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Working During The Covid-19 Pandemic: Views Of Customer Service Personnel And University Lecturers In The Republic Of Bulgaria

INTRODUCTION

1



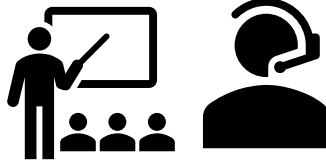
DISCUSSION

4



RESEARCH DESIGN

2



RESULTS

3





In the field of HR management, attention has been paid to some innovative strategies needed to manage and stimulate human capital to increase productivity during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the need to be flexible in general.

In the field of education, some studies focused on adapting the online environment to teaching [15] so that it could best reflect the essentials of the subject taught, for instance, music, while also accounting for the experiences of music teachers



Numerous publications report on the mental health risks of remote working and job satisfaction. In organizational aspect job satisfaction and support by managers traditionally predict lower levels of perceived stress and burnout and the importance of carefully designed and implemented human resource management strategies is highlighted as key to the employees' well-being, satisfaction, productivity, motivation, and health safety at the workplace .



THE AIM OF THE STUDY IS TO ANSWER THREE IMPORTANT RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

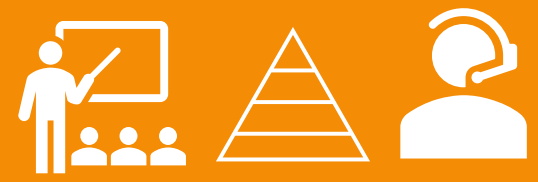
RQ1: What is different in the perceptions of the business and education employees?



RQ2: Are there common points in the perceptions of business and education employees?



RQ3: Can some universal needs and good practices be outlined?





708 university lecturers

269 (38%) are men, 420 (59%) women, and 19 (3%) did not wish to disclose their gender



The distribution of lecturers in different scientific fields is as follows: 175 (25%) social sciences, 182 (26%) humanities, 13 (2%) biological sciences, 56 (8%) mathematical and computer sciences, 68 (10%) medical sciences, 20 (3%) earth sciences, 23 (2%) agricultural sciences, 139 (20%) technical sciences, 14 (2%) physical sciences, and 18 (2%) chemical sciences



237 employees of the telecommunications operator

166 (70%) are women and 71 (30%) men



The majority of the participants (87%) are operational employees, with the remaining 13% holding managerial positions. More than half of them (63%) work directly with customers at various organisational levels (Hotline, Technical Services, Complaints & Grievances, Telemarketing, etc.), followed by Expert Unit Representatives (17%), Backoffice (11%) and other roles (9%)



The Perceived Stress Scale



Health Status Scale



Psychosomatic Symptoms Scale



The Professional Burnout Scale



The Job Satisfaction



1

A comparative analysis of values for psychosomatic expressions of perceived stress

2

Comparison of burnout rates among university lecturers and Telecom employees

3

Comparison of satisfaction scores for university lecturers and Telecom employees



4

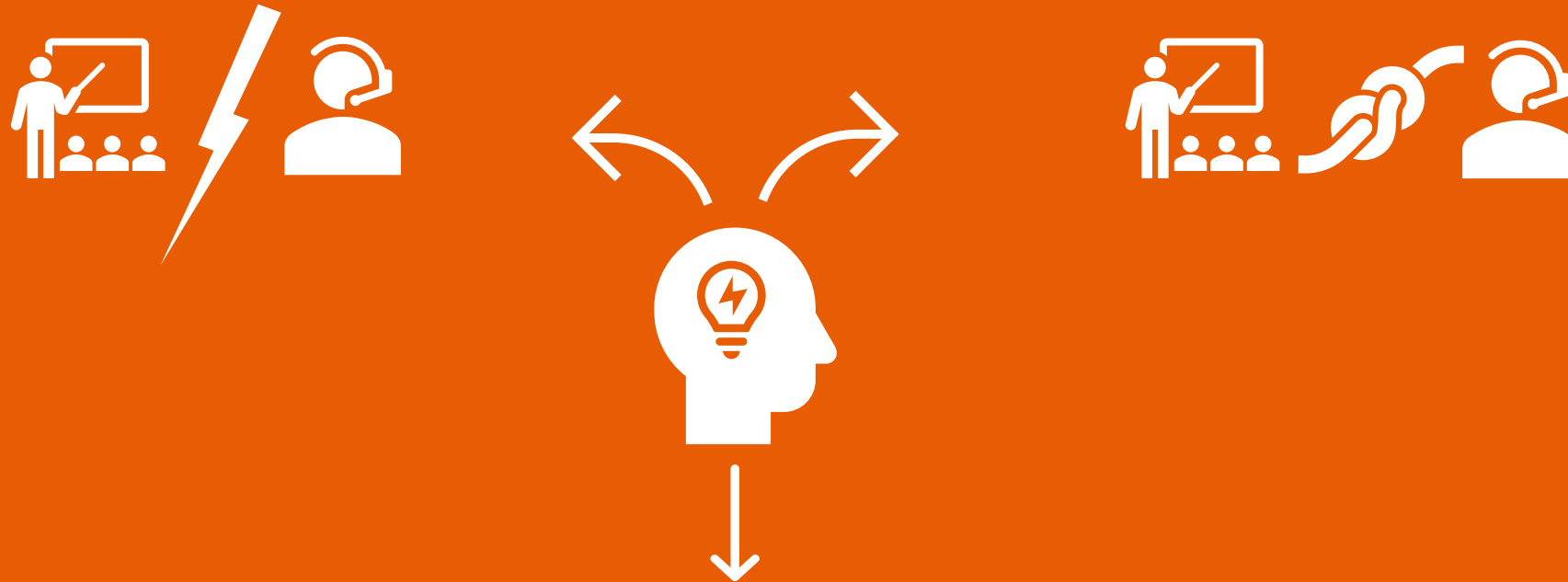
Ranked main difficulties related to teleworking

5

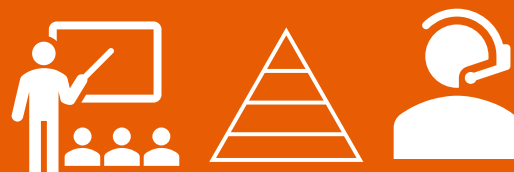
Ranked positives related to teleworking

RQ1: What is different in the perceptions of the business and education employees?

RQ2: Are there common points in the perceptions of business and education employees?



RQ3: Can some universal needs and good practices be outlined?





**Thank you for
your
attention!**

The Perceived Stress Scale comprises 10 items with a 5-point response scale and reliability coefficient is $\alpha = 0.901$

Health Status Scale is a 9-item scale for measuring subjective assessment of different health components - physical and mental health, fatigue and pain for the previous period with a 5-point response scale ($\alpha = 0.902$)

Psychosomatic Symptoms Scale is a 6-item scale created for the purpose of the present study with a 5-point response scale and $\alpha = 0.881$.

The Professional Burnout Scale with 22 items that form three subscales: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced work capacity and 7-point self-response scale. The obtained reliability coefficients are Emotional exhaustion ($\alpha = 0.918$); Reduced work capacity ($\alpha = 0.811$), Depersonalization ($\alpha = 0.776$).

The Job Satisfaction Scale is an adaptation from the Burnout Self-Test and Teacher Job Satisfaction Scale, Eighth Grade and covers 15 items with a 5-point response scale. There are three subscales on the job satisfaction scale, which comprise assessments of overall satisfaction with pay and relationships with colleagues and management ($\alpha = 0.871$); work load ($\alpha = 0.838$) and job satisfaction in respect to occupation ($\alpha = 0.595$). The last part of the survey included open questions for disadvantages and advantages, perceived by the telecommunication operators and university teachers during the pandemic time.



Table 1. Answers to the question "To what extent do the statements apply to you in recent months?"

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% CI t; p; Cohen's d
I could not sleep well	lecturers 708	1	5	2.93	1.16	t = -5.419 p = 0.0001 d = 0.417561
	telecom employees 237	1	5	2.47	1.04	
I had a headache	lecturers 708	1	5	2.69	1.19	
	telecom employees 237	1	5	2.69	1.08	
My appetite has changed	lecturers 708	1	5	2.23	1.18	t = -4.059 p = 0.0001 d = 0.337615
	telecom employees 237	1	4	1.90	0.72	
I felt a gratuitous irritation	lecturers 708	1	5	2.51	1.20	t = -10.417 p = 0.0001 d = 0.829047
	telecom employees 237	1	5	1.62	0.93	
I felt apathy	lecturers 708	1	5	2.29	1.20	t = -9.558 p = 0.0001 d = 0.908933
	telecom employees 237	1	5	1.49	0.81	

Table 2. Comparison of burnout rates among university lecturers and Telecom employees

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% CI
depersonalization	telecom employees 237	1.00	3.50	1.37	0.45	t = 3.185 p = 0.0015
	lecturers 708	1.00	5.00	1.55	0.83	d = 0.23901
reduced work capacity	telecom employees 237	1.00	5.00	2.45	0.90	t = -5.872 p = 0.0001
	lecturers 708	1.00	5.00	2.06	0.88	d = 0.440654
emotional exhaustion	telecom employees 237	1.00	4.00	1.97	0.59	t = 8.140 p = 0.0001
	lecturers 708	1.00	5.00	2.64	1.22	d = 0.699189

Table 3. Comparison of satisfaction scores for university lecturers and Telecom employees

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% CI t; p; Cohen's d
career development opportunities	237	1	5	3.26	1.16	t = -12.386
	708	1	5	2.38	1.29	p = 0.0001 d = 0.717358
the management does not show enough understanding	237	1	5	1.51	0.88	t = 11.285
	708	1	5	2.52	1.28	p = 0.0001 d = 0.919551
lack of prestige and recognition of work	237	1	5	3.95	1.07	t = -11.735
	708	1	5	2.79	1.39	p = 0.0001 d = 0.93521
problems related to bureaucracy	237	1	5	3.41	1.17	t = -2.941
	708	1	5	3.13	1.30	p = 0.0034 d = 0.226407
internal rules and procedures making work difficult	708	1	5	3.14	1.30	
	237	1	5	3.20	1.13	
misunderstanding of the organisation's objectives	237	1	5	4.03	1.11	t = -22.261
	708	1	5	2,10	1,17	p = 0.0001 d =1.692397

University lecturers (708 responses)

lack of live contact (361)
decline in the quality of the learning process (85)
greater workload (73)
physical and mental health implications (67)
see no negatives (61)
lack of technical and resource support (59)
a decline in motivation (52)
difficulties in control (over colleagues and students) (28)
uninformative answer (27)
difficulties with work-life balance and organizing space (25)

Telecom employees (237 responses)

lack of live contact with colleagues (96)
sedentariness/more fatigue (31)
social isolation (30)
worse technical support / less comfortable workplace (25)
limited opportunities for emotional and instrumental support in the office (22)
impaired concentration/distraction/scattering (12)
loss of work habits (10)
poor balance of personal and work tasks (3)
higher costs (2)

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Table 5. Ranked positives related to teleworking

University lecturers (708 responses)

higher student participation, flexibility in both teaching, planning and communication (209)
 time saved (167)
 peace and comfort (132)
 see no positives (112)
 ability to work from any location (119)
 the comfort of home (67)
 savings (including student and employer) (43)
 newly acquired knowledge (33)

Telecom employees (237 responses)

better concentration / lack of noise (53)
 less costs (transport, food, clothing) (42)
 reconciling personal and work tasks (21)
 flexibility (mobility, on-call) (20)
 working when unwell (19)
 reconciliation with childcare (15)
 comfort and coziness (11)
 health and better eating habits (11)
 freedom and autonomy (8)
 time for family and friends (4)
 rolling (3)
 others (stress from traffic jams, more rest) (5)