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## **Analysis of the relationship between eating habits, weight self-efficacy and workplace loneliness in multinational tourism organizations**

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**Abstract** Loneliness and unhealthy eating habits can lead to serious health complications, and it's understandable why these two variables are looked at in relation to each other when we reach out to a nutritional or mental health specialist. If we refer to the organizational environment, it could be deduced that such a dysfunctional relationship could be quite difficult to identify, especially when the organization of which the individual is part is a multinational one, with a high number of employees. This could lead to a significant decrease in the feelings of loneliness, implicit in maintaining healthy eating habits, which will increase the feeling of self-efficacy in relation to body weight. The objective of this research was to observe the relationship between the feeling of loneliness, eating habits and weight self-efficacy at work. The data obtained highlighted the fact that people tend to change their eating behaviors at work, depending on the environment they are part of. Thus, the social company has a significant impact on eating habits. At the same time, when social support within organizations is low or even absent, an increase in unhealthy eating behaviors can be observed among employees to cope with the feeling of loneliness. to observe whether young people are more susceptible to loneliness compared to other age groups. The results showed that the work environment is an important factor in maintaining loneliness. Tourism being a field of hospitality and openness to the customer, it generated a similar behavior inside the organization, among employees. Thus, it was possible to observe the fact that young people do not feel loneliness as much as in other fields of activity.

**Keywords.**Occupational health, Loneliness, Healthy eating, Body weight self-efficacy, workplace, multinational



### **1. Weight self-efficacy through the adoption of healthy eating at work**

Eating is a behavior motivated by factors related to physiological, internal and environmental consumption, on which individuals either surrender or suppress them.(Heatheron & Wagner, 2011; Prinsen et al., 2013).

Several studies have shown that humans are predisposed to prefer sweet foods and fatty textures, with individuals having cravings that mainly involve less healthy foods such as chocolate or pizza. Therefore, healthy eating inherently involves refraining from acting on unhealthy food impulses and accessing healthy ones, which requires self-control(Michener & Rozin, 1994; Rozin, 2006).

The workplace brings with it a series of challenges in terms of healthy eating, due to the impulse and the emotional factors that will be activated by continuous external stimulation.

Factors such as: stress, excessive work, exhaustion or a long schedule, directly affect how the employee will be able to manage his eating rhythm during the work schedule in order to support a nutritional balance.

According to Khetam Aless (2013) the main objective of a person is to be healthy and productive. In the author's opinion, only an individual with a physical, mental (spiritual) and social level appropriate to society can contribute to that society. His study had the objective of measuring the level of productivity according to the nutritional level and eating habits. The results showed that people who have unhealthy eating habits directly influence workplace productivity. A better knowledge of the nutritional status of the workers as well as their owning a hygiene in terms of daily nutrition at the workplace, should be a benchmark for the organization(Khetam Alessa, 2013, p.24).

According to Bor (2020), an unbalanced diet at work, due to the lack of food or the existence of unsuitable foods (for example the presence of vending machines), economic insufficiency of organizations, lack of education or habits that maintain malnutrition can support unhealthy eating behaviors(Bor, 2020, pp. 305-311).

Studies have shown that nutrition at work plays an important role in increasing productivity and reducing work accidents. Hypoglycemia, for example, or low blood glucose that occurs as a result of skipping a meal, could decrease perceptual speed and attention. At the same time, it was observed that a worker who has a fixed nutritional program has a production several times higher than another who has a chaotic nutritional program(Akhlaghi & Behrouz, 2015; Bor, 2020; McAulay et al., 2001).

Globally, health professionals correlate positively with poor nutrition and obesity. In the United States alone, more than 60% of them are overweight or struggling with obesity(Perry et al., 2018; Schneider et al., 2019).

Regarding the work schedule, research such as that of Samhat et al. (2020) showed that, out of a total of 307 nurses from five hospitals located in Beirut, 78% of them reported irregular or incomplete meals on time of day and a high number of snacks consumed during the night, which leads to the conclusion that people are more prone to have low self-control during the night, implicitly to have unhealthy eating behavior, than during the night(Samhat et al., 2020).

Quintiliani et al. (1999, 2001, 2004) highlight in their numerous researches the need to improve nutritional sustainability programs within the organization. It mentions the fact that it is necessary for the organization to provide employees with a diversified range of healthy foods,



based on fruits and vegetables, in order to restrict unhealthy eating that could occur through vending machines or direct control by the employee. His studies have shown a significant improvement in eating behavior among workers through nutritional programs, implicitly better performance(Quintiliani et al., 2010).

### ***1.1. Eating behaviors at work***

Studies have shown that most people tend to change their eating behavior during work hours. This is because eating healthy food consisting mostly of fruits and vegetables stands out more to others than if the meal consists of foods with added sugar or solid fats.

A large study in the United States of 16,000 individuals showed that only 10% of people meet the recommended threshold for vegetable consumption, and 90% far exceed the recommended threshold for consumption of solid fats and foods with added sugar(Watkins et al., 2022).

There are a number of factors that directly and indirectly impact the behavior of an employee. Organizational factors such as organizational culture, leadership, responsibilities according to the job description as well as those external to it, relationships with colleagues as well as factors external to the workplace, such as the balance between work and personal life, contextual changes in the individual's life, interpersonal skills, etc., determines how certain behaviors are sustained or extended(Moran et al., 2011).

Watkins et al. (2022) conducted an experiment in which they manipulated the food intake of a fictitious employee named Taylor. This character had two desks - on one was placed unhealthy food and on another, healthy food. The rest of the objects on the desk remained unchanged. At the same time, Taylor's co-workers were given the same identical information about Taylor's character (for both the unhealthy food eater and the healthy food eater) and past performance on the job. As predicted by the authors of the experiment, co-workers' perception of Taylor eating healthy foods (water and vegetables) was a positive one, compared to Taylor eating unhealthy foods (acidic juice and pastries).

The experiment highlighted that employees' eating habits play an important role in how colleagues view and treat them.

The authors conclude by stating that food consumption often reflects one's values, principles and philosophy of life, identity and traits. Thus, an awareness of consumption stereotypes is important, especially an increased attention from leaders on subordinates(Watkins et al., 2022).

## **2. Loneliness**

Although the need for connection is innate, many people often feel alone. Loneliness is a state of distress or discomfort that occurs when there are significant differences between desires for connection and actual experiences of it(Steptoe et al., 2004).

Gergen (1985) says of an individual that he is lonely when his network of social relationships is impoverished, precarious or less satisfactory than he desires(Gergen, 1985).

Based on what was mentioned by Gergen (1985), Sîntion F. (2018) brings to the fore the psychological state of the one who feels alone, a state that does not necessarily imply the physical



absence of others, but the fact that they fail to provide the person the stimulation and psychological resources it needs (Sîntion, 2018, p.382).

Cacioppo and Hawkley (2005) see loneliness as being caused more by the low quality of relationships than by the reduced quantity of them (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010).

Beck and Young (1978) classify loneliness as being visible in two forms, namely: situational loneliness - which involves a state of loneliness lived for a period of less than two years - and chronic loneliness - which implies a longer period of loneliness for two years (Beck & Young, 1978).

Loneliness, known as the subjective feeling of social isolation, is an important determinant of well-being and the feeling of health in general, being associated with a number of conditions, including cardiovascular risk, dementia or cognitive decline, disorders of disposition that can lead from depression to suicide (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010; Hodgson et al. 2020; Mann et al., 2022; Steptoe et al., 2004).

The causes of loneliness can be numerous. However, they are grouped into two broad categories: individual factors and social factors.

In an extensive analysis of the specialist literature regarding loneliness, Sîntion (2018) brings to the fore an example of what the two decisive factors involve:

**I. Individual factors:** attachment history - people who had experiences of poor relations with their parents, grew up in uncertainty, felt the insecurity of being loved, can experience a diffuse fear of others, which can lead to social isolation; low self-esteem - feelings of self-blame lead to a refuge in depression and then in solitude, by avoiding contact with others who might remind them of their subjectively perceived inferiority; lack of social skills - lonely people don't know how to reveal themselves, don't know how to hold a conversation or can't be attentive to those around them; trait anxiety; introversion; lack of assertiveness; locus of control.

**II. Social factors:** contemporary society, urbanized and industrialized, technological and updated; loss of life partner; changing the socio-demographic environment; job loss or change; RETIREMENT (Sîntion, 2018, pp.384:388).

### **2.1. Loneliness at work**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), loneliness is that pain when we feel that our social relationships do not meet our needs. Worldwide, it is estimated that 1 in 4 elderly people feel the effects of loneliness and social isolation, and between 5% and 15% of teenagers face loneliness on a daily basis (World Health Organization, 2023).

One of the areas that must be taken into account when discussing loneliness is that of the workplace.

Social isolation is associated with an objective distance from others or the experience of a perceived distance from others (Bartel et al., 2012; Marshall et al., 2007).

Marshall et al. (2007) describe loneliness at work as a two-dimensional psychological construct that derives from the employee's perception of his isolation from colleagues and from the organization itself. This aspect shows the employee's need to belong to the work team as well as the company (Marshall et al., 2007).



Riggle (2007), in his doctoral thesis research, observed that employees often feel isolated or unappreciated by their organization and/or their peers, which has a negative impact on well-being at work, satisfaction with colleagues and the workplace as well as on organizational commitment (Riggle, 2007).

Loneliness can affect each of us, once or several times in the course of life, it being encountered in various contexts of life. Studies show that one in five (20%) employees feel lonely on a typical work day. In particular, 18-24 year olds are twice as likely to feel lonely at work than other age groups. In fact, according to Mental Health UK, the older you are, the less likely you are to feel lonely at work (Loneliness and Our Mental Health at Work, 2022).

Pearlman and Peplau (1984) believe that an employee will experience loneliness if he perceives his social relationships with colleagues to be poor compared to other colleagues or if he experiences a sense of lack of control over opportunities to establish meaningful social relationships at the workplace. (Pearlman & Peplau, 1984).

In addition to individual factors, other external factors within the organization seem to support the development and maintenance of loneliness among employees.

Wright (2005), through the studies undertaken, showed that factors such as organizational climate, employees' personality, the size of the organization as well as organizational benefits, such as job satisfaction and work performance, equally contribute to the emergence of the feeling of loneliness among employees (Wright et al., 2005).

In order to combat loneliness at the workplace, Erdil and Ertosun (2011) highlight the fact that a positive organizational climate, which cultivates positive working relationships between colleagues, the reduction of competitiveness and the assumption by the organization of concrete results, without diffusion, can contribute to decrease in the number of employees who feel loneliness (Erdil & Ertosun, 2011).

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1. *The objective of the work***

The objective of this research is to investigate the relationship between healthy eating, weight self-efficacy and workplace loneliness in multinational tourism organizations.

#### **3.2. *Research hypotheses***

This research is based on the following working hypotheses :

1. *It is hypothesized that there is a correlation between Social Companionship and Healthy Food Consumption.*

2. *It is hypothesized that there is a correlation between Emotional Deprivation and Healthy Food Consumption.*

3. *It is hypothesized that there is at least one significant difference between young people and adults in terms of loneliness at work.*

#### **3.3. *Study participants***

In order to carry out this research, a convenience sample was chosen consisting of 50 respondents, aged between 19 and 55, from both urban and rural areas, all from Bucharest. Thus, there were 12 people in the 19-24 age group, 14 people in the 25-34 age group, 12 people in the 35-44 age group and 12 people aged between 45-55 years.



### **3.4. Ethical requirements**

The ethical aspects of the research were ensured by obtaining the consent of the subjects to participate in the study. The research was conducted online, due to the pandemic context, and the personal data of the participants were secured by coding their identity. The respondents expressed their consent for the utilization of the general results of the research in a scientific article.

### **3.5. Research tools and working procedure**

The research was based on the following instruments: the Healthy Eating and Weight Self-Efficacy Scale and the *Loneliness at Work Scale*.

- ***The Healthy Eating and Weight Self-Efficacy Scale***

*The Healthy Eating and Weight Self-Efficacy Scale (HEWSE)* is a very useful tool to highlight body image perception.

The 11 items are classified into two subscales, as follows: Healthy food consumption (items 1-7) and the Weight within normal parameters subscale (items 8-11).

Scoring is based on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree.

- ***Loneliness at Work Scale***

*Loneliness at Work Scale (LAWS)* is a valuable tool for measuring the dimension of loneliness within the organizational climate. Instrument consisting of 16 items, highlights the two facets of loneliness, namely Emotional Deprivation (items 1-9) and Social Company (items 10-16).

The Emotional Deprivation subscale is intended to measure the qualitative aspects of the relationships between colleagues, through a series of indicators such as: feeling, isolation, alienation, disconcerting. Thus, it can be said that this subscale defines the degree of quality of an individual's emotional perception regarding intercollegiate relationships.

The Social Company subscale is associated with the quantitative analysis of all aspects related to intercollegiate relationships, using key words such as sharing, time with, part of a group, so this subscale can be defined as the analysis of measurable perceptions of social aspects that an individual has them at work.

With a number of items marked R, they are reversed scored on a 5-point Likert Scale, where 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree.

### **3.6. Research design**

We began research in November 2023 by testing a convenience sample of 50 individuals, all employed within the Hilton hotel chain, with a view to analyzing the relationship between healthy eating, weight self-efficacy, and workplace loneliness in multinational organizations in tourism.

The two tests used, the Healthy Eating and Weight Self-Efficacy Scale and Loneliness at Work Scale (LAWS), were sent via the Google Forms platform between November and December 2023.



### 3.7. Data analysis and processing

To verify the three hypotheses, it started from the verification of the normality of the distribution for each individual factor, by calculating the start indices, drawing the histograms and the normality curve.

Thus, below we have the table for calculating the starting indices as well as the graphic representation of normality for each analyzed factor, in part:

Table 1. Calculation of starting indices

	Descriptive Statistics							
	N	Range	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
emotional deprivation	50	30	23,20	1,208	8,540	72,939	,434	,337
social company	50	23	18,76	,826	5,843	34,145	,333	,337
consumption of healthy foods	50	24	24,02	,990	7,000	49,000	-,432	,337
loneliness at work	50	49	57,02	1,567	11,083	122,836	-,278	,337
Valid N (listwise)	50							

**Hypothesis 1.** *It is hypothesized that there is a correlation between Social Companionship and Healthy Food Consumption.*

In order to observe whether the first hypothesis is confirmed or not, we calculated the normality of the distributions using the Tests of Normality test, considering the values obtained with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

Table 2. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for hypothesis 1

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
social company	.082	50	.200*	.971	50	.244
consumption of healthy foods	.145	50	.010	.937	50	.010

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

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction





We tested the normality of the two distributions using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. For Social Company we obtained  $\text{sig}=0.200 > 0.05$ , which means that the distribution is normal. For Healthy food consumption we obtained  $\text{sig}=0.010 < 0.05$ , which means that the distribution does not respect normality.

Given that one of the distributions does not respect normality, to check the correlation between the two, we used the non-parametric Spearman correlation coefficient.

*Table 3. Correlation between Healthy Food Consumption and Social Companionship*  
**Correlations**

			consumption of healthy foods	social company
Spearman's rho	consumption of healthy foods	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.589**
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.	.000
		N	50	50
	social company	Correlation Coefficient	-.589**	1.000
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.
		N	50	50

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to Table 3, the significance threshold is  $\text{sig}(2\text{-tailed})=0.000 < 0.05$  and the correlation coefficient is  $-0.589$ , so the correlation is significant and negative.

We can thus state that the hypothesis It is assumed that there is an inverse correlation between Social Company and Healthy Food Consumption has been confirmed.

A very important aspect in a person's life is the social relations he has with other fellows.

The more relationships we have, the more they can protect against a wide range of chronic conditions or facilitate recovery from illness.

At the same time, social relationships have been shown to directly influence our eating behavior, being an important way through which certain social circumstances can exert their influence on health

Regarding the relationship between food behavior and social relations at work, the specialized literature has highlighted the fact that what we eat and how we eat, can change the perception of others on the way we are seen, implicitly how we will be treated.

Starting from this idea, Watkins et al. (2022) highlighted the fact that a healthy food climate moderates the process of forming stereotypes. Thus, the way we eat as well as what we eat directly influences the perception and the way we are treated by other colleagues at work. At the same time, healthy eating at work directly influences judgments about self-control, this aspect being valid only when the healthy eating climate is weak. Also, the results of the study showed that a healthy food



climate moderates the indirect effects on the social company, through the perception by colleagues of self-control. Thus, it appears that when the food climate is healthier, intercollegiate social relations are weaker (Watkins et al., 2022).

Unhealthy choices are an important factor in obesity, which is now a global concern. People influence each other's food choices, which contributes to various forms of obesity and other chronic diseases.

When there is social connection, a person tends to imitate the behaviors of others, out of the desire to continue being accepted, an aspect that can be observed much more obviously in the workplace (Fischler, 2011).

This aspect is revealed by the study of Levy et al. (2021), who observed that there is a positive correlation between an employee's food purchase and a co-worker's food purchase with the employee. This was true for both healthy and unhealthy food and drink purchases. The data obtained suggest that in order to develop a strategy to modulate healthy food choices in the workplace it should be in agreement with peer-based strategies (Levy et al., 2021).

**Hypothesis 2.** *It is hypothesized that there is a correlation between Emotional Deprivation and Healthy Food Consumption.*

In order to find out the type of correlation to be applied, parametric or non-parametric, the normality of the score distribution was checked by applying the Tests of Normality, considering the Kolmogorov-Smirnov index.

*Table 4. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for hypothesis 2*

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
consumption of healthy foods	.145	50	.010	.937	50	.010
emotional deprivation	.162	50	.002	.930	50	.006

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

We tested the normality of the two distributions using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. For Healthy Food Consumption we obtained sig=0.010<0.05, and for Emotional Deprivation we obtained sig=0.002<0.05, which means that normality was not respected for any of the two variables.

Given that neither distribution obeys normality, to check the correlation between the two, we used the non-parametric Spearman correlation coefficient.



Table 5. Correlation between Healthy Food Consumption and Emotional Deprivation

			consumption of healthy foods	emotional deprivation
Spearman's rho	consumption of healthy foods	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.660**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N		50	50
	emotional deprivation	Correlation Coefficient	-.660**	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.	
N		50	50	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to Table 5, the significance threshold is  $\text{sig}(2\text{-tailed})=0.000 < 0.05$  and the correlation coefficient is  $-0.660$ , so the correlation is significant and negative.

The hypothesis that there is a correlation between Emotional Deprivation and Healthy Food Consumption is confirmed.

The results following the Pearson coefficient analysis demonstrate a negative correlation between the Emotional Deprivation and Healthy Food Consumption scales, which means that as emotional deviance increases, healthy food consumption decreases.

The relationship between emotional deprivation and eating habits can be complex and depends on many factors, including workers and their specific context. Emotional deprivation refers to the state of not receiving enough emotional support, affection, or care from other people. This can lead to a number of negative consequences for mental and emotional health, and some people may find temporary solace in eating foods, especially those considered "comfort food".

Some people turn to junk food to cope with stress, anxiety or depression. In situations of emotional deprivation, eating unhealthy foods can become a way to compensate or manage negative emotions. This concept is also supported by the cross-sectional study Healthy and unhealthy food consumption in relation to the quality of life among Finnish working women (Bergman et. al, 2022), through which the authors wanted to prove the idea that aspects of the quality of life motivate them people to make changes in their eating style. In this study, specific psychological scales were used to measure the quality of life, as well as the Major Depression Inventory (MDI) questionnaire, which measures depressive symptoms. Thus, more frequent consumption of healthy foods (eg, vegetables, fruits, whole grains, vegetable oils, nuts, seeds, and fish) was associated with better outcomes in nearly all dimensions of overall quality of life. According to the results of this study, frequent use (compared to less frequent use) of foods considered healthy in the present study appears to have a comprehensive, positive association with overall good quality of public sector employees.

Although research on health-related behaviors has become much more visible, little attention has been paid to unhealthy eating.



Using the self-regulation perspective, Liu et al. (2017) conducted two studies to examine the relationship between workplace stressors, sleep quality, negative mood, and eating behavior. The first study included 125 participants from 5 information technology companies and showed that when participants experienced higher levels of demands at work in the morning, they consumed more types of unhealthy foods and fewer types of healthy foods in the evening. Study 2 used data from 110 customer service employees in a telecommunications company and further demonstrated a positive association between morning employee demand and evening overeating behaviors. Results from Study 2 also supported employees' negative afternoon mood as a mediator linking their morning overwork with overeating behaviors toward the end of the day. Thus, emotional deprivation can contribute to cycles of emotional eating, where people overeat in response to overwhelm, stress, or other negative emotions (Liu et al., 2017).

In the study by Conner, Brookie, Richardson, and Polak (2015), a sample of 405 young adults (67% female; mean age 19.9 years) completed a daily Internet journal for 13 consecutive days. Each day, participants reported on their consumption of fruit, vegetables, sweets and crisps, as well as their eudaemonic well-being, curiosity, creativity, positive affect and negative affect. eudemonic well-being, curiosity and creativity of the participants. Adults who ate more fruits and vegetables reported higher average eudaemonic well-being, more intense feelings of curiosity, and greater creativity compared to young adults who ate less fruits and vegetables. On days when young adults ate healthy foods, they reported greater eudaemonic well-being, curiosity, and creativity compared to days when they ate more unhealthy foods.

It is important to emphasize that these links are not universal and may vary from person to person. Not all people experiencing emotional deprivation adopt unhealthy eating habits, and the factors that influence eating behavior are complex and interconnected. If someone notices that emotional deprivation or negative emotional states have a significant impact on their eating habits, it is recommended that they seek support from health professionals.

**Hypothesis 3.** *It is hypothesized that there is at least one significant difference between young people and adults in terms of loneliness at work.*

To obtain the results, we calculated the normality of the distributions using the Tests of Normality test, considering the values of the four age categories obtained with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

*Table 6. Normality analysis - the Tests of Normality test*

age groups		Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
loneliness at work	19-24	.210	12	.152	.918	12	.267
	25-34	.182	14	.200 <sup>*</sup>	.913	14	.174
	35-44	.206	12	.170	.910	12	.213
	45-55	.137	12	.200 <sup>*</sup>	.967	12	.876

<sup>\*</sup>. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction



As Sig 2-tailed  $>0.05$ - Kolmogorov- Smirnov, (Sig.(2-tailed) = 0.001), on all four age categories, has a value greater than 0.05, it means that normality was respected.

The next step is to apply the ANOVA method.

According to the Test of Homogeneity of Variance, the value Sig  $> 0.05$ , (Sig= 0.267) shows that the homogeneity has been met, and the chosen method will be the parametric one.

*Table 7. Test of Homogeneity of Variance*

Test of Homogeneity of Variances			
loneliness at work			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1,448	3	46	,241

The value of Sig=0.256, (Sig  $>0.05$ ), highlights the fact that in the present case, there is no statistically significant difference in terms of loneliness at work, in multinational organizations in the field of tourism, according to age.

*Table 8. ANOVA test*

ANOVA					
loneliness at work					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	502,016	3	167,339	1,395	,256
Within Groups	5516,964	46	119,934		
Total	6018,980	49			

*Table 9. Multiple Comparisons*

Multiple Comparisons						
Dependent Variable: loneliness at work						
age groups		Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
19-24	25-34	7,478	4,308	,318	-4,01	18,98
	35-44	8,187	4,471	,274	-3,75	20,08
	45-55	5,250	4,471	,646	-6,87	17,17
25-34	19-24	-7,478	4,308	,318	-18,98	4,01
	35-44	,690	4,308	,999	-10,79	12,17
	45-55	-2,228	4,308	,955	-13,71	9,26
35-44	19-24	-8,187	4,471	,274	-20,08	3,75
	25-34	-,690	4,308	,999	-12,17	10,79
	45-55	-2,917	4,471	,914	-14,83	9,00
45-55	19-24	-5,250	4,471	,646	-17,17	6,87
	25-34	2,228	4,308	,955	-9,26	13,71
	35-44	2,917	4,471	,914	-9,00	14,83



Thus, we can state that the hypothesis It is assumed that there is a significant difference between young people and adults in terms of loneliness at work has not been confirmed.

The period of youth, according to Veza and Verza (2000), is a period of full biopsychological stabilization and maturation, where the representative aspects of the young person begin to balance by gaining a status and role for the prosperous evolution of personality and behavior (Verza & Verza, 2000, p.209).

As for the professional identity, it represents a very important aspect of the young person's identity.

The development of society requires professionalization immediately after completing studies and qualifications, so most young people start looking for a job in order to gain more and more autonomy from their parents.

However, professional integration and adaptation is not simple, largely due to the young person's lack of experience in dealing with hierarchical bosses and with all that a job means in all its aspects.

A very sensitive aspect, which the young person often encounters, is solitude and isolation from the work group.

Young people showed a particular vulnerability to loneliness, determined largely due to work status, family pressure, separation or reduced availability of time due to work and caring responsibilities towards family and towards oneself (Leeftang et al., 1992/2010/2018).

For a long time there was a belief that only the elderly suffer from loneliness. This aspect was strongly disputed by a series of studies, including that of Griffin (2010), which showed that there is no significant age difference in terms of loneliness, moreover, young people reported periods of significant loneliness compared to older people (Griffin, 2010, p.23).

Mental Health UK launched a survey in April 2022 of 2,023 people to find out what their experience of loneliness at work is. The results showed that 41% of respondents aged 18-24 and 30% aged 25-34 reported significant mental health impairment due to loneliness at work, compared to 17% of respondents, aged between 45 and 54 years. Employees between the ages of 45 and 54 reported confidence in expressing feelings about loneliness in front of colleagues and bosses, compared to younger people - 59% - who reported insecurity about this aspect. The lack of physical time to get in touch with colleagues (manager, hierarchical colleagues, immediate team), due to a busy schedule, can have an impact on their mental health (Loneliness and Our Mental Health at Work, 2022).

Although the information from the specialized literature suggests a certain sensitivity and vulnerability of young people towards loneliness at the workplace in general, the results of this research demonstrate the opposite.

A possible explanation for these would be the specificity of the tourism activity. The field of tourism represents hospitality, availability and putting before all aspects, the best of the customer and achieving a high level of satisfaction by the latter. All these aspects presuppose on the part of the hotelier a certain level of awareness of the needs of his employees.

A hotel service to be of high quality must be based on a high level of professional and personal satisfaction of the employees. The hotel director, managers must pay attention to the level of stress felt by employees and manage it as efficiently as possible.



"A happy customer means being served by a happy employee" - this is the motto of the Hilton hotel chain.

Another aspect that could change the general perception of young people in the face of loneliness at work would be their assimilation by employees with more experience in hotel art, as well as the transmission of the organization's internal principles and values.

At the same time, the numerous employee motivation programs, development of client-employee/employee-manager/employee-employee communication, group cohesion, etc., can lead to the development of a sense of belonging to the group and the organization.

#### **4. Research limitations**

The present study has a number of limitations that emphasize the need for additional research. Thus, due to the small number of participants, the results cannot be generalized to larger cohorts, being rather indicative. Carrying out studies on a larger and more representative group would lead to the replication of the results obtained in the present study.

Also, the study carried out allowed the collection of data that captured the momentary experiences of the subjects, a fact that can limit the formulation of certain and firm conclusions regarding the relationship between healthy eating, weight self-efficacy and loneliness at work in multinational organizations in tourism. In this sense, we consider it indicated to carry out a longitudinal research that can better take into account the relationship between the variables mentioned above.

These assumed limitations allow the inclusion of the obtained results in future studies that evaluate how nutrition influences the lives of people working in multinational tourism organizations, both professionally and socially.

#### **Conclusions**

Against the background of impulses and emotional factors, healthy eating is subject to a series of challenges, especially in the professional field of the individual. Nutrition in the workplace influences productivity growth and the frequency of occupational accidents.

Unbalanced nutrition at the workplace can be stimulated by the lack of food or the presence of inappropriate food, the economic insufficiency of organizations, lack of education or habits that maintain malnutrition.

This research aims to analyze the relationships between loneliness, eating habits and weight self-efficacy among employees in multinational tourism organizations. It was based on the following instruments: the Healthy Eating and Weight Self-Efficacy Scale, which aims at the perception of body image, and the Loneliness at Work Scale, which measures the dimension of loneliness within the organizational climate.

A first hypothesis concerned the correlation between Social Company and Healthy Food Consumption. This hypothesis was confirmed with a correlation coefficient of -0.589, the two variables establishing a negative correlation. Thus, the more the Social Company represents a more harmful environment for the mental health of the individual, the lower the Consumption of healthy foods will be. It is considered that social relationships directly influence our eating behavior, and specialized literature has highlighted the fact that what we eat and how we eat, can change the perception of others on the way we are seen, implicitly how we will be treated. It is well known



that a person tends to imitate the behaviors of those with whom he is socially connected, out of a desire for acceptance, an obvious aspect in the workplace.

The second hypothesis concerned the correlation between Emotional Deprivation and Healthy Food Consumption. This hypothesis was confirmed with a correlation coefficient of -0.660, the two variables establishing a negative correlation. Thus, to the extent that emotional deviance increases, the consumption of healthy foods decreases.

Emotional deprivation causes the individual to feel that they no longer receive enough support or affection from other people, causing them to find temporary solace in eating, usually unhealthy, foods. This can become a way to compensate for negative emotions.

The third hypothesis was that there would be at least one significant difference between young people and adults regarding loneliness at work, but this was not confirmed. Thus, there is no significant age difference in terms of loneliness.

Although the specialized literature claims that there is a certain vulnerability and sensitivity of young people regarding loneliness in the workplace, this research finds the opposite. This may be due to the specificity of the activity in tourism, which is based on hospitality and availability, which generated a similar behavior inside the organization.

Food thus represents a very important aspect of the individual's life, regardless of age, and can be easily influenced by his professional activity, both through the lens of the workplace climate and through the lens of the interpersonal relationships established in this climate.

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