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## **Exploring the dynamics of neuroticism: A comprehensive analysis of two different workplace settings**

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**Abstract.** This research delves into the multifaceted dimensions of neuroticism, a fundamental trait in personality psychology, and its implications in the workplace. Grounded in psychological theories and the Big Five personality traits model, the study aims to unravel the nuances of neuroticism, exploring its historical evolution from a concept of pathological anxiety to a contemporary understanding as a normal personality trait. Motivated by firsthand observations of disparate approaches to neuroticism in the automotive industry across Romania and the United Kingdom, the study investigates the cultural and individual factors influencing these variations. The workplace, as a dynamic and culturally diverse arena, serves as a crucial backdrop for understanding how neuroticism manifests and its potential impact on employee well-being and organizational dynamics. The research unfolds against the backdrop of globalization, emphasizing the need to examine cultural differences in the manifestation of neuroticism. Drawing on insights from the automotive industry, the study explores the implications of neuroticism on team dynamics, organizational culture, and overall workplace productivity. The significance of the study lies in its potential to inform organizational policies, management strategies, and intercultural training programs aimed at optimizing workplace environments. By uncovering the cultural dimensions of neuroticism, the research seeks to contribute nuanced insights that can guide the development of targeted interventions for creating healthier and more productive work environments for employees across different cultural backgrounds. In conclusion, this study offers a comprehensive exploration of neuroticism, weaving together psychological theories, workplace dynamics, and cultural considerations. By shedding light on the interplay between neuroticism and cultural diversity, the research aims to provide valuable insights for both academic research and practical applications in organizational settings.

**Keywords.** neuroticism, team dynamics, organizational culture, workplace productivity



## **Introduction**

Neuroticism, a foundational dimension in personality psychology, is characterized by emotional instability, heightened sensitivity to stress, and a propensity for negative emotions (Costa & McCrae, 1985). Over time, various psychological theories, and thinkers, including Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and the Big Five personality traits model proposed by Costa and McCrae, have contributed to the multifaceted understanding of neuroticism. The trait has evolved from its historical roots as a concept describing pathological anxiety, as proposed by Freud in the late 19th century, to its modern interpretation as a normal personality trait associated with emotional reactivity (Freud, 1894; Costa & McCrae, 1992).

The workplace, a dynamic environment where individuals with diverse personalities collaborate, has become a focal point for studying neuroticism. Understanding the role of neuroticism in the professional sphere is crucial due to its potential impact on employee well-being, performance, and overall organizational dynamics. Neurotic individuals may exhibit heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional reactivity, factors that can significantly influence their ability to cope with workplace challenges (Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 2012).

In today's rapidly changing and globally interconnected business landscape, where cultural diversity is often the norm, exploring how neuroticism manifests across different cultures becomes imperative (McCrae & Costa, 1999). The automotive industry, with its cross-cultural interactions, serves as a particularly relevant context for this study. The motivation stems from firsthand observations of varying professional and cultural approaches to neuroticism within the automotive sector in Romania and the United Kingdom.

The motivation for this study arises from the need to bridge the gap in understanding the nuanced interplay between neuroticism, cultural differences, and workplace dynamics. Observing discrepancies in professional approaches to neuroticism in the automotive industry across Romania and the United Kingdom has sparked a curiosity to delve deeper into the cultural and individual factors contributing to these variations.

The implications of neuroticism extend beyond individual well-being; they permeate team dynamics, organizational culture, and ultimately influence the productivity and success of a workplace (Judge & Bono, 2001). Therefore, this research seeks to contribute a nuanced understanding of neuroticism, shedding light on its manifestation in diverse cultural contexts and its implications for workplace management. By doing so, we aim to provide insights that can inform strategies for creating healthier and more productive work environments for employees across different cultural backgrounds (Pelin et al., 2019).

The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform organizational policies, management strategies, and intercultural training programs aimed at optimizing workplace environments. By uncovering the cultural dimensions of neuroticism, this research seeks to facilitate the development of targeted interventions to enhance employee well-being and organizational performance.

In summary, this study serves as a comprehensive exploration of neuroticism, intertwining psychological theories, workplace dynamics, and cultural considerations to contribute valuable insights for both academic research and practical applications in organizational settings.



### **1. Neuroticism - definitions, characteristics and contributing factors**

Neuroticism, a key dimension in personality psychology, has been studied extensively over the years, with researchers offering diverse definitions to capture its essence. As noted by Costa and McCrae (1992), individuals high in neuroticism are often characterized by emotional instability, susceptibility to stress, and unpredictable behavior. This aligns with Eysenck's (1967) assertion that neuroticism involves being emotionally unstable and sensitive to stress and anxiety.

The historical roots of neuroticism trace back to Carl Jung, who conceptualized it as a process where psychic energy deviates from adaptive ego goals toward neurotic complexes (Jung, 1953). Over time, the definition has evolved, encompassing a range of characteristics. These include anxiety, depression, irritability, excessive self-criticism, and difficulty coping with change (Matthews et al., 2003).

A consensus emerges across various definitions, emphasizing neuroticism as a predisposition to negative emotions (Costa and McCrae, 1992; Barlow and Durand, 2015). This aligns with the Big Five personality model, where neuroticism is acknowledged as a fundamental trait influencing how individuals cope with stress and navigate life's challenges (Costa and McCrae, 1985).

Research underscores the multifaceted nature of neuroticism, with genetic, environmental, and cultural factors contributing to its development. Twin and family studies indicate a substantial genetic component, with up to 50% of the variability attributed to genetic factors (Nikolova et al., 2021). Environmental factors, including early life experiences such as trauma and stress, also play a crucial role (Belsky et al., 2012).

Stress, a consistent theme in the literature, is highlighted as a significant factor in the development of neuroticism (Campbell-Sills and Stein, 2019). Chronic exposure to stressors can exacerbate neurotic tendencies, leading to increased susceptibility to anxiety and depression (Barlow and Durand, 2015).

The impact of cultural and environmental factors on neuroticism is gaining attention. Studies, such as those comparing Western and Eastern cultures, suggest cultural influences on the prevalence and manifestation of neurotic traits (McAdams and Pals, 2006).

In terms of practical implications, understanding neuroticism is crucial for designing effective interventions. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, social support, and mindfulness practices have been suggested as strategies to manage and reduce neuroticism (Tett et al., 2012). Additionally, addressing environmental stressors and promoting a supportive cultural context may contribute to mitigating the development of neurotic traits (Vrshek-Schallhorn et al., 2015).

In conclusion, the literature on neuroticism reflects a rich tapestry of definitions, characteristics, and contributing factors. The interplay between genetics, early life experiences, stress, and cultural influences underscores the complexity of this personality trait. Developing a comprehensive understanding of neuroticism is pivotal for advancing both theoretical frameworks and practical interventions aimed at enhancing mental and emotional well-being.



## **2. Neuroticism and workplace performance**

### **2.1. Concept of workplace performance**

Workplace performance is a multifaceted construct, encompassing an employee's ability to efficiently fulfill tasks and responsibilities, exhibit professional and responsible conduct, produce error-free quality results, and maintain a high level of satisfaction in task execution (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). It extends beyond task completion, influencing how tasks are carried out and employee satisfaction (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995).

Evaluation of employee performance involves considering various factors, not just professional efficiency. It is defined by how employees professionally and responsibly fulfill tasks, making a significant contribution to organizational success (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Campbell et al., 1993; European Parliament, 2020). Defining and measuring workplace performance are critical aspects of talent management and organizational success (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995).

### **2.2. Relationship between neuroticism and workplace performance**

The association between neuroticism and workplace performance is nuanced and can be influenced by factors such as job type and organizational culture. While certain professions or organizational cultures may find some aspects of neuroticism, like anxiety and excessive concern for details, beneficial for performance, neuroticism is generally considered a trait with a negative impact on employee performance (Furnham & Cheng, 2000; Montes-Berges & Augusto, 2007; European Parliament, 2020).

Despite a commonly reported negative association between neuroticism and performance, some studies suggest that in certain circumstances, individuals with moderate levels of neuroticism can be more motivated and perform better, especially in stressful work environments (Tett et al., 2012; European Workplace and Alcohol, 2013). Mixed findings exist, with some researchers asserting a negative association between higher neuroticism and lower performance (Hurtz & Donovan, 2000; European Workplace and Alcohol, 2013).

Research conducted on a group of employees in Spain revealed an unfavorable correspondence between neuroticism and workplace performance, suggesting that employees with higher neuroticism traits may exhibit poorer job performance (Salgado & Moscoso, 1998; European Workplace and Alcohol, 2013). The occupational stress theory posits that individuals with high neuroticism are more susceptible to workplace stress, potentially leading to mental health issues that negatively impact job performance (Schaubroeck & Ganster, 1993; European Parliament, 2020). The self-efficacy theory suggests that individuals with high neuroticism may perceive their abilities as lower, affecting job performance negatively (Judge & Bono, 2001). The performance anxiety theory proposes that high neuroticism individuals may experience workplace anxiety, negatively affecting their performance (Harrison et al., 2006; Judge et al., 2002; Liu et al., 2016; Weiss & Rupp, 2011; Barrick & Mount, 1991; Tett et al., 1991).



### **2.3. Cultural differences between Romania and the United Kingdom**

Numerous cultural differences between Romania and the United Kingdom influence various aspects of life, including values, customs, traditions, and social behaviors (Popescu & Radu, 2019a). A significant difference lies in values, with British culture emphasizing individualism, personal freedom, and self-expression, while Romanian culture focuses more on collectivist values, such as family and community care and respect for traditions and history (Ilinca, 2017a).

Cultural disparities extend to interpersonal interactions and communication styles, with British culture being generally more formal, emphasizing etiquette and politeness (Manea, 2020). Dietary preferences also differ significantly, with Romanians known for traditional, hearty meals rich in meat and vegetables, contrasting with the prevalence of fast-food and processed foods in the United Kingdom (Popescu & Radu, 2019b).

Cultural variations are evident in holidays and traditions, with Christmas and Easter holding utmost importance in Romania, marked by strong adherence to traditions, while in the United Kingdom, holidays like Christmas, Halloween, and Valentine's Day take precedence (Ilinca, 2017b).

In summary, the multitude of cultural variations between Romania and the United Kingdom is both intriguing and important. A better understanding and appropriate appreciation of these differences can contribute to the creation and development of a multicultural environment and a broader perspective on the world.

### **2.4 Managing neuroticism in the workplace in Romania and the United Kingdom in the context of cultural differences**

The management of neuroticism in the workplace is a critical aspect of fostering a healthy work environment. This literature review explores research conducted in Romania and the United Kingdom, shedding light on how cultural differences influence the perception and management of neuroticism among employees.

Hațegan's (2015) investigation reveals that Romanian culture places greater importance on personal interactions, fostering warmer and more empathetic relationships among colleagues. In contrast, Birrell, Davies, and Armstrong's (2018) research emphasizes the British focus on performance and efficient time and task management. Understanding these cultural disparities contributes to a broader perspective and the creation of a multicultural environment.

Bocăneanu and Lupșa's (2019) study suggests that Romanians might be less inclined to criticize or address issues with their colleagues, while Britons may be more willing to use feedback and evaluations to identify and address neurotic behavior (Birrell et al., 2018).

Romanian culture may prioritize balancing professional and personal life, with employees more inclined to share personal problems (Hațegan, 2015). In contrast, British culture may rely more on relaxation exercises and time management techniques for stress management (Birrell et al., 2018; Bocăneanu & Lupșa, 2019).

Aliș and Nicolae's (2017) study highlights higher levels of neuroticism among Romanian employees compared to their British counterparts. This difference may contribute to defensive attitudes towards change and slower adaptation to new situations. Cultural factors, including



hierarchical orientation and power distance, may contribute to higher stress and anxiety levels among Romanian employees.

Simion et al. (2017) note that Romanian employees may lean towards passive coping strategies, such as avoiding problems, while British employees tend to adopt active strategies like planning and problem-solving. Higher neuroticism levels among Romanians may impact mental health and workplace performance.

Sava et al.'s (2019) study in Romania underscores the significant impact of environmental factors, such as working conditions and relationships with colleagues, on neuroticism. An empathetic approach and a psychologically supportive organizational culture are vital in addressing neurotic behavior (Sava et al., 2019).

Understanding and acknowledging cultural differences in managing neuroticism play a pivotal role in creating an efficient and healthy work environment (Cozman et al., 2014; Păun et al., 2018; Brown et al., 2016; Zhao et al., 2020). Interventions should consider collective approaches for stress management, especially in the UK, where individual approaches are prevalent (Brewer et al., 2019; Richardson et al., 2018; Leaver et al., 2021).

In conclusion, substantial cultural differences in neuroticism at the workplace exist between Romania and the UK. These differences, influenced by cultural orientations, individualism, and conflict resolution approaches, impact how neuroticism is managed. Organizations should consider these cultural nuances to create efficient and healthy working environments, tailoring strategies to fit the cultural context. Comparative research underscores significant variations in stressors between the two countries, emphasizing the importance of culturally informed workplace interventions. Future research could delve deeper into specific organizational interventions tailored to each cultural context, exploring their effectiveness in managing neuroticism. Comparative studies on stressors and coping mechanisms across different countries may contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural dynamics of workplace neuroticism.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to compare personality factors, particularly neuroticism, among Romanians employed in the United Kingdom and those employed in Romania. Through this work, we have aimed to explore how culture and work environment can influence or leave an imprint on an individual's personality. The research goal is to contribute to understanding the cultural impact on neuroticism and provide relevant information in the context of Romanian employees working in the United Kingdom.

#### **3.2 Research Objectives**

Objective 1: Evaluate the level of neuroticism in Romanian employees in the United Kingdom compared to the level of neuroticism in employees in Romania.

Objective 2: Examine differences in neuroticism among employees with medium-level education compared to those with higher education.

Objective 3: Identify the levels of activity and aggressiveness in Romanian employees in the United Kingdom compared to the levels in Romanian employees in Romania.



### **3.3 Research Hypotheses**

Hypothesis 1: It is presumed that there is a statistically significant difference in the level of neuroticism-anxiety among Romanian employees working in the United Kingdom compared to the level among Romanian employees in Romania.

Hypothesis 2: It is presumed that there are statistically significant differences in the level of neuroticism-anxiety between employees with medium-level education and those with higher education.

Hypothesis 3: It is presumed that there is a statistically significant difference in the level of aggression-hostility among employees in the United Kingdom compared to employees in Romania.

Hypothesis 4: We assume that there is a statistically significant difference in the level of activity among employees in the United Kingdom compared to employees in Romania.

### **3.4 Sample Presentation and Research Stages**

The research was conducted from October 2022 to March 2023, with the questionnaire administered online, and the subjects were convenience-sampled. Respondents were divided into two groups. The first group consisted of employees in Romania, totaling 40, while the second group comprised Romanians working in the United Kingdom, totaling 37.

All 77 participants in the study are Romanian nationals and employees, aged between 21 and 50. Regarding respondents' gender, 69% were female, specifically 53 females, and 31% were male, totaling 24 males.

The study participants were homogeneous in terms of the country in which they lived and worked as employees, with 40 working in Romania and 37 in the United Kingdom.

The workplace location was also homogenous, with 52% of respondents employed in Romania and 48% in the United Kingdom.

Age of the participants was categorized into three groups: 20-30 years, 31-40 years, and 41-50 years, with an overall homogeneity.

Analyzing the participants' educational levels, 37 individuals had medium-level education, while 40 had higher education, forming a homogeneous distribution. The breakdown was 48% with medium-level education and 52% with higher education.

### **3.5 Methods employed**

#### *3.5.1 Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (ZKPQ)*

Considering that personality exhibits a bio-psycho-socio-cultural structure, influencing an individual's behavior and attitude for adaptive purposes, this study aimed to explore how cultural context may impact fundamental personality dimensions. The Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (ZKPQ) was employed for data collection, assessing five personality dimensions. The questionnaire, consisting of 99 items, was divided into five scales:

- Impulsive Sensation Seeking,
- Sociability,



- Neuroticism-Anxiety,
- Aggression-Hostility,
- Activity.

The questionnaire was standardized for individuals aged 18 to 54. The Impulsive Sensation Seeking scale addressed traits like lack of planning, impulsive actions, and a tendency for rapid decision-making. The Neuroticism-Anxiety scale covered emotional tension, decision-making difficulties, low tolerance for criticism, and lack of self-confidence. The Aggression-Hostility scale evaluated the predisposition for expressing aggression, particularly verbally, and antisocial behavior in interpersonal relationships. Sociability assessed attraction to social events, friends, and intolerance to social isolation. The Activity scale included constructs related to the need for constant activity and effort expenditure.

Responses were recorded as "true" when participants identified with a statement and "false" when they disagreed. Scoring was based on a scoring grid, with each item receiving 1 or 0 points, and the score for each scale was obtained by summing the scores of corresponding items.

### *3.5.2 Research Design*

The Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (ZKPQ) was administered to a randomly selected group of 77 individuals. Data collection, conducted online through a Google Forms questionnaire, commenced in October 2022, and concluded in March 2023. Subsequently, the participant group was divided into two samples based on employment location: those working in Romania and those in the United Kingdom. Statistical calculations using SPSS were then performed to test hypotheses and provide a psychological interpretation of the results. The research concluded with the formulation of conclusions and recommendations based on the obtained results.

### *3.5.3 Ethical Considerations*

The Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (ZKPQ) is a well-established and validated tool for the Romanian population. All 77 participants provided informed consent and were assured of data confidentiality through a self-selected alphanumeric identification code. Participants were fully informed about the nature and purpose of the research, with the option to withdraw at any time without facing risks or constraints. As the study relied on a questionnaire testing method, there were no psychological or physical risks for participants.

## **4. Data analysis and interpretation**

### **4.1 Hypothesis 1**

The assumption is that there is a statistically significant difference in the level of neuroticism-anxiety among Romanian employees working in the UK compared to those working in Romania. This hypothesis was selected based on research indicating that neuroticism can be influenced by cultural environments. Studies suggest that cultural variations can affect the approach to neuroticism in the workplace (Leaver, A. M., Dwyer, L., & Chen, Y., 2021).

To test this hypothesis, data processing and calculations were performed using the SPSS program. The distribution of the groups was first verified by applying the normality test for the two



independent samples constituting the total participant pool, according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test.

Table 4.1 Normality Test for the Neuroticism-Anxiety Variable

Country	Kolmogorov/Smirnov		Shapiro-Wilk	
	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Sig</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Romania	.155	.017	.908	.003
UK	.108	.200*	.954	.127

Data distribution is normal and symmetrical for the UK but non-normal and asymmetric for Romania, leading to the choice of a non-parametric method. The result distribution is normal for the UK group but non-normal and asymmetric for the Romanian group. Since normality was not met in both cases, a non-parametric testing method was used to examine the hypothesis.

Table 4.2 Mean Ranks of Neuroticism-Anxiety Level by Country

Country	N	Mean of rank	Sum of rank
Romania	40	38.36	1534.50
UK	37	39.69	1468.50
Total	77		

Table 4.3. Non-parametric Mann-Whitney test for Neuroticism

Mann-Whitney U	714.500
Wilcoxon W	1534.500
Z	-.261
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.794

a. Grouping Variable: country

According to the results of the Mann-Whitney non-parametric test, as the significance level obtained is higher than 0.05, it indicates that the differences in the neuroticism-anxiety level between Romanian employees and those working in the UK are not statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis is not confirmed.

While cultural influences might be expected to impact anxiety levels, European Union regulations regarding workplace conditions across member states create a degree of uniformity, irrespective of the country of employment. Individual and socio-economic factors may also contribute to neuroticism levels. For instance, studies suggest that women, on average, exhibit higher levels of neuroticism than men, which may be attributed to biological, social, and cultural



influences. Additionally, an individual's socio-economic status can influence stress levels, contributing to higher neuroticism.

Some professions or organizational cultures may find certain traits of neuroticism, such as anxiety and excessive attention to detail, beneficial for performance. Nevertheless, neuroticism is generally considered a trait that can negatively affect employee performance, demanding heightened attention from employers, particularly those in human resources (Furnham, A. & Cheng, H., 2000), (Montes-Berges, B. & Augusto, J. M., 2007), (European Parliament, 2020).

Studies in organizational psychology and human resources highlight coping strategies employees can employ to manage workplace stress, such as emotional regulation, emotional ventilation through discussions with colleagues or superiors, and the use of relaxation techniques like breathing exercises or meditation.

Considering neuroticism as a personality trait, changing it at a personal level is challenging, despite significant cultural differences. Research indicates that cultural and environmental differences can influence the personality and mental health of employees.

#### 4.2 Hypothesis 2

We assume there are statistically significant differences in the level of neuroticism-anxiety between employees with medium-level education and those with higher education. To test this hypothesis, data were processed using SPSS, starting with the verification of group distribution through the normality test. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test revealed an asymmetric, non-normal distribution for both samples. The Mann-Whitney non-parametric test was then applied due to the asymmetric distribution.

Table 4.4 Normality Test for the variable Neuroticism-Anxiety according to Education Level

	Education	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
NA	Medium level	.147	37	.042	.958	37	.174
	Higher level	.158	40	.014	.919	40	.007

Table 4.5 Mean Ranks of Neuroticism-Anxiety Level according to Education Level

	Education	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
NA	Medium level	37	37.66	1393.50
	Higher level	40	40.24	1609.50
	Total	77		

Results in Table 4.5 show an average rank of 37.66 for participants with medium-level education and 40.24 for those with higher education concerning neuroticism-anxiety. Although individuals with higher education exhibit a slightly higher anxiety level, there is no statistically significant difference.



Table 4.6 Non-parametric Mann-Whitney for the Level of Neuroticism-Anxiety according to Education Level

Mann-Whitney U	690.500
Wilcoxon W	1393.500
Z	-.506
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.613

a. Grouping Variable: level of education

Table 4.6 displays the Mann-Whitney non-parametric test results, indicating a significance level greater than 0.05 ( $p=0.613$ ), suggesting that differences in neuroticism and anxiety between employees with medium-level and higher education are not significant. Therefore, the hypothesis is not confirmed.

Contrary to expectations, higher education does not necessarily correlate with lower anxiety levels. This may be attributed to the context where higher education often becomes a mere certificate factory, and many individuals end up not practicing in their field due to lack of experience or effective job-seeking strategies. Consequently, employees with higher education may find themselves in similar job positions as those with medium-level education, leading to comparable levels of work-related anxiety.

Studies suggest a correlation between education level and anxiety among employees. Higher education can provide employees with opportunities to learn and develop anxiety management skills, contributing to reduced anxiety levels and improved resilience in the workplace.

Despite the anticipation of significant differences in anxiety levels between individuals with medium and higher education, the study's results can be explained by the work environment's pressure, especially when employed in a foreign country, or the devaluation of a university degree. However, personality traits, life experiences, and the work environment can also play a crucial role in employees' manifested levels of neuroticism-anxiety, influencing study outcomes.

### 4.3 Hypothesis 3

It is presumed that there is a statistically significant difference in the level of Aggressiveness-Hostility among employees in Romania compared to those working in the United Kingdom. The Aggressiveness-Hostility scale used to test this hypothesis assesses the expression of aggression and antisocial behavior in interpersonal relationships.

To test this hypothesis, data was processed using the SPSS program, and initially, the distribution of the group was examined by applying the normality test. The table below illustrates the method of checking normality for the two independent samples that make up the total participant group, according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test.



Table 4.7 Normality Test for the Aggressiveness-Hostility Level

	Country	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
AO	Romania	.092	40	.200*	.971	40	.397
	UK	.131	37	.107	.938	37	.039

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

According to the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, a normal distribution was obtained for both samples, as seen in the table above and the histograms below. Since the normality test showed a normal distribution for both samples, as observed in the histograms attached above, a parametric testing method was applied, the t-test, as shown in the table below.

Table 4.8 Mean Ranks of Aggressiveness-Hostility Level by Country

	Country	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
AO	Romania	40	7.0750	3.19766	.50559
	UK	37	6.4865	4.14073	.68073

According to 4.8 table, the rank mean for aggressiveness-hostility is 7.075 for Romanian employees and 6.487 for UK employees. Although there is a small difference, it is not statistically significant.

Table 4.9. Independent Samples Test for the Aggressiveness-Hostility Variable

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
AO	Equal variances assumed	3.451	.067	.701	75	.485	.58851	.83953	-1.08391	2.26094
	Equal variances not assumed			.694	67.666	.490	.58851	.84795	-1.10370	2.28072

According to the results presented in the table above, the t-test indicates a significance coefficient greater than 0.05 ( $p = 0.067$ ), and Sig.(2-tailed) has a coefficient of 0.485, meaning there is no significant difference in the level of aggressiveness-hostility between employees in Romania and those in the UK. Thus, the results do not support the hypothesis of a statistically



significant difference in the level of aggressiveness-hostility between Romanian and UK employees.

Aggressiveness, as a personality trait, manifests through a tendency to adopt hostile behavior, express anger, and engage in interpersonal confrontations or conflicts (Anderson, C. A. & Bushman, B. J., 2002). As a nation with Latin roots, our communication style, both verbal and non-verbal, is much more expressive than the communication style in the UK, influenced by Anglo-Saxon values that emphasize social etiquette and politeness.

Building on these cultural values, it is considered that we adapt to conditions regardless of the country we work in. However, the communist model that left its mark on our nation, along with Latin influence, has deep roots that make us a unique nation, different and only to some extent changeable.

The stressful environment, excessive tasks, or time pressure are prevalent in most workplaces, regardless of the country. This could explain the result obtained in this study.

Although we expected to find differences between the tested samples, relying on "cultural modeling," there are several possible reasons why the results do not support the stated hypothesis, ranging from convenience sampling and a small number of participants to the possibility that aggressiveness and hostility are influenced to a lesser extent by cultural factors in this specific context. Uncontrolled factors such as the work environment, social context, or individual personality may also play a significant role in the level of aggressiveness-hostility manifested by employees and may influence study outcomes.

#### 4.4 Hypothesis 4

This hypothesis suggests a statistically significant difference in the activity levels of employees in the United Kingdom compared to those in Romania. The concept of activity, as per Zuckerman, pertains to the personality factor involving the need for activity and effort. The study aimed to explore if there is a statistical difference in activity levels when the work environment differs culturally.

To test the hypothesis, we proceed by checking for normality and homogeneity using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, as seen in the table below:

Table 4.10. Normality Test for the Activity Variable

	Country	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Activity	Romania	.098	40	.200*	.983	40	.797
	UK	.095	37	.200*	.975	37	.568

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction



Table 4.11 Mean Ranks of Activity Level by Country

	Country	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Activity	Romania	40	8.3000	3.27539	.51789
	UK	37	8.0270	3.76745	.61937

The results indicated a normal distribution for both samples, with significance levels higher than 0.05. Upon analyzing the mean ranks in Table 4.11 it is obvious that the difference in activity levels between Romania (mean rank 8.30) and the United Kingdom (mean rank 8.03) is not statistically significant. As the normality test indicated a normal distribution for both samples, a parametric test (t-test) was applied, as shown in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12. Independent Samples Test for the Activity Variable

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means								
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Activity	Equal variances assumed	.250	.618	.340	75	.735	.27297	.80293	-1.32655	1.87250
	Equal variances not assumed			.338	71.620	.736	.27297	.80735	-1.33660	1.88255

The results from the Levene's test indicated no significant difference in variances ( $p = 0.618$ ), and the t-test showed no significant statistical difference in activity levels between Romanians employed in the United Kingdom and those in Romania, contrary to the initial hypothesis.

Despite significant cultural differences between the two countries, the alignment with European Union standards at the organizational level might have contributed to the observed similarity in work-related activity levels. This suggests that cultural context may not significantly influence the need for activity and effort in the workplace. Considering participant age, the study's majority comprised adults, with the need for activity associated with stages in professional development, rather than cultural context. In conclusion, the need for activity appears to be more



closely tied to age and the desire for professional recognition, showing individual variations based on life stages and cultural context playing a lesser role.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

The aim of this research was to thoroughly examine neuroticism among Romanian employees and its impact in the workplace, particularly in different cultural environments. The primary objective was to assess the level of neuroticism among Romanian employees in the United Kingdom compared to those in Romania.

The objectives and hypotheses proposed for this research were achieved. Upon analyzing the results of the four proposed hypotheses, contrary to our expectations, they were not confirmed, and there were no statistically significant differences between the samples regarding neuroticism.

While existing studies in the field indicate differences in neuroticism based on cultural environment, educational level, or gender, the present research did not detect these differences. Several reasons could explain these results, such as the possibility that the sample might not be sufficiently representative to highlight existing differences, the small number of participants, or the convenience sampling.

However, strictly considering the results obtained from this research, there is a possibility that neuroticism is a relatively stable personality trait that is not significantly influenced by the environment or cultural context. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that neuroticism is a personality trait, and each person is affected differently due to individual characteristics, socioeconomic factors, or environmental conditions. The level of neuroticism results from a complex interaction between individual and socioeconomic factors, and each person may be influenced differently.

The main recommendation is to continue research in this field, using more significant samples and possibly employing more precise and extensive testing methods, which could provide a better understanding of the relationship between neuroticism and the cultural context of Romanian employees. Additionally, it would be useful to explore other psychological and socioeconomic factors that may influence the level of neuroticism and analyze its impact on the performance and well-being of employees.

Regarding workplace practices, it is crucial for organizations to recognize and understand individual differences in neuroticism levels and provide adequate support and resources for stress and anxiety management. Promoting effective coping strategies, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy and social support, can be beneficial in reducing neuroticism levels and improving employee well-being. These conclusions and recommendations can serve as a starting point for future studies and the development of interventions and organizational policies focused on mental health and employee well-being.



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