

Navigating Conflicting Emotions: A Systematic Review of Emotional Ambivalence and Role in Adult Decision Making in Working Place

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of emotional ambivalence in adult decision-making within the workplace using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. Emotional ambivalence, defined as the coexistence of positive and negative emotions toward the same object or event, is explored as a disruptive factor in rational and affective decision-making. Ten peer-reviewed articles published between 2013 and 2023 were selected from 99 initial sources based on credibility and relevance criteria. The findings reveal that emotional ambivalence, emotional dissonance, and workplace incivility contribute to burnout, turnover intentions, and reduced work engagement. Social support, inclusive culture, and emotion regulation serve as protective factors. This study offers both theoretical and practical implications for organizational psychology and future mixed-methods research.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of the modern workplace, effective decision-making is one of the most important aspects of individual and organizational performance. Decisions made in the workplace can affect employee productivity, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being. Research shows that quality decision-making can increase employee engagement and drive innovation, while poor decisions can lead to emotional exhaustion and decreased performance (Han & Sears, 2023). Therefore, understanding the factors that influence decisions in the workplace is crucial.

The emotional dynamics experienced by adults in the workplace play a significant role in decision-making. Strong emotions, both positive and negative, can influence how individuals assess situations and make choices. For example, a study of the relationship between emotional ambivalence in leader-employee interactions suggests that ambivalence can hinder employee well-being, potentially decreasing work engagement and increasing emotional exhaustion (Han & Sears, 2023). Thus, effective emotion management is key to creating a productive work environment.

The concept of emotional ambivalence refers to a state in which an individual experiences two conflicting emotions simultaneously, a common yet often overlooked phenomenon in organizational psychology (Rothman, Vitriol, Moskowitz, 2022). In this context, emotional ambivalence can occur when employees feel caught between positive and negative feelings related to a task or decision they have to make. This causes confusion and can negatively impact rational decision-making abilities. Therefore, a deeper understanding of emotional ambivalence is essential.

The research problem at hand is the lack of a systematic understanding of how emotional ambivalence influences decision-making processes in professional contexts. Many studies have examined decisions in emotional contexts, but few have explicitly explored how emotional ambivalence can shape individuals' perspectives and choices (Imani, Ghadam, Gomrokchi, Maddineshat, 2024). More comprehensive research on emotional ambivalence could pave the way for better managerial strategies in dealing with emotional conflict in the workplace.

The purpose of this study is to review the current literature to understand the role of emotional ambivalence in decision-making in adults at work. By investigating how emotional ambivalence can influence the decisions made, this study is expected to provide new insights that are useful for various parties, including managers, employees, and researchers in understanding the complexity of emotions in professional decisions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition and Characteristics of Emotional Ambivalence

Emotional ambivalence can be defined as a state in which an individual experiences positive and negative emotions simultaneously towards the same object. This concept involves affective complexity that reflects the inconsistency between an individual's feelings and cognitions (Gray, Uren, Pemberton, Boyes,

2023). In the context of psychology, emotional ambivalence not only includes the experience of conflicting feelings but also includes cognitive and evaluative ambivalence. Affective ambivalence refers to mixed feelings experienced simultaneously, while cognitive ambivalence involves the confusion of conflicting ideas and desires. Evaluative ambivalence relates to uncertainty in assessing the same object, which can influence an individual's behavioral decisions (Gray, Hasking, Boyes, 2021).

Studies show that individuals with high levels of ambivalence tend to experience fluctuations in emotional and cognitive responses, which can complicate the decision-making process in the work environment (Peng & Chen, 2021). In this case, the level of ambivalence can have a significant impact on an individual's emotional well-being and social adaptation, making it very important to understand the characteristics and mechanisms underlying emotional ambivalence in a professional context (Dwiyanti & Kartikawati, 2020). The experience of ambivalence is very relevant in work settings and can affect social interactions, work collaboration, and an individual's emotional regulation in conflict situations (Wujarso, 2024).

Another characteristic of emotional ambivalence is that it can occur in different situational contexts, ranging from everyday experiences to more extreme conditions. For example, in the context of self-harm behavior, individuals may have the desire to engage in the behavior while simultaneously resisting the desire, creating significant internal tension (Gray, Uren, Pemberton, Boyes, 2023). In the workplace, ambivalence can also arise when individuals attempt to integrate multiple goals; for example, the ambition to advance in a career may conflict with the need to maintain life balance and emotional well-being, as shown in research on coping strategies (Dwiyanti & Kartikawati, 2020).
Emotional Ambivalence in Adult Psychology

Emotional ambivalence in adult psychology is very relevant as a process that plays an important role in the emotional development of individuals in the workplace. Many researchers have noted that complex emotions, including ambivalence, can influence how individuals approach social situations and conflicts in the workplace (Bonilla, Armadans, Anguera, 2020). For example, adults who are able to recognize and understand their emotional ambivalence tend to have a better capacity to handle interpersonal conflicts and manage the pressure and stress that arises from these situations (Dwiyanti & Kartikawati, 2020). Developing emotional skills and understanding of ambivalence allows individuals to navigate these mixed feelings and make better decisions regarding their work.

Emotional regulation is an important element in dealing with emotional ambivalence, especially in adolescents and individuals in stressful situations. The ability to regulate emotions is essential in reducing the negative impact of emotional conflicts that often occur in everyday life. The definition of emotional regulation is expanded as an individual's ability to manage and adjust the emotions they feel, which includes regulating feelings, physiological reactions, and emotional responses. This process involves the ability to return to calm after experiencing a loss of control over emotions, either consciously or unconsciously

(Annisa, 2023). This includes a variety of approaches, from stress management that focuses on changing emotions to the use of strategies that involve social support, such as sharing experiences and feelings with coworkers (Dwiyanti & Kartikawati, 2020). Research shows that working women often have a variety of emotion-focused coping strategies in dealing with conflict, demonstrating the importance of social support and positive conflict management in organizational settings (Dwiyanti & Kartikawati, 2020).

Decision Making Theory

Decision-making in the workplace is often influenced by various factors, including the emotions experienced by individuals. Bounded rationality theory states that individuals cannot always make completely rational decisions due to cognitive limitations and the information they have (Xu & Flores, 2023). In this context, emotions can function as important information that influences the selection of decision alternatives. Positive emotions can broaden an individual's perspective in making decisions, while negative emotions often narrow their views (Oh, 2022). Affective theory suggests that emotional experiences not only influence an individual's perception but can also contribute directly to the outcomes of the decisions they make, indicating a strong relationship between affect and decision-making in the workplace (Oh, 2022).

The dual-process theory approach, which distinguishes between system 1 (intuitive) and system 2 (analytical), provides insight into how emotions influence decision-making. In this context, system 1 operates quickly and is often guided by emotions, while system 2 is slower and based on rational thinking (Xu & Flores, 2023). When faced with emotional ambivalence, individuals may have difficulty deciding on their next move, often avoiding more complex decisions (Oh, 2022).

In addition, the role of emotions as a disturbance in decision making is important to analyze. Ambivalent emotions can cause cognitive disorders that affect the quality of decisions made (Oh, 2022). Research shows that the influence of emotions in decision making can lead to suboptimal results, as seen in increased levels of burnout and job dissatisfaction when individuals are caught in complex emotional situations (Oh, 2022).

Emotional Interactions and Work Context

The work environment often serves as an arena where there are conflicts of values and expectations that can significantly affect individual emotions. Social and cultural dynamics in the workplace often create emotional ambivalence that impacts employee interactions and decision-making processes (Copeland, 2020). This value conflict can arise from differing expectations between individuals, both from superiors and coworkers, which can create psychological tension and interfere with productivity and job satisfaction (Oh, 2022). This experience of emotional ambivalence can lead to high uncertainty in carrying out tasks and responsibilities, which leads to suboptimal performance.

Studies have shown that emotional ambivalence can lead to increased burnout among workers. When individuals feel caught in a conflict between work responsibilities and personal expectations, they are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion and decreased job satisfaction (Oh, 2022).

Research has also found that emotional ambivalence is closely related to decreased work engagement and increased intention to leave the job, indicating a direct link between emotional states and job outcomes (Elhay, Elgilany, Elhay, 2022). An unsupportive or stressful environment can exacerbate these conditions, creating a negative cycle that is difficult to overcome.

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this study is the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) . Systematic Literature Review is one of the specific research methodologies. It also includes developments carried out to collect and evaluate research related to a particular topic (Triandini, 2019). The first stage of the systematic literature review is to find literature that is in accordance with the research topic. After searching for literature, check the credibility and relevance of these sources. Next, identify the main themes in the literature and find out whether there is a gap between existing theories and conditions in the field. Then create an outline framework that will later guide the structure of the review. Finally, the literature review is compiled based on that framework to show the findings systematically and organized (Cahyono, Sutomo, Hartono, 2019). The sources used in this literature are from Google Scholar with an initial number of 99 journals, then screening is carried out until 10 journals remain.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Journal Selection Flow Prism Graph

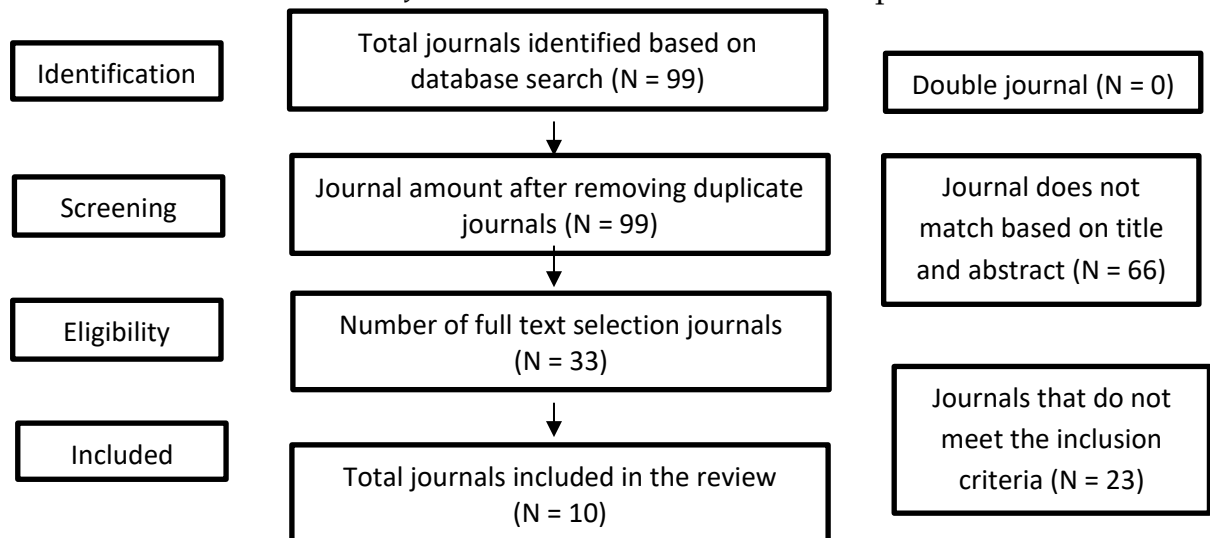


Table 2. List of Conflicting Emotions in the Workplace

Writer	Objective	Method	Variables	Key findings	Study contribution	Weaknesses of the study	Relevance to SLR
Wang et al. (2022)	Examining the dynamic relationship between Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and employee role-making behavior, with emotional ambivalence as a moderation.	Longitudinal survey with moderated regression analysis.	IV : Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) DV : Employee role-making behaviors Moderator : Employee emotional ambivalence	Emotional ambivalence strengthens the negative relationship between low LMX and role-making behavior. Employees with high ambivalence tend to be less adaptive in shaping their roles.	Expanding understanding of LMX dynamics by including emotional factors.	Limited generalization due to homogeneous sample.	It is important to understand the impact of emotional ambivalence in superior-subordinate relationships.
Nielsen et al. (2023)	Testing the role of social support in moderating the relationship between emotional dissonance and burnout in child welfare workers.	Cross-sectional survey with moderated regression analysis	IV: Emotional dissonance DV: Burnout Moderator: Social support (colleagues, supervisors, organizations)	Social support reduces the impact of emotional dissonance on burnout. Supervisor support is most effective in reducing	Highlighting the importance of social support in emotional work	Cross-sectional design hampers causal inference	Relevant to the literature on work stress and coping mechanisms

				g burnout.			
Kavakli & Yildirim (2022)	Analyzing the relationship between workplace incivility and turnover intention in nurses	Cross-sectional study with regression analysis	IV: Workplace incivility DV: Turnover intention	Workplace incivility significantly increases turnover intentions. Nurses who experience incivility are more likely to want to leave their jobs.	Strengthening evidence of the negative impact of workplace incivility in the health sector.	Did not check mediator/moderator variables	It is useful to understand the consequences of workplace incivility.
Lee et al. (2021)	Investigating the mediating role of workplace incivility in the relationship between organizational culture and turnover intention in nurses.	Correlational descriptive with mediation analysis.	IV: Organizational culture Mediator: Workplace incivility DV: Turnover intention	Workplace incivility mediates the relationship between organizational culture and turnover intention. Poor organizational culture increases incivility, which then	Explaining the indirect mechanisms between organizational culture and turnover.	The sample was limited to South Korean nurses.	Shows how organizational culture influences work behavior.

				increase s turnover intentio ns.			
Parra y et al. (2023)	Explorin g the impact of workpla ce incivility and emotion al exhausti on on work outcome s in higher educatio n.	Cross- section al survey with regress ion analysi s.	IV: Workpla ce incivility , emotion al exhausti on DV: Job outcome s (perform ance , satisfacti on) Work)	Workpla ce incivility and burnout emotion al in a way negative ly affect work results. The impact is stronger on non- academi c staff than lecturers .	Highlig hting the challeng es of workpla ce incivilit y in the educati on sector	Did not test the mediation mechanism	Relevan t to the literatur e on work stress in academi a
Melw ani & Roth man (2022)	Investig ating when and why ambival ent relations hips ("frenem ies") lead to helping or hurting behavior .	Experi ments and survey s	IV: Ambival ent relations hips DV: Helping vs. Helping harming behavior s Moderat or: Situation al factors (eg, power dynamic s)	Ambival ent relations hips can trigger both helpful and harmful outcome s, dependi ng on the context. Power influnc es the directio n of	Enrichi ng the theory of interper sonal conflict in the workpla ce.	Limited generalizati on due to experiment al setting	It is importa nt to underst and the dynam ics of comple x work relation ships

				behavior			
Meyer et al. (2024)	Analyzing the job stress profile of emergency medical staff.	Cross-sectional study with cluster analysis.	IV: Occupational stress factors Outcome : Burnout, job satisfaction	Pre-hospital staff are more stressed than clinical staff. Workload and lack of control are major sources of stress.	Identifying differences in stress between roles in emergency medicine.	Did not explore intervention.	Useful for literature on work stress in the health sector.
Song et al. (2024)	Examining the consequences of disagreements between leaders and employees about workplace events.	Multi-source survey with moderated mediation analysis	IV: Cognitive disagreement (leader vs. employee) DV: Work engagement, turnover intention Moderator: Communication quality	Disagreement reduces work engagement and increases turnover intentions. Good communication reduces negative effects.	Highlighting the importance of perceptual alignment within the team	Does not measure ambivalence explicitly	Relevant to the study of cognitive conflict in the workplace
Barboux et al. (2022)	Explaining why general practitioners have an ambivalent relations	Qualitative interviews and thematic analysis	Ambivalence in professional relationships	Ambivalence arises because of the conflict between the need for drug	Uncovering the unique dynamics of professional relationships.	Small and specific samples	Useful for understanding ambivalence in business-professional

	hip with pharmaceutical sales representatives.			information and distrust of sales motivations. Doctors feel caught between reliability and commercial bias			onal relationships.
Moon & Moon (2022)	Examining the impact of workplace incivility through emotional exhaustion and political skills.	Survey with mediation analysis	IV: Workplace incivility Mediator : Emotional exhaustion DV: Job performance, turnover intention	Workplace incivility increases emotional exhaustion, which then reduces performance. Political skills moderate negative impacts.	Explaining the psychological mechanisms behind incivility.	Does not explore organizational factors.	Important for the literature on workplace incivility and coping strategies

Based on the table above, various studies reviewed show consistency that factors such as workplace incivility, emotional dissonance, and emotional ambivalence have a significant impact on employee work behavior and psychological well-being. This shows that emotional dynamics cannot be separated from interpersonal relationships in the workplace. These three concepts contribute to stress, burnout, and the intention to leave work. Studies conducted in various organizational and professional contexts enrich the understanding of psychosocial conditions that affect individual performance. In other words, the workplace is not only a space for productivity but also an emotional battlefield that demands complex self-regulation. These studies emphasize the importance of organizational intervention in managing workers' emotional burdens. This is the basis for evaluating current HR and stress management policies.

One important study in the context of emotional ambivalence is the research of Wang, Jiang, Xu, Zhou, Bauer (2023), which showed that emotional ambivalence strengthens the negative influence of poor leader-subordinate relationships (LMX) on role crafting behavior. This finding suggests that employees who lack emotional clarity toward their superiors are more susceptible to disengagement. Moreover, this result is significant in individuals with low adaptability, indicating the important role of personal character in responding to contradictory emotional situations. This ambivalence not only reduces performance but also reduces work initiative. When someone feels uncertain whether their superiors are supportive or inhibiting, emotional confusion arises that suppresses intrinsic motivation. Thus, ambivalence can act as a psychological stressor. This suggests that emotional uncertainty is a major challenge in building healthy work communication.

In the context of interpersonal relationships, Melwani & Rothman (2022) add a new dimension to ambivalence, namely through the concept of "frenemies" or coworkers who are also competitors. This study shows that ambivalence is not always detrimental, depending on the context of power and attributions made to the colleague. When individuals feel they have more control, ambivalence can trigger cooperative behavior. Conversely, in conditions of low power, ambivalence creates an intention to bring down coworkers. This strengthens the theory of social motivation which states that perceived power plays an important role in determining emotional responses. Thus, ambivalence is contextual, not always negative. This study provides a new nuance to the affective approach to organizational behavior.

In addition, in the study of Barbaroux, Pourrat, Bouchez (2022) who used a qualitative approach to explore emotional experiences at work. This study shows that employees' emotional narratives are complex and often not reflected in quantitative surveys. These findings underscore the importance of a phenomenological approach in understanding workers' subjective realities. Narratives of feelings of disrespect, emotional manipulation, and injustice enrich the understanding of psychosocial burden. This indicates that qualitative data has the power to explore the depth of affective experiences. Therefore, the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods is important. This study opens up opportunities for deeper exploration of emotion regulation at work.

Emotional dissonance is also a major theme in Nielsen, Johannessen, Christensen, Finne (2023) study, which showed that workers who frequently have to display emotions that are inconsistent with their true feelings experience higher emotional exhaustion. This study shows that emotional dissonance is a significant predictor of burnout. However, social support from superiors and the organization has been shown to reduce these negative effects. This suggests that the social structure within the organization plays a buffering role against emotional stress. In addition, social support increases individual resilience in dealing with emotional role demands. Therefore, companies should build a supportive supervision system, especially in professions that have a high emotional burden. These findings reinforce the importance of the role of superiors as social emotional regulators.

In line with Nielsen, Johannessen, Christensen, Finne (2023) and Moon & Morais (2022) in the context of tourism found that emotional dissonance has a negative impact on job satisfaction and indirectly increases the desire to leave the job. However, individual political skills were found to mediate the relationship. With this ability, individuals can strategically align external emotional expressions and internal conditions. Employees who are good at reading situations and managing perceptions are able to reduce emotional dissonance. These results show the importance of soft skills training, especially in the service sector that requires intense interpersonal interactions. In other words, emotional dissonance is not just a personal issue, but can be mitigated by strengthening individual social capacities. This has important implications for career development and human resource training.

The phenomenon of workplace incivility consistently shows a negative relationship with performance and intention to stay in the organization. Kavaklı & Yıldırım (2022) emphasized that incivility has a direct impact on turnover intentions, and the effect is strengthened when individuals also experience job dissatisfaction. This study shows that rude behavior, even if it seems minor, has a systemic impact on employee retention. This shows the importance of an organizational culture that upholds politeness. Incivility also reduces the positive psychological climate, reinforcing the perception of a toxic work environment. Organizations need to realize that bad behavior does not always come from superiors, but also from colleagues. Therefore, cultural intervention is an important key in overcoming incivility.

Lee, Lee, Lee (2022) added a structural dimension by showing that organizational culture plays a major role in determining workplace incivility. Through a mediation model, it was found that a culture that supports participation and open communication reduces incivility and turnover intention. Conversely, authoritarian and closed cultures exacerbate these effects. This suggests that incivility is not just a product of individual behavior, but is influenced by the organizational system as a whole. Organizations with a supportive culture tend to have lower levels of incivility. Therefore, it is important to design organizational values that emphasize respect, openness, and empathy. This study supports a systemic approach to managing unethical behavior in the workplace.

Parray, Islam, Shah (2023) study highlighted the higher education sector and found that non-academic staff were more vulnerable to workplace incivility than academic staff. Differences in power and reward structures between employee groups appear to trigger inequalities in the experience of incivility. This opens up discussions about organizational justice and equal distribution of treatment. Non-academic employees who feel neglected or underappreciated are more likely to be victims of incivility. The implications of these findings suggest the importance of an inclusive approach to human resource management in the education sector. Strengthening conflict management and communication training are important solutions. Therefore, educational organizations need to adopt policies of equality and respect across positions.

Song, Gong, Zhao, Shen, Chen, Wang (2024) study examined the role of emotional identity in strengthening or weakening the impact of workplace

incivility. This study found that workers who have a strong emotional identity towards their profession are more resilient to incivility. Conversely, individuals with a weak professional identity are more likely to experience distress. This suggests that a sense of attachment to a profession can act as a psychological protector. Therefore, organizations need to facilitate the formation of professional identity through recognition, rewards, and career development. This study broadens the understanding of personal dynamics in dealing with social pressures at work. Emotional identity is an important aspect in managing work stress.

In the context of medical personnel, Meyer, Chiapponi, Kaufmann, Kanz, Hinzmann (2024) emphasized that workload and lack of control over work schedules are the main triggers of stress and burnout. This is exacerbated by work situations that do not support mental health, such as long shifts and uncertainty. Emergency health workers tend to experience emotional dissonance because they have to stay calm in stressful situations. Suggested interventions include adjusting workloads and creating more humane schedules. This study shows that the psychological well-being of workers is influenced not only by interpersonal relationships, but also by structural work systems. Institutional policies play a key role in building a healthy work environment. Therefore, managerial approaches need to be more responsive to specific work conditions.

In terms of methodology, the reviewed literature shows the dominance of quantitative approaches with survey designs. This approach is effective in identifying correlations between concepts, but is less able to explain the underlying internal processes. Longitudinal research is still rare, even though it is important to understand the dynamics of emotions over time. Some studies such as those by Wang, Jiang, Xu, Zhou, Bauer (2023) and Melwani & Rothman (2022) have begun to explore experimental and multilevel approaches. Meanwhile, qualitative studies such as Barbaroux, Pourrat, Bouchez (2022) provide narrative depth. This suggests the need for diversification of methodological approaches in the study of work psychology. A mixed-methods approach is recommended to address the challenges of emotional complexity in organizations.

In theoretical studies, emotional ambivalence is defined as a condition in which a person experiences positive and negative emotions simultaneously towards the same object or event (Gray, Uren, Pemberton, Boyes, 2023). This is evident in the study of Wang, Jiang, Xu, Zhou, Bauer (2023) which emphasized that employees with high emotional ambivalence tend to exhibit more negative role-making behavior when LMX relationships are low. These results support the concept of affective ambivalence, namely how mixed feelings inhibit cognitive and affective abilities to adapt adaptively in organizational interactions.

Furthermore, the theory states that ambivalence creates internal tension (Gray, Hasking, Boyes, 2021), which has the potential to increase stress in the workplace. This is in line with the findings of Barbaroux, Pourrat, Bouchez (2022) who showed that ambivalence toward pharmaceutical sales representatives creates evaluative conflict physicians want to obtain information but also distrust the other party's commercial intentions.

According to the theory Peng & Chen (2021), emotional ambivalence has elements of cognitive ambivalence, namely the inconsistency between thoughts

and feelings, which complicates decision making. This is reflected in Song, Gong, Zhao, Shen, Chen, Wang (2024) who found that perceptual disagreement between superiors and subordinates decreased work engagement and increased turnover intentions, unless high-quality communication could neutralize the cognitive conflict. This strengthens the relevance of ambivalence theory in the framework of perceptually incongruent superior-subordinate relationships, which exacerbate emotional responses and work actions.

The theory of Dwiyantri & Kartikawati (2020) states that emotional ambivalence contributes to emotional instability which accelerates psychological exhaustion. Studies by Nielsen, Johannessen, Christensen, Finne (2023) and Moon & Morais (2022) reinforce this by showing that emotional dissonance—as another form of affective ambivalence significantly increases burnout and emotional exhaustion, which in turn decreases work performance. However, social support and political skills (coping strategies) have been shown to mitigate the destructive effects of this ambivalence.

Theoretically, ambivalence can arise from the tension between internal values and external pressures, as described in evaluative conflict (Gray, Hasking, Boyes, 2021). Studies by Kavaklı & Yıldırım (2022), Lee, Lee, Lee (2022), and Parray, Islam, Shah (2023) demonstrate how workplace incivility creates contradictory emotional experiences—on the one hand wanting to stay because of professionalism, on the other hand feeling unappreciated—which accelerates turnover intentions and decreases job satisfaction. This suggests that ambivalence is not always internal, but can emerge in response to stressful social ecosystems or incivility.

In adult psychology, ambivalence is not limited to emotions, but also relates to a mismatch between social expectations and personal needs (Bonilla, Armadans, Anguera, 2020). Melwani & Rothman (2022) findings confirm this through an exploration of ambivalent working relationships (frenemies) that drive both prosocial and destructive behaviors, depending on power dynamics. This supports the idea that ambivalence plays a role in both adaptive and maladaptive behaviors, depending on the context and social structure in which individuals operate.

One of the key characteristics of ambivalence is its emergence in complex working conditions, such as work in health or emergency services (Gray, Uren, Pemberton, Boyes, 2023; Dwiyantri & Kartikawati, 2020). In this regard, Meyer, Chiapponi, Kaufmann, Kanz, Hinzmänn (2024) study revealed how pre-hospital staff experienced very high emotional stress due to professional demands that were unbalanced with personal control. This shows the ambivalence between moral commitment to patients and personal exhaustion, which is relevant to the concept of evaluative ambivalence in theory.

The practical implications of this study are the need for organizational-based interventions that support employee emotional health. This includes emotion regulation training, supportive supervision, and strengthening a just organizational culture. In addition, individual based strategies such as improving adaptability and political skills are also important. Integrated self-development programs can be a long-term investment for organizations. Emotionally

supportive work environments have been shown to increase engagement and productivity. Therefore, managing work emotions needs to be an integral part of HR management. This is not only relevant in the service sector, but also in result-oriented organizations.

However, there are several limitations. The study is still dominated by the individualistic cultural context, which may be less relevant to a collectivistic culture like Indonesia. In addition, the representation of the informal sector and non-formal workers is still minimal. There are also limitations in the use of longitudinal data to see long-term effects. Real interventions on emotional strain have not been empirically tested. This opens up opportunities for more diverse, interdisciplinary, and contextual research. Future research needs to focus on the effectiveness of work emotion policies in the Southeast Asian context. Cross-sector collaboration will strengthen the practical contribution of these research results.

Future research is recommended to use a longitudinal approach to understand changes in work emotions over time. Mixed-methods will enrich quantitative data with narrative depth. Studies should also focus on collective cultural contexts, particularly in the public and education sectors. Intervention research is needed to assess the effectiveness of emotion training programs and organizational culture. In addition, it is important to explore the role of technology in assisting emotion regulation, such as through mindfulness applications or virtual training. With this approach, the development of theory and practice can be more balanced. This study paves the way for strengthening emotional health in future organizations.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Emotional ambivalence in adults is a multidimensional and complex phenomenon, characterized by the simultaneous presence of positive and negative emotions toward an object, event, or social relationship. The main synthesis of this study suggests that emotional ambivalence has a significant impact on the psychological well-being of adults, such as increased stress, internal conflict, and challenges in decision-making and emotion regulation. However, studies that comprehensively explore this dynamic are still very limited, both in theoretical and methodological aspects, especially in the context of culture and adult development in developing countries.

Academically, this article provides an important contribution in the form of a systematic mapping of the current state of the study of emotional ambivalence in adults. This review highlights the limitations of the existing literature, while identifying research opportunities that are still wide open, including on the temporal, contextual, and individual differences dimensions that influence ambivalent responses. Through an approach based on affective, cognitive, and developmental theories, this study brings together various perspectives to strengthen the conceptual and methodological foundations of further studies.

In terms of practical and academic implications, there is an urgent need to raise public awareness and provide training in managing ambivalent emotions, especially in the context of social life, work, and interpersonal relationships in

adulthood. Intervention programs based on positive psychology, cognitive therapy, or mindfulness training may be effective approaches in helping individuals manage emotional ambivalence adaptively.

FURTHER STUDY

Interdisciplinary studies involving developmental psychology, neuroscience, sociology, and communication science are needed to broaden the understanding of the mechanisms and functions of emotional ambivalence. The development of new valid and contextual instruments is also needed to accurately measure this phenomenon in various cultural and demographic contexts. Thus, this study is expected to be a theoretical and practical basis for psychological research and interventions that are more responsive to the complexity of emotions in adult life.

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