on the stigma associated with autism. In our study, there is one gender that is of interest. That being the gender of the fictional applicant.

In order to figure out the effect of gender, the following linear regression was used:

$$x = \beta_0 + Female * \beta_1 + Treatment * \beta_2 + Female * Treatment * \beta_3$$

x represents a given dependent variable. *Female* represents a dummy variable with 1 being female, and 0 being male. Finally *Treatment* is a dummy variable representing whether the CV disclosed autism, 1, or whether it did not, 0. The variable of interest in this case regression is β_3, that being the estimate of the interaction variable between female and treatment.

4.4.1 Impact on teamwork

Variable	Estimate	Std. error	T-value	P-value
Intercept	4.04	0.13	31.44	<.01

Female	.27	.19	1.4	.16
Treatment	-.29	.18	-1.57	.12
Interaction	-.3	.27	-1.12	.27

Table 4
Table showing the regression analysis of perceived teamwork ability. The table shows the intercept, impact of gender, autism disclosure and the interaction effect of the two latter.

4.4.2 Impact on collaboration

Variable	Estimate	Std. error	T-value	P-value
Intercept	3.96	.13	30.07	<.01
Female	.34	.19	1.73	.09
Treatment	-.36	.19	-1.92	.06
Interaction	-.39	.27	-1.41	.16

Table 5
Table showing the regression analysis of perceived teamwork ability. The table shows the intercept, impact of gender, autism disclosure and the interaction effect of the two latter.

For both teamwork and collaboration, there appears to be an impact on whether the fictional applicant was female or male. The estimate appears to be of the same magnitude as that of disclosing autism. However, in both of these cases, the p-value is much larger than one would need to be statistically significant.

4.5 Summary of findings

We find that while disclosing autism has no clear impact on intention to employ or the various ratings, it does have an impact on the perceived social abilities of the applicant. This difference is both large and statistically significant, even after an extremely conservative adjustment for multiple comparisons. Via this impact on perceived social abilities there is an indirect effect on employment intentions. Finally, there is no clear evidence that gender of the applicant acts as a moderator for an autism disclosures impact on perceived social ability.

5.0 Discussion

This section examines the impact of autism disclosure in job applications on perceived social ability and employment intentions, including their interaction effect with gender. This examination builds on the findings in this thesis in order to address the research questions and highlight key patterns and relationships identified in the data. It explores the issue that social skills are an ever more important part of the labour market, while considering what this means in a world where autistic people are perceived to possess lower social competence.

Primarily the analysis will focus on the first research question:

> *"How does openness about an ASD diagnosis affect perception of a job applicant's social skills and their likelihood of getting a job with perceived social skills as a mediator?"*

This examination will also consider the second one:

> *"Does the gender of a job applicant impact how openness about an ASD diagnosis affects perception of the applicant and their likelihood of getting a job?"*

The discussion is structured around six sub-headlines, where subsections 5.1, 5:2 and 5.3 delve into the findings and results of the three hypotheses previously outlined. Subsections 5.4, 5:5 and 5.6 discuss the theoretical and practical implications of the results, as well as the limitations with the study.

5.1 Impact of autism disclosure on perception of social skills

The first hypothesis proposed is that disclosing an autism diagnosis would negatively affect perceptions of an applicant's social skills, particularly their ability to collaborate and function effectively in teams:

- *"A disclosure of an autism diagnosis will lead to lower perceived social skills as measured by perceived ability to collaborate and work in teams"*

This hypothesis was supported by the experimental results. It highlights a significant bias in how autistic individuals are evaluated within recruitment processes when it comes to their social abilities.

This confirms the idea based on the Fiske and Neuberg (1990) continuum model of impression formation. That during an initial cover letter screening, categorical information will be used in order to make assessments about an individual's characteristics.

These findings are especially relevant in the context of the modern labour market, where social competence and teamwork are increasingly emphasized as essential skills (Deming, 2017). A lower perception of these key work life skills could therefore be devastating for a job applicant.

Further, Drexler (2024) and White et al. (2011) highlights how autistic individuals often face challenges with communication and cooperation in various circumstances. While autistic individuals do experience challenges with social skills, the way autism takes expression varies (1177, nd).

Altogether, this indicates that even when autistic people have not interacted with recruiters in an interview setting, they are still put at a disadvantage in their careers due to the generalized negative perceptions toward their social abilities.

5.2 Employment intentions and general ratings

The second hypothesis posited that disclosing an autism diagnosis would negatively affect a recruiters employment intentions as a consequence of lower perceived social skills:

- *"As a consequence of lower perceived social skills from an autism disclosure, employment intention will decrease as measured by perceived suitability of the candidate, probability to call for an interview and general perception of the candidate"*

The results of the study were mixed towards the second hypothesis. The data did show an indirect effect on employment intentions as a result of an autism disclosure with social skills

as a mediator. However, the total effect is not significant, even if the directionality is negative.

This indicates that an autism disclosure does decrease perceived social skills in a way which should decrease employment intentions. However, there might be some unknown variable which prevents this disclosure from taking the full effect on employment intentions that we should expect.

As previous research (Whelpley & May, 2023; Romualdez et al, 2021) suggests, biases and stereotypes related to autism, such as perceptions of awkwardness or social deficits, often play a role in the hiring process.

One possible explanation for this result is that respondents might believe that discriminating towards autistic people is unfair, socially disapproved of or may know that such discrimination is illegal in certain cases.

This might in that case cancel out the effect of lower perceived social skills. It could be especially the case in a survey setting where respondents generally feel a need to give responses that are considered socially desirable. Therefore there might be a mismatch between stated employment intentions and actual employment intentions.

When presenting only a cover letter, the initial evaluation is based on the written content of the cover letter. This may reduce the impact of perceived social skills as they are not as easily communicated and noticed in a cover letter as in other parts of the recruitment process such as interviews. In contrast, during an interview, these attributes become more visible and can have a stronger influence on the evaluation process.

While the findings did not provide clear evidence of a direct effect on employment intentions, they still remain important for future research in recognizing potential biases in recruitment processes. These biases may be less obvious in hypothetical scenarios but could be present in real-world hiring decisions.

5.3 Gender as a moderator

The third hypothesis proposed is that female applicants who disclose an autism diagnosis will be evaluated with regard to their social skills than male applicants;

- *"Does the gender of a job applicant impact how openness about an ASD diagnosis affects perception of the applicant and their likelihood of getting a job?"*

This hypothesis was not confirmed by the results. However, even if the hypothesis was not confirmed, the idea that gender and autism interact in various ways cannot and should not be dismissed.

As Haney's (2016) has shown, autistic women are frequently misunderstood or dismissed. Autism is generally considered a "male condition", which means that women are often forgotten in the discussion.

This might interact with social expectations about how women are to behave. As Briton et al. (1995) and Vasyura (2008) have already shown that women are generally expected to display stronger interpersonal skills and emotional sensitivity.

The absence of a statistically significant result does not equate to evidence of any interaction effects between gender and autism disclosure in general. Rather, it highlights the complexity of the issue and the possibility that such effects may manifest in more nuanced ways than this study explored.

5.4 Theoretical implications

This study contributes to theoretical understanding of employment discrimination by offering empirical insights into how disclosure of autism influences a part of the recruitment process. This is especially interesting in the case of Sweden, where strong legal frameworks exist and prohibits certain types of discrimination against autistic people.

This study contributes to the growing body of research on disability and labor market discrimination, by emphasizing the role of implicit associations formed during the early stages of recruitment. This study also proves a significant an indirect relationship between an autism disclosure and hiring intent using a novel model.

The model proposed in this study suggests that when applicants disclose an autism diagnosis, the recruiter starts to associate the applicant with stereotypical traits of autistic people. The central trait being a lower degree of social skills. This forms the initial categorization in accordance with the continuum model of impression formation (Fiske and Neuberg, 1990).

This categorization and subsequent association with certain traits happens even without any audio or visual interaction or experience of audio and visual clues with the applicant in question. This indicates that even minimal disclosures, such as a cover letter disclosing an autism diagnosis, can create generalized expectations about the applicant's abilities, particularly regarding social functioning. This expands on previous literature on bias against autistic people that has mainly looked at the effects and perception of autistic behavior, rather than an autism diagnosis in and of itself.

5.5 Practical implications

The findings from this research have significant implications for both job seekers and employers. For job seekers, especially autistic job seekers, these results may inform them whether they should disclose their diagnosis or not. It simply helps them understand the reasons for and against disclosing their diagnosis when seeking employment.

For employers and recruiters, the study highlights the risk for unconscious bias in the early stages of the recruitment process. Despite existing anti-discrimination laws in Sweden, the study suggests that mere disclosure of an ASD diagnosis can negatively affect hiring decisions, even before any face-to-face interaction occurs.

This underlines the need for employers to consider their recruitment practices and how they might be influenced by various biases. In light of this, they might want to adapt their hiring practices to promote greater inclusivity.

5.6 Limitations

The limitations of this study mainly take the form of three kinds: limitations of generalization, limitations of survey responses and issues with autism communication.

Firstly, there are issues when it comes to generalising the responses collected to the specific group we are interested in: recruiters. The responses collected came from a very diverse group of people, most of whom have not worked HR-roles. This means that our respondents might not represent the population we are interested in when it comes to biases, values and thinking.

Secondly, survey responses might not capture actual intentions. Surveys generally induce certain types of biases, for example when it comes to social desirability. Respondents might answer more in line with what is socially approved rather than what they actually believe.

For example, it might be that people consciously avoid responding negatively towards an autism diagnosis while answering a survey. In reality, actual recruiters could instead be less willing to offer an interview to candidates who disclose an ASD diagnosis.

Some respondents commented privately on the fact that they understood from the diagnosis disclosure that the purpose of the study was to study perceptions of autistic people. This understanding of the experiment's purpose might have led to less clear results than otherwise would have been generated.

Another risk with survey responses is that they might be affected by inattentive responding. Some respondents might not take the time to read the cover letters in ways that real recruiters would not do. This might lead to more noise in responses that makes it difficult to accurately measure effect sizes and increases p-values.

Finally, the way an autism diagnosis was communicated might have impacted the effect of the autism disclosure. For example, it was framed as a positive in the survey disclosure, which might have lessened the potential negative impact that the disclosure of an autism diagnosis might bring. It is also not common to disclose psychological conditions such as autism in a cover letter, which might have impacted the effect of the disclosure in ways that are unknown.

5.7 Explanation for excluded variables in the analysis

In addition to the variables explored in this thesis, the experimental survey contained some additional questions relating to the respondents view of the applicant. These questions were

modeled on "Seeing is disliking" by Whelplay & May (2023). These questions in a later stage of our analysis did not fit in the conceptual model that we built. Therefore, they were excluded from the study.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Summary

This study examined how disclosure of a person's Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnosis would influence how they were perceived as job applicants and whether employers would consider them differently when it comes to employment.

This becomes even more interesting as the experiment was conducted in Sweden, where anti-discrimination laws are in place that limit the ability of employers to discriminate towards autistic people.

As conversations around neurodiversity grow and the drive to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) intensifies, it becomes increasingly important to understand how openness about one's autistic diagnosis impacts real-world hiring outcomes and how that interacts with factors such as gender. Especially as they are relevant to the SDGs of reduced inequalities and gender equality.

The study underscores the potential risks for individuals when choosing to disclose their autistic diagnosis, highlighting the persistent fear of discrimination that can discourage honesty and authenticity in the job application process.

The main finding of this study is that a disclosure of an ASD diagnosis significantly lowered evaluations of the applicant's perceived social abilities. This is particularly concerning given the modern labour market's strong emphasis on social and collaborative skills (Deming, 2017). If an applicant reveals their diagnosis, assumptions about one's characteristics can obscure the strengths of an autistic individual, further highlighting why people might be less willing to disclose their diagnosis.

Secondly, the study hypothesized that disclosing an autism diagnosis would negatively impact employment intentions as measured by: perceived suitability for the role, likelihood of interview invitation, and overall evaluation. The results, however, were mixed.

While there was an indirect link between lower perceived social ability and reduced employment intentions, a statistically significant total effect of an autism disclosure on hiring decisions was not observed.

However, it is important to remember that this does not imply the absence of bias, rather it may reflect the limitations of the hypothetical scenario used. In simulated hiring situations, participants may emphasize qualifications over social traits.

These findings align with the Fiske and Neuberg's (1990) dual-process model, which suggests that impression formation depends both on categorical labels and task-relevant information such as experience and skill. Without a face-to-face interview, where social behavior becomes more visible, biases related to autism may not be as pronounced.

Nevertheless, these findings bring up an important point about how implicit biases may still influence hiring in real-world settings, even if not captured in controlled experiments.

Finally, the study posited that female applicants disclosing autism would suffer a larger autism penalty on social functioning traits than male counterparts, was not supported. While the data did not reveal significant interaction effects between gender and autism disclosure, this remains an area that requires deeper investigation. Prior studies suggest that gendered expectations about communication and emotional sensitivity may exacerbate bias against autistic women (Haney, 2016; Briton et al., 1995), making it an important focus for future work in this field.

Taken together, the findings of this study emphasize that while explicit discriminatory behavior may not always manifest in controlled settings, subtle biases linked to perceptions of social functioning continue to influence how applicants who disclose neurodevelopmental conditions are evaluated.

6.2 Future research

Building on these findings, future research could broaden the scope of investigation by including a more diverse and representative sample of employers, hiring professionals, and organizational contexts.

While the current study focused on hypothetical scenarios using white-collar job applications in Sweden, examining actual decision-makers across various industries and organizational sizes could provide deeper insights into how autism disclosure influences hiring behavior in real-world settings.

Moreover, future studies should investigate the complex interaction effects between gender, autism disclosure, and perceived social competence. Especially in light of prior research suggesting that gender expectations influence how traits like warmth and social competence are perceived. Briton et al. (1995) and Vasyura (2008) have already shown that women are generally expected to display stronger interpersonal skills and emotional sensitivity.

Such dynamics align with Haney's (2016) observation that autistic women are frequently misunderstood or dismissed, which could lead to compounded disadvantages during recruitment.

Exploring these intersections more thoroughly, for example through mixed-method approaches, interviews or field based studies, could offer a more nuanced understanding of the layered stigmas that may exist.

Therefore, to further investigate gender as a potential moderator for the impact of autism on perceived traits is not only theoretically meaningful but also essential for developing more inclusive and equitable recruitment practices that could account for a layered effects of stigma

In addition, future research might benefit from examining different types of job roles. Particularly roles that vary in their demands for social interaction versus technical expertise. This could help clarify whether certain positions are more susceptible to bias following autism disclosure.

Lastly, future research could also incorporate the perspectives of neurodivergent individuals themselves, especially regarding their experiences with disclosure and employer reactions, would add important depth and real-world relevance to the existing body of knowledge.

These future research directions are crucial not only for deepening the insights into this kind of discrimination, but also for shaping policies, guiding organisational practices and lastly promoting a fairer. A more inclusive hiring process represents a meaningful step toward

greater workplace equality and aligns with the broader objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

7.0 Appendix/Material

7.1 Ai transparency

The Ai tools used are ChatGPT, Perplexity and NotebookLM.

These Ai tools have been used in different ways. ChatGPT has mostly been employed to improve the grammar and flow of certain sentences, while Perplexity has occasionally been used in order to find articles that discuss similar topics as our thesis. Additionally, another way AI has been used is in order to speed up the process of programming in lieu of using documentation.

A potential risk of using tools like Perplexity to find articles on similar topics, is that they may provide misleading information or reference articles that don't actually exist. To mitigate this, we manually verified the articles by reviewing their content. In some cases, we used NotebookLM to generate quick summaries and cross-check whether the information provided by one AI aligned with that of the other.

Overall, using AI tools provided valuable insights by allowing us to quickly scan the internet for relevant articles that could enhance our writing. The Ai also helped improve the clarity and coherence of the text, which was especially helpful after long hours of writing, when it became more difficult to stay focused and ensure the content remained relevant.

7.2 Information qualtrics

7.2.1 Information presented in the original survey language - Swedish

Du som HR chef,

Vi vill att du sätter dig i rollen som en HR-chef som ska anställa en ny medarbetare för att arbeta i kassan. Nedan hittar du en jobbannons och ett fiktivt personligt brev till en kandidat. Läs noggrant igenom all text, eftersom du i slutet kommer att behöva svara på frågor om innehållet.

Jobb Beskrivning: Kassapersonal

Plats: Matextra Haninge
Anställningsform: Deltid/Extra
Lön: Enligt kollektivavtal

Om rollen: Vi söker dig som vill bli en del av vårt härliga gäng på Matextra Haninge! I kassalinjen hjälper vi våra kunder att checka ut sina varor, vilket gör avdelningen till en viktig plats i butiken där vi har chansen att ge ett gott sista intryck av oss. Du är en viktig del av butiks teamet som ser till att ge våra kunder den bästa butiksupplevelser. Här kommer lite mer om tjänsten: Tillsammans med dina kollegor sköter du den dagliga driften i kassalinjen. Du ser till att våra kunder kan avsluta sina köp på ett bra och smidigt sätt med hjälp av våra utcheckning alternativ. I kassalinjen möter du massor av kunder dagligen, alltid med härlig energi, kunskap, fingertoppskänsla och ett stort leende.

Krav: Gymnasial utbildning, goda kunskaper i svenska (tal och skrift). Vi välkomnar sökande i alla åldrar, men med anledning av Arbetsmiljölagen ska du ha fyllt 18 år

7.2.1 Information presented in english

You as the HR Manager,

We want you to take on the role of an HR manager who is hiring a new employee to work at the checkout. Below you will find a job advertisement and a fictional cover letter from a candidate. Please read all the text carefully, as you will be asked questions about the content at the end.

Job Description: Checkout Staff
Location: Matextra Haninge
Employment Type: Part-time/Extra
Salary: According to collective agreement

About the Role:
We are looking for someone who wants to be part of our wonderful team at Matextra Haninge!

At the checkout line, we help our customers complete their purchases, making this department an important area of the store where we have the opportunity to leave a great final impression. You will be a vital part of the store team, ensuring our customers have the best shopping experience.

Here's a bit more about the position:
Together with your colleagues, you will manage the daily operations at the checkout. You will ensure that our customers can complete their purchases in a smooth and pleasant way using our available checkout options. In the checkout area, you will meet many customers every day, always bringing great energy, knowledge, attention to detail, and a big smile.

Requirements:
Upper secondary (high school) education, good knowledge of Swedish (spoken and written). We welcome applicants of all ages, but due to the Work Environment Act, you must be at least 18 years old.

7.3 Template for cover letter

7.3.1 No diagnosis - Swedish

Hej, mitt namn är (Alma Nilsson eller Karl Nilsson) och jag är 20 år.

När jag läste om tjänsten blev jag direkt intresserad eftersom den verkar passa både mina styrkor och min personlighet väldigt väl. Jag har erfarenhet av att arbeta i serviceinriktade roller där jag fått möta människor, hantera olika situationer och utveckla min problemlösningsförmåga. Genom mina tidigare erfarenheter har jag lärt mig att arbeta strukturerat, anpassa mig efter olika arbetsuppgifter och samarbeta med både kunder och kollegor. Att skapa en positiv upplevelse för människor är något jag verkligen brinner för. Jag gör alltid mitt bästa för att bidra till en välkomnande och trevlig atmosfär.

Jag uppskattar struktur, är noggrann och har lätt för att fokusera på detaljer. Jag gillar att arbeta med tydliga rutiner och att ha en klar överblick över mina uppgifter. Samtidigt trivs jag i sociala sammanhang, där jag får arbeta med människor och bidra till en positiv arbetsmiljö.

Min förmåga att engagera mig fullt ut i det jag gör har hjälpt mig att bygga starka relationer både med kollegor, vänner och kunder. Jag är en problemlösare som gillar att hitta nya sätt att lösa utmaningar, och jag brinner för att skapa en trivsam och inspirerande arbetsmiljö för mig själv och andra.

Jag skulle älska att få chansen att berätta mer om mig själv och höra mer om ert team och ert arbete. Hör gärna av er om jag kan få komma på en intervju!

Vänliga hälsningar,

(Alma Nilsson eller Karl Nilsson)

7.3.2 No diagnosis - English

Hello, my name is (Alma Nilsson or Karl Nilsson) and I am 20 years old.
When I read about the position, I was immediately interested because it seems to suit both my strengths and my personality very well. I have experience working in customer service roles where I've interacted with people, handled various situations, and developed my problem-solving skills. Through my previous experiences, I have learned to work in a structured way, adapt to different tasks, and collaborate with both customers and colleagues.

Creating a positive experience for people is something I am truly passionate about. I always do my best to contribute to a welcoming and pleasant atmosphere.

I value structure, am meticulous, and have a keen eye for detail. I enjoy working with clear routines and having a good overview of my responsibilities. At the same time, I thrive in social environments where I get to work with people and contribute to a positive work atmosphere.

My ability to fully engage in what I do has helped me build strong relationships with colleagues, friends, and customers. I am a problem-solver who enjoys finding new ways to tackle challenges, and I am passionate about creating a pleasant and inspiring work environment for myself and others.

I would love the opportunity to tell you more about myself and learn more about your team and your work. Please feel free to contact me if I may come in for an interview!

Best regards,
(Alma Nilsson or Karl Nilsson)

7.3.3 Diagnosis - Swedish

Hej, mitt namn är (Alma Nilsson eller Karl Nilsson) och jag är 20 år.

När jag läste om tjänsten blev jag direkt intresserad eftersom den verkar passa både mina styrkor och min personlighet väldigt väl. Jag har erfarenhet av att arbeta i serviceinriktade roller där jag fått möta människor, hantera olika situationer och utveckla min problemlösningsförmåga. Genom mina tidigare erfarenheter har jag lärt mig att arbeta strukturerat, anpassa mig efter olika arbetsuppgifter och samarbeta med både kunder och kollegor. Att skapa en positiv upplevelse för människor är något jag verkligen brinner för. Jag gör alltid mitt bästa för att bidra till en välkomnande och trevlig atmosfär.

En sak jag vill vara öppen med är att jag har autism. För mig innebär det att jag uppskattar struktur, är noggrann och har lätt för att fokusera på detaljer. Jag gillar att arbeta med tydliga rutiner och att ha en klar överblick över mina uppgifter. Samtidigt trivs jag i sociala sammanhang, där jag får arbeta med människor och bidra till en positiv arbetsmiljö.

Min förmåga att engagera mig fullt ut i det jag gör har hjälpt mig att bygga starka relationer både med kollegor, vänner och kunder. Jag är en problemlösare som gillar att hitta nya sätt att lösa utmaningar, och jag brinner för att skapa en trivsam och inspirerande arbetsmiljö för mig själv och andra.

Jag skulle älska att få chansen att berätta mer om mig själv och höra mer om ert team och ert arbete. Hör gärna av er om jag kan få komma på en intervju!

Vänliga hälsningar,

(Alma Nilsson eller Karl Nilsson)

7.3.4 Diagnosis - English

Hi, my name is (Alma Nilsson or Karl Nilsson) and I'm 20 years old.
When I read about the position, I was immediately interested because it seems to match both my strengths and personality very well. I have experience working in service-oriented roles where I've interacted with people, handled various situations, and developed my problem-solving skills. Through my previous experiences, I've learned to work in a structured way, adapt to different tasks, and collaborate with both customers and colleagues. Creating a positive experience for people is something I'm truly passionate about. I always do my best to contribute to a welcoming and pleasant atmosphere.

One thing I want to be open about is that I'm autistic. For me, that means I appreciate structure, am thorough, and have an eye for detail. I enjoy working with clear routines and having a good overview of my responsibilities. At the same time, I thrive in social settings where I can work with people and help create a positive work environment.

My ability to fully engage in what I do has helped me build strong relationships with colleagues, friends, and customers. I'm a problem-solver who enjoys finding new ways to tackle challenges, and I'm passionate about creating an enjoyable and inspiring workplace—for myself and others.

I'd love the opportunity to tell you more about myself and to learn more about your team and your work. Please don't hesitate to reach out if I could come in for an interview!

Kind regards,

(Alma Nilsson or Karl Nilsson)

7.4.1 Survey questions - Swedish

Question 1

Jag har tagit del av det personliga brevet

- Ja

Question 2

Vad läste du för dokument?

- Dikt
- Personligt brev
- Nyhetsartikel
- Recension

Question 3

Givet all information du läst om den sökande, vad är ditt intryck av den sökande?

- 1 - Inte gott alls
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 - Mycket gott

Question 4

Givet all information du läst om den sökande, hur sannolikt är det att du skulle bjuda in den sökanden till en anställningsintervju?

- - 1 - Inte alls sannolikt
- - 2
- - 3
- - 4
- - 5
- - 6
- - 7 - Mycket sannolikt

Question 5

Givet all information du läst om den sökande, hur lämplig anser du att den sökanden är för jobbet?

- - 1 - Inte alls lämplig
- - 2
- - 3
- - 4
- - 5
- - 6
- - 7 - Mycket lämplig

Question 6

I vilken utsträckning tycker du den ansökanden verkar vara:	1 - Lite	2	3	4	5 - Mycket

					50
Pålitilig					
Kvalificerad					
Självsäker					
Sympatisk					
Attraktiv					
Fångande					
Stel					

Question 7

Hur mycket instämmer du med följande påstående?	1 - Lite	2	3	4	5 - Mycket
Jag tror att kandidaten kommer arbeta väl med andra					
Jag tror att kandidaten kommer arbeta väl i team					

Question 8

Vad är din ålder?

-

Question 9

Vad är ditt kön?

- Man
- Kvinna
- Övrigt

Question 10

Studerar eller jobbar du med HR?

- Ja
- Nej

7.4.2 Survey questions - English

Question 1

I have read the personal letter

- Yes

Question 2

What type of document did you read?

- Poem
- Personal letter
- News article
- Review

Question 3

Given all the information you've read about the applicant, what is your impression of them?

- 1 – Very poor
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 – Very good

Question 4

Given all the information you've read about the applicant, how likely is it that you would invite them to a job interview?

- 1 – Not at all likely
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 – Very likely

Question 5

Given all the information you've read about the applicant, how suitable do you think they are for the job?

- 1 – Not at all suitable
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 – Very suitable

Question 6

To what extent do you think the applicant appears to be:	1 - Slightly	2	3	4	5 - Very
Reliable					
Qualified					
Confident					
Likeable					
Attractive					
Engaging					
Rigid					

Question 7

How much do you agree with the following statements?	1 - Slightly	2	3	4	5 - Very
I believe the candidate will work					

well with others						54
I believe the candidate will work well in a team						

Question 8

What is your age?

- (Free text entry)

Question 9

What is your gender?

- Man
- Woman
- Other

Question 10

Do you study or work in HR?

- Yes
- No

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