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Emotion as a state/trait and loneliness of employees at work in multinationals in Constanta and Bucharest

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Abstract. In the era of globalization, multinational companies have become an important part of the economic landscape. bringing with them diversity and challenges specific to the business environment in cities such as Bucharest and provincial cities. In this psychological study, we explore the impact of loneliness at work and emotions as a state and trait on employees in multinational companies, comparing the experiences in Bucharest with those in smaller Romanian cities, such as Constanta. The sample used consisted of 60 subjects, namely 30 male and 30 female, 30 from each city (Bucharest and Constanta). The samples with which we conducted the investigation are the loneliness at work scale and the state-trait emotion measurement questionnaire. The research hypotheses were: H1. It is presumed that loneliness at work is more pronounced among multinational employees in Bucharest than in Constanta; H2. Emotion as a state/trait is presumed to be more pronounced in employees of multinationals in Bucharest than in those in Constanta; H3. Emotion as a state/trait is presumed to be related to loneliness at work. The aim was to identify these aspects, providing useful information for improving the mental and relational well-being of employees in this work environment.

Keywords: loneliness at work, professional emotions, employees, multinational companies, comparison, Bucharest, Constanta, state, emotional trait. .



1. Introduction

In the context of globalisation and economic change, multinationals have become fundamental elements of today's economic landscape. Employees of these companies, working in business environments in different cities, may experience various impacts on their professional and personal lives. The psychological study of loneliness at work and emotions as a state and trait in a multinational company compared between cities in the country and those in Bucharest thus becomes an essential exploration of the impact of this reality on employee well-being.

Bucharest, as an important economic and commercial centre in Romania, attracts many multinational companies, offering varied professional opportunities. Cities in the provinces can offer a different context, with specific characteristics of the local business environment and different cultural particularities.

The aim of this research is to investigate how employees in multinational companies in Bucharest and in cities outside the capital experience loneliness at work and how emotions, both as a temporary state and as a persistent trait, are influenced by the context presented. We aimed to identify the feelings of loneliness and emotional variability between these two distinct work environments and to gain a better understanding of the psychological aspects associated with the work environment in multinational companies in Bucharest and less urbanized cities.

2. Loneliness at work

According to researchers Brown and Johnson (2018), loneliness in the workplace is not only about the physical absence of colleagues, but also the lack of meaningful connection and emotional support within the organisation.

Loneliness in the workplace is a complex and subjective phenomenon that describes the sense of isolation or lack of social connection felt by employees in their work environment.

Aspects such as the size of the organization, company culture and management style can influence the degree of social interaction and, therefore, the level of loneliness felt by employees. According to Smith and Davis' (2019) research, employee personality, level of extraversion or introversion, and previous experiences at work can influence the predisposition towards loneliness.

A crucial aspect is effective and open communication within the organization. Research by White and Black (2018) points out that poor communication can contribute to loneliness.

Lee's (2020) research postulates that loneliness in the workplace may be associated with increased levels of stress, anxiety and depression, negatively affecting employees' mental health.

According to previous research (Brown, 2016), organizations can promote awareness of loneliness in the workplace and provide resources and programs designed to improve social connections among employees.

Research by Smith and Davis (2019) suggests that an organizational culture that encourages collaboration, open communication, and mutual support can help reduce feelings of loneliness, and by White and Black (2018), implementing mentoring and onboarding programs can facilitate building social relationships in the workplace by providing support and guidance to employees.



Loneliness in the workplace is a complex issue, and understanding this dynamic requires exploring multiple research and contributions from the literature.

3. Workplace Emotions: Condition and Trait

Emotions play a key role in shaping an individual's perception of the value associated with his or her job, company or team, while having a significant impact on workplace behaviours. Research highlighted by Elfenbein and Ambady in 2002 suggests that those in an individual's inner circle are more adept at recognising and understanding their emotions (Elfenbein, Ambady, 2002).

The link between emotions, attitudes and behaviours in the workplace is often explained through affective event theory. Howard Weiss and Russell Cropanzano have conducted research focusing on the impact of six primary emotions in the workplace: anger, fear, joy, love, sadness and surprise, as outlined in their 1996 study. Essentially, affective event theory highlights the dynamic interaction between workplace events, emotional responses and subsequent behaviours. Recognising and understanding how emotions influence attitudes and behaviours in the workplace can be crucial to promoting a positive and productive work environment. This theory provides a conceptual framework for understanding the complex connections between emotional experiences and the resulting impact on individual and collective behaviours within a work context.

In the professional environment, emotions can be analysed in two different dimensions, namely as a state and as a trait. Emotions as a state represent immediate and transient responses to specific workplace stimuli, reflecting reactions to events such as project success or team communication difficulties (Spector, 2002).

In another vein, emotions as a trait are more stable personal characteristics, influencing how individuals consistently perceive and respond to various work situations (Ashkanasy, Daus, & Härtel, 2002).

Emotions as a state are fluid and can vary over time. They can be observed in momentary responses to everyday events in the workplace. For example, a promotion may generate positive emotions such as joy and satisfaction (Grandey, 2000). At the same time, a tense encounter with a colleague may trigger negative emotions such as frustration or anxiety (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996)

Otherwise, emotions as a trait indicate persistent individual predispositions towards certain emotions in the workplace. Individuals who regularly exhibit positive emotional traits, such as optimism or enthusiasm, may approach work situations with a more optimistic outlook (Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991). In contrast employees with negative emotional traits, such as pessimism or chronic anxiety, may experience difficulty managing stress at work (Watson & Clark, 1984).

Understanding emotions as a state and trait in the workplace is essential to creating a healthy work environment. Addressing these dimensions can contribute to effective human resource management and promote employee well-being within the organization.

Negative emotions are commonly found among workers in the service industry, it, corporate marking a difference from those in manufacturing, where interactions with customers



are less frequent and less visible, thus facilitating the concealment of mood (Smith, 2017). However, service employees are faced with the requirement to adopt a specific behaviour in line with their professional duty (Hochschild, 1983).

We experience a wide range of emotions over the course of a day (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002). Reflecting on our own experience, each individual can recognize moments of joy in social interactions, as well as times when we preferred solitude. Now imagine the difficulty of repressing or masking these emotions for 8 hours or more at work. This is the reality for workers in professions such as cashiers, teachers, massage therapists, firefighters, and librarians (Smith, 2017). Despite their personal emotional state, they are forced to prioritize their professional roles, resulting in the creation of a workplace identity - a „persona” that involves projecting emotions that may not authentically correspond to real feelings (Grandey, 2000).

The concept of emotional labour, introduced by Grandey in 2000, involves the conscious regulation and management of feelings and expressions for organisational purposes (Grandey, 2000). This concept, originally proposed by Hochschild in 1983, identifies three major levels of emotional labor and emphasizes the challenge of subtly balancing authentic emotions with those projected in accordance with the expectations imposed by the individual's professional roles (Hochschild, 1983).

3. Sample and methods

3.1. Description of the Sample:

The sample consisted of a total of 60 participants, evenly distributed between Bucharest and Constanta. Of these, 30 were women and 30 men.

3.2. Methods

Selection was made to reflect gender balance and to provide a comprehensive overview of employees' experiences in multinational companies in the two cities, randomly by convenience, via Google forms, internet groups, etc.

4. Tools used

4.1. The State-Trait Emotion Measure Questionnaire is a tool used in the Labour and Organizational field to assess and understand the emotional states of employees in the workplace. It explores the diversity of emotions experienced by individuals in the work context. It comprises 10 items and aims to measure the intensity of emotions at work, assess the influence of emotions on employee experience and job performance. It provides insight into the diversity of emotions experienced in the workplace and provides a systematic way of analysing employees' emotional experiences, contributing to the development of a framework

It has a high level of Romanian cultural adaptation. The key items are Joy, Anxiety, Pride, Sadness, Vigilance, Anger, Affection, Envy, Gratitude, Guilt and Shame. Answers are scored on a scale of 1 to 10.

4.2. Scale of loneliness at work .

It was developed to assess the degree of loneliness that employees experience in the work context. It explores issues related to social relationships in the workplace and can provide



information about the impact of loneliness on organisational commitment and other relevant variables in the work environment.

The scale contains 16 items, with statements covering various aspects of loneliness at work, from feelings of abandonment or alienation to satisfaction with professional relationships and feelings of camaraderie.

The scale is summative, and scores for each participant are obtained by adding together the scores for all 16 items. Items marked with (R) are reversed, and the scores thus obtained for these items are then summed.

A 5-step Likert scale is used, where 1 = total disagreement and 5 = total agreement. The scale was translated into Romanian by Borşan Ionela, Dumbravă Andrei Cosmin and Sîrbu Alexandru-Andrei, and the level of cultural adaptation is indicated as 1, i.e. high.

The scale was originally described in the article "Loneliness in the workplace: Construct definition and scale development" by Wright, S. L., Burt, C. D. B., & Strongman, K. T. (2006), published in the *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*.

5. Ethical aspects.

The research involved seeking voluntary and informed consent from participants in accordance with research ethics, with participants ticking their willingness to participate through a question on the questionnaire administered.

Participants' personal data were protected and their identity was kept confidential by coding their names by the initials of their street names, the last two digits of their telephone number and their home city.

The research aimed to bring significant benefits to the participants and minimise potential associated risks.

Participants received, additional information at the end of the study, including details of the purpose of the study and had the opportunity to ask questions, receive results from January 2024.

Participants were given the right to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences.

6. Objectives and assumptions

6.1. Objectives

Objective 1: To assess perceived levels of loneliness at work for multinational employees in Bucharest and Constanta and to compare these levels.

Objective 2: To measure perceived levels of emotion as a state/trait for multinational employees in Bucharest and Constanta and to compare these levels.

Objective 3: To investigate the correlation between the perceived level of emotion as a state/trait and loneliness at work, regardless of location (Bucharest or Constanta).



6.2. Hypotheses

H1. It is presumed that loneliness at work is more pronounced among multinational employees in Bucharest than in Constanta.

H2. It is presumed that the emotion as a state/trait is more accentuated in the employees of multinationals in Bucharest than in those in Constanta.

H3. It is presumed that there is a positive correlation between emotion as a state/trait and loneliness at work.

7. Results

H1. It is assumed that loneliness at work is more pronounced among multinational employees in Bucharest than in Constanta.

We calculated starting indices for the loneliness at work scale and normality (Table 1 and 2)

Table 1. Starting indices of the loneliness at work scale

	city	Statistic	Std. Error
Loneliness at work scale	Constanta	Mean	39,47
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	34,73
		Lower Bound	44,20
		Upper Bound	38,69
		5% Trimmed Mean	35,50
		Median	160,602
		Variance	12,673
		Std. Deviation	22
		Minimum	74
		Maximum	52
	Bucharest	Range	19
		Interquartile Range	,963
		Skewness	,360
		Kurtosis	55,63
		Mean	2,431
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	50,66
		Lower Bound	60,61
		Upper Bound	55,98
		5% Trimmed Mean	62,00
		Median	177,344
Variance	13,317		
Std. Deviation			



Minimum	30	
Maximum	74	
Range	44	
Interquartile Range	19	
Skewness	-,474	,427
Kurtosis	-1,018	,833

Table 2. Normality test

	city	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Loneliness at work scale	Constanta	,208	30	,002	,905	30	,011
	Bucuresti	,217	30	,001	,909	30	,014

Since an abnormal distribution was obtained (sig. was less than 0.05), we used a non-parametric test method, namely the U-Mann Whitney test for independent samples (Table 3 and 4).

Table 3

	city	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Loneliness at work scale	Constanta	30	21,23	637,00
	Bucuresti	30	39,77	1193,00
	Total	60		

Table 4

	Loneliness at work scale
Mann-Whitney U	172,000
Wilcoxon W	637,000
Z	-4,114
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,000

a. Grouping Variable: city

The U Mann-Whitney test analysis indicates a p-value of 0.000, significantly below the conventional threshold of 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This finding suggests a statistically significant difference in the loneliness scores of employees in Bucharest compared to those in Constanța, with a lower prevalence of loneliness in Bucharest. These results underscore the need for a detailed exploration of the factors influencing these regional differences and the implementation of targeted strategies to mitigate workplace loneliness, particularly in Constanța.



From a psychosociological perspective, Oljemark's (2023) research contributes to understanding the complexity of workplace loneliness, highlighting its paradoxical nature. This paradox manifests in the duality between the desire for community belonging and the need for personal space and individuality in the professional context. This tension reflects an internal struggle between the aspiration to form interpersonal connections and the necessity to maintain a certain distance for personal and professional autonomy.

Furthermore, Wright's (2005) theories demonstrate that the organizational climate plays a significant role in shaping employees' loneliness experiences, simultaneously influencing emotional deprivation and overall well-being. Thus, a picture emerges where organizational and interpersonal factors interact in a complex manner, contributing to feelings of loneliness and how they are experienced and managed in the workplace.

In conclusion, the statistical analysis results, coupled with the theoretical perspectives offered by Oljemark and Wright, emphasize the importance of a multidimensional approach in understanding and addressing the phenomenon of workplace loneliness. A deeper investigation of interpersonal dynamics and organizational factors is required to identify effective strategies for reducing the feeling of loneliness and improving employee well-being.

H2. Emotion as a state/trait is presumed to be more pronounced among multinational employees in Bucharest than in Constanta.

We calculated starting indices for the emotion as trait/state and normality scale (Table 5 and 6)

Table 5. Starting indices of the emotion scale as a trait/state

	city	Statistic	Std. Error	
emotion scale as a trait/state	Constanta	Mean	64,10	
		Lower Bound	60,19	
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	68,01	
		Upper Bound	64,09	
		5% Trimmed Mean	65,00	
		Median	109,472	
		Variance	10,463	
		Std. Deviation	44	
		Minimum	83	
		Maximum	39	
		Range	16	
		Interquartile Range	-,094	,427
		Skewness	-,867	,833
	Kurtosis	57,40	1,837	
Bucharest	Mean			



95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	53,64	
	Upper Bound	61,16	
5% Trimmed Mean		57,20	
Median		56,50	
Variance		101,283	
Std. Deviation		10,064	
Minimum		36	
Maximum		80	
Range		44	
Interquartile Range		12	
Skewness		,607	,427
Kurtosis		,796	,833

Table 6. Test of normality Emotion scale as a trait/state

	city	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
emotion scale as a trait/state	Constanta	,080	30	,200*	,974	30	,641
	Bucharest	,110	30	,200*	,945	30	,123

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

Since a normal distribution was obtained (sig. was greater than 0.05), we used a parametric testing method, namely the t-test for independent samples (Table 7 and 8).

Table 7.

	city	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Emotion scale as a trait/state	Constanta	30	64,10	10,463	1,910
	Bucharest	30	57,40	10,064	1,837



Table 8. Independent samples t-test

	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
Emotion scale as a trait/state	Equal variances assumed	,597	,443	2,528	58	,014	6,700	2,651	1,394	12,006
	Equal variances not assumed			2,528	57,913	,014	6,700	2,651	1,394	12,006

The analysis of values obtained through Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests for employees of multinational companies in Constanța and Bucharest indicates results above the threshold of 0.05, suggesting that the data distribution can be considered approximately normal. This finding is significant in the context of statistical analysis, providing a basis for the subsequent application of parametric tests.

The study highlights a statistically significant difference between the two cities concerning the scale of emotion as a trait or state. It is observed that employees in Constanța, on average, have higher scores on this scale compared to their colleagues in Bucharest, indicating a higher emotional intensity in the professional context of Constanța. Despite this, there is a considerable variability in the scores in both cities, and the data distribution aligns with a normal distribution. The results of the statistical tests reveal that these differences are significant and cannot be attributed to random variations, thus indicating a concrete trend between the two locations.

From a psychosociological perspective, these findings could reflect the different cultural and organizational dynamics between the two cities, influencing how employees express and experience emotions at work. Employees in Constanța may tend to express emotions more intensely, possibly as a result of the specific socio-economic context or the organizational culture of companies in this region. These differences underscore the importance of understanding the cultural context and interpersonal dynamics in addressing employee well-being and job satisfaction.



H3. It is assumed that there is a correlation between emotion as a state/trait and loneliness at work.

Table 9. Correlation between loneliness at work and emotion state/trait

		Loneliness at work scale	Emotion state/trait
Loneliness at work scale	Pearson Correlation	1	-,340**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,008
	N	60	60
Emotion state/trait	Pearson Correlation	-,340**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,008	
	N	60	60

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

The Pearson correlation coefficient, calculated to be -0.340 as detailed in Table 9, demonstrates an inverse relationship between the scores of loneliness at work and emotion as a state/trait. The presence of a negative coefficient signifies that as one variable increases, the other tends to decrease. This correlation is statistically significant, as evidenced by a p-value of 0.008, which falls below the established significance level of 0.01.

These findings validate the hypothesis (H3), illustrating a notable negative correlation between the scores of job loneliness and emotion as a state/trait. Specifically, this suggests that employees who exhibit higher levels of emotion as a state/trait are inclined to report reduced feelings of loneliness within the workplace. This revelation holds substantial potential for informing strategies aimed at cultivating a positive organizational climate.

From a psychosociological standpoint, the identified correlation may reflect the intricate interplay between individual emotional disposition and perceived social connectivity within a professional setting. High emotional states or traits could potentially facilitate better interpersonal interactions and a stronger sense of belonging, thereby mitigating feelings of loneliness. Understanding this dynamic could be pivotal for organizational leaders and human resource professionals in devising interventions aimed at enhancing employee emotional well-being and fostering a more inclusive and supportive workplace environment.

Conclusions

In light of the results obtained, it is confirmed that there are significant differences between employees in Constanta and Bucharest in terms of loneliness at work. The results indicate that employees in Bucharest have significantly lower loneliness scores compared to those in Constanta. This observation may be an indication that the workplace atmosphere and professional relationships in Bucharest are more conducive to social interactions and collaboration than in Constanta.

The analysis of emotions as a trait/state shows that employees from Constanta generally have higher scores in this dimension compared to those from Bucharest. However, both cities



show significant diversity in these scores, and the data suggest that their distribution approaches normality.

In relation to the original hypothesis about the correlation between emotion as a trait/state and job loneliness, I support the idea that there is a significant negative correlation between these two variables. In other words, employees who display intense emotions as a state/trait tend to experience lower levels of loneliness at work. therefore, it could guide organizational strategies for creating professional relationships and employee well-being.

The management of the organization could consider these aspects in the development of strategies to be able to create the organizational climate and employee well-being.

Future research can further explore the specific factors that contribute to these differences and provide personalized solutions for each work environment, as we were not limited by the methodological limitation of small sample size, online sample application method, or sample design. at his convenience. .

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