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**“Workplaces in the New Normal:
Analysis of identity processes and meaning making among
workers experiencing different reconfigurations and work
modalities in Organizations”**

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*Il coraggio di conoscere **la propria identità** è un coraggio raro;
e sono molti quelli che preferiscono incontrare il loro
acerrimo nemico in campo aperto,
piuttosto che il proprio cuore nell'armadio.
(Anonimo)*

*"Il **senso** della vita è quello di trovare il nostro dono.
Lo scopo della vita è quello di regalarlo."
(Pablo Picasso)*

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RÉSUMÉ GÉNÉRAL

Objectifs - Le "Nouvelle Normalité", une nouvelle réalité établie (Corpuz, 2021), a impliqué l'adoption généralisée de pratiques telles que le travail à distance, l'utilisation des technologies numériques pour l'éducation et le commerce, ainsi qu'une attention accrue portée à la santé mentale et à la sécurité. Ces changements, initialement considérés comme temporaires, sont devenus partie intégrante de la nouvelle réalité, remodelant profondément la vie personnelle et professionnelle. La Nouvelle Normalité a apporté des changements significatifs au sein des organisations, modifiant leurs structures, la reconfiguration des espaces et les modalités de travail. Certaines entreprises ont favorisé la modalité hybride, tandis que d'autres ont opté pour des configurations entièrement à distance ou totalement sur site, impactant les processus identitaires et de construction de sens des travailleurs. Avec l'adoption de nouvelles modalités et lieux de travail, les frontières entre la vie personnelle et professionnelle sont devenues plus floues, entraînant une réévaluation du sens du travail et de l'identité professionnelle. Le manque d'interactions sociales a affecté l'identité relationnelle et organisationnelle. D'un côté, ces changements ont conduit à une plus grande flexibilité et une majeure satisfaction au travail, mais de l'autre, ils ont entraîné un isolement accru. À cet égard, cette thèse vise à approfondir les concepts de construction de sens, des identités professionnelles, relationnelles et organisationnelles, de l'appropriation de l'espace et de l'équilibre travail-famille en relation avec les lieux de travail et les nouvelles façons de travailler, en proposant trois études différentes qui explorent collectivement ces aspects.

Méthodologie - Les données comprennent à la fois des aspects qualitatifs et quantitatifs et ont été recueillies à l'aide d'une approche méthodologique mixte. La première étude est qualitative, impliquant des entretiens semi-structurés réalisés sur deux échantillons italiens indépendants. La deuxième est quantitative, avec un questionnaire auto-administré auprès d'un échantillon français et italien, et la troisième est une étude par journaux de bord, également menée sur un échantillon italien et administrée sur cinq jours consécutifs. La combinaison des approches qualitatives et quantitatives était essentielle pour répondre pleinement à la question de recherche. Les méthodes quantitatives ont offert une couverture large en permettant la collecte de données auprès d'une population plus vaste, ce qui a permis de dégager des résultats avec une généralisabilité accrue. En revanche, les méthodes qualitatives ont apporté une compréhension plus approfondie, permettant une analyse détaillée de cas ou de phénomènes spécifiques, enrichissant ainsi l'analyse globale. Ce mélange de largeur et de profondeur a été crucial pour produire une investigation complète et équilibrée.

Résultats - Globalement, les résultats montrent que le contexte social défini comme la Nouvelle Normalité, ainsi que les changements dans la reconfiguration des espaces de travail et les modalités de travail, impactent les processus identitaires et de construction de sens des travailleurs. L'étude 1 souligne les bénéfices de l'utilisation d'une modalité de travail hybride : les participants éprouvent une plus grande appropriation de leur espace de travail et une identité relationnelle et organisationnelle renforcées

lorsqu'ils travaillent sur site. À distance, il semble y avoir un meilleur équilibre entre vie privée et vie professionnelle, surtout perçu par les femmes de l'échantillon. Le modèle de travail hybride permet aux travailleurs d'améliorer leur santé physique et mentale, de bénéficier de plus de flexibilité et d'autonomie (Vayre et al., 2022), d'augmenter leur satisfaction et leur productivité, et de mieux équilibrer leur vie personnelle et professionnelle (Ferrara et al., 2022). L'étude 2 propose de promouvoir un sentiment d'inclusion et de distinctivité au travail et de créer un climat de soutien et de collaboration, car ces éléments renforcent l'identité professionnelle. L'étude 3 montre que le sens du travail suit un processus réflexif en changement continu, qui semble, dans une certaine mesure, être influencé par l'alternance de la modalité de travail caractéristique du travail hybride. Dans leur ensemble, les résultats de cette thèse suggèrent que, face aux nouvelles modalités et configurations du travail, se concentrer sur les concepts de sens et d'identité dans les organisations est crucial pour le bien-être des employés et des entreprises, car une forte identité professionnelle et un lien avec le travail peuvent améliorer l'engagement des employés, leur satisfaction au travail et favoriser la création d'une culture organisationnelle cohésive.

Limites - Les limites communes aux trois études sont de nature méthodologique. Tous les échantillons sont des échantillons de convenance, ce qui limite donc la généralisation des résultats et leur représentativité. De plus, les données recueillies par le biais d'entretiens et de questionnaires peuvent ne pas représenter fidèlement les perceptions et les expériences réelles des participants, car ils peuvent avoir répondu de manière socialement désirable ou selon ce qu'ils pensent que le chercheur attend d'eux. Pour aborder cette préoccupation, nous avons veillé à ce que les réponses des participants soient anonymisées et confidentielles, en les assurant que leurs réponses ne seraient pas liées à leur identité. De plus, j'ai précisé qu'il n'y avait pas de bonnes ou de mauvaises réponses et que notre principal intérêt résidait dans leurs opinions et expériences sincères.

De plus, les entretiens ont été réalisés en deux parties avec la même personne (lorsqu'elle était physiquement au bureau et lorsqu'elle travaillait à distance), pour saisir le moment et comprendre comment les personnes se sentent, se perçoivent dans, et perçoivent cet espace de travail particulier. Le questionnaire de l'étude 2 nécessitait environ 20-25 minutes pour être complété, et l'étude 3, l'étude par journaux de bord, nécessitait que les participants répondent au même questionnaire pendant cinq jours ouvrables consécutifs à la fin de chaque journée de travail. Ces méthodes peuvent avoir impacté la motivation des participants à répondre de manière exhaustive et complète. En effet, le temps nécessaire pour remplir les questionnaires, ou pour réaliser les deux entretiens, a pu entraîner de la fatigue et une diminution de l'engagement. Dans l'Étude 3, le fait de devoir remplir le même questionnaire pendant plusieurs jours a pu provoquer de la monotonie, entraînant une perte d'intérêt de la part des participants. Cette répétitivité a pu se traduire par des réponses moins réfléchies ou moins précises, les participants ayant pu fournir des réponses similaires chaque jour sans réfléchir en détail à leurs expériences.

Implications Théoriques - D'un point de vue théorique, ce projet est innovant car il vise, grâce à une méthodologie mixte, à explorer en profondeur les processus de construction de l'identité (professionnelle, relationnelle et organisationnelle) et les processus de construction de sens à travers des expériences subjectives, en examinant leurs liens avec diverses dimensions individuelles, organisationnelles et de bien-être, et en étudiant leurs changements au fil du temps. Cette recherche vise à combler des lacunes dans la littérature existante. Les recherches scientifiques ont souvent étudié les identités professionnelle, relationnelle et organisationnelle de manière isolée, sans en considérer les interconnexions. Ce projet cherche à combler cette lacune en soulignant comment ces identités en coexistant rendent compte de la complexité du concept d'identité professionnelle, offrant ainsi une compréhension plus holistique du construit. Ce projet de recherche pourrait ainsi apporter des contributions significatives à la littérature scientifique, sous différentes perspectives, en établissant un lien entre les changements organisationnels se produisant dans la Nouvelle Normalité et les nouvelles définitions des processus identitaires et de construction de sens dans le travail des individus. Comprendre ces évolutions peut aider les organisations à mieux soutenir leurs employés dans la gestion de ces changements, en favorisant des équipes plus engagées et résilientes. Alors que les organisations continuent de s'adapter à la Nouvelle Normalité, il est crucial de comprendre comment ces adaptations impactent les employés à un niveau plus profond, afin de trouver des solutions durables.

Implications Pratiques - Les implications pratiques du projet visent à attirer l'attention des organisations sur les nouveaux besoins des individus en termes d'identité et d'attribution de sens au travail, alors qu'ils se confrontent aux nouvelles modalités et configurations de travail, en considérant que ces processus jouent un rôle décisif dans l'adaptation et le bien-être des personnes dans les contextes professionnels. Face à des phénomènes récents tels que la "Grande Démission" (tendance récente où un nombre significatif d'employés quittent volontairement leur emploi) et la "Démission Silencieuse" (où les employés se désengagent de leurs rôles et responsabilités sans démissionner officiellement), il semble essentiel pour les organisations et les employeurs de prêter attention aux besoins des employés pour les retenir et assurer la durabilité des entreprises. Cela peut aider à réduire les coûts de turnover, à améliorer la productivité, à augmenter la satisfaction au travail, à attirer les talents et à favoriser un environnement de travail soutenant. En se concentrant sur ces aspects, les organisations peuvent établir une base solide pour le succès et la résilience à long terme.

Mots-clés - Processus identitaires, construction de sens au travail, Nouvelle Normalité, nouvelles modalités de travail, reconfigurations de l'espace du travail.

GENERAL SUMMARY

Objectives – The "New Normal", a new establishment (Corpuz, 2021) has involved the widespread adoption of practices such as remote work, the use of digital technologies for education and commerce, and an increased focus on mental health and safety. These changes, initially seen as temporary, have become integral to the new reality, profoundly reshaping both personal and professional life.

The New Normal has brought significant changes into the organizations, altering their structures, their reconfiguration of spaces and work modalities. Some companies have favored hybrid modality, while others have opted for full remote or fully on-site setups, impacting workers' identity and meaning-making processes. With the adoption of new work modes and spaces, the boundaries between personal and professional life have become more blurred, leading to a reconsideration of the meaning of work and professional identity. The lack of social interactions has impacted relational and organizational identity. On the one hand, these changes have led to greater flexibility and higher job satisfaction, but on the other hand, they have resulted in increased isolation. In this regard, this thesis aims to delve into the concepts of meaning-making, professional, relational and organizational identities, space appropriation and work-family balance in relation to workplaces and new ways of working, proposing three different studies that collectively investigate these aspects.

Methodology – The data encompass both qualitative and quantitative aspects and were gathered using a mixed-method approach. The first study is qualitative, involving semi-structured interviews conducted on an Italian sample, the second is quantitative with a self-administered questionnaire to both a French and an Italian sample and the third is a diary study, also conducted on an Italian sample and administered over five consecutive days.

The combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches was crucial in fully addressing the research question. Quantitative methods offered broad coverage by enabling data collection from a larger population, which has enabled us to produce results with greater generalisability. On the other hand, qualitative methods provided a deeper understanding, allowing for a detailed examination of specific cases or phenomena, thereby enriching the overall analysis. This blend of breadth and depth was key to producing a comprehensive and well-rounded investigation.

Results – Overall, the results show that the social context defined as the New Normal, along with changes in workspace reconfiguration and work modes, impact workers' identity and sense-making processes. Study 1 highlights the benefits of using a hybrid work mode: participants experience greater appropriation of their workspace and enhanced relational and organizational identity when working on-site. Remotely, there seems to be a better balance between private and work life, especially perceived by women in the sample. The hybrid work model allows workers to improve their physical and mental health, gain greater flexibility and autonomy, increase satisfaction and productivity, and better balance

their personal and professional lives (Ferrara et al., 2022; Vayre et al., 2022). Study 2 suggests promoting a sense of inclusion and distinctiveness at work and creating a supportive and collaborative climate, as these elements strengthen professional identity. Study 3 shows that the meaning of work follows a reflective process in continuous change, which seems, to a certain extent, to be influenced by the alternation of the work modality, characteristic of hybrid work.

Overall, the results of this thesis suggest that, in the face of new modes and configurations, focusing on concepts of meaning and identity in organizations is crucial for the well-being of both employees and companies because a strong professional identity and sense connected to work could enhance employees' engagement, their job satisfaction and could build a cohesive organizational culture.

Limitations – The limitations common to all three studies are methodological in nature. All samples are convenience samples, and therefore this limits the generalizability of the results and their representativeness. Additionally, the data collected through interviews and questionnaires may not accurately represent the true perceptions and experiences of the participants, as they may have responded in a socially desirable manner or according to what they believe the researcher expects from them.

To address this concern, we ensured that participants' responses were anonymized and confidential, reassuring them that their answers would not be connected to their identities. Additionally, I made it clear that there were no right or wrong answers and that our primary interest was in their honest opinions and experiences.

Additionally, the interviews were conducted in two parts with the same person (when she/he was physically in the office and when she/he worked remotely), to capture the moment and understand how people feel, perceive themselves in, and perceive that particular workspace.

The questionnaire in Study 2 required approximately 20-25 minutes to complete, and Study 3, the diary study, required participants to respond to the same questionnaire for five consecutive working days at the end of each workday. These methods may have impacted participants' motivation to respond thoroughly and completely. In fact, the length of time required to complete the questionnaires, or to conduct the two interviews, may have led to fatigue and to become less engaged. In Study 3, the need to fill out the same questionnaire over multiple days may have caused monotony, leading participants to lose interest. This repetitiveness could have resulted in less thoughtful or less accurate responses, as participants might have provided similar answers each day without thoroughly reflecting on their experiences.

Theoretical Implications - From a theoretical perspective, this project is innovative as it aims, through a mixed methodology, to deeply explore the constructs of identity (professional, relational and organizational) and meaning-making processes through subjective experiences, investigation their ties with various individual, organizational and well-being dimensions, and studying their changes over time.

This research wants to address gaps in the existing literature. Scientific researches have often studied professional, relational, and organizational identities in isolation, without considering their interconnections. This project aims to fill that gap by underling how these identities, by coexisting, reflect the complexity of the concept of professional identity, offering a more holistic understanding of this construct. Furthermore, while meaning-making is recognized as an important aspect of identity formation, its relationship with identity constructs has not been extensively studied.

This project could thus make significant contributions to the scientific literature, from different perspectives, establishing a link between the organizational changes happening in the New Normal and the new definitions of identity and meaning-making processes in people's work. Understanding these shifts can help organizations to better support their employees in facing these changes, fostering more engaged and resilient workforces. As organizations continue to adapt to the New Normal, it is crucial to understand how these adaptations impact employees at a deeper level, finding sustainable solutions.

Practical Implications - The practical implications of the project aim to draw organizations' attention on the new needs of individuals in terms of identity and meaning attribution at work, as they grapple with the new job modalities and configurations, considering that these processes play a decisive role in adaptation and people well-being in professional contexts.

Faced with recent phenomena such as "the Great Resignation" (recent trend where a significant number of employees voluntarily leave their jobs) and the "Silent Resignation" (where employees disengage from their roles and responsibilities without formally resigning), it seems essential for organizations and employers to pay attention on employees' need to retain them and to ensure the sustainability of the companies. This can help to reduce turnover costs, enhance productivity, boost job satisfaction, attract talent, and foster a supportive work environment. By focusing on these aspects, organizations can build a strong foundation for long-term success and resilience.

Keywords – *identity work, sense-making, New Normal, new ways of working, work space*

INTRODUCTION

The crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has led to a change into the organizations and ushered in a different historical period, called “the New Normal”, namely a new establishment (Corpuz, 2021), which has totally transformed human life, economic sustenance, work and family structures and, at the same time, necessitates a radical revision of methods, practices and traditional competences used to manage work in general (Manuti et al., 2022).

All this, with a lot of repercussions on workers, their identitarian and meaning-making processes and, in general, their well-being at work.

In response to these transformations, many companies had to adapt to new work modes and to the reconfiguration of spaces, and manage the consequences that these transformations had on the workers (Mihalache & Volberda, 2021; Sadovy et al., 2021), thereby altering the ties between professionals and their work (Asatiani et al., 2021; Howard-Grenville, 2020; Spicer, 2020).

With “*work modalities*” we refer to different ways of working in relation to the space (both physical and virtual) actually inhabited by the worker: in this regard, we talk about hybrid work modalities that alternate between days on site and in remote mode, or modalities that are entirely in-person or entirely remote (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023).

Indeed, some organizational realities have decided to adopt, either completely or partially the remote working (Green et al., 2020; Sadovyy et al., 2021) as a means to improve workers’ well-being, provide them more flexibility (Gerards et al., 2021) and enable more effective work-life balance (van der Lippe & Lippényi, 2018), while others have returned either entirely to on-site modality or totally to remote working (Alam, 2020; Mihalache & Volberda, 2021; Vergine et al., 2019;). These changes did not occur only after the pandemic, leading to a return to stability, but this situation of change has extended, and all the transformations in the world of work are continuously evolving (Pataki-Bittó & Kapusy, 2021).

In this context, companies had to rethink the idea of working in accordance with their own culture, so their shared values, norms, symbols and codes of behaviors that allow the management of internal (Argyris, & Schön, 1997) and external issues (Ashleigh et al., 2019; Chatman, & Srivastava, 2021; Enriquez, 1970; Schein, 1985;). Organizational culture, also, determines a re-interpretation of workplace reconfigurations (Spicer, 2020), leading to a disruption of old patterns and to the need for different ways of designing work (Butera, 2003; Mercurio & Testa, 2000;).

This dynamic aligns with the growing body of research emphasizing that cultural shifts within companies influence how change is both understood and managed (Schein, 2010). Such shifts, which can be perceived as responses to external pressures or internal needs for adaptation (Kotter, 2012), inevitably impact not only the organizations themselves but also the professionals within them. Workers are increasingly driven to reflect on their professional, relational, and organizational identities, as well as the evolving meaning and purpose they attach to their work (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). This continuous reflection is central to understanding how individuals navigate the

complexities of contemporary work environments, where identity formation and the search for purpose are closely intertwined with organizational change (Gottlieb et al., 2020; Hu, 2020).

It is important for companies to engage in this reflection because such changes directly impact workers' well-being, satisfaction, motivation, and sense of belonging. Consequently, this allows for the implementation of more effective change strategies and the promotion of work environments that are not solely focused on productivity but are also personally fulfilling (Dutton et al., 2010).

In the following introductory paragraphs, it will be described how workplaces have been profoundly transformed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The discussion will cover the changes to various work environments, both physical and remote, and how these transformations have required new levels of flexibility and adaptation from organizations and workers.

Next, the focus will shift to how different work arrangements impact employee identity. This section will explore how remote, on-site, and hybrid work models influence employees' self-perception and professional roles. It will delve into how these work situations affect interactions with colleagues and shape professional identities.

Following this, the discussion will address how employees find meaning in their work based on their specific arrangements. You will discover how job satisfaction and a sense of purpose are affected by whether employees work remotely, in the office, or in a hybrid setup, and how workers derive fulfillment and purpose from their roles within these varied work environments.

The conversation will then turn to work-life balance in the context of the New Normal. This section will examine how the boundaries between work and personal life have become increasingly blurred, the challenges employees face in maintaining a healthy balance, and the strategies they use to navigate these new dynamics.

Additionally, you will find a review of the current state of literature in work and organizational psychology, highlighting existing gaps and open questions in the field. This part will provide context for future research directions and discuss the implications for practice, offering a comprehensive overview of ongoing developments in workplace psychology.

Finally, the research premises and hypotheses will be outlined. This section will close the introduction of this dissertation by setting the foundation for the three studies that compose it, introducing key assumptions and research questions that guide the investigations, and providing a roadmap for understanding the subsequent analyses and findings.

Workplaces in the New Normal

As mentioned before, the New Normal represents a context in which the nature and behavior of organizations and the people within them have undergone a radical change in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This upheaval has led to a resilient response from organizations and flexible, adaptive behaviors from workers, including finding new workspaces or modifying and reconfiguring existing ones (Raghavan et al., 2021).

In this social context, the concept of the workplace has been radically transformed: not only within companies but also remotely. In fact, people can work anywhere, in any space, including their own homes, reimagining and configuring areas such as the kitchen, bedroom, or dining room (de Lucas Ancillo et al., 2023).

With the term “*workplaces*” (Occhino, 2018) we do not only refer to physical spaces (personal or shared offices, open spaces or flex offices) and virtual ones (remote teams, teleworking, virtual workplaces) that companies have had to modify and rethink to ensure Covid-19 containment measures, but also to those that workers have been able to reconfigure to make them more aligned with themselves assigning them their own meaning (Lai et al., 2021). Other authors have defined workspaces in different ways: either as a “physical and relational place” where a group of people comes together to work (Bahles et al., 2022), thus attributing a psychosocial element to the space (Humphrey et al., 2007), or as a “physical structure” within which there are clearly defined roles, tasks, and responsibilities (Parker, 2014).

This workplaces reconfiguration may allow workers to appropriate their space, act upon it and, by living in it, modify it according to their preferences, needs and giving it new meanings (Lai et al., 2021; Lussault & Stock, 2010). In reality, changes in the workspace and the shift to virtual modes may not always bring benefits to workers, who may become less satisfied with these continuous changes. They might feel more isolated and sometimes lack a dedicated workspace or an environment that is functional for their work, such as inadequately equipped and non-ergonomic home spaces that are not comfortable or efficient for working (Arnold & Davies, 2022; Johnson & Carter, 2021).

This space reconfiguration inevitably has an impact on individuals’ identities, that is, the meanings individuals reflexively connect to themselves and the spaces they live as professionals (Brown, 2015; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Vough et al., 2020). It is important to consider that, within these spaces, there is also a reconfiguration of relationships and interactions. From an organizational perspective, consider Nonaka's knowledge creation theory, which posits that organizational knowledge—and thus competitive value and specific competencies for growth—is generated through the sharing of individually acquired tacit knowledge. This process underlines the importance of direct interpersonal interactions and shared experiences in fostering organizational learning and development (Nonaka, 1994)

“*Workplace appropriation*” refers to the worker interacting with the space (Lussault & Stock, 2010), making professional practices dynamic. The individual modifies the space, aligns it with themselves, and personalizes it, adding symbolic value that highlights their identity, role, and status (Lai et al., 2021). The space becomes not only a safe physical place where the worker feels reflected and comfortable but also a space of becoming, evolving, and continuous transformation. Furthermore, the process of space appropriation occurs at three different levels: the first involves modifying the workspace to make it physically comfortable; the second is adapting it to suit the tasks performed; and

finally, there is a level that encompasses psychosocial dimensions, including how attached the person feels to that workspace and how much control they feel over it (Lai et al., 2021).

We have to underline that space and place are not synonyms: while the former is a generic term referring to measurements and physical dimensions, “place” always refers to a specific reality in which there are affective values and it gains importance and meaning through the people who inhabit it (Farinelli, 2003). Precisely because place is not at all neutral, individuals construct meanings about themselves into it giving a sense (Brown, 2015; Conroy & O’Leary-Kelly, 2014; Moore & Koning, 2016; Vough et al., 2020), creating a narrative about (Giddens, 1991).

Alongside the concept of workspaces, there are those of workspace adjustments and decentralization. The first concept refers to all the physical changes introduced into the work environment (whether in the office or remotely) to allow workers to modify the space, work more effectively in a place that represents them, and feel safe within it. The term "decentralization" means that the workplace does not necessarily have to be in the office but can be relocated to any other place as long as goals are met and there is frequent communication with the head office (Agba et al., 2021). A concept that effectively combines work arrangement and decentralization is remote work, a flexible work practice that manifests in various forms (Green et al., 2017):

- *Regular home-based telework*, where the primary workspace is one's home for most days of the month.
- *High mobile telework*, where work is conducted from a remote location that is not necessarily one's home.
- *Occasional telework*, where remote work is infrequent, and the primary workspace remains the company office.

In the next paragraph, we will examine how, in the New Normal, different work modalities and the reconfiguration of workspaces impact the identity and identity processes of employees.

Employee Identity and Identity Processes According to Work Situations in the Context of the "New Normal"

While professional identity refers to all the meanings individuals built about themselves as professionals, as people in relation with supervisors and colleagues and, more generally, with the organization and the job world (Brown, 2015; Conroy & O’Leary-Kelly, 2014; Moore & Koning, 2016; Vough et al., 2020), on the other hand, meaning at work pertains to the narratives individuals continuously create about themselves (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Brown, 2015; Conroy & O’Leary-Kelly, 2014; Moore & Koning, 2016; Watson, 2008).

These self-narratives are useful to understand and to give sense of one's role and job (Caza et al., 2018; Ramarajan, 2014;), maintaining a sense of value (Vignoles et al., 2006), feeling close, connected and accepted by the boss and colleagues (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Vignoles et al., 2006) and understanding one's attachment and sense of belonging to the workplace and, more generally, to the

organization itself (Brown, 2015; Dutton et al., 2010; Killian & Johnson, 2006). Self-narratives are useful because they help people understand these phenomena, making sense of their existence, including their work life, by integrating the different aspects of their identity. Through self-narration, workers can reflect on their role, the challenges and changes they face, and attempt to create coherence in their self-perception (Caza et al., 2018; Ramarajan, 2014).

So, in this research project, we investigate how people create different meanings about them and their work, trying to understand which identity processes are strengthened or created as a result of the reconfiguration of workplaces and in relation to different modalities (on site, remote mode and hybrid work). We start from the premise that people don't act in isolation from their work context but in interconnection with it, affecting different identity nuances.

Indeed, personal identity and work identity are two interconnected concepts: work identity defines how a person perceives and evaluates himself/herself within his/her work contexts in relation to successes and achieved goals (Stanko et al., 2022), intertwining with and influencing his/her personal identity in terms of self-reflexivity and continuous search of clearer identity (Alvesson et al., 2008; Cerulo, 1997; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003).

In different work arrangements (whether in-office or remote), scientific literature suggests that employees' identity processes vary. When people primarily work remotely, their social and organizational identities may suffer due to reduced workplace interactions and fewer connections with colleagues (Biron et al., 2023). They may feel more isolated and hold less respect for their work and themselves as professionals (Bartel et al., 2012). On the other hand, remote work can also strengthen personal identity by allowing employees to perceive themselves as competent, as they can perform their tasks professionally, and by fostering a sense of autonomy, which reinforces their self-beliefs. Additionally, seeing themselves as autonomous, competent, and flexible workers can enhance their self-concept (Biron et al., 2023).

Workspaces also influence workers' identity processes. The workplace becomes a symbolic space: it represents a connection, an image of the professional (Grönkvist & O'Mahony, 2021), and a space where relationships, norms, values, and meanings are constructed (Brown & Humphreys, 2006). Moreover, the ability to change workplaces, whether spending some days in the office and others working remotely (either from anywhere or at home), allows for constant reflection on the self (Tietze et al., 2009), one's life spheres, and the boundaries between being a professional and who one is in their private life (Koslowski et al., 2019).

In general, during the New Normal, the changes in the reconfiguration of workspaces and work arrangements have led workers to continuously redefine their identities—professional, social, and organizational. This reflects the fluid nature of identity, which shifts according to situations and contexts (Brown, 2019). Such changes can create identity destabilization (Ajzen & Taskin, 2021), involving a constant reassessment of oneself as a professional, questioning one's competencies, and reflecting on who one is and how competent and valuable one is. Additionally, working in different modes leads to

an ongoing evolution of interactions with supervisors and colleagues, as well as a different sense of belonging to the organization (Brown, 2015). To counteract this identity destabilization, identity regulation is necessary—an active process where the individual becomes capable of adapting to changing contexts and continuously reflecting on the self (Costas, 2013). In conclusion, there also exists a spatial identity (Valand & Georg, 2018), which involves not only defining oneself through physical space but also through the space of interaction with others in everyday work life. In this case, identity construction becomes more of a collective process rather than an individual one (Valand & Georg, 2018).

Sense of work and meaning-making at work among employees according to their work arrangement in the context of the New Normal

As has been repeatedly emphasized, the New Normal has brought about a new structure within organizations, impacting how people make sense of their work.

The term "sense of work" refers to a set of cognitive and emotional processes that workers engage in to perceive their work environment and profession as more meaningful (Weick, 1995). Meaning-making processes are particularly activated in situations of change and uncertainty, as people need to find coherence and meaning over time (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015).

According to some scientific studies, if workers are able to find new meanings in the changes within their work, they will also be more satisfied, and their turnover intentions will decrease (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006; Van den Heuvel et al., 2009). Therefore, in a dynamic and evolving work environment, it is important to focus on people's ability to construct meaning, viewing them as active participants in this process rather than considering meaning as a fixed and unchangeable component (Van den Heuvel et al., 2009).

In this regard, work arrangements and the reconfiguration of workspaces are significant changes for employees and can, therefore, impact their sense-making processes.

Some studies highlight that the sense-making of one's work is not solely an individual dimension but also a collective one. Workers can find a "collective" sense (Knight et al., 2024), which arises from interactions with others within their professional context, whether understood as a physical space or as a network of social interactions (Slaby & Von Scheve, 2019). Through interactions with others, workers can, therefore, assign greater significance to their work environment, attribute different meanings to it, and interpret reality by giving it not only cognitive but also emotional meaning (Brundin et al., 2022).

Some research (Weick et al., 2005; Zhou et al., 2021) indicates that remote work can negatively impact employees' sense-making processes, and this seems to be particularly true for newcomers who build their sense of work day by day through interactions with others and by observing the norms and behaviors present in the office (Allen et al., 2017). However, remote work does not allow for this continuous observation and frequent feedback from colleagues, leading newcomers to experience greater uncertainty and, consequently, to attribute less meaning to their work (Shutte, 2023).

However, a study in the current scientific literature suggests that the difficulty in attributing meaning to one's work while working remotely is not exclusive to newcomers. It can also be experienced by any employees who feel isolated, have reduced communication with supervisors and colleagues, and perceive a lower sense of self-efficacy. This can lead to uncertainty and a sense of precariousness, negatively impacting the positive attribution of meaning to their profession (Vomacka, 2022).

Work-Life Balance and the New Normal

The post-pandemic recovery is not only characterized by new ways of understanding work, new workspaces, and work modalities, but also by new dynamics between people, their perception of their work, and the balance between their private and professional life.

We can define “*Work-life balance*” as achieving effectiveness and satisfaction in both professional and personal domains by minimizing conflicts within each area and managing the overlap between professional and private life (Clark, 2000). This definition also refers to the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in their roles at work and within the family, as well as their level of satisfaction with these roles. In this context, work-life balance encompasses three key elements: time balance, commitment balance, and satisfaction balance, all of which stem from fulfilling these roles (Greenhaus et al., 2003).

For some workers, the ability to work remotely is considered a privilege because it has allowed them to reconfigure their workspaces, redefine new practices, and gain greater flexibility (Kniffin et al., 2021). However, in this New Normal, a significant challenge has been the difficulty of separating private/family space from professional space when employees work from home (Wong et al., 2021). In this regard, some professionals view working from home as a condition that allows for better balance and a greater sense of responsibility in managing both work and personal commitments. However, others prefer working in the office to avoid family interruptions within their home workspace (Gibbs et al., 2021).

Moreover, while working remotely or in a hybrid mode offers workers greater flexibility and reduces commuting time, it can also create the perception that they must always be connected, available even after office hours, and ready to respond to professional demands from anywhere (Ghislieri et al., 2021; Giunchi et al., 2023). For this reason, it seems necessary to promote clear organizational policies that support a better work-life balance for employees by trusting them without exerting constant control when they work remotely (Talukder & Galang, 2021). Additionally, some research highlights the importance of the right to disconnect to encourage work-life balance and, consequently, enhance employee well-being (Broom, 2021; Eurofound, 2020; Vyas, 2022).

Current State of the Literature in Work and Organizational Psychology, Open Questions and Thesis implications

After Covid-19, much of the scientific literature in Work and Organizational Psychology has focused on flexible work experiences, changes within companies, new work practices, and the evolving relationship between professionals and their work. This shift has led researchers in the field to question how these changes have impacted people's lives, their understanding of work, and, more broadly, their well-being (Nguyen & Tuan, 2022; Pace et al., 2021).

Specifically, scholars have been exploring whether the hybrid work model could be the optimal solution in terms of efficiency, satisfaction, and better work-life balance, or not (Vyas et al., 2022). For some, it is a solution, while others view hybrid work as a potential primary psychosocial risk (Sahut & Lissillour, 2023), given that the increased use of remote technologies and rapid organizational changes may lead workers to experience greater stress, difficulty in setting boundaries between work and private life, and challenges in disconnecting from work at the end of the day (Capone et al., 2024).

Additionally, some authors express concern that the widespread adoption of remote work could result in reduced social contact with supervisors and colleagues, a heightened sense of isolation, and a tendency to overwork as a way to compensate for the lack of social connections (Prodanova & Kocarev, 2021).

In this regard, some recent studies suggest that colleague and manager support, along with organizational policies that allow for flexibility, can play a crucial and positive role in employee well-being, especially when working remotely. This support can lead to greater job satisfaction and increased engagement (Burke & Pignata, 2020; Di Tecco et al., 2021).

Moreover, there is an increasing shift in perspective: the focus is no longer solely on productivity within organizations, but there is greater attention on the workers, their sense of identity, and their search for meaning within their profession. This is because individual well-being also contributes to organizational well-being, especially in a new context like the New Normal, which has disrupted traditional work structures, environments, and arrangements (Brown, 2022).

What remains challenging, however, is understanding how workers can consolidate their professional, social, and organizational identity in such a rapidly changing context. This is especially complex given that, while some scholars argue that identities are multiple and evolving (Atewologun et al., 2020; Brown, 2022), others maintain that they are fixed and unitary (Collinson, 2003; Down & Reveley, 2009). Therefore, open questions still remain regarding what parameters define identity within the New Normal and what factors contribute to the construction and evolution of identity in professional contexts.

What remains relatively unexplored and underdeveloped in the field of Work and Organizational Psychology is the concept of work-related sensemaking and the processes by which workers construct meanings (Turner et al., 2024). Firstly, there is no consensus among scholars on a unified definition of sensemaking in the literature (Golob, 2018). Some define it as a process of

interpreting reality (Urquhart et al., 2019), others as a communicative act of expressing one's inner experience (Golob, 2018), while some view it as a reflective process aimed at bringing order to an ambiguous and complex reality (Dervin, 2017). Additionally, sensemaking is sometimes seen as an individual process, yet one that is deeply influenced by collective and social dimensions (Knight et al., 2024).

Furthermore, there are few studies that explore the processes of sensemaking in different work modalities, whether in-person, remote, or hybrid. For these reasons, the thesis, whose research hypotheses will be discussed in the next paragraph, aims to delve deeper into these topics. From a theoretical standpoint, the objective is to shed light on identity and sensemaking mechanisms within a specific social context - the New Normal - and in relation to work modalities and the reconfiguration of workspaces.

Regarding practical implications, this thesis, reflecting about identity and meaning-making processes within the New Normal, wants to offer many insights that can enhance both individual well-being and satisfaction and the organizational effectiveness to explore the complexities of modern work environments more effectively and fostering a new supportive and positive work culture.

For workers, it can be useful to understand how to maintain their identities in a constantly changing work environment. This understanding can enable them to adopt strategies to enhance their satisfaction and well-being within their profession.

In addition, understanding how identity and meaning-making evolve, it can assist workers in both personal and professional growth: by applying these concepts, they can better navigate changes and ensure their work aligns with their values and career goals. Additionally, recognizing the obstacles workers encounter in balancing work and private life, particularly in hybrid or remote environments, can lead to improved strategies for delineating between professional and personal spheres. This could help workers to establish boundaries and to manage their time in a more efficient way.

For managers, this thesis provides recommendations to design support programs to help employees to adapt and to work in an efficient way in different work modalities.

Managers can gain insights into how employees' identities and sensemaking processes evolve in dynamic work environments. This understanding can help them tailor their support and management strategies to better address employees' needs and challenges.

By grasping the dynamics of sensemaking and identity formation, manager can also think about and cultivate a more inclusive and supportive culture. This involves designing environments and practices that enable employees to align with the organization's mission and values, across all different types of work modalities.

Premises of the research

This research starts from the premise that, in this new reconfiguration of workplaces and different modalities, individuals are more prompted to redefine their work identity, to create new

meanings associated with themselves and their work and to create a new balance between their private and professional life.

This new self-redefinition impacts people's well-being.

Indeed, there is an extensive literature that suggests that working in a remote way, increases workers' perception of isolation, loneliness, as they feel socially deprived of informal support and connections (Cooper & Kurland, 2002; Marshall et al., 2007) and, in addition, they perceive a reduced sense of belonging to the company (Biasin & Marin, 2021; Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). However, different studies follow the opposite direction and they have focused on how a new reorganization of workplaces could benefit both companies in terms of efficiency/effectiveness (Castells, 2001; Kingma, 2019) and individuals in terms of increased satisfaction, commitment and productivity (Angelici & Profeta, 2020; Ayzen & Taskin, 2021; Kanning & Hill, 2013; Wood et al., 2021), especially if there is frequent and direct communication, even remotely (Miele & Tirabeni, 2020).

Additionally, other studies have underlined how the remote modality can also increase workers' confidence in their role within the workgroup or the organization, facilitating further adaptation.

The trust relationships between employees and supervisors can enhance organizational change and therefore influence how professionals could adapt to remote work (De Jong et al., 2016; Neves & Caetano, 2006; van Zoonen et al., 2021).

Research Hypotheses

Based on the scientific literature, the formulated hypotheses are as follows:

- The ability to reconfigure one's workspace in different workplaces, whether in the office or remotely, allows workers to assign new meanings to it, make it more aligned with themselves, and, consequently, feel it as an integral part of their professional identity (Lai et al., 2021; Monjaret, 1996; Vough et al., 2020;).
- Those who work primarily remotely may experience a diminished social identity if communication with supervisors and colleagues is infrequent and if continuous feedback is lacking (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Kniffin et al., 2021). Additionally, they may feel a weaker organizational identity in terms of their sense of belonging to the organization (Potgieter et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022).
- The sense attributed to one's work is not a stable dimension over time but rather evolves in response to changes in workspaces and work arrangements, whether in-person or remote (Afshari, 2023; Van den Heuvel et al., 2009;).
- Workers who experience entirely on site modality, have major difficulties in managing work-life balance (Michinov & Michinov, 2008) due to a lack of flexibility.
- The hybrid work modality becomes more effective when professionals can differentiate and set boundaries between their private and professional spheres, ensuring that one does not encroach on the other (Kingma 2019; Ninaus et al., 2021).

With the aim of answering these research hypotheses and further exploring the relationship between workplaces reconfiguration, work modalities, identity, meaning-making processes and work-life balance, this thesis presents three different studies, each with its own research objectives, methodology, data analysis and discussion of results.

All the studies were conducted in the post-Covid period to analyze workers' perceptions and experiences in the context of the New Normal and to understand the impact this context has had on them. In addition, they are linked by a common thread that touches these multiple themes all together, even though they observe the same phenomenon from different perspectives and methodologies. The more general focus is the new relationship between people and their work environment and way of working, even though each study addresses the themes of identity, meaning, work reconfigurations, and work-family balance separately and in a specific way.

In particular, the first study, qualitative in nature, focuses on two samples of Italians working in a hybrid mode. It will examine constructs as space appropriation, identities, meaning-making processes, workspace reconfiguration and work-family balance.

The first study is divided into Study 1A and Study 1B as it involves two distinct and independent samples: one consisting of cohabitation couples ($N = 10$) and another of 7 white-collar workers who share the same organizational culture. The purpose of this is to understand whether culture influences all the cited variables, it is important to identify common elements among workers within the same organization that may affect their perceptions, behaviors, and ways of dealing with the work environment. Additionally, comparing the results of those who share the same culture with those from different organizations allows us to highlight how culture can shape workers' responses and strategies, revealing similarities and differences in behaviors and perceptions.

The second study is quantitative, involving the administration of a questionnaire to both Italian and French samples, composed of workers engaged in different work modalities, namely fully in-person, fully remote, or hybrid modes (from 1 to 5 days per week remotely and from 1 to 5 days per week in the office). This study focuses primarily on the structure of professional identity and its nomological network, aiming to understand the dimensions related to it, without focusing on specific work modalities. A nomological network is a framework used to describe the relationships between theoretical constructs and their empirical indicators, ensuring that constructs are meaningfully connected to other variables and concepts within a theoretical model (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). The reference context is the New Normal, characterized by multiple work modalities and the reconfiguration of spaces in which workers experience their relationship with their work, being aware of these modalities and reconfigurations. This change in context has inevitably impacted people's representations and the relationship they have and create with their work.

The third and final study is also quantitative in nature and employs a diary study on a sample of 41 Italian workers who work in a hybrid mode. The objective of this study is to understand if the sense

attributed to work evolves over the course of a working week, if and how the sense attributed to work evolves over the course of a working week, specifically whether it increases or decreases linearly, grows and then decreases, or fluctuates in relation to factors such as work modality or other variables. Therefore, these subjects responded to a diary study at the end of each workday for five consecutive working days, indicating the work mode they were in on that specific day.

Each research study will be presented and detailed in the subsequent chapters.

After the presentation of the three studies, it is necessary to say that this thesis aims to be exploratory in nature and seeks to investigate the often complex relationship that workers have with their work environment, focusing on themes such as meaning, identity, and the work-life balance, within the specific social context of the New Normal.

To conclude, this project has been conducted following the guidelines proposed in 1964 by the Declaration of Helsinki and its latest ratification (World Medical Association, 2013).

It has been also approved by the Ethics Committee of the CERPS of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milan.

STUDY 1

Meaning-making and identity processes in relation to workplaces and work modalities: A qualitative study on two independent Italian samples

Objectives – The first was to investigate if and how on-site and remote work modalities impact the meaning-making and identity processes of Italian workers, their workspace appropriation and the balance between private and professional life.

For this purpose, intra and inter individual differences among participants working in the same company sharing the same organizational culture and also gender differences among cohabiting couples were investigated to determine if there were similarities or differences in identity and meaning-making processes, space appropriation and work-life balance.

Design/Methodology – A total of 34 semi-structured interviews were conducted in two modalities: one when the person was physically in his/her remote workspace and a second interview when he/she was physically in the office. Conducting interviews in both remote and in-office settings helps determine whether and how the work context influences employees' perceptions of their professional, relational, and organizational identity, as well as their work-life balance. By comparing responses from these different settings, researchers can assess if the context of work has a significant impact on these aspects. The interview core structure explores the topics mentioned above.

In Study 1A, five cohabiting couples (N = 10) were interviewed, resulting in 20 interviews (two per person). In addition, in Study 1B, 7 Italian white-collar workers from the same company (so, sharing the same organizational culture) participated in this study, for a total of 14 interviews.

All the material was analyzed using the content analysis (Berelson, 1955) following an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA, Smith, 1996) approach.

Results – The analysis of the results shows that on-site workers can better appropriate their workspace and give it a positive meaning if they can modify it to align with their self-identity.

Additionally, in the on-site modality, workers exhibit a stronger relational identity, perceiving frequent feedback, more direct communication and stronger bonds with colleagues.

Gender differences also exist in how interviewees perceive work-life balance.

Generally, there is a conception that men should financially support the family and thus work more, while women are more often assigned the roles of wives and mothers, also handling domestic chores. In line with these results, women feel more balanced when working remotely, while men feel more balanced when working at the office (from a minimum of two days to a maximum of four days remotely, for both genders).

Limitations – The sample size does not allow the generalization of the results and there may be a social desirability bias in both samples: employees from the same company may describe it positively due to a sense of belonging, while cohabiting couples may provide socially acceptable responses to avoid casting their relationship in a negative light.

Another limitation is that only Italian workers were interviewed, which may introduce a bias due to cultural and societal factors.

Additionally, the white-collar workers all come from the same organization, so there might be a 'homogeneity' effect in the data collected, related to the specific characteristics of the observed organization.

Despite these limitations, a strength of this study is the value of qualitative research: IPA allows for an in-depth and more analytical examination, helping the researcher “enter the personal space” of the interviewees and create a connection by listening to their life stories.

Practical Implications – This study continues the debate and exploration of organizational changes in terms of workspaces and modalities, which have influenced the meaning-making and identity processes, both professionally, relationally and organizationally, as well as the balance between private and professional life.

The study suggests that a good balance and a positive well-being can be achieved by ensuring a hybrid work modality, providing flexibility and, where possible, the freedom for workers to choose when to work remotely and when to be in the office.

This modality allows for the development of space appropriation, company belonging and connection with colleagues while avoiding risks such as social isolation, job dissatisfaction and a consequent loss of meaning in one's work.

Additionally, the current emphasis on achieving a good work-life balance should be embraced by companies, offering greater flexibility to workers and creating formalized practices and policies in this direction.

Originality/Value – This project proposes a double interview for each participant: one when they are physically in the office and the other when working remotely.

Furthermore, the use of IPA allows for interaction and dialogue with the participants which is not possible in quantitative research. Additionally, identity is not often linked to the organizational context but rather to a more individual and clinical context. Is for that reason that this study aims to connect the construct of identity in its facets (professional, relational and organizational) with the workspaces and workplaces that people, in the New Normal, experience every day.

Keywords – *meaning making - work spaces - organizational culture - work identity - appropriation of one's own work space - Work-life balance*

1. INTRODUCTION

Companies are entities in constant evolution. In recent years, economic, social, structural, and technological changes have driven innovation, change, and greater efficiency (Van Steenbergen et al., 2018). Despite this premise, post-pandemic, not only has the functioning of organizations changed, but also the way work is understood and carried out. For instance, the term NWW (new ways of working) was coined to define and explain the various ways work can be performed and how the relationship between humans and work has transformed (Renard et al., 2021). These new "ways" have given people a certain degree of freedom regarding where they can work, allowing them to work in different places than the organizational reality and according to their own schedules, facilitated by new technologies that enable connection and availability anytime and anywhere (Nijp et al., 2016).

The ability to work remotely has enabled reconsideration of work-family balance (Ghislieri et al., 2017; Ghislieri et al., 2023), greater autonomy (Kotera & Correa Vione, 2020), and managing one's work more flexibly and responsibly (Brandl et al., 2019). Workers can create a dedicated space at home or elsewhere, which they can personalize and give meaning to (Adler et al., 2016; Michaelson et al., 2014; Pfau, 2015). Although two authors argue that remote work increases motivation, autonomy, well-being, and performance (Ruostela et al., 2015; Scott, 2019), others claim it heightens feelings of isolation, loss of social interactions, and perceived lower organizational support, leading to stress and burnout (Dilshani, 2015; Xu & Yang, 2021).

These changes also necessitate observing how workers experience these aspects, their locations, and the meanings they construct about themselves and their work. In an evolving external world, people engage in processes of meaning-making that impact their identity. "Meaning making" refers to the process through which people construct meanings regarding their lives, whether personal or professional. Victor Frankl (1963) pioneered this concept, emphasizing the human need to interpret and give sense to existence, considering it a vital force in human experience (King & Hicks, 2021). Thus, people continually create meanings about themselves and engage in meaning-making within their life contexts.

In this scenario filled with changes and new ways of understanding work, this study aims to understand how people experience these modifications related to their work and workspaces, whether in the office or remotely. This initial study focuses on workers' sense-making processes, their identities, workspace appropriation, and work-family balance in hybrid work modes. The following sections will explore the literature on these topics, followed by a description of the qualitative study and interview results.

1.1 Giving sense to one's own work

Every change requires revisiting one's behaviors and leads to new self-narratives (Scott, 2019). Particularly in the workplace, new work modes, and management of time and spaces have triggered individuals' identity processes, leading them to give new meanings to their experiences and construct

stories (King et al., 2016; McAdams & McLean, 2013) relative to their sociocultural contexts (McAdams, 2001; Savickas, 2013).

Creating self-narratives activates meaning-making, defining and giving sense to one's life and experiences, impacting both personal and professional identity (McLean & Fournier, 2008). Some authors argue that making sense of one's work through self-narratives has positive implications for well-being (Allan, 2017; McAdams, 2010) and satisfaction (Steger et al., 2012) and that these narratives are modified and revised concerning changes in the work environment, leading to a clearer definition of work identity (Scott & Lockwood, 2024; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). In addition, self-narratives are not created in isolation but are deeply influenced by interactions with others and, also, they are co-constructed through interactions with colleagues and managers within organizational contexts, influencing identity formation and expression, creating meaning-making processes (Alvesson & Robertson, 2016; Cunliffe & Coupland, 2021).

In this process of sensemaking, people attribute values, thoughts, and beliefs to their work, establishing relationships with bosses and colleagues and activating psychological processes such as the feeling of self-efficacy, the sense of belonging, and the perception of support and closeness (Rosso et al., 2010; Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). Through this, they redefine their identity.

1.2 Identity at work

Identity refers to the subjective interpretations people make to understand who they are, based on individual characteristics, personality traits, roles, relationships, and group memberships (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Meaning and identity are closely connected concepts, but whereas past scientific literature viewed identity as a static, unchangeable construct, other authors highlight its multiple, fluid, and changeable nature (Atewologun et al., 2020; Brown, 2022; Callero, 2003; Caza et al., 2018).

Many scholars from the "work identity" perspective reject the idea of coherent and integrated identity (Down & Reveley, 2009; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003), favoring its fragile and elastic nature (Brown, 2015; Callero, 2003) and considering it a starting point for meaning-making (Brown, 2020; 2022; Pratt et al., 2006; Reay et al., 2017; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003; Weick, 1995). In the organizational context, identities are connected to the meanings people attribute to their professional roles and work activities (Dutton et al., 2010), evolving based on self-perception, the work environment, and interpersonal dynamics (Ashforth et al., 2008; Brown, 2015).

The reference theory for this study is narrative identity (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014), which sees identity as a set of narratives of all life experiences that contribute to making sense of and understanding who we are (Caza et al., 2018; Linde, 2001). According to this perspective, people continuously create their autobiography (Beech et al., 2012, p. 41) that helps them connect their past, present, and future (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). These identity narratives result from internal/personal factors and external influences and are constantly "in progress" (Boje, 1991; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Pick et al., 2017).

Starting from this theoretical framework, this study investigates three different identities that people revisit within their workplaces, spaces and work modalities:

- *Personal/Professional Identity*: This identity plays a fundamental role in defining "who am I?" within the work role, helping people recognize and legitimize themselves in their specific job position (Sluss & Ashforth, 2008; Stryker, 1987). It encompasses self-image at work (Roberts et al., 2009), skills (Pratt et al., 2006), understanding of role tasks (Caza et al., 2018; Ibarra, 1999; Pratt et al., 2006), self-esteem and confidence in one's competencies (Pierce & Gardner, 2004; Roberts, 2005), the need for self-awareness (Ashford, 2001), and feelings of self-efficacy and self-validation (Aguinis & Glavas, 2019; Alvesson & Jonsson, 2022; Vignoles et al., 2006).
- *Social Identity*: People define themselves based on their membership in social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). At work, they construct meanings about themselves relative to relationships and social groups (Dutton et al., 1994). This identity reflects the sense of belonging to a specific work group (Caza et al., 2018) and is influenced by professional interactions: a worker may feel valued and accepted based on colleagues' and supervisors' opinions (Roberts et al., 2005). Dimensions include the need to feel connected and accepted (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Vignoles et al., 2006), distinctiveness (Brewer, 2012; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007), desire to appear socially desirable (Roberts, 2005), workplace climate, relationships with supervisors and colleagues (Yang & Lin, 2022), and feeling supported or isolated (Haslam et al., 2022).
- *Organizational Identity*: Work environment experiences shape and modify professionals' self-narratives, influencing how they define themselves in meaning-making processes (Caza et al., 2018). Organizational identity encompasses perceptions and emotions through which individuals identify with their workplace (Brown 2015; 2017; Fugate et al., 2004; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003; Watson, 2008), including workplace attachment (Mura et al., 2023), organizational identification (Yue et al., 2021), and belongingness (Allen, et al., 2021; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton et al., 1994; Gonzales, 2022).

1.3 Appropriation of the workspace

The workplace reflects individuals' activities, perceptions, desires, values, and images (Noschis, 1978) that can be modified to align more closely with one's identity (Monjaret, 1996). Lewin (1936) demonstrated a link between behaviors and the inhabited space, indicating that space conveys meanings and influences behaviors. For example, working in an enclosed, isolated space differs from working in an open space, which fosters communication and group belonging (Barbillon et al., 2006).

The concept of "space appropriation" began being studied in 1976 at the International Conference of Space Psychology, defined as the ability to dominate a space rather than being dominated by it, inhabiting and experiencing it (Altman, 1975) allows one to recognize themselves within that space and to confer an identity upon themselves (Fisher, 1992).

Moreover, the worker who appropriates their space in their workplace, taking it as a personal and intimate space, with a set of objects and artifacts that hold value to them (Konar et al., 1982; Heidmets, 1994). Additionally, space appropriation appears to be a factor connected to job satisfaction: when the worker feels they can modify their space to better align with themselves and their needs, they show greater satisfaction (Monjaret, 1996). Thus, if within a work space, individuals can modify it by adding personal and familiar characteristics, there will be an increase in satisfaction (Monjaret, 2002). However, changes in workspaces and different modalities require workers to find new spaces, whether within the workplace or remotely, and adapt them according to their current needs (Grandazzi, 2018; Humphry, 2014), because space follows the becoming of the subject (Lai et al., 2021).

According to Environmental Psychology, appropriation occurs through changes in the physical characteristics of the environment (e.g., comfort), its adaptation to the tasks to be performed in that space, and psychosocial dimensions such as attachment to that space, the sense it evokes, and the feeling of control over it (Cobaleda Cordero & Babapour Chafi, 2017).

Moreover, especially in remote workspaces (e.g., one's own home), the individual assumes an active and creative role, reinventing that space to align it more with themselves as professionals (Bobillier Chaumon, 2013; Lai et al., 2021). Thus, the workspace touches on different dimensions: the individual one in terms of personal, emotional, and perceptual needs; the social one because the organization of the space within the workplace can modify and reorganize interpersonal relationships; the organizational one in which the workspace can also be different from the physical office space; and the professional/identity dimension, which refers to a modification and adaptation of our work identity within that space (Bobillier Chaumon, 2013; Lai et al., 2021).

1.4 Family-work balance in hybrid work modalities

When referring to the New Normal, we think of all the changes and adjustments that companies have had to make to remain competitive and survive in the job market (Vyas, 2022), as well as all the modifications that, in some way, workers have had to "endure" to adapt to a new condition (implementing remote work technologies, adjusting their workspaces from home, managing their time in a flexible way, developing new competencies and roles). Therefore, the pandemic has not only disrupted places but also work practices (Kniffin et al., 2021; Ratten, 2020), leading to different arrangements that did not exist in the past (Vyas, 2022), prompting further reflection on family-work balance. In particular, in hybrid work modes, there is no longer a clear separation between family and professional space, and since these spaces sometimes overlap (Wong et al., 2021), workers are unable to enjoy time with their family and children because the work space encroaches on the family space and vice versa (Vyas, 2022).

Despite this, some authors agree on the positive effects of hybrid work, arguing that granting workers such flexibility allows for better work-life balance and increased job satisfaction (BBC News, 2021a; Pelta, 2020; Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014). On the other hand, other scholars have

emphasized how remote work, especially within the confines of the family home, may decrease productivity due to interruptions from family members or children during work hours (Gibbs et al., 2021; Mustajab et al., 2020; Parker et al., 2020) and may not allow for adherence to workplace behavioral norms and organizational culture (Vyas, 2022).

Despite hybrid work allowing for a reevaluation of work-life balance, inequalities between men and women in managing this balance persist (Schoonbroodt, 2018). This is because, despite ongoing social changes, gender stereotypes remain largely unchanged: women are still more associated with household and childcare responsibilities while men are perceived as primarily focused on their careers (Glasgow & Sang, 2016; Ruzungunde & Zhou, 2021).

Some studies have shown that women spend more time managing household and childcare duties compared to men, even when their working hours are the same (Eby et al., 2005; Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000). Nevertheless, the social image of men in the workplace has undergone a transformation, leading to a reexamination of roles that portrays men as both financial providers and involved fathers and husbands (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Pace & Sciotto, 2021).

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the literature mentioned above, this study aims to shed light on how, in different workplaces and modes of work (in-office and remote), individuals construct and modify identity processes (professional, relational, and organizational identities), sense-making processes, how they appropriate their workspace, and how they experience the balance between personal and professional life.

Additionally, as previously presented, identity does not remain unchanged over the course of existence but evolves through both internal and external changes and contextual factors (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Pick et al., 2017).

Given that the New Normal has brought about new ways of working and a different relationship between individuals and work, this research seeks to investigate these changes and their impact not only on a professional level but also on a personal/identity level, assuming that organizational culture plays a role in determining a re-interpretation of the reconfiguration of workplaces, spaces and work modes (Spicer, 2020).

For these reasons, we aim to investigate whether workplace settings, their configuration, and work modes (hybrid, in this case) indeed impact sense-making processes, identity formation, and perceptions of work-life balance among white-collar workers aged between 25 and 50.

As described earlier, the study examines two samples: cohabiting couples and white collars from the same company, both working in a hybrid mode (from a minimum of two days to a maximum of four days remotely). The white collars share the same organizational culture, which allows for an exploration of how this shared environment influences their experiences and perceptions.

Therefore, the research questions are as follows:

- 1. How does in-office work and remote work impact identity processes, sense-making, workspace appropriation, and work-life balance perceptions among Italian workers?*
- 2. What are the intra- and inter-individual and gender differences among interviewed cohabiting couples regarding work-life balance?*
- 3. What impact does sharing the same organizational culture have on identity processes, workspace appropriation, and work-life balance?*

2. METHOD

This study aims to investigate how white-collar workers, aged between 25 and 50, experience and describe their workplaces, their identity processes, sense-making processes, space appropriation, and their perceptions of work-life balance in hybrid work modes. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted at two different times: one when the person was physically working in the office and the other when the work mode was remote. Therefore, each participant responded to two interviews in two different work modes (in-person and remote).

These interviews were administered to:

- A first group (Study 1A) composed of 5 cohabiting couples (N = 10) to analyze the aforementioned constructs and, additionally, to understand if there are intra- and inter-individual differences in relation to work-life balance, for a total of 20 interviews (two per subject);
- A second group of 7 individuals (Study 1B) working in the same company to investigate the same dimensions as the first convenience sample, but with the difference that these workers all share the same organizational culture (for a total of 14 interviews). Therefore, the interviews obtained amount to 34.

The criterion behind conducting interviews in both contexts is to capture the moment and understand how individuals feel and perceive themselves in relation to that specific work environment.

In the following paragraphs, the characteristics of the participants, the subjects' verbalizations, and the discussion of the main results will be presented in detail, obtained through content analysis (Berelson, 1955), and, simultaneously, through interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA, Smith, 1996), which follows an idiographic approach, focusing on the cognitive and emotional experiences of individual subjects, placing emphasis on the meaning that individuals attribute to their experiences.

2.1 Participants and Procedure

The group of participants consists of a total of 17 workers who work some days in-office and some days remotely. Specifically, one subset is composed of 5 cohabiting couples (Study 1A), and another consists of 7 white-collar workers who work in the same company (Study 1B).

Convenience sampling was employed, and participants were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: being white-collar workers, aged between 21 and 66, and working in hybrid mode.

The study excluded all individuals who were not white-collar workers, such as blue-collar or manual labor workers, as well as those who worked either entirely remotely or entirely in the office.

All interviews were conducted online, using the Teams platform, to facilitate recording and transcription. Each participant was interviewed twice: once while working remotely and the other while physically in the office.

Participation in this study was voluntary, and subjects did not receive any monetary reward or compensation. After an explanation of the study and its objectives, each participant read and signed the informed consent form, and anonymity was ensured during the transcription phase of the responses. The research was conducted following the guidelines of the Helsinki Declaration (World Health Organization, 2013).

Table 1 below summarizes the socio-demographic and professional characteristics of the two groups of participants:

Table 1. Demographic profile of the participants.

	Cohabiting couples (N = 10)	Workers in the same company (N = 7)
Gender	5 Males 5 Females	3 Males 4 Females
Age	Mean = 39,4 SD = 6,62	Mean = 36,71 SD = 6,55
Children	4 Couples Yes 1 Couple Non	3 Yes 4 Non
Degree	1 Bachelor degree 7 Master degree 2 Post-university Master's degree	1 High school degree 1 Bachelor degree 2 Master degree 3 Post-university Master's degree
Relationship status	10 Cohabiting	2 Married 3 Cohabiting

		1 Single 1 In a non-cohabiting couple
Contract type	9 Permanent contracts 1 Temporary contract	7 Permanent contracts
Years in the same company	1 Less than a year 1 Between 1 and 5 years 5 Between 5 and 10 years 3 More than 10 years	3 Less than a year 2 Between 1 and 5 years 1 Between 5 and 10 years 1 More than 10 years

2.2 Core interview structure

The semi-structured interview guide was developed through a thorough analysis of the literature on professional, relational, and organizational identity, meaning-making processes, the concept of workspace appropriation, and work-life balance. Additionally, brainstorming sessions were conducted among the researchers involved in the project to identify the most relevant themes and questions for the research objectives.

Two interview guides were created: one for when the person is physically working in the office and one for when they are remote. The questions remained the same; only the clarification of the mode in which the person was on the day of the interview differed.

After this deductive process—from literature to individual question identification for each theme—different sections of the interview were created:

1. Description of the workspace. In this section, the participant is asked to describe their workspace at that precise moment, providing all its physical characteristics. First, by imagining themselves as an external observer of that space, and then by providing a description of themselves within that specific workspace. An example would be: *"Imagine you are the photographer of your workspace at this precise moment. Can you describe it as you see it? Now, imagine yourself as a photographic lens within this specific space, how would you describe it? If, instead, you were to take on the role of an external observer looking at yourself within your workspace, what would you see?"*

2. Professional Identity. This thematic area aims to understand the participant's perception of themselves in relation to their workspace and mode of work, their perceived professional skills, and whether they experience a sense of professional self-efficacy. A question could be: *"Do you think this workspace reflects your idea of yourself as a professional?"*

3. Relational Identity. In this part of the interview, the focus is on the perceptions of the relationships the person has formed at work, the quality of communication exchanges, and the support they perceive from supervisors and colleagues. For example: *"How do exchanges with colleagues and supervisors*

occur when you work remotely? How does communication develop with them when you work remotely/in person?"

4. Organizational Identity. Here, questions emphasize the relationship between the interviewee and their organization, asking if there is a sense of belonging, attachment to the company, and whether their values align with those of the organization. Some questions could be: *"What are the company values that you perceive most when working in person/remotely? How much do you identify with them? What would you change? When you are in your workspace in person/remotely, do you feel an attachment to your company? What kind?"*

5. Work-life Balance. This section asks the participant how they manage to balance their personal and professional life and whether the company facilitates this balance. For example: *"Working in person/remotely, are you able to balance your work and personal life? How so? Do you think the company does anything to promote this work-life balance?"*

2.3 Data analysis

All interviews were conducted online via the Teams platform, recorded, and transcribed verbatim. Data analysis was carried out using content analysis (Berelson, 1955) in conjunction with interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA, Smith, 1996).

IPA allows for an understanding of the emotions, beliefs, and perceptions expressed consciously and spontaneously by the interviewee during the interview. All meanings and sense attributions of the participants are central in this type of analysis to comprehend the content and its complexity, rather than quantitatively measuring constructs.

Therefore, a semi-structured interview format was chosen to facilitate participants' expression and reflexivity, capturing their meaning-making processes.

Using NVivo software (QSR International®, version 14), content analysis (Berelson, 1955) was conducted following the IPA approach, which develops through six different phases: Reading and re-reading of interviews; Coding; Clustering; Iteration; Narration; and Contextualization (Smith, 1996).

From this process, overarching themes, specific themes, and sub-themes (referred to as "codes" in NVivo) were identified in each interview, connecting them to respective verbalizations.

3. RESULTS

Initially, the results of the sample composed of cohabiting couples (Study 1A, N=10) will be presented, followed by those of the 7 white-collar workers who work for the same company (Study 1B). Since the research focuses on how work modes (in-person/remote) may impact identity processes, sense-making, space appropriation, and perceptions of work-life balance, overarching themes, specific themes, and sub-themes emerging in the respective work modes will be described.

All the most relevant verbalizations made by the participants in the study will be included in the text.

STUDY 1A: Cohabiting couples

3A.1 Overarching themes, specific themes, and sub-themes

The overarching themes identified in the "in-presence" (P) and "remote" (R) modalities are "space perception," "professional identity," "relational identity," "organizational identity," and "work-life balance." Each overarching theme is characterized by specific themes and sub-themes, coded with the letter "P" for in-office mode and "R" for remote mode in NVivo.

Table 2 presents the structure of the overarching themes, specific themes, and sub-themes, along with the frequency of occurrence and the percentage of participants who mentioned them in the in-office mode.

Table 2. On site work modality.

Super-ordinate themes	Specific themes	Sub-themes	Referral (N)
Space perception	Space meanings (P)	Is one's own place	9
		It is an important aspect	12
		It is a space for growth	11
		This is a space in which I do not recognise myself	2
		Any meaning	5
	Space feelings (P)	Happiness	8
		Satisfaction	7
		To feeling part of something	16
		Sadness	5
		Sense of connection	13

		Discomfort	7
	Space appropriation (P)	It was built by me	12
		It is a place to live	7
		Full of my personal stuffs	15
		It represents me as a worker	9
		No ties with it	3
Professional identity	Self-efficacy (P)	I am skilled and good	6
		I am productive	10
		No concentration	7
	Job centrality for the self (P)	No identity without work	8
		Work as a priority	6
		Not really important	8
	Identification with work (P)	I am what I produce	10
		Only work-related thoughts	13
		It's my creature	3
		Family is more important	6
Relational identity	Support (P)	No perceived support	4
		Help received	12
		Trust	7
	Communication exchanges (P)	Direct dialogue	12
		No feedbacks	7
		Loneliness	5

		Everyone does their own thing	8
	Relations at work (P)	We are a team	15
		Attention to colleagues	18
		Isolation/no buddy	7
Organizational identity	Ties with organization (P)	Connection	6
		Mutual exchange	8
		Sense of distance	5
	Values (P)	No identification	4
		Productivity/ Performance	11
		Closeness	14
	Organizational attachment (P)		13
	Organizational belonging (P)		11
Work-life balance	Behaviours (P)	Good balancing	10
		Workaholism	12
		Stressful issue	15
	Stereotypes (P)	Rigid roles	7
		Alpha male idea	7
		Differences between men and women	16

Note. Referral (N) = Number of times that theme has been cited in the interviews; Percentage of participants (%) = Percentage of participants who referred to that theme

Table 3 below illustrates the structure of overarching themes, specific themes, and sub-themes, along with the frequency of occurrence, in the remote mode.

Table 3. Remote work modality.

Super-ordinate themes	Specific themes	Sub-themes	Referral (N)
Space perception	Space meanings (R)	It's part of myself	11
		It is not my place	8
		Comfort zone	13
		Cosy space	7
		Any meaning	5
	Space feelings (R)	Good vibes	11
		Satisfaction	14
		Calmness	6
		Discomfort	13
	Space appropriation (R)	Personalization	12
		It is a place to live	9
		Too much confusion	5
		It represents me as a worker	9
		No appropriation	4

Professional identity	Self-efficacy (R)	Work efficiency	3
		I am productive	7
		Less concentration	12
	Job centrality for the self (R)	No identity without work	11
		Work as a priority	9
		Not really important	5
	Identification with work (R)	Sense of distance	13
		Not so much identification	8
		The most important for myself	9
Relational identity	Support (R)	No perceived support	15
		Help received	6
		Perception of being controlled	14
	Communication exchanges (R)	Online modality is not good	16
		No feedbacks	13
		Loneliness	5
		Everyone does their own thing	14
	Relations at work (R)	Through a screen	17
		Isolation	13
Organizational identity	Ties with organization (R)	Loss of connections	14
		Mutual exchange	3
		Sense of distance	15
	Values (R)	Very distant values	9

		No perception of values	12
		Control	11
	Organizational attachment (R)	Less at distance	16
	Organizational belonging (R)	Less at distance	13
Work-life balance	Behaviours (R)	Good balancing	12
		Workaholism	9
		Stressful issue	6
	Stereotypes (R)	Rigid roles	9
		Alpha male idea	5
		Differences between men and women	13

Note. Referral (N) = Number of times that theme has been cited in the interviews; Percentage of participants (%) = Percentage of participants who referred to that theme

In this section, the overarching themes, specific themes, and sub-themes are described with the support of participants' interview responses.

Additionally, the themes emerged in the in-office mode and remote mode will be compared.

3A.1.1. Space perception

The overarching theme "Space perception" refers to all the perceptions, meanings, and emotions that individuals experience in their workspace, whether it's remote or in-office. The specific themes within this category are "space meanings," "space feelings," and "space appropriation."

3A.1.1.1 Space meanings, space feelings e space appropriation

The specific theme "*Space meanings*" refers to all the perceptual, emotional, and personal meanings that the individual attributes to their workspace: whether it's a space they feel is an integral part of themselves, a space that represents them, whether it's comfortable, or if it conveys no meaning other than its professional context.

The specific theme "*Space feelings*" pertains to all the physical sensations and emotions that the individual feels and experiences when immersed in their workspace. It encompasses all verbalizations related to the emotional states conveyed by their workspace: happiness, satisfaction, sadness, discomfort, a sense of connection, calmness, and feeling part of something.

Meanwhile, the theme of "*Space appropriation*" refers to how the workspace is perceived as personal and customizable, whether it aligns with the individual's professional self-concept, and whether it's a space they enjoy inhabiting.

For all these specific themes, different results emerge in the in-office and remote modalities.

In the in-office setting, the majority of respondents (6 out of 10) feel that the workspace is not only professional but also a place for personal growth, an important and calm environment that represents themselves, attributing generally positive meanings to it.

However, this is primarily true for men:

"It is a space for not only professional but also personal growth. I feel it is really my place where I feel good" (AC. - man).

"It's a space where I feel at ease, where if I have thoughts, I calm down, here I breathe deeply despite the fact that it's not a place where you have to relax" (FP. - man).

"I feel that it is a place for me, that it represents me as I am in life in general" (DP. - man).

Instead, for some women (4 out of 10), it doesn't represent a significant space, indeed, it is characterized as "sad," "formal," and "controlling":

"In this space, I feel cast because, being an open space, everyone knows about you while you are working and in my opinion it is a form of control" (ES. - woman).

"It is a space in which I feel suffocated" (MF. - woman).

"It is a sad space because I see that everyone is bent over their computers and there is not that meaning of family" (GC - woman).

In the remote mode, it's mostly men in senior roles (e.g., managers or directors) who don't associate any positive meaning with the remote space because they prefer being in the office, where there are no family obligations and where their desk remains the same, without objects being moved or distractions. It's a space to which they associate meanings such as "confusion," "full of distractions," and "disorder":

"It is a space that is not really mine. At the office I go and find it as I left it, but here at home you never know how you will find it the next day and there is never time to fix it up" (AM - man).

"It's a space that feels foreign to me" (AC - man).

Instead, women generally feel more comfortable remotely, in an environment that is not only professional but also familiar:

"It's a place that I built the way I wanted, I created it myself and so I feel it's really mine, it's my comfort zone where I can work with peace of mind" (GC - woman).

"Here I feel happy and satisfied. The presence of my children also creates a positive environment" (SR - woman).

Moreover, for the majority of participants (7 out of 10), if the space is customizable (with personal photos and meaningful objects) and if everyone has their own desk that is not subject to rotation, then there is a greater sense of connection with the workspace, greater satisfaction, and a perception of inhabiting it willingly. This result emerges *both in the remote and in-office modalities*, and there are no gender differences in this perception:

"It is a space that I see as mine because I was able to modify it with personal items that remind me of my family and friends. So, when I am in the office there is a personalisation that tells me that this desk is mine and mine alone" (TM - man).

"It seems difficult to think that at a distance you can have a connection with your own space, but for me it is precisely because here you put a picture, here an object of your child and everything looks professional and familiar at the same time. I work better that way and I am also more satisfied" (FG - woman).

3A.1.2 Professional identity

The overarching theme "Professional identity" refers to the individual's perception of themselves as professionals, their sense of self-efficacy, the extent to which their identity is connected to their professional domain, and how much they identify with their work. The specific themes within this category are "self-efficacy," "job centrality," and "identification with work," which will be analyzed in both modes of work.

3A.1.2.1 Self-efficacy, job centrality and identification with work

The specific theme of "Self-efficacy" reflects participants' perceptions of their ability to complete their work tasks and achieve goals, as well as their effectiveness as workers.

"Job centrality" pertains to the importance and priority assigned to one's work, the difficulty in focusing on oneself and personal matters due to recurrent thoughts related to work.

"Identification with work" refers to the extent to which individuals incorporate their professional role into their self-concept, identifying more with their professional identity than with their familial or relational roles in general.

In the in-office mode, workers generally feel more productive and self-efficacious when supported by their manager (even in the form of monitoring their activities) and when they already have a positive self-image. The centrality of work and identification with it are higher for upper-level roles and for some men in the sample (4 out of 5) who consider their profession a priority, to the extent of placing personal relationships and family obligations second.

"When I'm in the office I feel that I am more productive because my boss frequently asks me about work, reminds me of deadlines and so there is more pressure and this makes me stay focused" (GC - female).

"Work for me is everything, it's of exaggerated importance, so much so that sometimes I realize that I should go home to my family but it's not a main thought I have, time goes by very fast here" (FP - man).

"I feel that I am a woman with a strong personality so I know that I am good at it and that I can complete tasks no matter what I do, at work but as in life in general" (FG - woman).

"I am totally my job: if there is no work, there is no you" (TM - man).

When working remotely (primarily from home), 6 out of the 10 participants feel that the home environment brings significant distractions, especially if the other partner is also present. Particularly for those in senior positions, there is a need to demonstrate productivity, discipline, and adaptability even when working remotely.

Those who perceive a strong attachment to work and identify closely with it do not seem to change the importance they attribute to work when they are remote compared to when they work in person.

"My remote work allows me to demonstrate my skills of self-motivation, discipline and adaptability, important qualities that contribute to professional success and a positive relationship with the company" (AC - man).

"Work for me is central wherever I am" (TM - man).

"I already don't feel I'm very good, but that's my problem, but at a distance it's also more difficult to be supported, to call and have things explained to you in order to achieve your goals. Certainly work is not an essential part of my life, but if you ask me if I am good at a distance, I would say no, too many distractions especially with my husband at home and not enough help" (MF - woman).

3A.1.3 Relational identity

The overarching theme "Relational identity" focuses on the perceptions of the relationships that the individual has managed to establish at work, the quality of communication exchanges, and the support they believe to receive from superiors and colleagues. It generally pertains to the relational atmosphere experienced both remotely and in-office. The specific themes within this category are "support," "communication exchanges," and "relations at work," which will be analyzed in both modes of work.

3A.1.3.1 Support, communication exchanges and relations at work

The specific theme "*Support*" describes the quality and frequency of support received at work, whether from superiors or colleagues, according to the participants' perception of collaboration and assistance versus distance and individualism.

"*Communication exchanges*" refer to the quality of communicative interactions between superiors and colleagues, how and where they occur in-person and remotely, and whether they are frequent or occasional.

"*Relations at work*" investigates the type of relationships perceived and established within the company: whether they are formal or informal, whether the worker feels part of a team, or whether there is a sense that everyone works individually.

In the in-office mode of work, contradictory results emerge: while some perceive direct, frequent dialogue, feeling supported and assisted when needed, and being part of a team, others (3 out of participants) feel isolated even when physically present and without the opportunity to receive constructive feedback.

"*There is really direct communication, there is always dialogue and someone asking you if you need it even if you are not the one asking directly*" (DP - man).

"*I feel like I am in a bubble, left a bit to my own devices, where there is not much communication and where there seems to be a certain awkwardness to ask for help*" (ES - woman).

"*If I'm in need, my boss and also my colleagues don't waste a moment to help me: we are really a team that represents a big family to me*" (TM - man).

In the remote mode of work, the majority of participants perceive receiving less support and feeling more isolated. Communication appears to be less frequent and of lower quality as it is conducted through screens or specific devices, which exacerbates a sense of distance and isolation. Additionally, it emerges for 7 out of the 10 participants the idea of being more closely monitored remotely: the speed of email responses, the duration of online meeting attendance, and whether the webcam is on or off.

"There's never the boss to tell you if you need something and that's strange because when I go to the office it's totally different" (MF - woman).

"Here you really feel the distance, you no longer have the idea of being one big family, but everyone does their own thing and there is no real interaction. In fact you talk through a screen all day long and that's not working in a healthy way" (FP - man).

"When I work from home, I have the perception that I am more controlled by what I do, almost as if there is an idea that if you are remote you don't do anything or you do less and that makes me really nervous" (AC - man).

3A.1.4 Organizational identity

The overarching theme "Organizational identity" pertains to the extent to which one's identity is tied to a sense of belonging to the company, the type of relationship the individual establishes with their organization, and whether there is a shared set of values that the worker identifies with and considers their own. The specific themes within this category are "ties with organization," "values," "organizational attachment," and "organizational belonging," which will be analyzed in both modes of work.

3A.1.4.1 Ties with organization, values, organizational attachment and organizational belongingness

The specific theme *"Ties with organization"* refers to the level of connection and bond that the worker perceives as a professional within that specific company.

"Values" indicates the degree of alignment or divergence of the individual from the values upon which the organization is founded, which affects their commitment and job satisfaction.

"Organizational attachment" describes the level of emotional commitment of the worker, which depends on how much they feel that the company is an integral part of themselves.

Finally, *"Organizational belonging"* refers to the strength and importance assigned to the relationship with the company, describing how people feel valued and identified with the organization itself.

In the office setting, 7 interviewed workers experience a stronger and more intense connection with the company, an increased perception of alignment with its values, closer proximity, heightened sense of belonging, and greater emotional commitment. In other words, individuals are more committed because they feel an emotional bond with the organization. However, some feel that they are more closely monitored in the office regarding the correct behaviors to exhibit, and therefore, their commitment also stems from this aspect.

"Maybe sometimes I feel too much attachment to my company, I realize that, but because it is really a fundamental part of my life and it is a bond that gives me personal pride" (TM - man).

"I feel values such as formality and the right behaviour to have, so you are somehow led to reflect yourself in the company values, otherwise you are cut off" (MF - woman).

"I really chose this company from the heart, it was my dream and so I feel adhered to everything it proposes" (GC - woman).

"Here I feel valued, here you can be seen for who you are and this creates a very strong bond" (DP - man).

In the remote working mode, different results emerge: there is a perceived greater distance from the company and its values, especially if there is not a strong identification and sense of belonging with it from the start. This is even more felt and relevant for workers who work remotely for most of the week (3-4 days from home). However, those who hold managerial and responsible positions consistently show a strong attachment and sense of belonging even when working remotely.

"When I work here at home, I still feel attached to the company, certainly in a different way than when I'm there, but the attachment is always there. I think it is an emotional attachment due to gratitude for working in a company like this. This bond translates into a sense of belonging and commitment to continue contributing to the success of the company" (AC - man).

"When I am remote I paradoxically feel a greater bond because I feel that I want to be there in presence and this distance I feel it, I want to go there, that's where I belong" (FP - man).

"I do too many days remotely to feel a strong connection, I cannot feel a connection with the company if I am here" (SR - woman).

3A.1.5 Work-Life Balance (WLB)

The overarching theme "Work-Life Balance" refers to workers' ability to create a functional balance between their private and professional spheres, as well as the prioritization given to either work or life outside of work. The "private sphere" includes not only family life but also social and personal aspects (self-care, hobbies, sports, etc.). The specific themes within this macro-category are "WLB Behaviors" and "WLB Stereotypes," which will be analyzed in both work modes.

3A.1.5.1 WLB behaviours and WLB stereotypes

The specific theme *WLB Behaviors* refers to all the actions workers take to create a good work-life balance and includes all the corporate welfare practices the organization proposes to help them find a good equilibrium. In particular, this theme aims to understand if and how workers try and manage to find a balance, whether work becomes so important that they cannot dedicate themselves to anything else, and if the company does anything to encourage this balance.

With *WLB Stereotypes*, it refers to all the perceived, experienced, and enacted gender differences related to balancing life and work. This sub-theme highlights whether men or women are more effective in balancing these spheres, if there are any preconceptions and stereotypes connected to roles (mother, father, worker), and if there is the idea, often present in our society, that women primarily act as mothers and men as full-time workers.

In the in-office mode, 6 people of the sample (5 men and one female manager) feel they have found their own balance between different life spheres. Paradoxically, however, half of the respondents give absolute priority to work, finding it difficult to return home before dinner time.

"This is a really bad thing to say, but sometimes I am so immersed in my work that I don't even realize I have to go home to my family" (AT - man).

"I really struggle to get away from work when I'm here" (DP - man).

Furthermore, for the majority of interviewees, despite the company's efforts to help them balance private and professional life, they feel compelled to work and struggle to find the right motivation and willpower to engage in other activities, except occasionally for sports:

"The company doesn't shout at you if you have family commitments and have to leave early, but maybe it's me who should have the responsibility and the strength to break away, but I don't" (FG - woman).

"Very few times I manage to jog after work before going home" (TM - man).

The majority of men in the sample (4 out of 5) use concepts such as "alpha male" and "men take care of everything" to highlight the idea that work is closely linked to the male domain, while domestic and family matters are associated with the female domain. Additionally, 9 interviewees feel a strong gender difference in the realm of WLB: men feel more balanced when working in the office because they don't have to think about domestic chores or feel responsible for family care, while women perceive this stereotype associated with them.

"On this side I am quiet because I always think that I am the man who brings the bread home while my wife can look after the children. I know it is an ugly view, but unfortunately this is our society and we are the result of it" (AC - man).

"It's a bit like my husband thinking that he does the most tiring job in attendance and it's OK for me to think about the family. But look today that I am in presence, I also work but this is not considered by him" (ES - woman).

"I seem to be the classic, sorry for this word, alpha male who works and succeeds. I work a lot but because I enjoy it and I have a very high role in the company. It happens that I work very late at night so I like to have everything ready, but it's only right that my wife does it" (TM - man).

When working remotely, some interviewees struggle to separate family and professional domains, especially men (5 out of 5) because the remote space is more often associated with family rather than work. Women, on the other hand, seem to be more capable of finding a work-family balance because they perceive themselves as more flexible, better able to manage household chores, and saving time by avoiding the commute to work. The idea that men feel more balanced when working in the office, while women feel more balanced when working remotely, also emerges in the remote work context.

"I like working from home because I can do laundry if I want to, during a meeting or I can accompany the little one to medical appointments. I feel like I'm left to myself a bit because my husband doesn't take care of anything, but certainly from a distance I can also think about the more personal aspects without arriving on a tight schedule" (MF - woman).

"It is really difficult for me to talk about a balance between private and work sphere also because when I work from home I cannot reconcile anything, paradoxically" (FP - man).

In conclusion, both in-person and remotely, the stereotype of the man, often a manager, who works without interruptions while contributing minimally to family support (if not from an economic standpoint), and the expectation for women to prioritize family tasks, such as caring for the home and children, emerges strongly.

"Even if I am from home, I always think that it is my wife who has to do everything. I know it's a bit of a macho view. However, she does a less stressful job that she enjoys less, so I think she is the one who has to do everything. I contribute to the expenses and bring the salary home" (DP - man).

"I certainly prefer to stay at home and manage the children, but it is a view that is also imposed on me by my husband or his family. My husband does not help me at all, he does not contribute to this balance. The roles have been divided in a way that follows the macho vision of our society" (ES - woman).

An inter- and intra-couple analysis was conducted to highlight the dynamics related to work-life balance. Regarding the intra-couple analysis, in couple 1, work and family roles are rigidly defined and agreed upon. The woman, a manager, immerses herself in her work, whether she is working remotely or in person, leaving the management of the household and child entirely to her husband. As a result, the husband has to reduce his work time to handle domestic tasks. This arrangement seems to work for both partners, although the man experiences stress and difficulty taking time for himself, especially when working in the office.

In couple 2, the work-life balance is highly skewed. The woman manages all family responsibilities both in person and remotely, as her husband perceives her job as less demanding and assumes she has more time for household duties. The husband feels more balanced when working in the office, but this dynamic creates a significant role asymmetry, with the woman shouldering most of the family-related tasks.

In couple 3, the wife feels less balanced when working in the office because she struggles to manage family responsibilities as effectively as she would like. The husband, however, prefers working in person, as when he returns home, everything is already organized, allowing him to focus on family time in the evenings. Here, too, the domestic workload seems to fall primarily on the wife in both work arrangements.

In couple 4, the wife finds working in the office stressful because, upon returning home, she must handle all household and childcare duties without any flexibility. However, working remotely allows her to better manage personal and family commitments, as she can take breaks during the workday. The husband, on the other hand, believes working in person provides him with better work-life balance and expresses socially conditioned expectations that his wife should handle the home and family, reinforcing a traditional division of roles.

In couple 5, the wife feels more balanced when working remotely as it allows her to better manage both work and family responsibilities. Working in person causes her stress, making her feel less connected to her role as a mother. The husband maintains a good balance both at the office and remotely, thanks to having a dedicated workspace at home, a private area that allows him to physically separate work from family life. In this case, the work-life balance appears to be more evenly distributed between the two partners, with greater equilibrium than in other couples.

From the inter-couple analysis, several central themes emerge. In couples 2 and 4, social expectations related to gender roles play a key role in work-life balance. In both couples, the husbands expect their wives to manage most of the domestic and family responsibilities, even when their wives'

workloads may not be as light as presumed. In couples 1, 3, 4, and 5, remote work seems to offer women greater flexibility in managing family commitments. However, in all couples except for couple 5, there is a clear imbalance in the distribution of household duties. Women tend to bear the greater burden of family responsibilities, whether they are working in person or remotely. This imbalance is often justified by perceptions related to job roles (e.g., jobs with "less responsibility") or by cultural and social expectations, as seen in couple 4.

Overall, the intra-couple analysis highlights that work-life balance is asymmetrical, with women shouldering more of the burden, especially when their husbands perceive their partners' work as less important and reinforce gender role expectations that assume women should take care of family duties. The inter-couple analysis shows that for women, remote work is associated with greater flexibility and freedom, while men tend to feel more balanced when working in the office.

STUDY 1B: White collars from the same company

In this section, the results of the second sample, namely the 7 white-collar workers employed in the same Italian company, will be presented. For clarity, Table 4 also reports the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample:

Table 4. Demographic profile of the 7 participants in the same Italian company.

	Workers from the same company (N = 7)
Gender	3 Males 4 Females
Age	Mean = 36,71 SD = 6,55
Children	3 Yes 4 Non
Degree	1 High school degree 1 Bachelor degree 2 Master degree 3 Post-university Master's degree
Relationship status	2 Married 3 Cohabiting 1 Single

	1 In a non-cohabiting couple
Contract type	7 Permanent contracts
Years in the same company	3 Less than a year 2 Between 1 and 5 years 1 Between 5 and 10 years 1 More than 10 years

These participants share the same organizational culture, and additionally, the company they belong to is very small in terms of personnel size. It's a company located in Northern Italy, with its headquarters (which are significantly larger) in France. In this Italian organization, employees typically work 2-3 days in the office and the rest remotely, at their discretion.

3B.1 Overarching themes, specific themes, and sub-themes

Similarly to the sample of cohabiting couples in Study 1A, the overarching themes, specific themes, and subthemes of the white collars sample will be presented here. The overarching themes identified in the 'in-presence' (P) and 'remote' (R) modalities are 'space perception', 'professional identity', 'relational identity', 'organizational identity', and 'work-life balance'. For this sample as well, coding was conducted using NVivo software, with 'P' indicating the in-office mode and 'R' indicating the remote mode. Table 5 shows the structure of the overarching themes, specific themes, and subthemes, along with the frequency and percentage of individuals who mentioned them in the in-office mode.

Table 5. On site work modality.

Superordinate themes	Specific themes	Sub-themes	Referral (N)
Space perception	Space meanings (P)	Is one's own place	15
		Sharing space	9
		Familiar space	13

		Full of objects	8
	Space feelings (P)	Sense of connection	13
	Space appropriation (P)	I feel myself here	11
		Comfortable	8
		It represents me as a worker	12
Professional identity	Self-efficacy (P)	I am skilled and good	6
		I need help because I am a good-for-nothing	4
		No concentration	9
	Job centrality for the self (P)	Work as a priority being on site	12
		Not really important	3
	Identification with work (P)	It's my creature	2
		Family is more important	13
Relational identity	Support (P)	Perceived support	14
		Attention to all	8
		Trust	9
	Communication exchanges (P)	Direct and frequent	15
	Relations at work (P)	We are a family	9
		Attention to colleagues	13

Organizational identity	Ties with organization (P)	Strong ties	8
	Values (P)	No identification	2
		People are the focus	15
	Organizational attachment (P)		9
	Organizational belonging (P)		12
Work-life balance	Worker Behaviours (P)	Good balancing	13
	Company that encourages balance (P)		9

Note. Referral (N) = Number of times that theme has been cited in the interviews; Percentage of participants (%) = Percentage of participants who referred to that theme

The following Table 6 presents the structure of the overarching themes, specific themes, and subthemes, along with the frequency of their occurrence, in the remote mode:

Table 6. Remote work modality.

Superordinate themes	Specific themes	Sub-themes	Referral (N)
Space perception	Space meanings (R)	Is one's own place	6
		Sharing space	2
		Familiar space	5

		Full of objects	8
	Space feelings (R)	Sense of connection	6
	Space appropriation (R)	I feel myself here	4
		Comfortable	5
		It represents me as a worker	4
Professional identity	Self-efficacy (R)	I am skilled and good	8
		I need help because I am a good-for-nothing	11
		Less concentration	12
	Job centrality for the self (R)	Work as a priority	5
		Not really important	8
	Identification with work (R)	It's my creature	2
		Family is more important	12
Relational identity	Support (R)	Perceived support	5
		Attention to all	7
		Less of trust	11
	Communication exchanges (R)	More difficult	13
	Relations at work (R)	Less strong	12
	Ties with organization (R)	Perception of distance	6

Organizational identity	Organizational attachment (R)		7
	Organizational belonging (R)		9
Work-life balance	Worker Behaviours (R)	Good balancing	10
	Company that encourages balance (R)		11

Note. Referral (N) = Number of times that theme has been cited in the interviews; Percentage of participants (%) = Percentage of participants who referred to that theme

In this section, the overarching themes, specific themes, and subthemes are described with the support of participants' verbalizations during the interviews. Furthermore, the emerged themes in the in-office and remote modes will be compared.

3B.1.1 Space perception

In the in-presence mode. all interviewees agreed that the work space is a personal space that is perceived as both their own and a shared space. The space refers to the idea of being in a big family where everyone tries to choose the same days in presence in the office in order to share the open space. Only the manager has a space of her own, an office at the end of the corridor separate and quite far from the common office of all the other employees.

The office space has also been modified to make it more in line with employees' desires and ways of being with the addition of personal items, photos and company gadgets that emphasise a personalisation of that workspace.

Some, perceive that space as familiar and perceive it as a “second home”.

"It is a space that I feel is mine, that I decorated as I wanted with my personal things and it is a space that represents me" (GG - woman).

"It is a place that feels a bit like home, it is a place dedicated to me that I can modify and fill with meaning (MC - man).

"There is the idea of sharing, it is a space that refers to our internal idea of being family, we are few but together we are closer, also psychologically" (PT - woman).

In the remote mode, the idea of a private work space that is constructed and designed by the individual employee always emerges. Most of the interviewees feel that they are calmer and more relaxed as an attitude than when working in the office because even though the company is perceived as a small family, in presence it is necessary to maintain the same formal line of behaviour. Some, to this space, assign a meaning of more responsibility in completing tasks and evolution.

"I feel more relaxed here because I don't have to prove that I am always ready and active" (IV - woman).

"This space reflects the professional I am today and what I want to become in the future" (MB - man).

3B.1.2 Professional identity

In the office presence mode, some interviewees do not feel good and effective at work, but associate this with having joined the company a short time ago (less than a year after being hired). There is the idea that in presence one feels more like a concentrated professional because there are no distractions and one does not want to give the idea of wasting time, as is generally the case at a distance.

"I take my time but I don't feel like a genius, I need support also because I have only been here a short time" (DR - woman).

"Here I feel good because I produce without being distracted, at home I am always distracted" (MS - man).

When the mode is remote, there remains for some the idea that they need more help because they do not have a direct possibility of asking from one desk to another and that they are less efficient because they think they have a longer time due to not having to take transport home. For others, remotely there is a greater identification with their work which is perceived as part of their self and identity.

The company manager perceives her own role less strongly when working remotely and feels she has less control over the employees.

"I feel identified with my work and I feel the role is mine, but I don't feel it as strong remotely, I can't tell you why. Then I feel a loss of control over them even though I trust them" (PT - woman).

"I still feel small, professionally speaking, I need to ask in presence in a direct way" (MS - man).

3B.1.3 Relational identity

When working face-to-face, all interviewees say they feel values such as support, closeness and sharing. There is the possibility of informal exchanges at the coffee machine or in the cigarette break where there is sharing of ideas about work, but also deepening of personal lives.

In the office, feedback is perceived as immediate, bonds seem to be formed with ease also because the idea of being one big family that supports each other in times of need is always strong.

Even the spaces convey this ease of communication and availability towards each other: doors are always open to make moments of meeting and exchange frequent.

"There is warmth and help. In the office it's just something you feel as soon as you walk in here. There are no barriers, you enter the office by knocking, but there is always someone who is ready to support you" (GG - woman).

"Being here you are able to make even those who never speak speaking and that is the winning part of being present in the office" (PT - woman).

Remotely, opposite perceptions and views emerge: there is the idea of formality, distance and lack of continuous support.

Communication seems to be slower because one has to wait for the others' time to respond.

For some, physical distance diminishes affective distance and one feels more disconnected from a perceived, in-presence, very strong relational reality.

The manager states that she finds it more difficult to trust at a distance despite having built a bond of trust in presence, as if physical distance also diminishes the ability to control.

"Here you find it more difficult to ask for help and talk normally with colleagues as we do in presence. I don't have the idea of all-round support for me" (GG - woman).

"At a distance you feel less the idea of family that you create in the office, it's really a clear separation. Then I as a remote manager have to see that I can trust them and know that you do things even if I don't control you closely" (PT - woman).

3B.1.4 Organizational identity

In presence, there are contrasting opinions regarding attachment to the company and sense of belonging. For some, in presence the perceived attachment and support are stronger, for others it is still difficult to build a bond with the company, but not with the team. The parent company is perceived as distant, so the bond is felt more with the Italian company while the French company seems to be a nucleus in itself.

Most of the sample feels they are part of a company that functions like a real family in terms of support and closeness.

'In the company, our Italian one I say, there is a focus on us, on supporting us as people and not just as workers' (DG - woman).

"I feel a huge attachment wherever I am: it's my creature, I always feel a bond" (PT - woman).

Working remotely, some perceive the company values as unclear and distant. Others, despite not being physically in the office, feel a strong sense of belonging and perceive that the company gives autonomy and trust and this increases the strength of the bond.

Especially those who have more important roles in the company feel a strong identification with it.

"You carry the company with you everywhere. Then I love the company logo and so I am proud to show it because I really feel a connection" (MG - man).

"The company values are not very clear to me, there is always a focus on the individual, but remotely I feel there is a distance. There is a relationship but at a distance" (GG - woman);

3B.1.5 Work-life balance

When working face-to-face, most of the interviewees feel that they manage to find a work-life balance, claiming that the company helps to find this reconciliation and that it understands the need to take a break from work.

Very often, especially for senior roles, there is such an immersion in one's work that one loses track of time, but everyone agrees that personal and family life is also a priority.

"There is corporate elasticity, if you have commitments everyone understands and then they don't call you after working hours, there is respect for you and your life outside" (MF - man).

"I always respect other people's commitments but for my own I have more difficulty because in presence it is more difficult to stop a meeting and a person who is talking and then maybe it's 7pm" (GG - woman).

At a distance, a greater perception of availability of time for oneself emerges, there is flexibility of schedules and commitments, and workers try to balance their private and professional lives well: everyone seems to be well organised without taking time away from their affections. In addition, there are hobbies or time devoted to sport that become of fundamental importance for one's psycho-physical well-being.

"I don't take time away from my family for work, also because I am better able to balance the two areas remotely. I am well organised so I carry out professional tasks and then devote myself to what is most important to me, i.e. wife and child" (MG - man).

"I find that the company has a lot of respect for everyone's time, it gives you flexibility" (GG - woman).

4. DISCUSSION

In the historical period in which we find ourselves, defined as the New Normal, there has been a shift by companies in adopting different work modes: some have reported a total shift to remote work, some have preferred to return to completely in-presence work, while most have retained the option of a hybrid mode (Eurofound, 2020; Milasi et al., 2020)

By changing these arrangements and habits, it is necessary to put people at the centre and to assess whether all the actions put in place by organisations can be sustainable for them in terms of psycho-physical well-being so that they can make sense of their work (Brown, 2017) and so that they maintain a good level of satisfaction, productivity and a sense of belonging with their organizations (Grant & Clarke, 2020).

Such reflections do not only affect employees, but also employers who find themselves balancing the wellbeing of the individual with that of the organisation and, from such questions, try to find a balance between different ways of working while mitigating potential risks (Grant & Clarke, 2020).

From these premises, comes the sense of this study.

Indeed, the aim was to understand and investigate how Italian workers experience changes within their workplaces in the New Normal and, above all, in different work modes.

To do this, three research questions were formulated to study the impact of office presence and remote work on processes of identity, meaning, space appropriation and work-life balance, in two Italian samples: one formed by cohabiting couples and the other by white collars sharing the same organizational culture.

The following section presents the results that emerged from the data analysis, highlighting how some findings contrast with the scientific literature, while others show a countertrend.

The first research question focuses on the impact of face-to-face and remote office work on the appropriation of space and meanings attributed to it, on professional, relational and organisational identity.

Generally speaking, for the interviewees, the office work space becomes important if the worker manages to appropriate it and, therefore, to attribute positive meanings to it and it is consistent with the literature. When we speak of "appropriation of space" we mean a process in continuous evolution that touches on identity components: in fact, when people in our sample think of being able to modify the

workspace at their will with photos or objects meaningful to them, they believe it allows them to give meaning to their work, create a connection with that space, and identify with it (Purba et al., 2023; Rioux & Pignaul, 2013). Moreover, the concept of space also includes the notions of closeness and belonging to both the company and colleagues, especially in face-to-face interactions (Babapour et al., 2018; van Hooff & van Hooft, 2016).

Despite the benefits of workspace appropriation, some research highlights the limitations imposed by organizations. For example, Bernstein et al. (2020) show that in hybrid companies, desk rotation policies often restrict employees' ability to personalize their workspace. Hatch and Sargis-Roussel (2021) add that some organizations limit personalization to maintain a consistent corporate image, thereby reducing flexibility. Moreover, Pinder et al. (2020) indicate that such policies can lead to an emotional disconnection between employees and their work environment.

While desk rotation policies and corporate image constraints in offices reduce employees' emotional connection to their workspace, the remote mode introduces a different complexity: workers of this study find it more difficult to separate family/personal space from work space when they are remote (usually in their home).

In support of the results of this project, two studies (Harris, 2003; Petriglieri, 2019) show that working from home makes one perceive the intrusiveness of one's professional life in one's private life and vice versa more strongly, leading to greater difficulty in both separating the two spheres and defining their spatial boundaries.

A possible solution, where possible, would be to customise one's desk remotely as much as possible to make it more in line with a work space and find a place in the home that is separate from familiar spaces such as the kitchen or bedroom (Wapshott & Mallett, 2011).

With regard to professional identity, from our data emerges that workers feel that they are much more productive and experience a greater sense of self-efficacy in the presence rather than in the remote mode, especially if the manager pays attention to them and is supportive (Halford 2005).

This is because they feel that there are fewer distractions in the office than they experience remotely (Ciolfi et al., 2020), so they are more inclined (especially men in senior positions in the company) to prefer the presence mode.

The risk, however, of such a choice is that work becomes central and that these workers become more identified with it, so much so that they consider it a part of their identity and so much so that they put their affections and family duties in second place, for lack of energy and resources for other spheres of life (Li et al., 2020). In this regard, if the profession occupies a priority place, such workers will spend an excessive amount of time in the office to the detriment of their family life (Mansour & Tremblay, 2016) and this will undermine the balance between professional and private life (Cheng et al., 2019) and will not allow them to direct their personal resources to the family roles they hold (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000), but rather will consider family an interference with work responsibility (Gillet et al., 2021).

In the remote mode, workers of our sample (especially men) feel more pressure to prove that they are capable and valuable because they cannot prove it in presence. Some studies suggest that remote work increases stress because work tasks need to be carried out alone, unlike in the office, where one can ask colleagues for help when needed (Galanti et al., 2021). Moreover, they feel they are more closely monitored, perceiving excessive control, which leads them to work more than necessary in an attempt to build a trust-based relationship at a distance with a manager perceived as controlling. This is linked to the idea of needing to be always available while also performing well with focus on one's tasks (Delfino & Kolk, 2021).

Moreover, this exaggeration of one's professional performance leads to a tendency to overwork, that may result in workaholism due to an overconnection to work through technologies (Giunchi & Vonthron, 2023), but with a loss of its quality and with increased stress and difficulty in disconnecting at the end of the day (Giunchi et al., 2023; Halford, 2005).

Furthermore, it seems that remotely employed workers perceive themselves as less self-efficacious because, again, they perceive more family distractions and perceive that environment as 'unprofessional' and this is sustained by the literature (Ciolfi et al., 2020).

The interviewed women, on the other hand, perceive themselves to be more self-efficacious remotely (Schepers et al., 2011) because they are more able to structure their day according to professional and family goals (Wang & Haggerty, 2011), seeing virtual work as an opportunity to devote time to their personal lives as well (Adamovic, 2018).

In the presence mode, our sample shows a stronger relational identity. This result is supported by the scientific literature on the subject that shows that workers who spend several days a week in the office feel greater social support, are more likely to help colleagues in difficulty and experience higher levels of well-being and satisfaction (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008).

Furthermore, feeling that they have collaborative bonds at work reduces role-related ambiguities and conflicts because information is transferred directly and communication can be clearer and more frequent (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008).

In addition, the role of the manager also helps to strengthen the relational identity of their employees and make them feel that they are part of a team in which the values are those of support, mutual aid and constructive communication (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Sias, 2008).

In the remote mode, in our sample, it is more common for workers to experience a distance, a lack of immediate interactions and feedback also due to the use of screens and online devices (Kniffin et al., 2021) and these factors can lead to an increased sense of isolation (Flores, 2019), a loss of motivation and meaning related to their work (Leigh-Hunt et al., 2017).

Many scientific studies have underlined the importance of the supportive behaviour of both the supervisor and colleagues during remote working days (Adamovic, 2018; Schepers et al., 2011): in fact, if an employee feels that he/she is supported and encouraged even remotely, he/she will not perceive

that sense of isolation, but rather will develop a greater sense of belonging and trust towards that work team (Schepers et al., 2011).

Working remotely, however, may also cause the supervisor to develop a feeling of diminished trust towards his/her employees and a greater need for control (Koehne et al., 2012), who thinks that when working remotely they are not focused on work, but carry out other activities outside the professional sphere (Ciolfi et al., 2020). This perception of the manager, when perceived by his or her subordinates, creates the pressure to always be connected and to perform (Tramontano et al., 2021).

In order to cope with both the manager's sense of isolation and the need for control, it is necessary to create formal and informal moments to exchange feedback, to develop or strengthen the network with colleagues, to create social appointments to strengthen the bond and to do activities outside of work with colleagues in order not to lose continuity (Crosbie & Moore, 2004).

When speaking of organisational identity, reference is often made to the attachment bond that employees develop and strengthen over time with their company. The attachment bond in the company is a concept that was developed by Environmental Psychology and refers to both an emotional and affective bond (Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1995).

Some research has shown that, working in presence, increases the sense of connection with the company, making one feel that there is a sharing of values and goals. Moreover, the stronger this connection is, the more the person will feel invested in that bond and will be more committed to their profession (Chudzicka-Czupala et al., 2023; Rioux, 2007).

When, on the other hand, the working modality is at a distance, it seems that the bond with the company is perceived to be weaker, but this also seems to be connected to a social aspect of remoteness not only from the place, but also from the climate with bosses and colleagues (Wang et al., 2022). Those, on the other hand, in management and leadership roles always show a strong attachment and sense of belonging even at a distance (Potgieter et al., 2021).

The second research question wanted to investigate how cohabiting couples experience family-work reconciliation in relation to working arrangements and whether there are any gender differences in this regard.

A great disparity of perceptions, between men and women in our sample, emerges both in presence and remotely and this is in line with other findings in the current scientific literature.

If men perceive a better work-family balance when working in the presence, women feel they find a better balance when working remotely (Watson et al., 2021).

This is because, and this is especially true in Italian culture (Crespi & Ruspini 2015; Magaraggia, 2012), men are more often associated with the role of career-focused workers (Cannito, 2018; Musumeci & Santero, 2018), while women's roles are often limited to being mothers, wives, and more inclined towards domestic tasks (Naldini, 2015; Reverberi et al., 2022). Italy, in fact, is one of the countries in Europe to have a conservative social structure in which the rigid division of roles still persists (Pace & Sciotto, 2022; Straub, 2007).

Women, in fact, continue to be considered the main caregivers of children while men, in a male-centred perspective, the breadwinners of the family, that is, those who provide economically for their household (Naldini, 2015; Reverberi et al., 2022).

The risk of this view, and the results of the interviews show this, is that men think of women as wives and mothers without considering that they are also workers. Thus, this accumulation of roles, tasks and duties leads to women not having enough time for themselves and their leisure time, causing them to experience stress, headaches, muscle tension and, in the most severe cases, anxiety and depression (Lott, Chung, 2016).

Despite this view, some studies show that men who manage to find a balanced division between family and professional commitments develop greater investment and satisfaction in their role as fathers, while still managing to be recognised at work and progress in their careers (Chung & Van der Lippe, 2020; Pace & Sciotto, 2022).

It remains true, however, that beyond rigid role definitions, those who work in a mixed mode perceive greater flexibility (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007), tend to be more satisfied with their work (Maruyama et al., 2009) and proceed by objectives rather than time deadlines (Pinsonneault & Boisvert, 2001).

Finding a good work-life balance is likely to result in increased job satisfaction and job performance for both genders (Bailey & Kurland, 2002).

The third research question seeks to understand whether sharing the same organisational culture changes the experiences and perceptions of meaning, identity construction and work-life balance in a sample of Italian workers.

It is necessary to explain that the reference company is very small ($N = 7$) and the work environment is an old flat, renovated to be used as an office. This aspect contributes to making all the professionals feel part of a large family in which 'feeling at home' recurs frequently in the verbalisations.

Moreover, in terms of relational identity, a strong connection with colleagues emerges, a frequent and direct communication which is in line with the results presented above, with reference to the sample of Study1A.

The literature, in this regard, indicates that sharing a common organization can significantly enhance cohesion and foster a powerful sense of belonging among employees. When team members share the same company, they identify with their organization, they tend to feel more secure, valued, and aligned with the group's goals, which enhances psychological safety, collaboration and relational and organizational identity. This identity process is essential to create a unified culture where professionals are motivated not only by external rewards but by intrinsic commitment to the team (Atienza, 2017).

Compared to the sample represented by the cohabiting couples, what is felt more by the 7 white collars is belonging to their team, because, especially in small and medium-sized companies, ties and shared values and goals are prioritised (Warner & Wäger, 2019) and this allows a greater sense of security and trust to develop towards change (Spicer, 2020).

Finally, another important aspect that emerges from the Study 2A, compared to the Study 1A, is the better balance between professional and personal life, regardless of work mode and gender, showing the importance of an organizational culture in supporting work-life balance and recovery from work of its employees (Anastasopoulou et al., 2023; Stankevičienė et al., 2021).

According to Cameron (2004), sharing the same company and organizational culture strengthens employees' social identity by reinforcing three key elements: cognitive identification, affective identification, and group evaluation. When a group is part of the same company, they also share experiences, roles, common goals, and an organizational context with its own rules. This serves to strengthen both relational and organizational identity. Additionally, the organizational context - composed of norms, values, and culture - deeply influences the sense of belonging to an organization or team. In this regard, sharing the same environment leads to greater homogeneity in behavior and expectations, fostering a common vision of organizational identity and reinforcing cohesion and the sense of belonging.

4.1 Limitations

This study has several limitations.

Firstly, being a qualitative study, the sample size is small. Therefore, all the verbalisations and results obtained must be read bearing in mind that the sample is not representative of the population, but is a small part of the population who recounted their experiences in a specific context: the results, therefore, cannot be generalised.

Secondly, the experiences recounted may have been subject to social desirability in order to show the interviewer aspects of the self and one's work that could potentially be more desirable and positive.

A third limitation is due to the fact that only male and female workers from Italian companies were interviewed, and this may create a bias stemming from the culture and society to which they belong, which has a certain set-up, certain beliefs and ways of observing and experiencing reality. For this reason, it would be interesting to replicate the results in different contexts, since the literature has emphasised the impact of socio-cultural elements on work practices and different ways of working (Bana et al., 2020; Peretz et al., 2018).

Additionally, the white-collar workers all come from the same organization, so there might be a 'homogeneity' effect in the data collected, related to the specific characteristics of the observed organization.

In spite of these limitations, this study has one strength, which is the value of qualitative research: in fact, IPA favours an in-depth and more analytical analysis, helping the researcher to 'enter the personal space' of the individual interviewee and make contact, listening to their life stories.

4.2 Research and Practical implications

This study contributes to the debate and in-depth study related to the changes that have taken place in organisations in terms of workplaces and working methods that have had an influence on the processes of meaning and identity construction, both professional, relational and organisational, and on the work-life balance.

From the study, it emerges how a good balance and a winning well-being for both workers and companies can be found by ensuring a hybrid work mode that allows both to develop a sense of appropriation of space, belonging to the company and bonds with colleagues, but also to avoid risks such as social isolation, dissatisfaction with one's work and the consequent loss of meaning for what one does. It has been seen how, being able to have one's own desk in the office and being able to customise it, can increase closeness, greater connection with one's workplace and an increased psychological well-being of workers, making them feel part of a professional reality on which they can have an influence. To ensure better workspace appropriation and promote personalization, companies can adopt various strategies, such as allowing employees, even in desk rotation contexts, to add personal touches like photos or meaningful objects. When possible, offering fixed workstations can create a sense of stability and continuity. Alternatively, if permanent desks are not feasible in the long term, companies could consider implementing less frequent rotation schedules.

Moreover, the current emphasis on building a good work-life balance should be welcomed by companies, since this aspect is of particular importance for a good quality of working life but also considering gender stereotypes and gender inequalities that still remain in the labour market and in our societies. Companies and organizations should be able to offer more flexibility to workers and creating formalised practices and policies in this direction. In order to promote an organizational culture careful of its employees' needs (Giunchi et al., 2024), companies could for instance offer to their employees more flexibility in the choice of work modes, by giving them the possibility to choose more “*smart*” working solutions, thus to organize their work by phases, cycles and objectives, with no time and space constraint, working in presence or remotely.

However, companies should be cautious not to promote this “always-on” culture, but rather prioritize providing employees with opportunities to disconnect and recover, ensuring a healthier balance between work and personal life.

Furthermore, it would be important to provide workers with company training so that they understand the implications for their health and mental and physical balance of working too much and the importance of implementing the right to disconnect in order to be able to devote themselves to their private sphere (Eurofound, 2020; Vayre & Vonthron, 2019).

STUDY 2 - Workplace Identity: factor structure and nomological network in an Italian and a French sample

Objectives – This study has two different objectives: 1) on the one hand, it aims to evaluate the psychometric properties of the Workplace Identity Scale (Sulphey, 2020); 2) on the other, it aims to relate different variables, using a nomological approach, introduced by Cronbach and Meehl (1955), which refers to the interconnected system of relationships between a construct, its antecedents and consequents. This study is focused on the nomological network of professional identity, i.e. to understand which dimensions, personal (self-esteem) and contextual (distinctiveness/inclusion and social climate) correlate with the 5 factors of professional identity (Job Centrality, Self-Identity, Person-Organization Fit, Job-Fit and Collective Identity) in the New Normal in two countries (Italy and France). The interest of testing the same model in two countries, France and Italy, is to make a contextualised contribution to the analysis of both the professional identity of employees in the New Normal and of their adaptation and well-being at work.

Design/Methodology – An online questionnaire was administered, through convenience sampling, to workers from different professional backgrounds between the ages of 25 and 66, who are experiencing current and reconfigured work arrangements, controlling for different demographic characteristics (gender, age, level of education, type of employment contract, etc.). The questionnaire contains scales on identity, feelings about work, personal variables such as self-esteem at work (Rosemberg, 1979), Workplace Identity (Sulphey, 2020), distinctiveness and inclusion (Reysen et al., 2017) and social climate at work (Jones & James, 1979 – adaptation from Parker et al., 2003). We currently have 344 completed questionnaires in Italy and 388 in France (N = 732). Data analysis is carried out through SPSS and MPlus.

Results – Confirmatory factor analysis results indicate that the 5-factor structure of the Workplace Identity Scale yield a suitable fit to the data both in Italy and France. Concerning the correlates of the five dimensions of professional identity (namely Job Centrality, Self-Identity, Person-Organization Fit, Job-Fit and Collective Identity), it emerges in both countries that feelings of distinctiveness and inclusion are one determining factor in all five dimensions of the Workplace Identity Scale. These constructs indicate that people want to be part of groups in which they feel similarity with the members, and at the same time, they wish their belongingness to their group to be more salient and important than to other groups, thus they desire their organisation to be unique and distinct from others (Becker et al., 2012; Reysen et al., 2017). Therefore, workers who have a high sense of distinctiveness and inclusion will develop a better self-related identity, place more centrality on their work, feel a greater fit with their profession and between themselves and their organization, and feel a stronger collective identity. Self-esteem seems to be a determinant and significant factor for Job Fit and Collective Identity in Italy and

for Self-Identity and Job Fit in France. Thus, these results suggest that, in the Italian sample, a worker with high self-esteem will feel a greater fit with their job and perceive a stronger collective identity. In the French sample, however, self-esteem leads to a greater self-definition and, as in the Italian sample, contributes to a greater perception of fit with their job. In both the Italian and French samples, it emerges that the social climate at work is a determining factor for constructing a collective identity.

Limitations –First of all, the convenience sampling method may introduce sample bias as participants are not selected randomly and may not adequately represent the broader population, thus restricting the generalizability of our findings. Another limitation concerns the reliance on self-reported data, which introduces the possibility of common method bias.

Moreover, this study does not reveal significant differences between Italy and France. Hence, future research is needed to understand potential divergences between the two countries, across which dimensions, and to comprehend these differences from a cultural perspective.

Theoretical and practical implications - These results are important as they can be considered as a contribution in delving into and expanding the research of professional identity, distinctiveness/inclusion, self-esteem and social climate at work, considering that it could be important to value individual and professional aspects with relational and organizational ones.

Workers who view their organization as unique and feel included develop a stronger sense of identity and connection to their profession and workplace. This enhances their self-esteem, leading to a greater alignment with their job and fostering a collective identity. Mutual support and collaboration with supervisors and colleagues further strengthen the worker's sense of belonging. These elements combined lead to practical benefits, such as increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment, highlighting the importance of a supportive and inclusive organizational culture. To achieve individual and organizational well-being, companies need to focus on strengthening the different personal and contextual aspects that contribute to determining workers' professional identity. Organizations should prioritize creating a supportive and collaborative work environment where employees feel included in a professional context. Moreover, they should ensure employees are recognized and valued for their skills and contributions, and strive to enhance their self-esteem at work through constructive feedback and frequent, direct communication.

Originality/Value – This study contributes to the literature by exploring the construct of workplace identity and its nomological network considering personal and contextual dimensions connected to it, enabling us to understand both the dimensions of professional identity and its correlates.

Keywords – *workplace identity, self-esteem, distinctiveness/inclusion, social climate, nomological network*

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of identity has been extensively studied in the spheres of clinical, social, and psychodynamic psychology, but it has been less explored within the organizational and work psychology fields. Indeed, it is only in recent decades that researchers and companies themselves have begun to question and show interest in identity in the professional context (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Brown, 2022; Caza et al., 2018). This shift in perspective stems from the evolution of the work environment, globalization, and the rise of flexible work arrangements. These changes have completely transformed and innovated the way we work, making it necessary to observe and understand not only organizations as entities and their functioning but also the individuals within them and how they adapt to these new forms of work (Davis, 1991). Moreover, organizations have realized that productivity is closely linked to employee well-being and satisfaction (Martin, 2005), which are critical factors to focus on for achieving organizational success.

Therefore, when we talk about identity in organizations, we refer to all those meanings that people reflexively attribute to themselves (Brown, 2015, p. 22), trying to answer questions such as: "Who am I?", "What am I doing in my life, what are my goals?", "Who do I want to become?". Identity is a process of self-description and self-definition based on emotional, cognitive, relational, and contextual processes (Petriglieri et al., 2018) that are not only confined to the private sphere but extend to every context people experience, including the workplace.

Many authors have been interested in identity within organizations. Caza and colleagues (2018) argue that there is a collective identity that encompasses meanings related to the organization of belonging and social ties, a personal identity that represents a self-description based on purely individual characteristics (such as gender, ethnicity), and one connected to the work role (being a manager or employee or self-employed).

The concept of identity work was first described by Snow and Anderson (1987) as "the range of activities individuals engage in to create, present, and sustain personal identities that are congruent with and supportive of the self-concept" (p. 1348). This definition, later taken up by other authors (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Caza et al., 2018), emphasizes the multiplicity of possible identities that are created and modified over time and through contexts of belonging. Thus, individuals activate a reflective process on themselves in relation to their needs, desires, relationships, roles, and affiliations (Brown, 2020).

Building and modifying one's identities within organizations is not only a solitary journey (Athens, 1994), but it requires the presence of significant others such as supervisors and colleagues. These individuals facilitate learning processes, show the behavioral norms to be followed in that particular context, and highlight the similarities and differences to position oneself individually (Clark & Holquist, 1984). Indeed, as Taylor (2021) states, "we define our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the others' representations of us" (pp. 32-33).

Defining identity as a process implies studying it at different levels and highlighting its different types (Shultz et al., 2012).

In this regard, in the literature, professional identity has been studied from different perspectives and is defined as a multidimensional concept (Bothma et al., 2015) composed of structural, social, and individual/psychological dimensions.

The structural dimension refers to the context of belonging that shapes identity (Kirpal, 2004), the social dimension develops through interaction with other individuals and contributes to the formation of collective social identity (Buche, 2003; 2008), and the individual/psychological dimension includes aspects of self-perception at work, career, professional development, the priority associated with one's work, and the level of adaptation/congruence between oneself and the professional environment.

Other authors have studied different facets of professional identity. Fugate and colleagues (2004) speak of career identity, which is the way individuals define themselves in relation to their career and its progression over time. This concept is longitudinal because it is a perception of one's professional achievement between the past and present, connected with future aspirations (McArdle et al., 2007).

A different concept from the previous one is occupational identity, which is a relatively stable construct over time (Brown, 2004) and is defined as "the set of central, distinctive, and enduring characteristics that determine one's profession and role" (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999, p. 417).

Of a different nature is professional identity, which is one of a person's multiple social identities (Ibarra, 1999) that encompasses both the definition of being a professional and a collective identity of belonging to a workgroup or organization or both (Feen-Calligan, 2005; Fugate et al., 2004). Professional identity is not given but requires time to develop so that a person becomes an expert in their professional field. It requires the acquisition of technical and relational skills and the learning of professional behaviors through formal and informal learning processes (Hotho, 2008).

Some research has clarified the difference between two sometimes confused concepts: organizational identity and organizational identification. While the former is the set of perceptions and emotions through which an individual feels part of their work context in terms of belonging (Brown 2015; 2017; Fugate et al., 2004; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003; Watson, 2008), identification is also a cognitive process, but it represents a bond that further defines the worker's identity (Dutton et al., 1994) and makes them feel that their values, actions, and beliefs align with those of their organization (Lane & Scott, 2007). While organizational identity is a feeling of belonging to a context, identification is not only belonging but compatibility between oneself and the company, to the point that its success or failure is perceived as one's own (Mael & Ashforth, 1992).

Given the multifaceted nature of the concept of identity at work, the next section will present studies that have investigated this construct and defined it according to multiple dimensions.

1.1 Dimensions of Work Identity in the literature

The concept of identity did not primarily originate in Work Psychology but from the studies of Erikson (1950), who defined this construct as multidimensional, personal, and continuous over time and within the individual's contexts of belonging.

After Erikson, there has never been a consensus on definitions among authors interested in the topic across different disciplines. In particular, in the field of Work Psychology, identity can be thought of as professional (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016) or related to social affiliations, such as work groups/teams or connected to professional reality in terms of belonging.

The concept of identity within organizations is relatively recent and began with the studies of Elsbach (1999), who hypothesized that organizations were fundamental in shaping and modifying individuals' identities and that individuals could influence the work environment and, in turn, be influenced by it.

Buche, in 2003, defines “work identity” as a “socially constructed representation of an individual’s self-perception of their interactions within the work environment” (Buche, 2003, p. 11). Subsequently, Agostino (2004) defines it as part of the individual identity that derives from being part of a specific workplace, while Walsh and Gordon (2007) describe it as “a self-concept at work, composed of organizational identity and other role-related identities that allow one to know how to behave in one’s profession” (p. 2). Lyoyd and colleagues (2011) defined work identity as “a multifaceted and layered construction, in which the self plays a central role, and that shapes the roles individuals are called to play in the professional context” (p. 65).

Luyckx and colleagues (2008) were interested in how work identity develops over an individual's life, creating the Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS) and adapting it to the work reality. This scale consists of 25 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) that investigate 5 dimensions of work identity: 1. Work commitment, highlighting the choices made during one’s career and the commitment to pursuing them; 2. Identification with work commitment, defining the degree of identification with the choices made; 3. Broad work exploration, representing all the information gathered by the worker to subsequently make career choices; 4. In-depth work exploration, defining identity development and reflection through which, after gathering various information, the person evaluates different work possibilities; 5. Ruminative career exploration, which blocks reflection and career choice due to continuous questioning of past or future professional choices. According to these authors (Luyckx et al., 2008), these 5 dimensions contribute to the development of work identity, taking into consideration the individual and their cognitive processes, but not investigating the dimensions of professional relationships or the organizational context of belonging.

Other authors (Welbourne & Paterson, 2017) focused on “Role-based identities at work,” i.e., the different identities that the worker has concerning the roles they occupy, and identified five: 1. Organization-based identity, i.e., how the individual perceives themselves by being part of their company; 2. Professional identity, representing identification with one’s work and the commitment

spent on it; 3. Innovative identity, which is the ability to define oneself as capable and bearers of new and innovative ideas; 4. Team identity, referring to how much a person identifies, feels belonging to their work group, and what roles they assume within it; 5. Work identity, describing how an individual's work becomes more or less central and important for self-definition. After identifying these dimensions, the authors (Welbourne & Paterson, 2017) proposed a scale to measure role-based identity: the Role-based Identity Scale (RBIS), which includes 20 items, 4 for each role-based identity dimension.

Not all studies on work identity have conceived it as an individual construct linked to cognitive processes and roles. In fact, many researches have revisited social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), arguing that much of the self-concept derives from group affiliations (Ashmore et al., 2004; Deaux et al., 1995), and therefore, teams and belonging to them also redefine an individual's identity (Jones & Volpe, 2011; Lock & Funk, 2016).

Heere and James (2007) developed a scale on team identity based on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and the studies of Ashmore and colleagues (2004). For these authors, team identity consists of seven dimensions: 1. Self-categorization, i.e., the process through which the worker feels part of a team and identifies with it; 2. Evaluation, the positive or negative attitude a person has in evaluating a specific social category, such as their team; 3. Importance, which defines the value and importance assigned to a group of belonging, affecting the self-concept; 4. Attachment, representing the degree of closeness and emotional involvement with the group of belonging; 5. Social inclusion, representing how much a person feels incorporated into the group and perceives a collective identity; 6. Behavioral involvement, i.e., how much a person participates in the team's actions and activities; 7. Cognitive awareness, representing how much the individual knows about the team of belonging, directly touching their identity. This scale has the merit of wanting to study work identity from a social perspective, i.e., belonging to a team, without considering professional identity itself or the identity created in relation to one's organization.

The latter concept, i.e., organizational identity, has been studied in the literature by Parker and Haridakis (2008). According to them, organizational identity develops through organizational identification, i.e., the relationship between people and companies they belong to, helping individuals define who they are and how they act (Hogg & Terry, 2000). This concept is not something that belongs either to the individual or the organization, but something created in mutual interaction (Tompkins & Cheney, 1983). Such identification with the organization can influence workers' identity and work behaviors (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Bartel, 2001). Unlike personal/professional and social identities, which are well-defined constructs in the literature, organizational identification lacks a clear definition. Some define it as cognitive and emotional processes that allow the individual to bond with the organization (Bullis & Bach, 1989; 1991; Mael & Ashforth, 1995), others as communicative processes that create the bond with the company (Kuhn & Nelson, 2002), still others as the result of acceptance and sharing of the company's characteristics and values (van Dick et al., 2004).

The study by Parker and Haridakis (2008) seeks to clarify organizational identification, which precedes organizational identity and emphasizes the social nature of the construct: it is both a self-definition process and a reciprocal influence between the worker and the belonging company that serves to relationally bond, create meanings, and integrate personal goals and values with those of the organization. The authors, to measure organizational identification, developed the Organizational Identification Scale, which consists of 4 factors: 1. Connection with the manager; 2. Degree of self-investment in the organization (representing the sense of loss if one had to leave it); 3. Shared goals and values; 4. Connection with other workers.

Fombelle and collaborators (2011) emphasized how workers can feel more identified with the organization only if the latter touches important aspects of their identity, such as the need for support, the desire for professional affirmation, and value congruence. In this study, the authors created a scale, the Member Identity Scale (Fombelle et al., 2011), showing how identity and organizational identification are closely connected concepts (an example item is “when I talk about my organization, I say 'we' instead of 'they'”).

Some scholars (Klotz et al., 2014) speak of vocational identity, meaning how workers negotiate and adapt their personality to the norms and behaviors of their organization, and in this way, perceive themselves as fitting into the company they belong to. Therefore, a person's identity is studied concerning a specific context rather than according to a more global conception (Marsh & Shavelson, 1985).

Table 7. Work Identity Studies.

Researches on Work and Workplace Identity	
Author(s)/Year	Studied dimensions
Heere & James (2007)	1. Self-categorization 2. Evaluation 3. Importance 4. Attachment 5. Social Inclusion 6. Behavioral involvement 7. Cognitive awareness
Parker & Haridakis (2008)	1. Connection with the manager 2. Degree of self-investment in the organization 3. Shared goals and values 4. Connection with other workers

Luyckx et al. (2008)	Work identity develops through five dimensions: 1. Commitment to work 2. Identification with work commitment 3. Broad work exploration 4. In-depth work exploration 5. Ruminative exploration of one's career
Fombelle et al. (2011)	Organizational identity develops through organizational identification, which involves the need for support, the desire for career advancement, and alignment of values between oneself and their company.
Klotz et al. (2014)	Vocational identity at work
Welbourne & Paterson (2017)	1. Organization-based identity 2. Professional identity 3. Innovative identity 4. Team identity 5. Work identity

1.2 The Workplace Identity Scale by Sulphey (2020)

In the previous paragraphs, it emerges how the concept of identity, and especially workplace identity, is conceived and treated in different ways. Despite these diversities, the scale I have chosen for my study is that of Sulphey (2020), which defines workplace identity as the concept of self that depends on understanding one's role at work, thus encompassing all the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects that a person uses to define themselves in their professional role (Walsh, 2000).

The concept of workplace identity is connected to that of social identity because an individual, to define themselves at work and in their role, must belong to a work group or professional context (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Fugate et al., 2004), and there must be a consolidated relationship between the individual and their company (Agostino, 2004; Bothma & Roodt, 2012; Sulphey, 2020).

The clearer and more structured this workplace identity is, the better the well-being of the worker (Worth, 2016) and their performance (Amiot et al., 2007; Brown & Bimrose, 2018; Wayne et al., 2006). Many authors emphasize how a well-defined workplace identity benefits workers: it creates positive feelings towards the company and better identification with it and its values (Staples et al. 1984), greater satisfaction (Buche, 2003), a better sense of the importance of one's work (Amiot et al., 2007), and the perception of having higher energy and professional resources (Caza & Wilson, 2009).

Sulphrey (2020) started from these premises to develop the Workplace Identity Scale, which, unlike previous authors (Bajerjee, 2013; Buche, 2003; Wayne et al., 2006), shows more items and greater internal consistency.

This scale was created from an analysis of the scientific literature, selecting four studies: according to Kirpal (2004), Workplace Identity is formed by structural, social, and individual components; for Lloyd et al. (2011), it is an identity that influences both personal spheres, roles, and organizational contexts. According to Johnson et al. (2012), workplace identity consists of individual, relational, and collective identities, while Bester (2012) identifies the centrality of work, value congruence, and person-organization fit as the three areas in which such identity operates.

Sulphrey (2020), based on these studies, creates a pool of 33 items (later reduced to 18 in its final version) divided into 5 factors:

- **Job Centrality** -> how important and central work and the organization are in a person's life and the value they assign to themselves through their profession. It aligns with Kularathna and Adhikaram's (2011) definition of Work Centrality.
- **Self-Identity** -> defines feeling an integral part of an organization and the perception of one's uniqueness, following VanStaden's (2005) definition.
- **Person-organization fit** -> the level of adaptation of the person to their work context, so much so that the company's success is perceived as one's own and is in line with Kristof's (1996) definition.
- **Job-fit** -> how much the person considers their job to be an important part of their life.
- **Collective-identity** -> defines feeling part of a collective and, specifically, a work group, echoing Johnson et colleagues (2012) definition.

1.3 Nomological network of Workplace Identity

In the previous paragraph, it emerged how professional identity is a multidimensional construct composed of different facets that touch on aspects closely related to the self, such as Self Identity or those related to the relationship between oneself and one's work (Job Centrality, Job-fit) and oneself and one's organization (Person-Organization fit) or one's professional group (Collective-identity).

Furthermore, from an analysis of the scientific literature, there are some personal and contextual factors that seem to be linked to the five dimensions of professional identity and could also be determinants of it. In the next section, such factors, namely distinctiveness/inclusion, self-esteem, and social climate at work are presented and hypothesized as components of the workplace identity nomological network.

1.3.1 Distinctiveness/Inclusion and Workplace Identity

The concept of inclusion at work integrates both the dimensions of distinctiveness and inclusion, based on Brewer's optimal distinctiveness model (1991), which interprets social behavior. Individuals

have a need for belonging within their social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), but they also seek distinctiveness - wanting to be part of groups where they feel a sense of similarity with other members, while also desiring to be seen as unique and distinct entities (Becker et al., 2012; Reysen et al., 2017). When groups can meet both of these needs, individuals form a stronger psychological bond and greater identification with the group itself (Brewer, 1991; Leonardelli et al., 2010).

In the context of organizational identity, distinctiveness refers to how employees perceive their organization as standing out from others. If employees view their organization as unique and different from competitors, their attachment and sense of belonging to the company increase (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Vieru & Rivard, 2014; Riemenschneider & Armstrong, 2021). This form of distinctiveness is organizational, not personal, meaning it reflects the organization's unique attributes rather than individual employees' personal uniqueness.

Furthermore, the concept of distinctiveness is closely related to inclusion. While people desire to be distinct, they also need to feel included within their social groups (Brewer, 1991; Leonardelli et al., 2010). In organizational settings, inclusion pertains to employees' perceptions of being recognized and accepted within their work context, which leads to greater satisfaction and improved performance (Chen & Tang, 2018; Robinson et al., 2013).

Just as distinctiveness influences organizational identity, inclusion also impacts it. Studies on self-categorization (Hogg & Turner, 1987) show that when individuals feel included in a specific group, they adjust their self-perceptions and identity to align with the group's characteristics (Leonardelli et al., 2010). Enhanced perceptions of inclusion within a group strengthen social or collective identity (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Kreiner et al., 2006; Zhang et al., 2018).

From these insights, it can be hypothesized that distinctiveness and inclusion, as they pertain to perceptions of organizational uniqueness and feelings of being part of the organization, play a crucial role in shaping professional identity. Specifically, these factors influence self-related aspects, such as feeling unique, valuable, and included in the work environment (Brewer, 1991; Leonardelli et al., 2010; Reysen et al., 2017), experiencing a sense of belonging and aligning with the group's characteristics (Brewer, 1991; Caza et al., 2018; Cuganesan, 2017), and perceiving the company as distinct from others while making its members feel recognized and valued (Riemenschneider & Armstrong, 2021; Chen & Tang, 2018).

Therefore, the first hypothesis of the study is as follows:

H1. Distinctiveness and inclusion are one determining factor of workplace identity represented by its five dimensions (Job Centrality, Self-Identity, Person-Organization Fit, Job-Fit and Collective Identity).

1.3.2 Self-Esteem and Workplace Identity

Self-esteem represents all the perceptions and attitudes, both positive and negative, related to the self (Rosenberg, 1979), and it is a concept closely connected to identity (Brown, 2020; Harrod & Serpe, 2021). If a person has good self-esteem, they will consider themselves worthy of value and consideration, and their identity will be clearer and strengthened by this positive self-judgment (Burke & Stets, 2009). However, individuals do not have just one identity.

Indeed, drawing on Stets and Burke's identity theory (2000), there are three types of identity that can be related to self-esteem: group, role-related, and individual/personal identity.

The first, group identity, is the set of meanings people associate with the groups they belong to and the strength of the interactions that are created (Stets & Serpe, 2013). The stronger people's self-esteem, the more they will seek confirmation of their value in the groups they belong to and remain within them to improve and maintain the positive image they already have of themselves (Rubin & Hewstone, 1998). This cognitive and behavioral mechanism is defined as "social self-esteem" and implies a redefinition of one's social identity (Long et al., 1994; Turner et al., 1987).

The second, role-related identity, is the set of meanings people attribute to themselves in relation to the roles they play in different contexts, such as family, friends, and work (Stryker, 2000). It too can be related to self-esteem. Some authors define self-esteem related to organizational roles as "organization-based self-esteem" (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Pierce et al., 1989): as self-esteem increases, one's investment in work also increases, and one's role gains greater significance. In this way, organization members can see their self-esteem needs satisfied by defining and reinforcing their work roles (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Jena & Pattnaik, 2020; Steger et al., 2012).

The third type of identity is individual/personal identity, which encompasses all the characterizations through which a person defines themselves in terms of values (Hitlin, 2003), morals (Stets & Carter, 2012), and personality traits (Stets & Burke, 2009). This seems to be the central dimension of self-esteem. This specific identity also includes professional identity, which is often associated with the concept of oneself as a worker with skills (Motallebzadeh & Kazemi, 2018), and as a professional who self-defines in relation to others in their organizational context (Lord et al., 1999; Brown, 2004).

Some authors argue that individual professional identity also arises from a sense of belonging to an organization, sharing knowledge and skills in mutual exchange with bosses and colleagues (Heikkinen, 2001; Super, 1980).

Individual/personal identity is also a dimension connected to self-esteem. In fact, the higher a person's self-esteem, the more they will be able to positively self-define in terms of goals achievement and abilities, which will strengthen their identity (Stets & Cast, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2014). Furthermore, believing in one's abilities will lead the worker to engage more in work and want to demonstrate the skills required by their role (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Dutton et al., 1994). This will increase their individual professional identity.

Considering these three identities together, it can be stated that a person defines themselves in terms of "being" (personal identity) and "doing" (role and group identity), and thus they can be related to the five dimensions of Sulphey's Work Identity (2020). Specifically, Stets and Burke's (2000) personal, role, and group identities correspond, as follows, to Sulphey's five professional identity dimensions:

- Personal identity -> Self-Identity
- Role identity -> Job Centrality, Person-organization fit, and Job Fit
- Group identity -> Collective-identity

If it is true that Stets and Burke's (2000) three identities can be related to Sulphey's (2020) five dimensions, and if self-esteem influences professional identity, we can hypothesize the following:

H2. Self-esteem is a determining factor of workplace identity represented by its five dimensions of the Workplace Identity

1.3.3 Social Climate at Work and Workplace identity

In the scientific literature concerning organizational contexts, aspects of the social climate at work have increasingly become the focus of study because they influence job satisfaction, burnout, performance, and work engagement (Parker et al., 2003).

In this study, by "social climate at work," we specifically refer to "psychological climate," which is the set of individual psychological representations that a person has of their work environment, allowing them to interpret professional events and give them meaning (Jones & James, 1979; Parker et al., 2003). This definition not only encompasses an individual level but also a social/collective one because it describes how individuals cognitively represent themselves in relation to their work environment (Jones & James, 1979): the level of support, cooperation with colleagues, trust, and overall pride.

In this regard, if a worker perceives a collaborative climate, mutual assistance among colleagues, and morally acceptable behaviors, they will feel more identified with the organization and strengthen their sense of belonging to it (Pagliaro et al., 2018). In fact, people prefer to identify with and, therefore, reinforce their organizational identity in organizations perceived as honest and morally consistent (Ellemers et al., 2013). Consequently, this will reinforce their membership in the work group and, therefore, their social identity (Pagliaro et al., 2018).

Additionally, perceiving a good work climate among colleagues and a sense of support will create a "shared" social identity that will help individual members of the work group self-define in terms of roles, behaviors, and attitudes (Zhang & Reynolds, 2020).

Furthermore, a worker experiencing a positive work climate will be more likely to show their "real" and authentic self, without overlays or identity modifications to fit into the workplace (Brickson, 2013; Zhang & Reynolds, 2020). When speaking of the "real" self, this refers to a person's ability to

recognize their identity aspects and to display them in belonging contexts, feeling competent, effective, and showing themselves for who they are (Kernis, 2003; Roberts et al., 2005).

Some studies relate the work climate to professional identity, as workers who are helped and guided in understanding organizational norms and behavioral rules will feel more competent and perceive themselves as suitable professionals for that context (Maxwell et al., 2017; Moos, 1973).

Similar to the constructs of distinctiveness/inclusion and self-esteem, the work climate also appears to be connected to identity aspects.

Individuals perceiving support and collaboration in their work environment:

- through a sense-making process, will attribute a positive self-evaluation as professionals to themselves, perceiving themselves as capable, suitable for that context, and psychologically connected to their work. This will impact their personal/professional identity (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Bizumic et al., 2009);
- will feel more connected to their work environment and their organization in general, increasing their fit with the company and their identification with its values (Bartels et al., 2007; Ellemers et al., 2004; Reynolds et al., 2017). These aspects will redefine and reinforce their organizational identity;
- will strengthen social ties with leaders and colleagues, creating greater salience within the work group and facilitating their social identity (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Bizumic et al., 2012; Haslam & Ellmers, 2005).

From this literature analysis, the third hypothesis of the study is as follows:

H3. Social climate at work is a determining factor of workplace identity represented by its five dimensions of the Workplace Identity

The model of the study is graphically represented as follows:

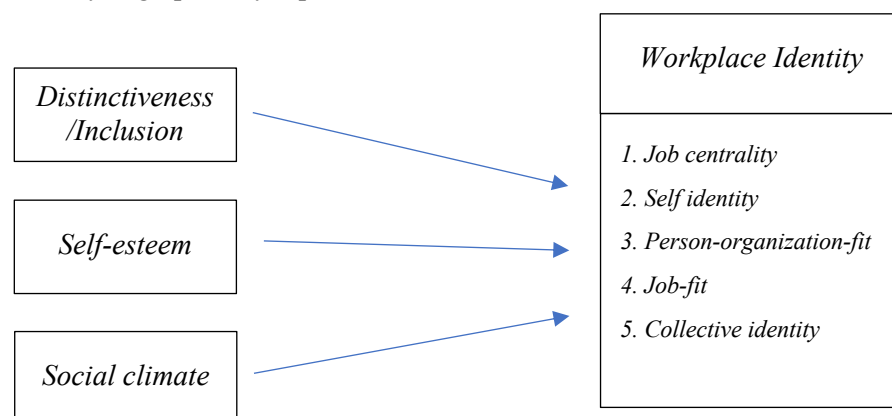


Figure 1. The hypothesized nomological model of Workplace Identity.

2. METHOD

2.1 Participants and procedure

This study involved a convenience sample of 389 Italian workers and 344 French workers, contacted throughout the snowball sampling exercise.

They filled out a self-report questionnaire, created via the platform LimeSurvey, and sent to them maintaining anonymity and obtaining prior informed consent.

Here below, there is a summary table of the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants in the two countries:

Table 8. Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants in Italy and France.

	ITALY (N = 389)	FRANCE (N = 344)
Gender	179 Females (46,02%) 210 Males (53,98%)	234 Females (68%) 110 Males (32%)
Age	Mean = 45,53 SD = 12,60 Min = 21 years old Max = 66 years old	Mean = 46,86 SD = 10,86 Min = 21 years old Max = 64 years old
Kids	204 Yes (52,4%) 185 No (47,6%)	234 Yes (68,02%) 110 No (31,98%)
Level of education	142 High school degree and other high school certificates (36,5%) 57 Bachelor's degree and other bachelor certificates (14,7%) 132 Master degree (33,9%) 41 Post-Master degree (10,5%) 17 PhD degree (4,4%)	192 High school degree and other high school certificates (55,8%) 77 Bachelor's degree and other bachelor certificates (22,4%) 75 Master degree (21,8%)
Contract	282 Open-ended contract (72,5%) 67 Fixed-term contract (17,3%) 20 Internship/Interim (5,1%) 20 Other contracts (5,1%)	263 Open-ended contract (76,5%) 31 Fixed-term contract (9%) 22 Internship/Interim (6,4%) 28 Other contracts (8,1%)
Occupational sectors	71 Industry (18,3%) 70 Commerce (18%) 44 Education and Research (11,3%)	48 Industry (14%) 48 Commerce (14%) 24 Education and Research (7%)

	32 Health (8,2%) 32 Public administration (8,2%) 33 Bank/Assurance/Finance (8,5%) 41 Communication/IT (10,5%) 66 Others (17%)	40 Health (11,6%) 51 Public administration (14,8%) 14 Bank/Assurance/Finance (4,1%) 24 Communication/IT (7%) 95 Others (27,6%)
Working mode	191 Full on site (49,1%) 21 Totally remote mode (5,4%) 177 Hybrid mode (45,5%)	157 Full on site (45,6%) 32 Totally remote mode (9,30%) 155 Hybrid mode (45,1%)

2.2 Measures

The measurement scales used in this study will now be presented. Since all the scales have been validated in English, a translation and a back-translation were performed using Brislin's method (1970) to administer them to Italian and French participants in their native languages.

Workplace Identity. Workplace identity was assessed through 16 items (items 1 and 8 were removed in both Italy and France according to confirmatory factor analysis results) from the Workplace Identity Scale (Sulphrey, 2020) composed of 5 factors which are Job Centrality, Self Identity, Person-Organization-Fit, Job Fit and Collective Identity. An example of Job Centrality was “my work is the most important aspect of my life”; for Self-Identity “I find myself as an integral part of my organization”; for Person-Organization-fit was “I consider my organization's success as my own”; for Job-fit “The work I do at my organization is meaningful” and for Collective Identity “When I talk about my organization, I often say “we”.

The items were measured with a five-point scale ranging from 1 = “Strongly Disagree” and 5 = “Strongly Agree”. Cronbach's α in this study was .93 for both countries.

Compared to other scales, this one was chosen for this study because it combines personal/professional identity aspects, which are individual and inherent to the person, as well as relational aspects that emphasize the connection between the person, his/her organization and the team work. Finally, this scale addresses organizational identity aspects, reflecting the workers' attachment to their company and shared values, considering a more “macro” and contextual aspect of identity.

Distinctiveness and inclusion. These constructs were assessed using an ad hoc scale adapted from Reysen and colleagues (2017) based on Brewer's work (1991). The 6 items (item 1 was removed from both nations) were measured with a seven-point scale ranging from 1 = “Strongly Disagree” and 7 = “Strongly Agree”. 3 items assessed the distinctiveness dimension and an example was “My organization is unique compared to other organizations” and 3 items for the inclusion construct (example of item was

“I feel included and well integrated in my organization”). Cronbach’s α in this study was .90 for Italy and .86 for France.

Self-esteem adapted to work. Self-esteem adapted to the work field was assessed by using the Rosenberg’s self-esteem scale (1965), composed of 7 items because we removed the items 3, item 5 and item 8 both for Italy and France. An example of an item was “In general, I am inclined to think that I am a failure in my work”. Participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement from 1 = “Strongly Disagree” and 4 = “Strongly Agree”. Cronbach’s α in this study was .81 for both countries.

Social Climate at work. Social climate at work was assessed using an ad hoc scale adapted from Parker and colleagues (2003) on Jones and James’s work (1979). We used 11 items from the original version (item 11 was removed from both nations) and an item example was “There is a sense of cooperation between the people I work with”. Participants were asked to indicate how often they perceived a social climate aspect at work from 1 = “Never” and 4 = “Always”. Cronbach’s α in this study was .94 for Italy and .96 for France.

Control variables. Sex (0=men, 1=woman), age, type of contract (0=temporary, 1=permanent) and work mode (0=hybrid or totally remote, 1=totally onsite) were considered as control variables in this study.

2.3 Data analysis

Firstly, several confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) to test the psychometric properties of each scale in both countries were conducted in Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 2017, version 8). Since the Workplace Identity Scale and its five factors (Sulphey, 2020) are well described in the literature and widely used in studies (Alanzi et al., 2022; Alkahtani et al., 2021), a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using maximum likelihood (ML) was directly conducted (Alamer, 2022; Flora & Flake, 2017). Secondly, descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation), α reliabilities (α – Cronbach’s α) for each scale and bi-variate correlations (Pearson’s r) between all the variables of the study also control variables were calculated using SPSS. Finally, the hypotheses of the study regarding the nomological network of workplace identity were tested by performing two SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) in Mplus, one for each country, in order to understand whether distinctiveness/inclusion, self-esteem, and social climate at work were determining factors of professional identity as represented by the five factors (Job Centrality, Self-Identity, Person-organization fit, Job-fit, and Collective-identity). The decision to keep the two models separate stems from verifying the homogeneity regarding the socio-professional characteristics of both samples and the structural invariance of the measures, but the criteria were not met.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Psychometric properties results

Results of CFA are reported in Table 9. According to a previous study (Bollen & Long, 1993) several goodness-of-fit criteria were considered: the χ^2 goodness-of-fit statistic; the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA); the Comparative Fit Index (CFI); the Tucker Lewis Index (TLI); the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Because the χ^2 is sensitive to simple size, the use of relative goodness-of-fit measures is strongly recommended (Bentler, 1990).

Overall, all the scales showed acceptable fit indices both for Italy (IT) and for France (FR), as shown below in the Table:

Table 9. Fit indices both for Italy (IT) and for France (FR).

Scales	χ^2	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
Identity IT	$\chi^2(94)=268.086^{***}$	.07	.94	.92	.05
Identity FR	$\chi^2(94)=252.300^{***}$	.07	.92	.89	.07
Distinctiveness and Inclusion IT	$\chi^2(8)=14.432$	.05	.99	.98	.03
Distinctiveness and Inclusion FR	$\chi^2(8)=16.282^*$	.06	.99	.97	.03
Self-esteem IT	$\chi^2(12)=47.799^{**}$	.09	.94	.90	.05
Self-esteem FR	$\chi^2(13)=36.854^{**}$	.07	.95	.93	.04
Climate IT	$\chi^2(44)=198.434^{**}$	.10	.92	.91	.05
Climate FR	$\chi^2(44)=174.891^{**}$	.09	.94	.92	.04

Note: $^*p<0.05$; $^{**}p<0.01$; $^{***}p<0.001$.

The Figure 2 shows the Confirmatory Factor model of the Workplace Identity among the Italian Sample. Standardized factor loadings ranged from .59 to .86.

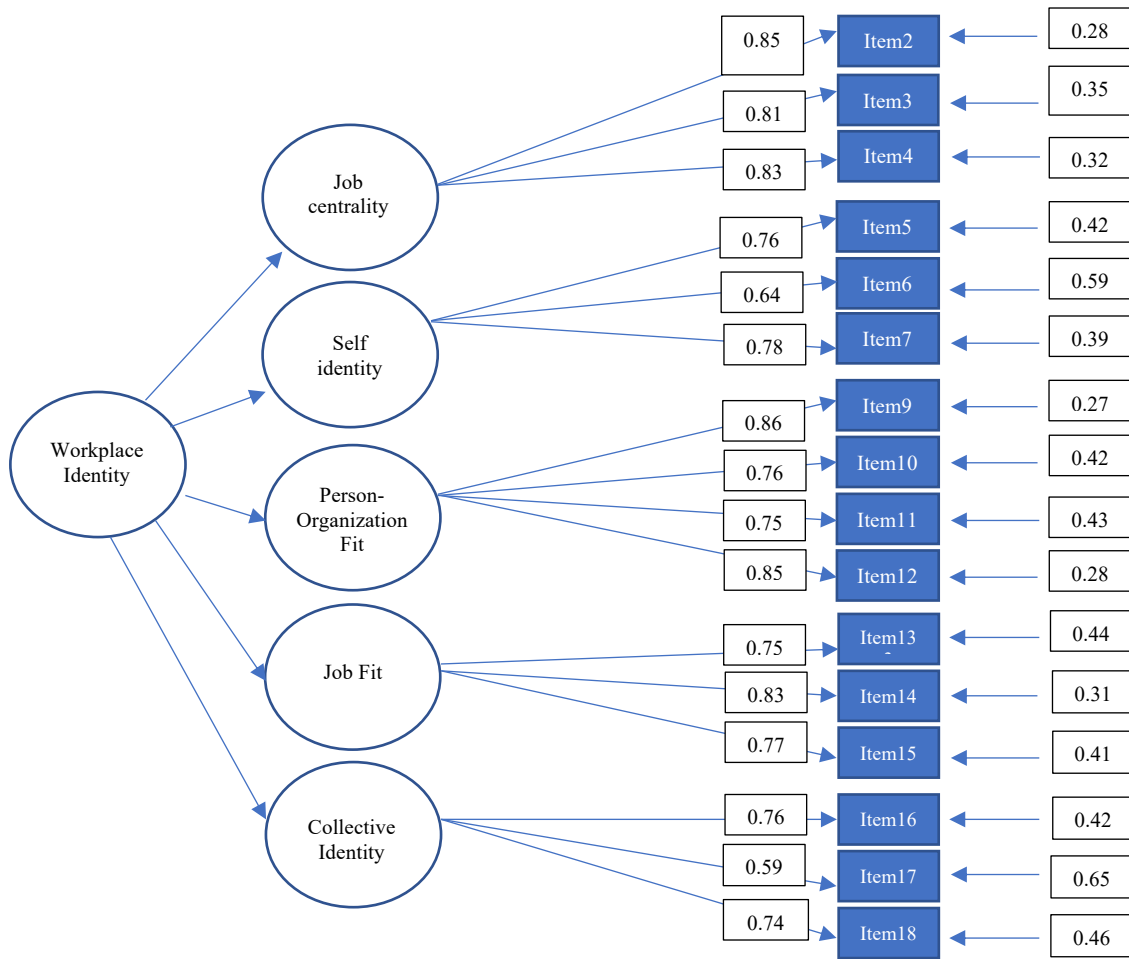


Figure 2. CFA (ML estimation) for the Workplace Identity Scale in the Italian sample. Workplace Identity composed by 5 factors (f1,f2,f3,f4,f5) and their items.

The Figure 3 shows the Confirmatory Factor model of Workplace Identity for the French sample. Standardized factor loadings ranged from .59 to .92, as Figure 2 shows.

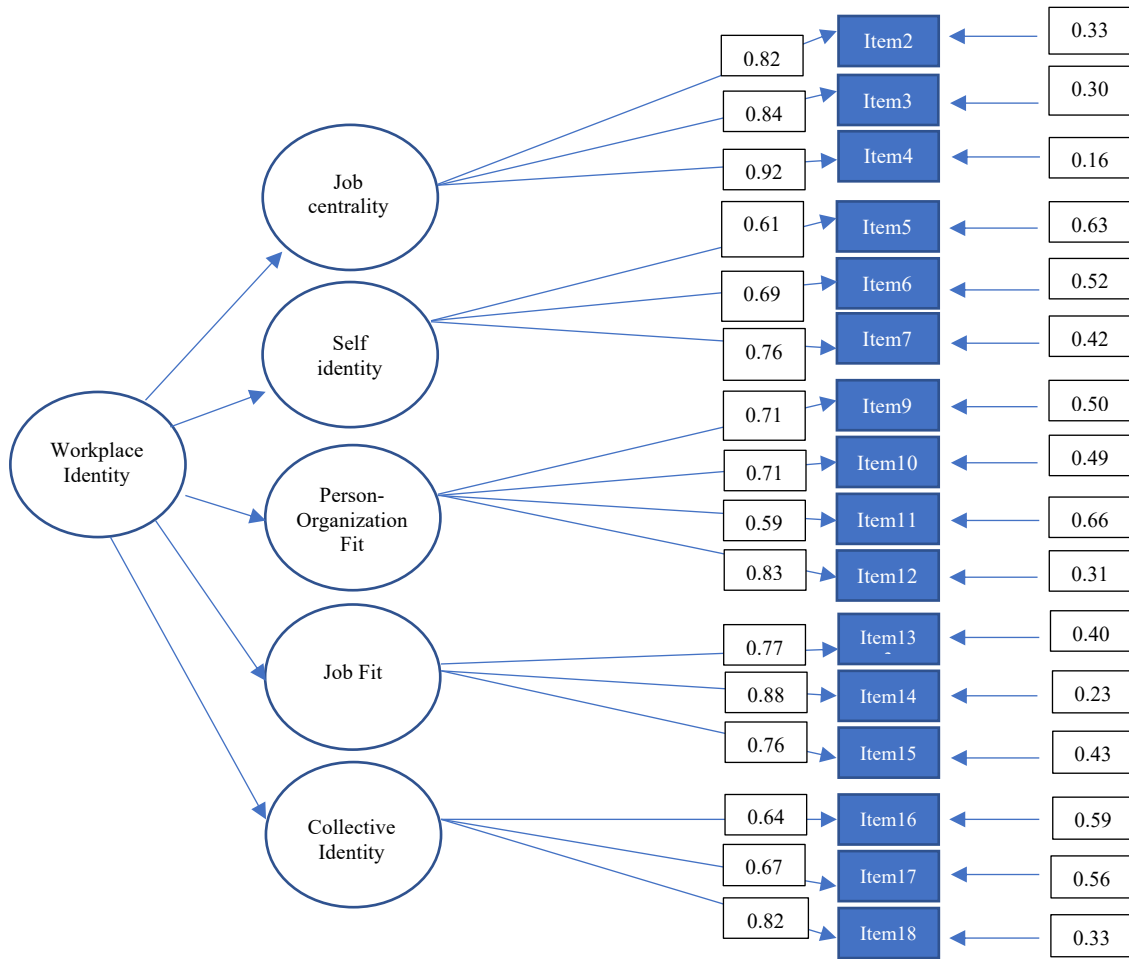


Figure 3. CFA (ML estimation) for the Workplace Identity Scale in the French sample. Workplace Identity composed by 5 factors (f1,f2,f3,f4,f5) and their items.

3.2. Descriptive statistics results and correlations

The means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations of the study variables are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations of Socio-Demo variables and the 5 dimensions of Workplace Identity.

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Sex (1=woman)	-	-	-	-.21***	-.16**	-.09	-.05	-.05	-.11*	-.04	-.09	-.07	-.09	-.07
2. Age	45.5 (46.8)	12.6 (10.9)	.01	-	.28***	.15**	.12*	.10	.18***	.13**	.14**	.10*	.23***	.16**
3. Contract type (1=open ended)	-	-	.00	.18**	-	-.13*	.03	.14**	.15**	.16**	.18***	.11*	.16**	.06
4. Work mode (1=onsite)	-	-	.16**	.22***	-.04	-	.13*	.05	.03	.01	-.02	-.01	-.03	-.05
5. Job-centrality	2.61 (2.41)	1.03 (1.08)	-.15**	-.01	-.00	-.03	-	.47***	.51***	.48***	.29***	.37***	-.01	.25***
6. Self-Identity	3.36 (5.59)	0.85 (0.83)	.05	-.09	.03	-.19***	.35**	-	.67***	.71***	.65***	.74***	.46***	.61***
7. Person-Organization-Fit	3.29 (3.28)	0.87 (0.84)	-.08	-.04	.06	-.06	.45***	.50***	-	.70***	.65***	.66***	.39***	.52***
8. Job-Fit	3.59 (3.66)	0.84 (0.86)	-.01	-.12*	.05	-.08	.41***	.66***	.56***	-	.71***	.69***	.54***	.62***
9. Collective Identity	3.71 (3.60)	0.75 (0.85)	-.07	-.05	.07	-.11*	.12*	.46***	.44***	.51***	-	.70***	.61***	.67***
10. Distinctiveness/Inclusion	4.72 (4.76)	1.20 (1.26)	-.04	-.12*	.13*	-.18**	.31***	.68***	.53***	.64***	.56***	-	.47***	.68***
11. Self Esteem	3.14 (3.21)	0.50 (0.49)	.01	.11*	.09	-.02	-.04	.50***	.25***	.44***	.37***	.36***	-	.48***
12. Social climate	3.55 (3.63)	0.73 (0.82)	-.02	-.13*	.00	-.08	.14**	.58***	.39***	.49***	.55***	.58***	.45***	-

Note. In brackets and in the part below the diagonal, there are the French sample values. In the upper part, the Italian sample values. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation.

Concerning bivariate analyses between the dimensions of workplace identity and control variables, in the Italian sample, we see that Sex is positively correlated with Person-Organization Fit ($r = -.11^*$), indicating that men tend to perceive a better fit between themselves and their organization compared to women. Additionally, there are positive correlations between age and four factors of Workplace Identity: Job Centrality ($r = .12^*$), Person-Organization Fit ($r = .18^{**}$), Job-Fit ($r = .13^{**}$), and Collective Identity ($r = .14^{**}$). This suggests that older individuals tend to report higher levels of four out of the five dimensions of Workplace Identity.

Furthermore, there is a positive correlation between the type of contract and four dimensions of Workplace Identity, suggesting that those with permanent contracts perceive greater Self Identity ($r = .14^{**}$), Person-Organization Fit ($r = .15^{**}$), Job-Fit ($r = .16^{**}$), and Collective Identity ($r = .18^{**}$). Lastly, those who work in person tend to assign more centrality to their job ($r = .13^*$) compared to those who work in a hybrid or fully remote mode.

Regarding correlations between socio-professional variables and the factors of workplace identity, in the Italian sample, we observe positive correlations with age, indicating that older people report higher perceptions of distinctiveness/inclusion ($r = .10^*$), self-esteem ($r = .23^{***}$), and social climate ($r = .16^{**}$) and as well positive correlations with the type of contract, meaning that those with an open-ended contract feel more included and that their organization is unique ($r = .11^*$) and they show as well higher levels of self-esteem ($r = .16^{**}$).

In the French sample, the correlations between gender and Job Centrality ($r = -0.15^{**}$) show that men tend to report higher levels of job centrality compared to women. This suggests that men perceive their job as being more central or important in their lives than women do.

The correlation between age and Job Fit ($r = -0.12^*$) suggests that, in the sample, older individuals tend to report slightly lower levels of job fit compared to younger individuals. This indicates that as age increases, people may feel less aligned or connected with their job.

In the dataset, there is a negative correlation between work mode and Self-Identity ($r = -0.19^{**}$), indicating that individuals who work hybrid or fully remotely tend to report higher levels of self-identity in the workplace compared to those who work in-person.

Additionally, there is a weaker negative correlation between work mode and Collective Identity ($r = -0.11^*$), surprisingly suggesting that employees working in a hybrid or full remote mode may also perceive slightly higher levels of collective identity compared to their onsite counterparts.

Similarly to the Italian sample, age results to correlate positively with higher levels of self-esteem ($r = .11^*$), but to the contrary, older people resulted to feel less included ($r = -.12^*$) and to perceive a lower quality of social climate at work ($r = -.13^*$). Furthermore, people with open-ended contract report higher feelings of distinctiveness and inclusion ($r = .13^*$). Finally, the work-mode shows a negative correlation with distinctiveness and inclusion ($r = -.18^{**}$), meaning that those in hybrid or full remote mode perceive to be more included and that their organization is unique compared to those working onsite.

To conclude, as expected, in both the Italian and the French sample the correlations between all the five dimensions of workplace identity and their factors were found positive and significant.

3.3. Nomological network models results

The fits of the two hypothesized nomological network models were found to be acceptable in both countries. For Italy: $\chi^2 (708) = 1842.085$, $p < 0.001$, RMSEA = .06, CFI = .90, TLI = 0.89, SRMR = .07. For France: $\chi^2 (709) = 1677.194$, $p < 0.001$, RMSEA = .06, CFI = .90, TLI = 0.89, SRMR = .07.

We analysed the percentages of variance explained by each model for the 5 dimensions of the Workplace Identity Scale:

	Job Centrality	Self-Identity	Person-Organization-Fit	Job-Fit	Collective Identity
Italy	17%	79%	54%	75%	100%
France	7%	81%	40%	63%	60%

The Table 11 below summarises the results obtained concerning the relationships between the variables, hypothesized in the study as components of the nomological network of workplace identity, and each of the five dimensions of workplace identity (the values in brackets refer to the French sample, those outside the brackets to the Italian sample).

Table 11. Regressions results from SEM in Italy and France.

	<i>Job Centrality</i>	<i>Self-Identity</i>	<i>Person-organization-fit</i>	<i>Job-Fit</i>	<i>Collective-Identity</i>
Distinctiveness/ Inclusion	52*** (.32***)	.79*** (.62***)	.63*** (.54***)	.54*** (.60***)	.51*** (.47***)
Self-esteem	-.12 (-.06)	.12* (.30***)	.16** (.15**)	.34*** (.33***)	.42*** (.14**)
Social climate	-.07 (-.06)	.04 (.14*)	-.00 (-.00)	.10 (-.02)	.21*** (.30***)

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

The first hypothesis supposed that distinctiveness and inclusion were one determining factor of professional identity represented by its five dimensions (Job Centrality, Self-Identity, Person-organization fit, Job-fit, and Collective-identity).

It emerges in both countries that distinctiveness and inclusion are one determining factor in all five dimensions of the Workplace Identity Scale. In particular, in Italy, there are significant results for Job Centrality ($\beta = .52$, $p < .001$), Self-Identity ($\beta = .79$, $p < .001$), Person-Organization-Fit ($\beta = .63$, $p < .001$), Job-Fit ($\beta = .54$, $p < .001$) and Collective Identity ($\beta = .51$, $p < .001$). In France, we have also significant results for the all five dimensions: Job Centrality ($\beta = .32$, $p < .001$), Self-Identity ($\beta = .62$, $p < .001$), Person-Organization-Fit ($\beta = .54$, $p < .001$), Job-Fit ($\beta = .60$, $p < .001$) and Collective Identity ($\beta = .47$, $p < .001$).

Therefore, workers who have a high sense of distinctiveness and inclusion will develop a better self-related identity, place more centrality on their work, feel a greater fit with their profession and between themselves and their organization, and feel a stronger collective identity.

Therefore, the H1 hypothesis is confirmed in both countries.

The second hypothesis supposed that self-esteem was a determining factor of professional identity represented by its five dimensions (Job Centrality, Self-Identity, Person-organization fit, Job-fit, and Collective-identity).

Differences emerge here compared to Hypothesis 1 and between countries. Self-esteem is not a determinant of Job Centrality in both Italy ($\beta = -.12$), and France ($\beta = -.06$), and has a low but still significant influence on Self-Identity ($\beta = .12$, $p < .05$), and Person Organisation Fit in Italy ($\beta = .15$, $p < .01$), and Person Organisation Fit ($\beta = .15$, $p < .01$), and Collective Identity ($\beta = .14$, $p < .01$), in France. In contrast, self-esteem seems to be a determinant and significant factor for Job Fit ($\beta = .34$, $p < .001$), and Collective Identity ($\beta = .42$, $p < .001$), in Italy and for Self-Identity ($\beta = .30$, $p < .001$), and Job Fit ($\beta = .33$, $p < .001$), in France.

Thus, these results suggest that, in the Italian sample, a worker with high self-esteem will feel a greater fit with their job and perceive a stronger collective identity. In the French sample, however, self-esteem leads to a greater self-definition and, as in the Italian sample, contributes to a greater perception of fit with their job.

Hypothesis 2, therefore, is partially confirmed.

The third hypothesis supposed that social climate at work was a determining factor of professional identity represented by its five dimensions (Job Centrality, Self-Identity, Person-organization fit, Job-fit, and Collective-identity).

Regarding the results related to the social climate at work, it emerges that this is a determining factor of collective identity both in Italy ($\beta = .21, p < .001$), and France ($\beta = .30, p < .001$), and also, albeit with a weak but significant relationship, of Self-identity ($\beta = .14, p < .05$) in France.

So, H3 was not totally supported.

4. DISCUSSION

The concept of professional identity is studied in the scientific literature by various authors who highlight its benefits on workers' behaviours and organizational variables. For example, a worker with a strong professional identity improves their performance (Brown & Bimrose, 2018), is more engaged at work (Sandhya & Sulphrey, 2020), and is less likely to leave the company (Hegde, 2016). The results of the study show that professional identity is a multidimensional and multifaceted concept (Sulphrey, 2020) that allows the worker to clearly position themselves in their work environment, better understand their role, who they are as a professional, the type of fit they have with their job and company, and the collective identity they can create with supervisors and colleagues. While literature tends to emphasize that identity enhances performance, this study aims to highlight that it also profoundly influences the worker's ability to position themselves more clearly within the work context.

The results indicate that perceptions of the distinctiveness of one's organization and the feeling of being a part of it feeling included are a crucial factor for a worker to develop a clearer concept of themselves as a professional with a strong workplace identity. This helps them feel that their work and organization fit well with who they are, consider their job as a central and integral part of themselves, and feel included and belonging to a work group, thereby strengthening their social identity.

These results in both countries (France and Italy) are in line with scientific studies that emphasize the importance for workers to recognize that their organization is unique and valuable, while at the same time, fostering a sense of belonging and the ability to create a strong connection with the work environment and the organization itself (Reysen et al., 2017; Riemenschneider & Armstrong, 2021).

Regarding the concept of self-esteem and identity, the results do not indicate that self-esteem is a determining factor, in either country, for the centrality assigned to work. This contrasts with the literature that links self-esteem to greater work commitment and the centrality of work in the professional's life (Stets & Cast, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2014). This can be explained by research conducted in Europe (especially in Italy and France) which shows that work is not assigned great importance and that there are no significant relationships between self-esteem and the centrality assigned to work (Davoine & Méda, 2010).

Both in the Italian sample, and in the French one, personal esteem is a determining factor for the fit with one's job and collective identity. This is also highlighted by some studies which show that having strong self-esteem and a clear self-concept helps workers identify the job that best fits their needs

and skills, thereby increasing their job satisfaction and commitment (Stets & Cast, 2007; Stets & Burke, 2014).

In the Italian sample, it also emerges that self-esteem is a determining factor linked to collective identity.

The stronger people's self-esteem, the more they seek validation of their worth within their groups and remain in these groups to enhance and maintain the positive image they already have of themselves (Stets & Serpe, 2013).

Having high self-esteem allows workers to understand the professional and social skills they can contribute to their work group, developing functional work relationships. This enables them to feel part of an organizational group and to continuously redefine the self in a dialectical process where "I" and "we" are constantly reshaped (Melucci, 1995).

In the French sample, it emerges that personal self-esteem is a determining factor in constructing self-identity.

Indeed, having a good self-concept allows the worker to define themselves in terms of capabilities, values (Hitlin, 2003), morals (Stets & Carter, 2012), and personality traits (Stets & Burke, 2014). The more a person can assess themselves as worthy and competent, the stronger their self-concept will be (Brown, 2004; Motallebzadeh & Kazemi, 2018).

In both the Italian and French samples, it emerges that the social climate at work is a determining factor for constructing a collective identity.

These results are consistent with studies in the literature: indeed, if a worker perceives mutual assistance, support, and a sense of collaboration with supervisors and colleagues, they will feel a sense of belonging to a relational and organizational reality. This will increase their sense of belonging and strengthen their social/collective identity (Pagliaro et al., 2018).

Moreover, perceiving a positive work climate among colleagues and a sense of support fosters a "shared" social identity that aids individual members of the work group in defining themselves through roles, behaviors, and attitudes (Zhang et al., 2020).

In summary, this study not only confirms some of the insights from existing literature but also introduces new perspectives, especially regarding the complexity of professional identity and cultural variations in the importance of self-esteem and social climate. These findings provide a valuable contribution to a more nuanced and contextualized understanding of how identity develops and manifests in workplace settings.

4.1 Limitations

This study has several limitations.

First of all, the convenience sampling method may introduce sample bias as participants are not selected randomly and may not adequately represent the broader population, thus restricting the generalizability of our findings.

Another limitation concerns the reliance on self-reported data, which introduces the possibility of common method bias. Future studies could address this issue by incorporating objective measures, such as data collected from alternate sources within organizations, such as colleagues or supervisors, to assess employees' attitudes and performance more comprehensively.

Moreover, this study does not reveal significant differences between Italy and France. Hence, future research is needed to understand potential similarities and divergences between the two countries, across which dimensions, and to comprehend these differences from a cultural perspective.

In future studies, one could consider using diaries or conducting longitudinal research to understand the evolution of professional identity over time in relation to the variables already considered or incorporating new ones.

4.2 Theoretical and practical implications

Despite its limitations, this study has important implications, both at the level of scientific research and at the practical level for companies.

Regarding theoretical implications, the nomological network of professional identity allows us to see which dimensions are connected to it and how they relate to it, enabling us to understand the dimensions that determine a specific construct.

In addition, these results are important as they can be considered as a contribution in delving into and expanding the research of professional identity, distinctiveness/inclusion, self-esteem and social climate at work, considering that it could be important to value individual and professional aspects with relational and organizational ones.

Concerning the practical implications, these results indicate that to achieve individual and organizational well-being, companies need to focus on strengthening all aspects that contribute to determining workers' professional identity. To boost employee engagement and performance, organizations should focus on cultivating a supportive, collaborative workplace where everyone feels part of the professional community. It's essential to acknowledge and appreciate employees' skills and efforts, while also promoting their self-confidence through regular constructive feedback and open communication.

This suggests that maintaining a positive relationship between supervisors and employees could positively influence organisational commitment in which both organization and staff engage in a positive and mutual relationship in which there is collaboration, support and satisfaction (Zhao et al., 2019).

Furthermore, this study suggests that managers should create a greater sense of inclusion through both formal and informal moments, making professionals feel a sense of belonging and value in the workplace. For instance, implementing policies and best practices that foster inclusion and create a collaborative work environment (Chung et al., 2020).

STUDY 3

Exploration of Meaning-Making Processes: A Weekly Analysis of the Differentiation between On-Site Work and Telework through a Diary Study

Objectives –The objective is to explore and understand whether and how people modify their meaning related to work during a work week. Specifically, because in the New Normal they must experience changes in work modalities over the days, it would be interesting to observe whether the meaning remains unchanged or changes over time and depending on the work modes.

Design/Methodology – A general questionnaire and a specific questionnaire were developed to create diaries for 41 workers (aged between 25 and 65 years) with a mixed work mode. Initially, they answered (via the LimeSurvey Platform) a baseline questionnaire that included personal variables and the Meaning of Work Inventory containing four dimensions (*Inventaire du sens du travail - IST*, Arnoux-Nicolas et al., 2017).

Subsequently, the 41 subjects completed diaries questionnaires composed of a 4-items reduced version of the IST, one item representing each dimension, for five consecutive days at the end of each workday, whether working in-person or remotely (resulting in a total of 41 general questionnaires and 205 completed diaries over a duration of 5 days). Data analysis is performed using SPSS to investigate the base and daily level of meaning of work and differences in the means of meaning of work according to the work mode. A Latent Growth Model is used in Mplus to model change in meaning of work during the course of a work week.

Results – Results show that globally the base level of the four dimensions of meaning of work correlates with daily measurements of meaning of work. Despite no differences in daily meaning of work on the base of the same day work mode are found, differences in the means of the meaning of work of some days of the week based on the work mode of some previous days in the week are observed. In fact, results of variance analyses showed some effects of the work mode of Monday (day1) and of Wednesday (day3) on the meaning of work of some days after. Specifically, those working remotely on Monday reported higher levels of meaning of work on the day after, Tuesday, and at the end of the week, on Friday. Furthermore, those working remotely on Wednesday reported also higher levels of meaning of work on Friday. Finally, results from the Latent Growth Model of meaning of work highlight a downward trend of meaning attributed to work during the working week for the subjects of our sample.

Limitations – This study has several limitations. The first is methodological in nature: to investigate daily meaning, we selected one item for each factor of the original meaning of work scale including four factors, for a total of 4 items, which may not be exhaustive in exploring the different dimensions of meaning. The second limitation concerns time: we investigated work-related meaning over a period of

5 days, which may not be sufficient to observe significant fluctuations. Another limitation relies on not having considering other factors, in addition to the work mode, that could affect fluctuations in meaning of work during the week. Concerning the sample, other than its relatively small size that does not permit to generalise our results, hybrid workers who participated in this study did not report the same number of days working remotely nor the same alternation between remote and onsite working days during the week. In addition, we investigated the effect of the work mode of each single day on the meaning attributed to work the subsequent days, without controlling for the work mode of those same days. Considering that each participant completed the diary at the end of the work day, this represents an important limitation and a possible bias for our results. Finally, a last limitation could be related to participant motivation: asking them to respond to a daily questionnaire, even if short, might impact their motivation to participate.

Theoretical and practical implications - From a theoretical standpoint, this is one of the first studies that explore the concept of work meaning over a temporal span. Results seem to show that meaning of work is not a stable and static concept and it evolves over time. Therefore, studying work meaning appears to be particularly important, especially in light of the importance that meaning of work has on work outcomes and of all the changes brought about by New Normal. Researchers should continue exploring how the meaning of work fluctuates over time, while also examining the factors that can impact this sense of meaning. On a practical level, organizations can implement training programs to help employees grasp the significance of meaningful work and offer coaching that allows them to directly engage with the motivational elements that foster a deeper sense of purpose in their roles (Shapiro et al. 2007).

Originality/Value – This study contributes to the understanding of work-related meaning, not as a contingent response to an event, but as a process over the course of a work week, to understand if and how it evolves over time and if it does change according to work modes.

Keywords – *diary study, meaning-making processes, meaning of work, hybrid work*

1. INTRODUCTION

For several decades now, companies have been increasingly interested in the concept of meaningful work and recognizing its importance for both employee well-being and organizational health (Morin, 2008). The New Normal period has brought considerable changes to the work environment, necessitating a focus not only on production processes but also on how individuals perceive and find meaning in their work (Steger et al., 2012).

The concept of "meaningful work" is not uniform but can be defined either as a subjective experience (Rosso et al., 2010), as the qualitative value of what is important and positive for a person in relation to their work (Steger et al., 2012), or as a professional experience that gives meaning to other life contexts outside of work (Bernaud et al., 2015).

The definition of meaningful work underlying this study assumes that meaning is a multidimensional construct and should therefore be studied in its entirety (Arnoux-Nicolas et al., 2016). It includes Importance of Work, Work Purpose, Work Direction and Work Comprehension.

Additionally, meaning is situated within a reflective and interpretative process in which workers are active participants (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). Meaning is not stable by nature but is a dimension that changes over time depending on events and contexts (Van den Heuvel et al., 2009), making it important to study this process within a continuously evolving organizational context. It is not an immediate or automatic process, but rather one that starts from a conscious reflection on what the individual feels, their belonging context, and their personal values, goals, and meanings (Weick et al., 2005).

It has been noted how this period, referred to as the New Normal, has been characterized by changes in work methods, interactions, and practices, to the extent that work can now be considered more as something a person does and produces, rather than a place they go to (Bean & Eisenberg, 2006).

1.1 Factors That Promote Meaningful Work Processes

From a literature review (Einwiller et al., 2021; Gandal et al., 2005; Grant, 2008; Spurk & Straub, 2020), it emerges that the processes of constructing meaning derive from multiple sources: those related to the self, the work itself, work relationships, and the organizational context.

1.1.1 Sources Related to the Self

Some authors argue that the aspects that make up the self are crucial in constructing meaning, including values, motivations, and beliefs about work. For example, if one's profession aligns with their values and beliefs, it is more likely that the individual will assign a positive meaning to their work because it aligns more with the self (Gandal et al., 2005). Moreover, the more intrinsic the motivation for work is, and thus the more a person works because it is gratifying, the more significant their profession will be considered (Sheldon et al., 2003).

For example, one line of research posits that intrinsic motivation arises from the anticipated alignment between an individual's self-concept and a specific activity (Deci & Ryan, 2012). This explanation implies that intrinsic motivation is fueled by perceptions of interest or satisfaction in the work (Cardador et al., 2006). Other authors disagree with these perspectives because they do not take into account extrinsic aspects that can create meaning in work. In this regard, Gandal and colleagues (2005) argue that work meaning is activated following career advancements or financial rewards received for one's work.

1.1.2 Sources Related to the Work Itself

Regarding the work itself, meaningful work derives from constructs such as the centrality and importance of one's work (Paullay et al., 1994), the understanding of one's tasks (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003), and how well one's profession aligns with their ethics and morals (Ciulla, 2011). Some research suggests that clear, challenging tasks and high levels of autonomy produce more meaningful work experiences compared to simple, repetitive tasks with a lack of decision-making autonomy on how to complete the work (Grant, 2008). To create a positive meaning at work, tasks must be significant to the person and must influence the work of others (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Job crafting, where employees proactively shape and redefine their roles to better align with their strengths and interests, can also enhance the meaningfulness of work by increasing task variety, autonomy, and personal significance (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). In conclusion, the more workers can decide how to perform their tasks, the more they will feel like an active and determining subject in their organization. This contributes to increasing meaning because autonomy, decision-making processes, and the testing of one's skills are developed (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003).

1.1.3 Relational Sources

A second area, related to relational sources, describes how meaningful work derives from the interactions and relationships that people can establish with others at work. Analyzing relational aspects, the processes of constructing meaning are facilitated by the motivation to create bonds with colleagues (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), the perception of support (Spurk & Straub, 2020), to have a mentor (Kennet & Lomas, 2015), the feeling of receiving necessary information from one's work team (Heide & Simonsson, 2019), and accurate and direct communication (Einwiller et al., 2021). According to some scholars, the workplace itself becomes important in creating meaning attributed to one's work. For example, working in a physical space alongside colleagues improves the quality of interactions with them and provides a model of conduct to know how to behave appropriately at work (Dutton & Ragins, 2007). This would result in a greater perception of being part of a context, feeling capable and supported (Rosso et al., 2010). Managers appear to have an important role in the sense-making processes of their employees. They define the mission, set the goals, and influence the way to achieve them. Therefore, the clearer the leader is in clarifying work objectives and communicating them as a common mission,

the more they will push employees to attribute meaning to what they do in the name of a shared purpose (Bono & Judge, 2003).

1.1.4 Organizational Sources

The company and its values are also crucial in the processes of meaning. Indeed, the more employees feel part of their organization and perceive congruence with its missions, values, and ideologies (Besharov, 2008), the stronger the meaning attributed to their work will be. However, this congruence can also become a double-edged sword because when the worker no longer perceives it or perceives it to a lesser extent, they may experience a diminished sense of work and believe that the context is no longer as significant for the self (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003).

1.2 Meaning-Making processes and related outcomes

In the previous paragraph, the factors that can influence the processes of meaningful work were described. Now, the possible outcomes of meaningful work will be considered.

In this regard, some studies in the literature suggest that meaning can be considered a personal resource, an aspect of the self-linked to resilience, personal efficacy, optimism, and the perception of control and adaptation to changes (Luthans et al., 2007). Therefore, the more a worker can view their work context positively, the more resilient and adaptable they will be (Avey et al., 2008; Van den Heuvel et al., 2009), which can mean an ability to adapt to new work modes or even new configurations of professional spaces.

In this context, we can connect meaning to coping abilities (Folkman, 2008), as a positive reinterpretation of a changing work environment and a perception of being able to successfully cope with what is happening. Moreover, studying meaningful work is important because it appears to be connected to other variables in the professional field. For example, a study by Georgellis and colleagues (2012) showed that the more workers find meaning in their professional tasks, the more satisfied and professionally engaged they will be. In this regard, the construction of work meaning seems to be connected to work engagement in the dimension of dedication (Bakker et al., 2008). Indeed, attributing meaning to one's work enables greater dedication and engagement in performing it (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007).

Other studies speak of increased well-being (Helgeson et al., 2006) at work if people can find deep and positive meaning in their workdays. Many studies link meaning with change: people who can find meaning in their work and the changes occurring in their professional context are more capable of understanding why change is necessary, motivating them to perform better and put more effort into their tasks (Van den Heuvel et al., 2009). In this case, meaning processes can be defined as motivational aspects.

1.3 Processes of Meaningful Work Over Time

It has been noted that constructing meaningful work is a process and, therefore, involves continuous evolution and modification over time depending on the work context and its changes. Some studies emphasize that not only are people motivated to seek meaning in their work (Kashdan et al., 2004), but that the search for work meaning on one day of the week leads to an active pursuit of meaning and motivation on subsequent days (May et al., 2004; Spreitzer et al., 2005). As a result, people will perceive themselves as more vital, having more work agency, and with a greater sense of having learned something new during the day (Niessen et al., 2012).

Other research focuses on the importance for workers to create, day by day, working conditions based on their needs because this will lead to greater meaning attributed to their work and a tendency to reflect actively in a constantly evolving professional environment (Petrou et al., 2017).

The context of crisis in old frameworks and the necessity to rebuild new work models, as highlighted by Coibion et al. (2020), makes it crucial to understand if and how the sense of work changes over the days depending on different work modalities and space reconfigurations. Additionally, this destabilization demands individual reflection on the self and one's meaning-making processes to rediscover a sense of purpose in what one does (de Becdelièvre & Grima, 2020).

Some authors have defined the post-pandemic period as a "career shock" (Blokker et al., 2019; Lysova et al., 2019) that compels people to redefine the meaning attributed to their profession and career trajectories. The long-term effects of these meaning-making processes can be manifold (de Becdelièvre & Grima, 2020):

1. **Confirmation of meaning:** This includes workers who already attributed significant and positive meaning to their work before the New Normal. The internal changes have only reinforced their work-related meaning.
2. **Disruption of work meaning:** For some workers, the changes post-Covid have not allowed them to establish a new sense of their profession. Here, the career shock has prevented the formation of new meaning, adaptation to the new context, and modification of previous frameworks.
3. **Questioning of meaning:** All the changes in the work context allow workers to find a new meaning, previously unknown. In this case, the worker tries to reflect on their work and align it with their values or new values rediscovered in the New Normal.
4. **Revelation of meaning:** In this scenario, the workers' reaction to the career shock is positive. The changes push them to find new meanings, new positive aspects of their work, and this reflection becomes an adaptation to a new reality, imposing continuous introspective processes of meaning-making.

In general, it emerges that workers' responses to changes in the New Normal have been varied: on one side, there are those who have more difficulty coping with the modifications in the world of work

and seek a certain stability; on the other side, there are those who have taken this period as an opportunity for reflection and adaptation.

From the analysis of the scientific literature mentioned above, it is clear that the processes of meaning are not static but evolve over time, depending on contexts, events, and individuals' capacity to cope with new restructurings. Understanding these changes is important because it illuminates how workers find and maintain their sense of work and how it evolves over time. This is crucial for organizations and managers to create better work environments and promote effective initiatives, ensuring that companies and employees' needs and expectations are aligned.

Therefore, the hypothesis of this study is as follows:

H1. Over the course of a week of work in different modalities, the perception of meaning of work will not be stable but will evolve and change over time depending on work mode.

2. METHOD

2.1 Participants and procedure

This study involved a convenience sample of 41 Italian workers selected on the base of mixed work modality and contacted throughout the snowball sampling exercise.

Initially, they filled-out (via the LimeSurvey Platform) a baseline questionnaire, in which they provided socio-demographical information and they answered on the general level of measured variables (identity, meaning of work, self-esteem, recovery and so on). Subsequently, the 41 subjects completed diaries for five consecutive days at the end of each workday, whether working in-person or remotely (resulting in a total of 41 general questionnaires and 205 completed diaries over a duration of 5 days). 41 workers were contacted, and all of them responded to the general questionnaire as well as to all the daily diaries for 5 consecutive days (100% response rate). The choice was made to observe only one week to determine if there were significant fluctuations in terms of meaning within such a short time frame.

Here below, there is a summary table of the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants:

Table 12. Socio-demographic characteristics of the Italian participants.

	Italian Workers (N = 41)
Gender	20 Females (48,8%) 21 Males (51,2%)
Age	Mean = 34,81 SD = 9,88

	Min = 25 years old Max = 71 years old
Kids	8 Yes (19,5%) 33 No (80,5%)
Level of education	7 High school degree (17,1%) 6 Bachelor's degree (14,63%) 16 Master degree (39%) 9 Post-Master degree (21,95%) 3 PhD degree (7,32%)
Contract	25 Open-ended contract (60,98%) 7 Fixed-term contract (17,1%) 1 Internship/Interim (2,41%) 8 Other contracts (19,51%)
Working mode	1 Full on site (2,44%) 1 Totally remote mode (2,44%) 39 Hybrid mode (95,12%)

Regarding the alternation of in-person and remote work days, 19 workers (46.3%) had the autonomy to choose their schedule, while for the remaining 22 workers (53.7%), it was a decision made by the company.

For 19 workers (46.3%), the company decided the number of days they could work remotely, while for the remaining 22 workers (53.7%), it was their own free choice.

2.2 Measures

Seen that we wanted to investigate the meaning of work, the scale used in this study, about this dimension, will now be presented. Since the scale have been validated in French, a translation and a back-translation were performed using Brislin's method (1970) to administer them to Italian participants in their native languages.

2.2.1 General questionnaire

Meaning of work - this dimension was assessed using the Meaning of Work Inventory (*Inventaire du sens du travail – IST*) created by Arnoux-Nicolas and colleagues (2016). It is a self-administered questionnaire that measures work meaning across four factors: importance of work (items 3-5-10-13, one example of item: "I find my job personally enriching", Cronbach's α is .87), work comprehension

(items 1-2-9, one example: "I have a good understanding of the usefulness of my work", Cronbach's α is .75), work direction (items 4-7-8, an example: "My work has a clear and precise direction", Cronbach's α is .75), and work purpose (items 6-11-12-14-15-17, Cronbach's α is .80), example: "I sometimes think that my work doesn't serve much purpose"). All the scores of these different dimensions provides a general indicator of work meaning. This inventory consists of 17 items, each with a seven-point Likert scale. Participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" and 7 = "Strongly Agree".

2.2.2 Diary survey data

Daily perceived meaning at work - It was assessed using the short version of the Work Meaning Inventory created by Arnoux-Nicolas and colleagues (2016), by selecting one item for each factor. Examples of the selected items are: "I find that my work today has been personally rewarding" (Importance of Work), "It seems to me that my work today has added very little to my life" (Work Purpose), "I think the work I did today has given meaning to my life" (Work Direction), "the goals I had to achieve today in my work were challenging and meaningful" (Work Comprehension). This short version scale is composed of 4 items, each with a seven-point Likert scale. Participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" and 7 = "Strongly Agree". Cronbach's α in this study ranged from .90 to .94 (M=.92)

2.3 Data analysis

Diary studies allow for the investigation and understanding of changes in certain variables over time (Bolger et al., 2003). In this study, the aim was to examine how work meaning of work changes over the course of a week of hybrid work using a Latent Growth Model approach (Meredith & Tisak, 1990), which explores changes over time in selected variables for a specific sample. Since work meaning is a variable that changes over time, it is assumed that there will be fluctuations in this dimension during a work week.

We estimated growth parameters using a random slope (Type = Random) with Maximum Likelihood (ML) and 5,000 bootstrap estimates. Additionally, we used the Algorithm = Integration option in the Analysis command to break down the covariance matrix of the continuous latent variables and the residual covariance matrix of the observed variables into orthogonal components. This approach aimed to improve the optimization of the latent growth model (Muthén and Muthén, 2012). We wanted to explore the trajectory of meaning of work during a week of hybrid work in a specific context, called the New Normal. We expected to see either an increase or a decrease in the meaning of work, therefore we modelled its change linearly (Ferrie et al., 2002).

Data analyses regarding the factor structure of meaning of work and the assessment of change were performed through MPLUS 8.0 (Muthén and Muthén, 2017).

Firstly, five different CFA analyses were performed to test the factor structure of each daily measure of meaning of work, from Monday (day1) to Friday (day5).

Here below a table that shows the fit indices of the meaning of work, in the Italian sample for each day.

Table 13. Fit indices both of the meaning of work, in the Italian sample for 5 days.

Measure	χ^2	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
CFA Meaning of Work Day 1	$\chi^2(2)=2.350$	0.07	1.00	0.99	0.02
CFA Meaning of Work Day 2	$\chi^2(2)= 1.670$	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.02
CFA Meaning of Work Day 3	$\chi^2(2)= 23.497^{***}$	0.51	0.82	0.46	0.03
CFA Meaning of Work Day 4	$\chi^2(2)= 0.957$	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.01
CFA Meaning of Work Day 5	$\chi^2(2)= 6.021 *$	0.22	0.96	0.87	0.03

Note: $*p<0.05$; $***p<0.001$;

Secondly, to model linear change in meaning of work, the factor loadings for each variable at each time point were fixed at 0,1,2,3 and 4 for the day1 to day5 (MOW_Day1-MOW_Day5). Day one was fixed as the intercept (0) to represent the first measurement occasion.

The study then modelled the change in meaning of work, accounting for time-structured variability both within and between individuals using a second-order intercept and slope. This approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis of how meaning of work evolves over time across individuals.

Model fit was evaluated using the AIC and BIC fit indices, which are comparative measures of fit according to Kenny (2015). They are particularly meaningful when comparing different models, with lower values indicating better fit. The model with the lowest AIC and BIC was considered the most appropriate.

The average meaning of work for the sample on day one is represented by the intercept mean, while the variance of the intercept captures the extent of individual differences in meaning of work on day one. This analysis provides insight into the initial state of meaning of work among participants.

The average daily rate of change in meaning of work for the sample is indicated by the slope mean, with a positive mean suggesting an increase over time and a negative mean indicating a decrease. This metric helps to understand the overall trend in meaning of work over the study period.

Lastly, the variance of the slope represents intra-individual differences in the rate of change in meaning of work (Gross et al., 2013). This highlights variability in how individuals experience changes in meaning of work over time.

3. RESULTS

Descriptive statistics, correlations and variance analyses were firstly performed using SPSS 25.

Several Student's t-tests were performed in order to compare the means of each daily measure of meaning of work, from Monday to Friday, on the basis of the work mode (on-site or remote) of the same day and of previous days.

Table 14. Descriptive statistics of MOW (Meaning of Work) for each working day in the two work modes (On site and remote).

	N = 41	M	DS
1. MOW_On site_Day 1	24	4.38	1.48
2. MOW_Remote_Day 1	17	4.44	1.32
3. MOW_On site_Day 2	22	4.00	1.24
4. MOW_Remote_Day 2	19	3.90	1.85
5. MOW_On site_Day 3	21	4.31	1.68
6. MOW_Remote_Day 3	20	4.33	1.53
7. MOW_On site_Day 4	27	4.37	1.66
8. MOW_Remote_Day 4	14	4.36	1.55
9. MOW_On site_Day 5	24	3.99	1.54
10. MOW_Remote_Day 5	17	4.05	1.71

Note. N = The number of respondents on-site and teleworking for each day among the 41 participants.

Table 15. Correlations between the four dimensions of Meaning of Work and the Meaning of work of each single day during the work week.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Work importance_Base	(.87)								
2. Work comprehension_Base	.64***	(.75)							
3. Work direction_Base	.55***	.65***	(.75)						
4. Work purpose_Base	.55***	.82***	.60***	(.80)					
5. Meaning at work_Day1	.67***	.43**	.32*	.42**	(.90)				
6. Meaning at work_Day2	.42**	.25	.18	.20	.42**	(.92)			
7. Meaning at work_Day3	.61***	.30	.50**	.23	.60***	.30	(.94)		
8. Meaning at work_Day4	.54***	.34*	.42**	.30	.69***	.16	.58***	(.92)	
9. Meaning at work_Day5	.52***	.23	.18	.18	.34*	.48**	.52***	.46**	(.93)

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$; Values in brackets are internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha).

Here below, five Tables that show the differences of the Meaning at work in relation to the work mode (On site-Remote) for each Day.

Table 16. Independent Sample test using Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, in both work modes (Day 1).

	ModeDay1	M	SD	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Meaning_Day1	On site	4.37	1.48	.253	.618	-.147	39	.884
	Remote	4.44	1.31			-.150	36.893	.881
Meaning_Day2	On site	3.56	1.49	.128	.722	-2.040	39	.048
	Remote	4.5	1.44			-2.052	35.337	.048
Meaning_Day3	On site	4.39	1.54	.567	.456	.373	39	.711
	Remote	4.20	1.68			.367	32.689	.716
Meaning_Day4	On site	4.38	1.57	.700	.408	.092	39	.927
	Remote	4.33	1.68			.091	33.126	.928
Meaning_Day5	On site	3.42	1.41	.001	.970	-3.004	39	.005
	Remote	4.80	1.50			-2.973	33.300	.005

Table 17. Independent Sample test using Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, in both work modes (Day 2).

	ModeDay2	M	SD	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Meaning_Day2	On site	4.00	1.23	10.369	.003	.190	39	.850
	Remote	3.90	1.84			.185	30.756	.855
Meaning_Day3	On site	4.23	1.52	.793	.379	-.336	39	.738
	Remote	4.40	1.70			-.333	36.501	.741
Meaning_Day4	On site	4.20	1.53	.543	.465	-.688	39	.496
	Remote	4.55	1.70			-.683	36.630	.499
Meaning_Day5	On site	3.72	1.46	.989	.326	-1.188	39	.242
	Remote	4.31	1.70			-1.174	35.779	.248

Table 18. Independent Sample test using Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, in both work modes (Day 3).

	ModeDay3	M	SD	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Meaning_Day3	On site	4.30	1.68	.288	.595	-.031	39	.976
	Remote	4.32	1.52			-.031	38,918	.976
Meaning_Day4	On site	4.33	1.71	.329	.570	-.131	39	.896
	Remote	4.40	1.52			-.132	38,813	.896
Meaning_Day5	On site	3.33	1.50	.381	.541	-3.017	39	.004
	Remote	4.70	1.39			-3.023	38,973	.004

Table 19. Independent Sample test using Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, in both work modes (Day 4).

	ModeDay4	M	SD	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Meaning_Day4	On site	4.37	1.66	.025	.874	.025	39	.980
	Remote	4.35	1.55			.025	28,055	.980
Meaning_Day5	On site	3.74	1.62	.538	.468	-1.471	39	.149
	Remote	4.34	1.48			-1.531	29,513	.136

Table 20. Independent Sample test using Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, in both work modes (Day 5).

	ModeDay5	M	SD	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Meaning_Day5	On site	3.98	1.53	.301	.587	-.049	39	.961
	Remote	4.01	1.70			-.048	32,260	.962

Results of correlations between base level dimensions of meaning of work and daily measurements of meaning of work are the following: base work importance has the strongest correlation with the meaning given to work on Monday ($r = .67^{***}$) and shows positive and significant correlations as well with all the other days of the week (ranging from $.42^{**}$ to $.67^{***}$), suggesting that the general importance someone attributes to his/her work is associated with positive meanings attributed to work during the week.

Base work comprehension shows a significant correlation with the meaning attributed to work on Monday ($r = .43^{**}$) and Thursday ($r = .34^{*}$).

Base work direction has moderate and significant correlations with daily perceptions of the meaning of work at the beginning and at the middle of the week, on Monday ($r = .32^{*}$), on Wednesday ($r = .50^{**}$) and Thursday ($r = .42^{**}$), indicating that subjects who are able to attribute a clearer general direction to their work tend to report higher meaning attributed to work during their work week.

Base work purpose shows significant correlations with meaning of work on Monday ($r = .42^{**}$), suggesting that those who attribute a purpose to their work at a general level find their work more meaningful at the beginning of a work week.

The T-test results on differences in daily means of meaning of work according to the correspondent day work mode (for example, work mode of Day1 Monday, in presence or remote, and meaning of work of Day1 Monday and so on) are not significant. However, T-test results indicate that there is a greater meaning of work on Day 2, Tuesday, if the person worked remotely on Day 1, Monday [$t(39) = -2.05$, $p = 0.048$]. In addition, there is the same result concerning the Day5, Friday: there is an augmented meaning of work on Day 5 if the person worked remotely on Day 1 [$t(39) = -2.97$, $p = 0.005$]. Additionally, there is a greater sense of work on Day 5 if the person worked remotely on Day 3, Wednesday [$t(39) = -3.02$, $p = 0.048$].

In order to choose the growth model that fit better to the data, we compared two models, based on results of confirmatory factor analyses on daily measurements of meaning of work. A first model including all the daily measurements of meaning of work comprised day3 and day5 which CFA did not show acceptable fits; and a second one, excluding the measurements of meaning of work at day3 and day5. Since the fit of the second model was lower than the fit of the first model (Model 1 fit: AIC 1512.51, BIC 1529.643, Adjusted BIC 1498.34; Model 2 fit: AIC 794.09, BIC 807.80, Adjusted BIC 782.76) we conclude that the second growth model of meaning of work fitted better to the data. The results concerning this second model are therefore presented, even if it should be highlighted that the results of the two models converged.

The results indicated that the covariance between the meaning of work intercept and slope was not significant, $\sigma = 22.02$, $S.E = 13.24$, $p = .10$, 95%CI [2.22; 45.65]. This means that meaning of work on day one does not affect meaning of work over time. The results also suggested that the mean of the intercept was positive and statistically significant $\mu = 6.06$, $S.E = 0.87$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [4.51; 7.95], however the variance of the intercept was not significant $\sigma = -44.33$, $S.E = 26.45$, $p = .09$, 95% CI [-

105.15; -4.84]. Therefore, there are no significant inter-individual differences at the initial level of meaning of work. Regarding the fluctuations of meaning of work, the results showed that the mean of the slope was significant, $\mu = -0.91$, $S.E = 0.47$, $p = .05$, 95% CI [-1.91; -0.07] and the variance of slope was not significant $\sigma = -8.32$, $S.E = 8.58$, $p = .33$, 95%CI [-27.23; 6.28].

This suggests that there are not intra-individual differences in the rate of change of meaning of work over time but that there are inter-individual changes in meaning of work over the week. More specifically, we observe differences in the meaning of work between the subjects indicating that for some of them as the week goes on, from Monday, to Tuesday and then Thursday, the meaning of work diminishes.

Despite not including the daily meaning of work measures for Wednesday and Friday in the final model, the results from the analysis of variance and the linear growth model suggest that as the week progresses, the level of meaning of work slightly decreases. This trend appears to affect more significantly those who work on-site at the beginning and midweek.

4. DISCUSSION

This study, in its exploratory phase, aims to understand whether the sense attributed to work changes over the course of a work week under different work modalities (on-site in the office or remote) and how it changes, in a specific sample of Italian subjects.

The context of this study is specific, characterized by changes in work modalities, the reconfiguration of spaces, and the relationship between people and their work and organizational context. In this scenario, it becomes clear how important it is for workers to reinforce the meaning attributed to their work or to find new and different meanings to satisfactorily adapt to all these ongoing changes. According to some research (Leruse et al., 2004; Tahri & Elkadiri, 2016), a change in the social context entails an organizational change where human capital faces the risk of losing the meaning associated with work. Furthermore, finding meaning in one's work is connected to personal well-being and, on a more macro level, organizational well-being (Weick, 1995).

Within a broader social and contextual change, there is a more specific one related to different work modalities and the reconfiguration of workplaces, which requires redefining meaning on a daily basis through a reflective process. As expressed in previous paragraphs, meaning is not fixed but evolves in relation to lived experiences, actions taken, tasks, and changes within one's workday (Afshari, 2023). Our study highlights how the meaning of work evolves over a five-day workweek in different work modalities, thereby confirming hypothesis H1 and this change should be viewed as part of an oscillation within a dynamic equilibrium. Additionally, this result aligns with some studies in the scientific literature that show how a change at work can impact meaning-making processes. Weick (1993) emphasizes that a chosen or imposed change related to one's work can challenge the actions taken to complete a task, the perception of responsibility and authority, and this would lead workers to find new ways and meanings to readapt to the new context (Autissier et al., 2010). Furthermore, every time a

context changes, individuals are called upon to modify their meanings in the face of the uncertainty of the new situation (Tahri & Elkadiri, 2016).

Moreover, organizations can also be considered as systems of sensemaking (Weick, 1995) that facilitate a continuous process of classifying new situations, interpreting them, and taking action. Changes in the world of work thus imply a tension between innovation and evolution on one hand and old and familiar practices on the other (Chua & Westlund, 2019). In this tension, workers need to reconcile new aspects with those already known and established in their work, attributing new meanings (Westlund, 2011).

So far, we have focused on individual sensemaking processes, that is, all the meaning-making that a person engages in within their changing work contexts throughout their workweek. However, there is a part of the scientific literature that argues that the evolution of professional meaning also stems from the presence of another type of meaning: collective meaning (Cristofaro, 2022; Ran & Golden, 2011). This can also explain why sensemaking processes evolve during a workweek. It is not only the perceptions and reflections of the individual worker attributing meaning to their work on a specific day and in a specific mode but also a meaning derived from being in contact (physically or in a remote way) with their managers and colleagues and from the sharing of collective meaning.

Therefore, collective meaning can be seen as a contagious process that allows individuals to continuously revisit their own meanings by exchanging opinions on tasks, behavioral norms, perceptions of support, and organizational mechanisms (Hareli & Rafaeli, 2008). Thus, there are two processes at play simultaneously: an individual one, which is sense-making, and a collective one, which is sense-giving, including emotional and cognitive contagion. For instance, a manager might make sense of a specific situation and communicate it to their employees through sense-giving (Cristofaro, 2022). The employees, in turn, might attribute their own meaning and/or modify it based on the manager's sense. In this perspective, people are not passive recipients of others' sensemaking but continuously activate their own sensemaking processes, comparing them with those of others within their work context (Cristofaro, 2019).

4.1 Limitations

This study has several limitations. The first is methodological in nature: to investigate daily meaning, we selected one item for each factor, for a total of 4 items, which may not be exhaustive in exploring the different dimensions of meaning. In future research, it might be considered to select two items per factor or more as suggested by (Mielniczuk, 2023).

The second limitation concerns time: we investigated work-related meaning over a period of 5 days, which may not be sufficient to observe significant fluctuations. Future research could explore this dimension over two consecutive weeks or longer, or conduct a longitudinal study where participants respond over the course of a working year.

Moreover, other limitations are related to the sample. Firstly, the relatively small sample size is a common concern in diary studies. However, for capturing changes over time, a study requires a large number of participants and more time to detect their changes (Ohly et al., 2010). For this reason, our results can't be generalized. Furthermore, the sample of hybrid workers of this study did not work the same number of days remotely nor had the same alternation between remote and onsite working days during the week. It should be noted, as well, that we investigated differences in the daily meaning of work according to the work mode, without finding significant results. What we found, instead, was an effect of the work mode of each single day on the meaning attributed to work the subsequent days. However, we did not control for the work mode of those same days and since each participant completed the diary at the end of the work day, this is definitively an important limitation and a possible bias for our results.

Another limitation could be related to participant motivation: asking them to respond to a daily questionnaire, even if short, might impact their motivation to participate. They may complete the diary quickly and with little reflection (Bolger et al., 2003) on their responses because they are at the end of their workday, with other personal or family obligations.

Additionally, another limitation is not having considered other factors that could impact meaning of work fluctuations, for instance the quality of interactions and communication between supervisors and colleagues, both in remote and in-person settings. Future research could explore these aspects.

These limitations, coupled with the exploratory nature of the current study, position our findings as an initial step towards understanding work meaning during a work week.

Additionally, this study was conducted in Italy. However, more person-oriented cross-cultural studies are needed to further validate the generalizability of latent profiles across different nations and cultures.

4.2 Theoretical and Practical implications

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the exploration of the concept of work meaning over a temporal span. Indeed, while studies such as those by Wortman & Silver (2001), Park (2010), and Brown and colleagues (2014) consider this dimension in specific and contingent terms, they do not explore its evolution over the course of a work week.

Studying work meaning appears to be particularly important, especially in light of all the changes brought about by the New Normal. This includes the reconfiguration of workspaces and the different ways in which people experience their workday.

Furthermore, finding meaning in work, even amidst different work modalities, has consequences for workers in terms of individual and professional well-being, and for organizations in terms of organizational well-being.

In fact, the meaning-making processes are associated with positive employee outcomes that are especially crucial during periods of change, such as positive attitudes, motivation to embrace change, work engagement, and improved performance (Van den Heuvel et al., 2009).

The more workers find meaning in their work during the week, the more they will feel motivated to remain part of the company (Cash & Gray, 2000), thereby reducing burnout and turnover intentions. This will also benefit the organization by minimizing the need to recruit and train new hires, allowing for manageable turnover (May et al., 2004).

It is important for companies to encourage employees to actively reflect on what creates meaning for them at work, including activities and in what ways (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). This could also be facilitated by having both an in-person and remote buddy or mentor who can provide necessary support and foster a meaningful professional relationship that enhances understanding of their role and responsibilities (Van Emmerik, 2004).

Furthermore, companies can provide training programs to help employees understand the importance of work meaning and coaching to allow workers to experience first-hand the motivational aspects that create meaning (Shapiro et al. 2007).

Additionally, companies can offer in-person mindfulness courses which, according to various studies, facilitate self-focus, introspection on personal desires, and the ability to observe oneself objectively. This helps in developing positive strategies for oneself, both at work and in personal life (Baer, 2003). This focus on the individual and their desires would enable a more functional process of meaning-making that aligns with their true self (Van den Heuvel et al., 2009).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Since the pandemic, multiple changes have occurred in the way work is perceived, the manner in which it is performed, and the relationship between individuals and their professions has inevitably shifted. To define these new dynamics, a social and historical context called the New Normal (Corpuz, 2021) has emerged, encompassing the adoption of new practices by organizations and new ways of viewing and restructuring work in terms of procedures, relationships, workspaces, and modes (Best, 2021). Indeed, some companies have decided to have their employees return fully to the office, others to adopt a completely remote mode, and still others to implement hybrid work (Gratton, 2021).

In this scenario, beyond considering changes within organizations, it is essential to focus on the workers and their psychological processes and needs at work (Giunchi et al., 2024) emerging by the changes they experienced and are still experiencing. They have encountered an evolving context and, as a result of these experiences, have adapted to new ways of understanding work. These workers have developed representations of this New Normal, leading them to live their work lives differently, requiring them to reconstruct, redefine, or modify their professional identity and the meaning they attribute to their work (Quin et al., 2024).

Regarding identity processes, we can affirm that the change in work modalities (on-site, remote, hybrid) and the new reconfigurations of workspaces have impacted people's professional, relational, and organizational identities (Hu, 2020). In fact, in such an evolving context, individuals continuously engage in reflections and narratives about themselves (Vough et al., 2020) to address questions such as

"Who am I as a professional? What skills do I have, and which ones do I still need to acquire? Do I assign centrality to my work, and is it part of my self-definition?" (Alvesson & Jonsson, 2022).

However, these identity reflections affect not only the individual realm but also the social and organizational spheres. Indeed, people are immersed in their work contexts, whether on-site in the office or working remotely, and they still weave relationships and interact with supervisors and colleagues. Therefore, in the new work modalities and different workspace reconfigurations, social/relational identity is also involved (Haslam et al., 2022). Consider how professional contact opportunities can change when a person is working remotely versus in the office, the type and quality of communicative exchanges, how included one feels in their work team, or how much one perceives distance and a sense of isolation (Yang & Lin, 2022).

From an organizational perspective, these changes compel us to reflect on how the relationship between people and their organization evolves, what type of psychological bond is created, and what sense of attachment develops not only to the physical place but also to the organizational context to which they belong (Brown, 2017).

All these reflections and analyses from the scientific literature form the foundation of this research work. For those engaged in research and interested in the field of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, it is crucial to understand what is happening in the context of the New Normal. This includes gaining a deeper understanding of people's lived identities and senses of meaning, how they react to these changes, and what resources they can leverage to adapt satisfactorily to evolving workplaces and contexts.

Furthermore, this study aims to provide insights for organizations, helping them understand where to focus to create more stimulating, inclusive, and satisfying work environments.

In this respect, three research studies have been presented with their respective objectives.

The **STUDY 1** has two different aims. The first was to investigate, through a qualitative methodology using semi-structured in-depth interviews, if and how on-site and remote work modalities impact the meaning-making and identity processes of Italian workers, their workspace appropriation and the balance between private and professional life. A second objective was to understand if there are intra and inter individual and gender differences among cohabiting couples interviewed about their work family-balance and to determine if, within the sample of participants working in the same company, there are similarities or differences in identity and meaning-making processes, space appropriation and work-life balance, given their shared organizational culture.

The results of this specific sample show that the office workspace becomes important if the worker feels they can take ownership of it, have control over it, and only in this way can they assign it positive meanings (Purba et al., 2023). In contrast, in the remote workspace, it seems more challenging for interviewees to separate private/family life from professional life because there is a sense that the profession intrudes into the intimate life of the person (Petriglieri, 2019).

Additionally, it emerges that workers perceive themselves as more effective when working on-site (Ciolfi et al, 2020), particularly if they feel surrounded by a supportive and collaborative atmosphere, as they do not have familial distractions that can occur in the remote mode (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Moreover, on-site work appears to strengthen their relational identity, reducing feelings of distance and isolation, as well as their organizational identity, making them feel more connected and belonging to their organization (Sagita, et al., 2023).

On the other hand, remote work seems to facilitate a better work-life balance, especially for women who feel more reconciled in a remote mode compared to when they are physically at the workplace (Reverberi et al., 2022).

Therefore, this study is significant as it brings attention to how the two work modalities (on-site and remote) are experienced and how they impact identity processes, meaning-making, workspace appropriation, and work-life balance for Italian workers. This suggests that working in a hybrid mode, especially if the worker has the flexibility to decide the frequency and which days, may be more functional for the professionals.

Also the **STUDY 2** has two different objectives. First of all, it aims to evaluate the psychometric properties of the Workplace Identity Scale developed by Sulphey (2020). Secondly, it aims to relate different variables, using a nomological approach to professional identity, i.e. to understand which dimensions correlate with the 5 factors of workplace identity (Job Centrality, Self-Identity, Person-Organization Fit, Job-Fit and Collective Identity) in the New Normal in two countries (Italy and France). The results of the study reveal that professional identity is a multidimensional and multifaceted concept (Sulphey, 2020) that enables workers to clearly position themselves within their work environment, gain a better understanding of their role, recognize who they are as professionals, assess their compatibility with their job and company, and develop a collective identity with supervisors and colleagues.

The findings indicate that distinctiveness of one's organization and a sense of inclusion are crucial for workers to develop a clearer self-concept as competent professionals. These results, observed in both France and Italy, align with scientific studies emphasizing the importance of making workers feel part of a unique and valuable work context that fosters simultaneously a sense of belonging and facilitate in this sense a strong connection with the work environment and the organization itself (Riemenschneider & Armstrong, 2021).

Regarding the concept of self-esteem and identity, the findings do not suggest that self-esteem is a determining factor, in either country, for the centrality assigned to work. In both the Italian and French samples, personal esteem is a determining factor for job fit and collective identity. Specifically, in the French sample, personal self-esteem emerges as a determining factor in constructing self-identity.

In both samples, the social climate at work is shown to be a determining factor for constructing a collective identity.

These results are consistent with studies in the literature: if workers perceive mutual assistance, support, and a sense of collaboration with supervisors and colleagues, they are likely to feel a sense of belonging

to a relational and organizational reality. This perception will enhance their sense of belonging and strengthen their social and collective identity (Pagliaro et al., 2018).

These results underscore that, to achieve both individual and organizational well-being, companies must focus on fortifying all aspects that contribute to shaping workers' professional identity.

The aim of the **STUDY 3**, in its exploratory phase, was to explore and to understand, using the diary study method, whether and how people modify their meaning related to work during a work week. Specifically, because in the New Normal they must experience changes in work modalities over the days, it would be interesting to observe whether the meaning remains unchanged or changes over time.

The results showed that the meaning attributed to work didn't not increase linearly among the 41 study participants who worked both on-site and remotely over the course of a week.

More specifically, we observe variations in the meaning attributed to work among the subjects, indicating that for some, the significance of their work diminishes as the week progresses from Monday to Tuesday and then to Thursday. Although the final model does not include the daily measures for Wednesday and Friday, the results from the analysis of variance and the linear growth model suggest that meaning of work levels slightly decrease as the week advances. This trend appears to impact more significantly those who work on-site at the beginning and midweek.

This study is innovative because it aims to investigate an area that has not received much attention in the literature: the evolution of the meaning of work over a period of time. Many studies focus on examining the meaning of work at a specific point or through a general and retrospective perception. Therefore, this study initiates a reflection on the meaning of work as a process over time, which can be studied in relation to different work modalities.

CONCLUSION

This thesis wanted to explore how the significant organizational changes brought about by the "New Normal", a period defined by the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, that affected workers' identity and their identity processes, meaning-making at work, and overall their well-being. By integrating qualitative and quantitative methods across three distinct studies, this project provides a comprehensive analysis of how different work modalities and the reconfiguration of workspaces impact individuals on multiple levels.

In the literature, we have observed that many researchers are raising questions about the new work modalities, their impact on workers, how work-related meaning changes, and what constitutes the most effective balance between different work styles. To address the general research questions of this thesis, the findings from the three studies suggest that when individuals are able to reconfigure their workspaces to align with their personal preferences, they tend to attribute positive meanings to these spaces, which in turn reinforces their professional identity. Additionally, the findings support the hypothesis that remote work can have a greater impact on employees' social and organizational identity

if there is a lack of constant interaction and effective communication between supervisors and colleagues.

Furthermore, this thesis aims to contribute to the understanding of the sense of work, an area that still requires deeper exploration in current scientific literature. The results of this thesis, though exploratory, indicate that the meaning of work is a dynamic and evolving process. It develops over time in relation to work modalities but does not change in a linear fashion over the course of a week; rather, it tends to grow at the beginning of the workweek and then gradually declines.

Additionally, the findings highlighted that the shifts in work environments, whether hybrid, remote, or on-site, had strong implications for workers' professional, relational, and organizational identities. The hybrid work model, in particular, seems to offer a balanced approach, allowing employees to experience a stronger sense of identity and belonging while maintaining a healthier work-life balance.

One unresolved question was how to assist employees in sustaining their identities amidst changing work modalities and the reconfiguration of workspaces. For this point, organizations and HR Managers can implement several strategies:

- Personalized workplaces. This could allow employee to restore their workplaces according to their professional and psychological needs at work, whether at home or on-site, helping them to align their environment with their personal and professional identities and fostering a stronger sense of belonging and purpose;

- To ensure regular communication and feedback among employees, managers and colleagues. Regular formal and informal feedback sessions can help employees feel seen and valued, which supports their social and organizational identities.

- To give support for hybrid work, providing resources, formations and guidelines that help employees to cope with the challenges of hybrid work. This could include training, formal and informal meetings, time management, setting boundaries between work and private life.

- To foster a sense of meaningful work, it is essential to ensure clarity of objectives and values, aligning organizational goals with personal ones. Actively involving employees enhances their perception of purpose and the significance of their contribution. Promoting a collaborative and supportive environment increases the collective sense of purpose in their work. Granting autonomy in managing their roles helps employees feel responsible and trusted. Additionally, encouraging a balance between personal and work life is crucial.

Limitations and directions for future research

Despite the positive aspects demonstrating that these studies contribute innovative elements, it is necessary to outline the limitations related to this dissertation.

The first one concerns the sampling method used to select participants. All samples are convenience samples, and therefore this limits the generalizability of the results and their representativeness to the broader population.

Secondly, all three studies relied solely on single-source self-report data, whether qualitative or quantitative, which raises concerns about common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Additionally, the data collected through interviews and questionnaires may not accurately represent the true perceptions and experiences of the participants, as they may have responded in a socially desirable manner or according to what they believe the researcher expects from them.

In addition, in the study 1, the interviews were conducted in two parts with the same person (when she/he was physically in the office and when she/he worked remotely). The questionnaire in Study 2 required approximately 20-25 minutes to complete, and Study 3, the diary study, required participants to respond to the same questionnaire for five consecutive working days at the end of each workday. These methods may have impacted participants' motivation to respond thoroughly and completely.

A specific limitation of studies 1 and 3 lies in their exclusive focus on male and female workers from Italian companies, which may introduce bias influenced by the cultural and societal norms specific to that context. These norms encompass particular setups, beliefs, and ways of perceiving and experiencing reality.

Therefore, replicating these findings in diverse contexts would be beneficial, given that existing literature highlights the impact of socio-cultural factors on work practices and different approaches to work (Bana et al., 2020; Peretz et al., 2018;).

Another limitation, concerning the Study 2 and the Study 3, pertains to the reliance on self-reported data, which introduces the potential for common method bias.

Specifically, the Study 2 does not uncover significant differences between Italy and France. Therefore, future research is warranted to explore potential divergences between the two countries across various dimensions and to understand these differences through a cultural lens.

Theoretical and practical implications

From a theoretical perspective, this project is innovative in that, through a mixed-methods approach, it seeks to delve deeply into the constructs of professional identity and the meaning of work. It explores subjective experiences, investigates their relationships with various individual, organizational, and well-being dimensions, and studies their evolution over time. Thus, this project could make numerous contributions to the scientific literature by establishing, from various perspectives, a link between the organizations are experiencing and have experienced with the establishment of the New Normal and the new identity definitions and meaning-making at work for individuals.

The practical implications of the project aim to draw the attention of organizations to the emerging psychological needs at work, particularly the new identity needs and meaning attribution at work of individuals facing new work modalities and configurations, considering that these processes play a crucial role in adjustment, meaning and identity at work within professional contexts. In light of recent phenomena such as the “Great Resignation” and “Quiet Quitting,” it is essential for organizations and employers to pay attention to their employees' needs to retain them, thereby ensuring the sustainability of the organizations.

It is crucial to sustain workers into their meanings associated to work and their identity processes.

For this reason, it is important for companies to encourage employees to actively reflect on what creates meaning for them at work and what reinforces their identity (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

This reflection can be facilitated by providing employees with both an in-person and remote buddy or mentor who can offer essential support and foster meaningful professional relationships that enhance understanding of their roles and responsibilities (Van Emmerik, 2004).

Moreover, companies can introduce training initiatives aimed at helping employees recognize the importance of deriving meaning from their work, along with coaching sessions that allow them to directly experience the motivating factors that lead to a more purposeful work experience.(Shapiro et al., 2005).

Additionally, offering in-person mindfulness courses can be beneficial. Research indicates that such courses promote self-awareness, encourage introspection on personal desires, and facilitate objective self-observation. These practices aid in developing positive strategies for individuals, both in their professional and personal lives (Baer, 2003). This focus on the individual and their aspirations fosters a more effective process of meaning-making that aligns with their authentic self (Van den Heuvel et al., 2009).

Regarding identity processes, these findings underscore that for both individual and organizational well-being, companies must concentrate on fortifying all factors that shape workers' professional identities. To enhance work engagement and performance, organizations should prioritize establishing a supportive and collaborative work environment where employees feel integrated within a professional context.

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APPENDIX A - Interview structure for studies 1A and 1B (on-site mode)

Note: The following interview structure is my translation into English, but it was originally in Italian.

AREAS OF INVESTIGATION	SUB-THEMES	QUESTIONS
Opening and initial description	1. Workspace 2. Level of satisfaction 3. Feelings about the space	1. Imagine you are the photographer of your workspace at this moment. Can you describe it as you see it? Now imagine you are a camera lens in this specific space; how would you describe it? If you were an outside observer looking at yourself in your workspace, what would you see? 2. Are you satisfied with the configuration of your workspace in your company? Do you consider it a space you would like to inhabit? 3. Do you feel that it is your space?
Individual/Professional identity	4. Meanings attributed to the space 5. Role and task 6. Self-Concept in relation to the space 7. Aspects of liking or disliking the space	4. What meanings do you give to your workspace? Do you think it is an important element of your professional life? 5. Do you think your workspace is suited to your role and tasks? 6. Do you think this workspace reflects your idea of yourself as a professional? 7. What aspects do you like about your workspace? What aspects do you dislike? How would you improve it to better match your professional personality?

Social identity	8. Organization climate	8. What organizational climate does the distribution/organization of space in your company convey?
	9. Relational exchanges	9. Where do exchanges with colleagues and bosses take place?
	10. Link between space and interpersonal relationships	10. Do you think the organization of space influences your relationships with colleagues and superiors (perceived support, conflicts)?
	11. Quality of communication	11. How do you manage to develop communication with them in your workspace? Are there aspects you would improve to facilitate communication?
	12. Perception of others	12. How do you think others perceive your workspace and how you inhabit it?

Organizational identity	13. Values and attachment to the workplace	13. What values do you perceive the most when working in presence in your company? To what extent do you identify with them? Which ones would you change? When you are at work in the company, do you feel attached to it? What kind of attachment?
	14. Relationship with the organization	14. How would you describe your relationship with the organization when working in the company? Working in presence, do you feel valued and supported by your company? Can you give examples?
	15. Quiet Quitting	15. When you work in presence, do you think you are doing the essential or going beyond your own tasks? In this configuration, do you feel you actively participate in meetings and proactively in tasks?
	16. Importance of work	16. When you work on-site, what place does work occupy in your life?
	17. Work-Life Balance	17. Working in presence, do you manage to balance your work and private life? How? Do you think the company does something to facilitate this balance between professional and private life?

APPENDIX B - Interview structure for studies 1A and 1B (remote mode)

Note: The following interview structure is my translation into English, but it was originally in Italian.

AREAS OF INVESTIGATION	SUB-THEMES	QUESTIONS
Opening and initial description	1. Workspace 2. Level of satisfaction 3. Feelings about the space	1. Imagine you are the photographer of your workspace at this moment. Can you describe it as you see it? Now imagine you are a camera lens in this specific space; how would you describe it? If you were an outside observer looking at yourself in your workspace, what would you see? 2. Are you satisfied with the configuration of your workspace in the remote mode? Do you consider it a space you would like to inhabit? 3. Do you feel that it is your space?
Individual/Professional identity	4. Meanings attributed to the space 5. Role and task 6. Self-Concept in relation to the space 7. Aspects of liking or disliking the space	4. What meanings do you give to your workspace? Do you think it is an important element of your professional life? 5. Do you think your workspace is suited to your role and tasks? 6. Do you think this workspace reflects your idea of yourself as a professional? 7. What aspects do you like about your workspace? What aspects do you dislike? How would you improve it to better match your professional personality?

Social identity	8. Organization climate	8. What organizational climate does the distribution/organization of space in your company convey when you work remotely?
	9. Relational exchanges	9. Where, in this modality, do exchanges with colleagues and bosses take place?
	10. Link between space and interpersonal relationships	10. Do you think the organization of your remote space influences your relationships with colleagues and superiors (perceived support, conflicts)?
	11. Quality of communication	11. How do you manage to develop communication with them in your remote workspace? Are there aspects you would improve to facilitate communication?
	12. Perception of others	12. How do you think others perceive your remote workspace and how you inhabit it?

Organizational identity	13. Values and attachment to the workplace	13. What values do you perceive the most when working in the remote mode? To what extent do you identify with them? Which ones would you change? When you work remotely, do you feel attached to your workspace? What kind of attachment?
	14. Relationship with the organization	14. How would you describe your relationship with the organization when working in the remote way? Working remotely, do you feel valued and supported by your company? Can you give examples?
	15. Quiet Quitting	15. When you work in remote way, do you think you are doing the essential or going beyond your own tasks? In this configuration, do you feel you actively participate in meetings and proactively in tasks?
	16. Importance of work	16. When you work in the remote way, what place does work occupy in your life?
	17. Work-Life Balance	17. In this remote mode, do you manage to balance your work and private life? How? Do you think the company does something to facilitate this balance between professional and private life?

APPENDIX C - Interview transcript of a cohabiting person from study 1A in the on-site mode

Note: The following interview transcript is my translation into English, but it was originally in Italian.

Imagine being the photographer of your workspace at this precise moment. Can you describe it as you see it? Now, imagine yourself as a camera lens inside this specific space; how would you describe it? If, instead, you took on the role of an external observer looking at you within your workspace, what would you see?

Well, my space is very comfortable and well-organized. I've built and designed it myself since joining this company, piece by piece. It was a lifelong dream to have a space all to myself, and when I became a manager, it came true. I have my own office, which is a big deal. I see a glass door where my colleagues walk by, there are paintings around me, a bookshelf, and everything I need on my desk. Lots of photographs because I also have a passion for photography. I am happy with this job and this space, so anyone looking in would see a smiling me, eager to work. I feel great in my space, so I would describe it as satisfaction.

Are you satisfied with the configuration of your workspace at your company? Do you consider it a space you would gladly inhabit? Do you feel it is your own space?

Yes, there have been times in my life, even before L. was born, when I would even sleep here. It was a bit uncomfortable, but I really inhabit it, if that's what you mean. It's like an extension of my home, only it's at work.

How do you feel within your workspace?

I feel really good, at ease. Everything is according to the criteria I require for work: cleanliness, order, and focus.

What significance do you attribute to your workspace? Do you feel it is an important part of your working life?

It's a space of growth, not only professionally but also personally. The place itself makes you understand that you've become someone important; otherwise, you'd be with everyone else in the open space or shared areas. I must say it reflects a lot of who I am; it's an authentic space for me, and I feel truly immersed in it. Plus, I like the work; it's tailor-made for me, and this makes it important in my life.

Do you think your workspace is suitable for your role and the tasks you perform?

The space itself is suitable, but my job is all about live communication. So, the space is important, but everything is based elsewhere—in other meeting rooms and encounters with clients, even outside the office.

Do you think this workspace reflects your idea of yourself as a professional?

It's a bit serious like me, as I always want to be presentable, but it's also very warm as I am with people. I believe I'm supportive to everyone, so besides the formality, there's help. Yes, it represents me.

What aspects of your workspace do you like? Which ones do you dislike? How would you improve it to make it more aligned with yourself as a professional?

It's a space of my own making, so I can shape it to my image, and that's what I've done. I like the colors inside, I like looking outside and down—we are on the 22nd floor, so I see Milan from above. Perhaps I would change where my office is located because it's in a hallway, and people constantly walk by.

What company climate does the distribution/organization of the space in your company convey?

That it's a team. So, even though I have an office, my door is always open unless I'm in a meeting or doing something very important. But there is help and interaction. The fact that my office is in a passage area indicates that I'm not the king of the company with others as subjects, but someone with whom you have reciprocal interpersonal exchanges.

Where do exchanges with colleagues and bosses take place?

Anywhere, we even have the kitchen, believe it or not, so really anywhere. If some are at home, I always try to communicate with them via video because it feels more real to see them than just hear them on the phone. We meet in my office, the meeting room, or the hallway.

Do you think the organization of space influences the relationship with your colleagues and bosses (perceived support, conflicts)?

Certainly, as mentioned above.

How does communication with them develop in your workspace? Are there aspects you would improve to facilitate communication?

No, I think we have found a balance in all this. Before, colleagues never knocked for fear of a 'no,' but now that they know me, they know I'm available.

How do you think others perceive your workspace and your way of inhabiting that space?

They see me as serene, I think. They always find me here, so maybe they think I'm glued to the chair, but joking aside, they see that I'm at ease, and it shows in my demeanor.

What values do you perceive most when you are working in-person at your company? How much do you identify with them? Which ones would you change?

When I talk about myself, I always say I'm the manager of..., almost as if belonging here has taken a part of me, a kind of strong bond. I share all the values, which range from attention to the person and their well-being to the aspect of success. So, focus on the individual and on the company. I am exactly like that.

When you are in your workspace at the company, do you feel an attachment to it? What kind?

Absolutely, always and everywhere. When we go on vacation and I see my company's sign somewhere, I feel like I miss it. So, I think this is good; I feel it's my place.

How would you describe your relationship with the organization when you work in-person?

A mutual exchange. I know what I have to do and how to manage, and I get rewarded, not just in monetary terms but in personal pride. Especially when I'm in here, I feel like this is where I want to be.

When working in-person, do you feel valued and supported by your company? Can you give me some examples?

Yes, although I am the one giving support and value to others. But when I talk to the CFO of the company, I am certainly recognized for my work, and they tell me I'm doing well. There haven't been any particular moments where I wanted something different.

When your workspace is the company, do you think you do the essentials or go beyond your duties? In this configuration, do you feel you actively participate in meetings and proactively in your tasks?

I do too much, actually; my wife suffers from it. It seems I'm the classic alpha male (sorry, this is a bad definition but to make the point) who works and is successful. I work a lot because I like it; I feel a unique power and strength when I'm here. It happens that I stay very late in the evening.

When you work at the company, what position does work occupy in your life?

Very important. Without my job, I wouldn't know what to focus on. After all, the company is also a bit of real life, not because family life isn't, but I see work with a sense of pride because it pushes you to surpass yourself every day.

When working in-person, can you balance your work and private life? How? Do you think the company does anything to favor this work-life balance?

Reserve question? My company has all the useful programs for families, corporate welfare, but alas, I never use them. There is this problem in our society that still sees roles very rigidly: women do one

thing and men do another. So, whether I can balance it, I'd say no, despite the company's help. If L. needs to be taken to kindergarten, I take him, no problem, but once I get to work, I enter the whirlwind of everything, and my wife takes care of the rest. I need to work on this.

APPENDIX D - Interview transcript of a white collar from study 1B in the remote mode

Note: The following interview transcript is my translation into English, but it was originally in Italian.

I'm currently working from home, meaning I don't have a fixed workspace. Right now, I'm at my girlfriend's place, still working remotely and not at the office today. Actually, this place is becoming a usual spot lately because on the days I work from home, she usually does too, so we are together.

Workspace Description Questions

Imagine you are the photographer of your workspace at this precise moment. Can you describe it as you see it? Now imagine you are a camera lens in this specific space, how would you describe it? If, instead, you were an external observer looking at yourself in your workspace, what would you see?

In front of me, there is a huge, chaotic bookshelf filled with books, mostly educational, university, or training materials. There's also a dictionary and such things, items that don't really belong to me. I have a window next to me, and beside it, there's a bed. Sometimes I use my bed to work, other times I sit on the chair. It's more comfortable here for the Wi-Fi. The only downside is that I don't have a dual monitor setup like at the office and not a wide desk, but it's fine. As a camera lens, I would see the same things. I would perhaps see some messiness because we are not very tidy, but that's it. As an external observer, I would see myself as disorganized, wearing a sweater but with pajamas underneath, yet I would see a less rigid and more informal person. My posture is also better because I am more relaxed.

Are you satisfied with the configuration of your remote workspace? Do you consider it a space you would like to inhabit? Do you feel it's your own space?

Yes, generally yes. I don't need much, and I am happy. For now, I'm comfortable. It is definitely my space but also not mine because it's my girlfriend's place, so it's personal but I feel more at home in my office space.

How do you feel about your remote workspace?

Sometimes it's difficult because if we both have calls to make, we need to manage. At work, I'm in a more organized state and have full control of the situation. It's true that at the office, I can't do just whatever I want, but at least it's my space. Overall, I can say I'm satisfied. However, I generally feel better when I'm at my own home. Here, I feel good because I'm with her. Here, as at my own home, I

can have more relaxed and extended times: I can have coffee and chocolate whenever I want. We have a dog, and if I feel sad, I go and pet him, and I feel better.

What meanings do you attribute to your remote workspace? Do you feel it is an important part of your work life?

Home is a very strong concept for me, the walls represent solid family relationships. For me, it's a safe place. It is definitely an important space. It's important because it's a shared but intimate space.

Do you think your remote workspace is suited to your role and tasks?

Yes, sure, to work I just need a computer, an internet connection, and a power outlet.

Do you think this workspace reflects your idea of yourself as a professional?

I still feel like I'm not much of a professional, I feel small. I certainly feel determined and focused, but my space says I'm disorganized. However, I know what I think of myself, so maybe in this case it doesn't reflect me remotely. Perhaps to reflect me, I would need a space of my own.

What aspects do you like about your remote workspace? What aspects do you dislike? I like the comfort and sharing the space with my favorite person. Perhaps I would like to make it more my own; that's something I don't like. Maybe a bigger desk.

How would you improve it to make your space more aligned with yourself as a professional?

Maybe I would get another computer because I'm used to that at work, but I think I need to change the way I see myself. I still feel small.

Social Identity Questions

How do exchanges with colleagues and bosses happen when you work remotely?

We use Slack for communication, as it is a fast channel to talk. Emails are more formal and used for external communications or formal messages. We also call each other.

Do you think the organization of your remote workspace influences your relationships with colleagues and bosses?

Definitely, the lack of physical proximity is felt. For example, I've been waiting for a response since yesterday. In the office, I can go to the desk and ask directly. The communication process is slowed down. The physical distance decreases the emotional connection.

Are there any aspects you would improve to facilitate communication?

Maybe seeing each other on video shortens the distances.

Are your boss and colleagues aware of how your remote workspace is organized?

No, my boss just made sure we have all the necessary tools to work remotely, but I use a background filter during video calls, so they don't know what's really there. They don't pay much attention to where you are, as long as you can work comfortably.

How do you think others perceive your remote workspace and your way of inhabiting it?

Maybe they see me at ease; I always keep the video on, so they know I have nothing to hide. I think they see me as calm.

Organizational Identity Questions

What company values do you perceive most when working remotely? How much do you identify with them? Which would you change? When you are in your remote workspace, do you feel an attachment to your company? What kind?

Company values are not very clear; they seem a bit superficial. The values here might include freedom and flexibility. I think a company that allows this type of work is showing great trust. I feel identified with them but feel distant when working remotely. It's nice that they want people to feel good. Some might abuse this freedom, so I would suggest less freedom as a value. When working remotely, I feel detached and distant, so I feel less attachment.

How would you describe your relationship with the organization when working remotely?

A bit distant; I know my bosses are there, but they are not emotionally present. They tell you to work towards goals and then check. So, I'm not sure if there's a real relationship.

Do you feel valued and supported by your company when working remotely? Can you give examples?

Not really, as I mentioned, the important thing is to get things done. If you need something, the bosses are there, but I don't feel much value and support.

When your workspace is remote, do you think you do the essential or go beyond your tasks? Do you feel you actively participate in meetings and tasks in this setup?

No, I think I am the same person as I am in the office, more or less. I might get anxious about other things, like if I get an email from a professor. I try to be equally productive, though I tend to be more productive at the office.

When you work remotely, what place does work occupy in your life?

The same as when I am at the office. It's necessary for living.

Working remotely, do you manage to balance your work and private life? How? Do you think the company does anything to facilitate this balance?

Certainly, from home I feel I can value my private life more because it gives me more time for myself and my loved ones. I save time on commuting and can spend my lunch break with someone other than colleagues. I feel I balance well. The company doesn't do much for this balance. We are flexible; colleagues with young children often work from home and are flexible. However, there are no real initiatives or publicity for this. This could be an area for improvement.

APPENDIX E – Questionnaire Study 2

Note: The following questionnaire of Study 2 is my translation into English, but it was originally in Italian and in French.

We welcome you to this research and thank you for your courtesy and helpfulness.

This study aims to investigate the perception of well-being and quality of life at work of employees of companies adopting different work configurations. This research is managed by Dr Sara Petrilli under the supervision of Prof. Silvio Ripamonti (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan) and Prof. Anne-Marie Vonthron and Prof. Marianna Giunchi (Department of Psychology, University of Paris Nanterre). The following questions concern the relationship between you, your company and your work. Answering the questionnaire will not take you more than 15 to 20 minutes. It is essential that you read the questions carefully and complete the questionnaire in its entirety.

Participation in this study is voluntary and anonymous. We guarantee that the confidentiality of your data will be preserved in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr Sara Petrilli (sara.petrilli@unicatt.it). We thank you for your cooperation and availability.

Consent to participate in the study:

I have read, understood and accepted the research information and agree to participate in it:

- ☐ (1) Yes
- ☐ (0) No

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC AND PROFESSIONAL AREA

In this section, we ask you to fill in some socio-demographic and professional data. This information will help us, in the data analysis phase, to differentiate participants according to certain characteristics.

D01. Genre:

- ☐ (1) Female
- ☐ (2) Male
- ☐ (3) Other _____

D02. Age: _____

D03. Do you have any children?

- ☐ (1) Yes
- ☐ (0) No

D04. Highest qualification/diploma you have obtained among those listed?

- ☐ (1) High school diploma or equivalent qualification
- ☐ (2) Bachelor's degree
- ☐ (3) Master's Degree
- ☐ (4) Master
- ☐ (5) PhD

D05. What sector do you work in?

- ☐ (1) Private sector
- ☐ (2) Public sector

D06. What type of industry do you work in?

- ☐ (1) Industrial
- ☐ (2) Commercial
- ☐ (3) Teaching and research
- ☐ (4) Sanitary
- ☐ (5) Public administration
- ☐ (6) Banks/Insurance/Finance
- ☐ (7) Informatics/Telecommunications ☐ (8) Other

D07. How many employees does the company where you work have?

- ☐ (1) Less than 10
- ☐ (2) Between 10 and 50
- ☐ (3) Between 50 and 250
- ☐ (4) 250 and more

D08. What type of contract do you have?

- ☐ (1) Fixed-term contract
- ☐ (2) Open-ended contract
- ☐ (3) Internship/Apprenticeship
- ☐ (4) Interim
- ☐ (5) Other

D09. What is your work regime?

- ☐ (1) Full-time
- ☐ (2) Part-time

D10. What role does it play?

- ☐ (1) Laborer
- ☐ (2) Employee
- ☐ (3) Executive manager
- ☐ (4) Manager
- ☐ (5) Other

D11. How long have you been in your current job?

- ☐ (1) Less than 1 year
- ☐ (2) Between 1 and 5 years
- ☐ (3) Between 5 and 10 years
- ☐ (4) More than 10 years
- ☐ (5) More than 15 years

THE MODE/CONFIGURATION OF YOUR WORK

In this section, we ask you to enter some information regarding the mode and configuration of your work.

D12. Currently, you work:

- ☐ (1) Always in the presence
- ☐ (2) Always at a distance
- ☐ (3) In mixed mode (presence/distance)

Q12b. If you work in mixed mode, how many days a week do you work remotely? _____

Q12c. Does the way you work result from your free choice or is it decided by the company?

- ☐ (1) Free choice
- ☐ (2) It is the company that decided it

D13. Adaptation and satisfaction with the way of working

Based on your working mode (in-presence/distance/mixed mode), please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>			5 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	Overall, I am satisfied with the way I work.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
2	My work mode allows me to do my job better than I could have done in any other mode.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
3	If I had the opportunity to change the way I work, I would be unlikely to do so.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
4	Since I have been working in this mode, I have been able to reconcile my work and private life more closely.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
5	Since I started working in this mode, my productivity has increased.	①	②	③	④ ⑤

D14. Feeling of social isolation

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>			5 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	I feel separated/distant from my colleagues	①	②	③	④ ⑤
2	I often have the feeling that I am no longer close to anyone.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
3	At work I am isolated from others.	①	②	③	④ ⑤

D15. If your working mode is partly or exclusively remote, please describe in which space(s) you work, trying to be as precise as possible (e.g. at home in a dedicated space, you set up your office in a room, in the living room, on the dining room table, etc. or in a coworking space, in a library, etc.):

D16. If your working mode is partly or exclusively remote, on a scale of 1 (it is not important to me) to 5 (it is necessary for me) how important is it for you to be able to customise your workspace (e.g. organise it to your liking, personalise it, etc.)?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

D17. If you work in presence or mixed mode, your space within the company is:

- ☐ (1) Individual (has a personal office separate from the others).
- ☐ (2) Shared (has a personal office in an enclosed shared space, e.g. a shared office).
- ☐ (3) Open Space (having a personal office in a shared open space, e.g. an Open Space).
- ☐ (4) No space/Flex office (no dedicated personal space).

D18. On a scale of 0 (Not at all satisfied) to 5 (Very satisfied), what is your level of satisfaction with the configuration of your workspace?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOU, YOUR COMPANY AND/OR YOUR WORK

In the following section, we ask you to reflect on the relationship you have with your company and/or your work. Please answer truthfully. There are no right or wrong answers, only answers that reflect the point of view of the questionnaire respondent.

D19. Attachment to the workplace/psychological comfort

The following statements refer to the relationship between you and your workplace, understood as the company you work for. Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>				5 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	I am attached to my place of work.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	It would be very difficult for me to leave my workplace.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3	There are places in the company that are particularly tied.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4	If my company were to move, I would regret my current workplace.	①	②	③	④	⑤
5	This workplace is a part of me.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6	There are places in the company that bring back memories for me.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7	After the holidays, I am happy to return to my place of work.	①	②	③	④	⑤
8	For work, it is the ideal place.	①	②	③	④	⑤

D20. Organisational affiliation

The following statements refer to your relationship with your organisation/company/employer. Please indicate your degree of agreement:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>			5 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	I am able to work in my organisation without sacrificing my principles.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
2	I usually use 'we' rather than 'they' when talking about my organisation to outsiders.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
3	I think there is consistency between my organisation and my values and beliefs.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
4	I usually experience more positive than negative emotions during my work.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
5	Being part of my company leads me to do more than what is expected.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
6	In my work group, I have affinities with my colleagues.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
7	Fairness is maintained by applying the rules and policies of my organisation.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
8	My personal needs are well met by my organisation.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
9	Whenever I have personal or professional problems, my organisation offers me the help and support I need.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
10	My career goals are fully considered by my organisation.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
11	My organisation tries to make my work as challenging and promising as possible.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
12	The results achieved at work are adequately rewarded in my organisation.	①	②	③	④ ⑤

D21. Distinctiveness

The following statements refer to your feelings about your organisation. Please indicate the level of agreement:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>				7 <i>Fully agree</i>	
1	In my organisation I feel that I am interchangeable with other people (i.e. indistinguishable from other people working in the same organisation).	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
2	I feel included and well integrated in my organisation.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
3	My organisation is unique compared to other organisations.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
4	My organisation is different and stands out from the others.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
5	I identify a lot with other people who work in the same organisation as me.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
6	I am happy to be part of the organisation I work for.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
7	I consider myself part of the organisation I work for.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦

D22. Sense at work

The following statements concern perceptions associated with your work. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>	7 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	I understand the value of my work.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
2	I clearly do not see that my current work makes sense.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
3	I find my work personally rewarding.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
4	I often think that in my work I do not know where I am going.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
5	My work brings very little to my life.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
6	Sometimes I think my work is not very useful.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
7	My work has a clear and precise direction.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
8	My job does not help me to have a really clear outlook on life.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
9	I can't quite understand what my work leads to.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
10	My current job gives meaning to my life.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
11	I often don't understand what the purpose of my work is.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
12	I do not understand what effect my work has on the world or society.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
13	The goals I have to achieve in my work are challenging and meaningful.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
14	Regardless of what anyone says, I find many jobs absurd.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
15	I am not sure what I have to do for my work to be considered successful.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
16	My current job gives meaning to my life.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
17	In my life, I attach great importance to my work.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	

D23. Self-esteem

Below you will find a list of statements concerning what you might think of yourself. We now ask you to indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement below:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>	4 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	In my work, I think I am worth at least as much as others.	① ② ③ ④	
2	In my work, I think I have a number of qualities.	① ② ③ ④	
3	In general, I am inclined to think that I am a failure in my work	① ② ③ ④	
4	At work, I am able to do things at least as well as most people.	① ② ③ ④	
5	I think I don't have much to be proud of in my work	① ② ③ ④	
6	I have a positive attitude towards myself in my work	① ② ③ ④	
7	Overall, I am satisfied with myself in my work.	① ② ③ ④	
8	I would like to have more respect for myself at work.	① ② ③ ④	
9	Sometimes I feel useless at work	① ② ③ ④	
10	I happen to think I am a good-for-nothing in my work	① ② ③ ④	

D24. Continuity of the self over time

The following statements concern your perception of the link between your work and your time. the perceived link between your work and time. Please indicate your degree of agreement:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>				5 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	The work I do allows me to feel in touch with my past.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	The work I do allows me to feel in touch with the person I was in the past.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3	The work I do allows me to feel that there is continuity in my life.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4	The work I do allows me to feel that important aspects of my personality remain unchanged over time.	①	②	③	④	⑤

D25. Feeling of personal self-efficacy

The following statements refer to how you feel at work. Please indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>					7 <i>Fully Agreed</i>
1	In my work, I can always solve difficult problems if I put enough effort into it.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
2	If someone stands in my way, I can find ways and means to get what I want.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
3	It is easy for me to keep my resolutions and realise my goals.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
4	In my work, I am confident that I am able to deal efficiently with unforeseen events.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
5	Thanks to my skills, I am able to handle unexpected professional situations.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
6	I can solve most professional problems if I invest the necessary effort.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
7	I can keep calm in the face of professional difficulties because I can rely on my ability to handle problems.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
8	When I am faced with a problem in my work, I can usually find several solutions to solve it.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
9	If I have a professional problem, I can usually find a solution.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
10	Whatever happens at work, I can usually handle it.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦

D26. The following statements concern your perception of your work. Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>				5 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	I am appreciated for the work I do.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	My work is the most important aspect of my life	①	②	③	④	⑤
3	Without my work I have no identity.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4	All my successes are directly related to my work	①	②	③	④	⑤

5	My values and those of the organisation coincide.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6	In my work I have the freedom to decide what to do.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7	I would recommend my organisation to others	①	②	③	④	⑤
8	My job prevents me from becoming what I would like to be.	①	②	③	④	⑤
9	When someone compliments my organisation, I feel like a personal success.	①	②	③	④	⑤
10	I am interested in knowing what others think of my organisation.	①	②	③	④	⑤
11	If anyone criticises my organisation, I feel personally offended.	①	②	③	④	⑤
12	I consider the success of my organisation as being the mine	①	②	③	④	⑤
13	The work I do in my organisation is significant.	①	②	③	④	⑤
14	My work is a rewarding activity for me	①	②	③	④	⑤
15	I consider my work an important part of my life.	①	②	③	④	⑤
16	When I talk about my organisation, I often say 'we'.	①	②	③	④	⑤
17	I contribute as much as possible to team work.	①	②	③	④	⑤
18	In my organisation, I feel I am an integral part of the group I work with.	①	②	③	④	⑤

RELATIONS AT WORK

In the next section we ask you to think about the relationships you have at work.

D27. Manager/supervisor support

In relation to your superior (if you have more than one, we ask you to think of the person you consider your manager direct), indicate how often its responsible :

		1 <i>Never</i>	5 <i>Always</i>
1	My manager tells me if he/she is satisfied with my work.	①	② ③ ④ ⑤
2	My manager is interested in my problems and wishes in relation to my work.	①	② ③ ④ ⑤
3	I feel appreciated by my manager.	①	② ③ ④ ⑤
4	My manager intervenes to help me solve my professional problems.	①	② ③ ④ ⑤
5	My manager is friendly and helpful to me.	①	② ③ ④ ⑤

D28. Social climate at work

In relation to the people you work with, please indicate how often:

		1 <i>Never</i>	5 <i>Always</i>
1	You can sense that there is a good atmosphere among the people I work with.	①	② ③ ④ ⑤

2	There is a friendly atmosphere among the people I work with.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
3	There is a sense of cooperation between the people I work with.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
4	Morale in my working environment is good.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
5	The working atmosphere in my workplace is relaxed and welcoming.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
6	The people I work with care about each other.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
7	The people I work with trust each other.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
8	The people I work with collaborate to get the job done.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
9	In my working environment, there is a general feeling of pride.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
10	Most of the people I work with would not want to change their working environment.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
11	There is friction (disagreement) between the people I work with.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
12	The people I work with take pride in their work.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤

WELL-BEING AT WORK

In this section, we ask you to reflect on how you feel at work, what your experiences are in this regard.

D29. Thinking about your work in general, please indicate your satisfaction with the following aspects, using the response scale from 1 - Very dissatisfied to 5 - Very satisfied

		1 <i>Very dissatisfied</i>	5 <i>Very satisfied</i>
1	Your job prospects	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	
2	Physical working conditions	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	
3	Working relations	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	
4	The way in which your capabilities are utilised	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	
5	Your work as a whole, taking into account every element	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	

D30. Commitment to work

Please read each feeling you have about your work and indicate how often you experience them:

		1 <i>Never</i>	7 <i>Always</i>
1	In my work, I feel full of energy.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
2	At work, I feel strong and full of vigour.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
3	I am passionate about my work.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	

4	I am enthusiastic about my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
5	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
6	I feel happy when I work hard.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
7	I am proud of the work I do.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
8	I am completely absorbed in my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
9	I am literally immersed in my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦

D31. Work exhaustion

Read out any moods you might be feeling in relation to your work and indicate how often you experience them:

		1 <i>Never</i>					7 <i>Always</i>
1	I feel emotionally drained from my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
2	I feel tired when I get up in the morning and have to face another day of work.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
3	I feel frustrated with my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
4	I feel I work 'too much' in my job.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
5	I feel at the limit of my endurance.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦

D32. Performance at work

The following statements refer to your behaviour at work in the last 3 months; please indicate how often:

		1 <i>Almost Never</i>					5 <i>Always</i>
1	I managed to plan my work in such a way as to complete it in time.	①	②	③	④	⑤	
2	The planning of my work was optimal.	①	②	③	④	⑤	
3	I kept in mind the results I had to achieve in my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤	
4	At work, I was able to distinguish problems that had priority from secondary ones.	①	②	③	④	⑤	
5	I was able to do my job well with minimum time and effort.	①	②	③	④	⑤	
6	Collaboration with others has been very productive.	①	②	③	④	⑤	
7	On my own initiative, I started new tasks when the previous ones were already finished	①	②	③	④	⑤	
8	When there were any, I accepted challenging work tasks	①	②	③	④	⑤	
9	I worked to keep my professional knowledge up-to-date.	①	②	③	④	⑤	
10	I worked to keep my professional skills up-to-date.	①	②	③	④	⑤	
11	I developed creative solutions to new problems.	①	②	③	④	⑤	
12	I have taken on additional responsibilities.	①	②	③	④	⑤	

13	I have continuously sought new challenges in my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤
14	I actively participated in working meetings.	①	②	③	④	⑤

D33. Intention to leave the company

Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>				4 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	For the same financial impact, I would decide to quit my job.	①	②	③	④	
2	If nothing would prevent me from leaving my position, I would do so.	①	②	③	④	
3	My intention is to leave my organisation.	①	②	③	④	
4	You can't find worse than the job I have now.	①	②	③	④	
5	I often think about leaving the organisation where I work.	①	②	③	④	

D34. Work-life interaction

The following statements refer to the relationship between your work and your private life. Please indicate how often:

		1 <i>Never</i>				4 <i>Always</i>
1	I am irritable at home because my work is demanding.	①	②	③	④	
2	It is difficult to fulfil family obligations because I am always thinking about work.	①	②	③	④	
3	I have to cancel appointments with wife/husband/family/friends due to work commitments.	①	②	③	④	
4	I find it difficult to fulfil my family obligations because of my working hours.	①	②	③	④	
5	I do not have enough energy to do leisure activities with my spouse/family/friends because of my job.	①	②	③	④	
6	I have to work so much that I have no time left for my hobbies (pastimes).	①	②	③	④	
7	I find it difficult to relax at home because of professional obligations.	①	②	③	④	
8	My work robs me of the time I would like to spend with my partner/family/friends.	①	②	③	④	
9	My family situation makes me so irritable that I vent my frustrations on my colleagues.	①	②	③	④	
10	I find it difficult to concentrate on work because of the worries related to my family problems.	①	②	③	④	
11	Problems with wife/husband/family/friends affect my professional performance.	①	②	③	④	

12	I don't feel like working because of problems with my partner/family/friends.	① ② ③ ④
13	After a pleasant day/week at work, I feel more like doing activities with my spouse/family/friends.	① ② ③ ④
14	I am better able to fulfil my family obligations because of what I have learnt in my work.	① ② ③ ④
15	I am able to keep my schedule at home because my work also requires it.	① ② ③ ④
16	I manage my time at home more effectively because of the way I work.	① ② ③ ④
17	I am able to interact better with my partner/family/friends because of the things I learnt at work.	① ② ③ ④
18	After a pleasant weekend with my spouse/family/friends, I have more fun at work.	① ② ③ ④
19	I take my responsibilities at work more seriously because the same is demanded of me at home.	① ② ③ ④
20	I am able to keep my commitments at work because I am asked to do the same at home.	① ② ③ ④
21	I manage my time at work more efficiently because I also have to do it at home.	① ② ③ ④
22	I am more confident because my family life is well organised.	① ② ③ ④

APPENDIX F – Questionnaire Study 3

Note: The following questionnaire of Study 3 is my translation into English, but it was originally in Italian.

We welcome you to this research and thank you for your courtesy and helpfulness.

This study aims to investigate the perception of well-being and quality of life at work of employees of companies that adopt a hybrid working mode: some days remotely and the others in the office.

This research is managed by Dr. Sara Petrilli and conducted under the supervision of Prof. Marianna Giunchi (Department of Psychology, University of Paris Nanterre).

The following questions concern the relationship between you, your company and your work.

Answering the questionnaire will not take you more than 10 minutes. It is essential that you read the questions carefully and complete the questionnaire in its entirety. Participation in this study is voluntary and anonymous. We guarantee that the confidentiality of your data will be preserved in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr Sara Petrilli (sara.petrilli@unicatt.it).

We thank you for your cooperation and availability.

Consent to participate in the study:

I have read, understood and accepted the research information and agree to participate in it:

- ☐ (1) Yes
☐ (0) No

In order to identify the person who filled in the questionnaire while guaranteeing anonymity, we ask you to indicate below the first and third letter of your first name, followed by the penultimate letter of your surname and your day of birth in double digits (e.g. for Sara Petrilli, born on day 4: SRL04): _____

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC AND PROFESSIONAL AREA

In this section, we ask you to fill in some socio-demographic and professional data. This information will help us, in the data analysis phase, to differentiate participants according to certain characteristics.

D01. Genre:

- ☐ (1) Female
- ☐ (2) Male
- ☐ (3) Other _____

D02. Age: _____

D03. Do you have any children?

- ☐ (1) Yes
- ☐ (0) No

D04. Highest qualification/diploma you have obtained among those listed?

- ☐ (1) High school diploma or equivalent qualification
- ☐ (2) Bachelor's degree
- ☐ (3) Master's Degree
- ☐ (4) Master
- ☐ (5) PhD

D05. What sector do you work in?

- ☐ (1) Private sector
- ☐ (2) Public sector

D06. What type of industry do you work in?

- ☐ (1) Industrial
- ☐ (2) Commercial
- ☐ (3) Teaching and research
- ☐ (4) Sanitary
- ☐ (5) Public administration
- ☐ (6) Banks/Insurance/Finance
- ☐ (7) Informatics/Telecommunications
- ☐ (8) Other _____

D07. How many employees does the company where you work have?

- ☐ (1) Less than 10
- ☐ (2) Between 10 and 50
- ☐ (3) Between 50 and 250
- ☐ (4) 250 and more

D08. What type of contract do you have?

- ☐ (1) Fixed-term contract
- ☐ (2) Open-ended contract
- ☐ (3) Internship/Apprenticeship
- ☐ (4) Interim
- ☐ (5) Other _____

D09. What is your work regime?

- ☐ (1) Full-time
- ☐ (2) Part-time

D10. What role does it play?

- ☐ (1) Laborer
- ☐ (2) Employee
- ☐ (3) Executive manager
- ☐ (4) Manager
- ☐ (5) Other

D11. How long have you been in your current job?

- ☐ (1) Less than 1 year
- ☐ (2) Between 1 and 5 years
- ☐ (3) Between 5 and 10 years
- ☐ (4) More than 10 years
- ☐ (5) More than 15 years

THE MODE/CONFIGURATION OF YOUR WORK

In this section, we ask you to enter some information regarding the mode and configuration of your work.

D12. The hybrid mode (alternating presence and remote days):

- ☐ (1) It was chosen by me
- ☐ (2) It is my company that chose it for me

D13. The number of days you work remotely:

- ☐ (1) It was chosen by me
- ☐ (2) It is my company that chose it for me

D14. The days on which he works remotely are fixed:

- ☐ (1) Weekly
- ☐ (2) Monthly

D15. How many days do you work remotely per week? _____

D16. How many days do you work remotely per month? _____

D17. The days of the week when he works remotely or in presence:

- ☐ (1) I can choose them, changing them when I want
- ☐ (2) I can choose them, but they remain fixed (e.g. every Tuesday and Friday)
- ☐ (3) The company established them for me

D18. What are your reasons for choosing to work remotely on a particular day? _____

THE MODALITY/CONFIGURATION OF HIS WORK

In this section, we ask you to enter some information regarding the mode and configuration of your work.

D19. Based on your working mode (mixed mode), please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>			5 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	Overall, I am satisfied with the way I work.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
2	My work mode allows me to do my job better than I could have done in any other mode.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
3	If I had the opportunity to change the way I work, I would be unlikely to do so.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
4	Since I have been working in this mode, I have been able to reconcile my work and private life more closely.	①	②	③	④ ⑤
5	Since I started working in this mode, my productivity has increased.	①	②	③	④ ⑤

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOU, YOUR COMPANY AND/OR YOUR WORK

In the following section, we ask you to reflect on the relationship you have with your company and/or your work. Please answer truthfully. There are no right or wrong answers, only answers that reflect the point of view of the questionnaire respondent.

D20. The following statements concern perceptions associated with your work. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>				7 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	I understand the value of my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
2	I clearly do not see that my current work makes sense.	①	②	③	④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
3	I find my work personally rewarding.	①	②	③	④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
4	I often think that in my work I do not know where I am going.	①	②	③	④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
5	My work brings very little to my life.	①	②	③	④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
6	Sometimes I think my work is not very useful.	①	②	③	④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
7	My work has a clear and precise direction.	①	②	③	④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
8	My job does not help me to have a really clear outlook on life.	①	②	③	④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
9	I can't quite understand what my work leads to.	①	②	③	④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
10	My current job gives meaning to my life.	①	②	③	④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
11	I often don't understand what the purpose of my work is.	①	②	③	④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
12	I do not understand what effect my work has on the world or society.	①	②	③	④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
13	The goals I have to achieve in my work are challenging and meaningful.	①	②	③	④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
14	Regardless of what anyone says, I find many jobs absurd.	①	②	③	④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
15	I am not sure what I have to do for my work to be considered successful.	①	②	③	④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
16	My current job gives meaning to my life.	①	②	③	④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
17	In my life, I attach great importance to my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦

D21. The following statements concern your perception of your work. Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>				5 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	I am appreciated for the work I do.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	My work is the most important aspect of my life	①	②	③	④	⑤
3	Without my work I have no identity.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4	All my successes are directly related to my work	①	②	③	④	⑤
5	My values and those of the organisation coincide.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6	In my work I have the freedom to decide what to do.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7	I would recommend my organisation to others	①	②	③	④	⑤
8	My job prevents me from becoming what I would like to be.	①	②	③	④	⑤
9	When someone compliments my organisation, I feel like a personal success.	①	②	③	④	⑤
10	I am interested in knowing what others think of my organisation.	①	②	③	④	⑤
11	If anyone criticises my organisation, I feel personally offended.	①	②	③	④	⑤
12	I consider the success of my organisation as being the mine	①	②	③	④	⑤
13	The work I do in my organisation is significant.	①	②	③	④	⑤
14	My work is a rewarding activity for me	①	②	③	④	⑤
15	I consider my work an important part of my life.	①	②	③	④	⑤
16	When I talk about my organisation, I often say 'we'.	①	②	③	④	⑤
17	I contribute as much as possible to team work.	①	②	③	④	⑤
18	In my organisation, I feel I am an integral part of the group I work with.	①	②	③	④	⑤

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR WORK

In this section, you will find a list of statements concerning the relationship you have with your work.

D22. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each sentence below:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>		4 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	In my work, I think I am worth at least as much as others.	①	②	③ ④
2	In my work, I think I have a number of qualities.	①	②	③ ④
3	In general, I am inclined to think that I am a failure in my work	①	②	③ ④
4	At work, I am able to do things at least as well as most people.	①	②	③ ④
5	I think I don't have much to be proud of in my work	①	②	③ ④
6	I have a positive attitude towards myself in my work	①	②	③ ④
7	Overall, I am satisfied with myself in my work.	①	②	③ ④
8	I would like to have more respect for myself at work.	①	②	③ ④
9	Sometimes I feel useless at work	①	②	③ ④
10	I happen to think I am a good-for-nothing in my work	①	②	③ ④

D23. The following statements refer to how you feel at work. Indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>		7 <i>Fully Agreed</i>
1	In my work, I can always solve difficult problems if I put enough effort into it.	①	② ③ ④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
2	If someone stands in my way, I can find ways and means to get what I want.	①	② ③ ④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
3	It is easy for me to keep my resolutions and realise my goals.	①	② ③ ④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
4	In my work, I am confident that I am able to deal efficiently with unforeseen events.	①	② ③ ④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
5	Thanks to my skills, I am able to handle unexpected professional situations.	①	② ③ ④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
6	I can solve most professional problems if I invest the necessary effort.	①	② ③ ④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
7	I can keep calm in the face of professional difficulties because I can rely on my ability to handle problems.	①	② ③ ④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
8	When I am faced with a problem in my work, I can usually find several solutions to solve it.	①	② ③ ④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
9	If I have a professional problem, I can usually find a solution.	①	② ③ ④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦
10	Whatever happens at work, I can usually handle it.	①	② ③ ④	⑤ ⑥ ⑦

D24. Indicate how often the following situations occur:

			1 <i>Never</i>					5 <i>Always</i>
1	I can decide for myself how to carry out my work.			①	②	③	④	⑤
2	I can decide for myself the pace of my work.			①	②	③	④	⑤

RELATIONS AT WORK

In the next section we ask you to think about the relationships you have at work.

D25. In relation to your superior (if you have more than one, we ask you to think of the person you consider your manager direct), indicate how often its responsible:

			1 <i>Never</i>					5 <i>Always</i>
1	My manager tells me if he/she is satisfied with my work.			①	②	③	④	⑤
2	My manager is interested in my problems and wishes in relation to my work.			①	②	③	④	⑤
3	I feel appreciated by my manager.			①	②	③	④	⑤
4	My manager intervenes to help me solve my professional problems.			①	②	③	④	⑤
5	My manager is friendly and helpful to me.			①	②	③	④	⑤

D26. In relation to the people you work with, please indicate how often:

			1 <i>Never</i>					5 <i>Always</i>
1	You can sense that there is a good atmosphere among the people I work with.			①	②	③	④	⑤
2	There is a friendly atmosphere among the people I work with.			①	②	③	④	⑤
3	There is a sense of cooperation between the people I work with.			①	②	③	④	⑤
4	Morale in my working environment is good.			①	②	③	④	⑤
5	The working atmosphere in my workplace is relaxed and welcoming.			①	②	③	④	⑤
6	The people I work with care about each other.			①	②	③	④	⑤
7	The people I work with trust each other.			①	②	③	④	⑤
8	The people I work with collaborate to get the job done.			①	②	③	④	⑤
9	In my working environment, there is a general feeling of pride.			①	②	③	④	⑤
10	Most of the people I work with would not want to change their working environment.			①	②	③	④	⑤
11	There is friction (disagreement) between the people I work with.			①	②	③	④	⑤
12	The people I work with take pride in their work.			①	②	③	④	⑤

WELL-BEING AT WORK

In this section, we ask you to reflect on how you feel at work, what your experiences are in this regard.

D27. Please read each feeling you have about your work and indicate how often you experience them:

		1 <i>Never</i>					7 <i>Always</i>
1	In my work, I feel full of energy.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
2	At work, I feel strong and full of vigour.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
3	I am passionate about my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
4	I am enthusiastic about my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
5	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
6	I feel happy when I work hard.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
7	I am proud of the work I do.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
8	I am completely absorbed in my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
9	I am literally immersed in my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦

D28. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>				5 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	Overall, I feel physically fit.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	Overall, I feel mentally fit.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3	Overall, I feel full of energy.	①	②	③	④	⑤

D29. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

In the evening, after work:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>				5 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	I forget about work	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	I don't think about work at all.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3	I distance myself from my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4	I am taking a break from the demands of work.	①	②	③	④	⑤
5	I take a break and relax.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6	I do relaxing things.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7	I use the time to relax.	①	②	③	④	⑤
8	I take time for recreation	①	②	③	④	⑤
9	I learn new things.	①	②	③	④	⑤

10	I seek intellectual challenges.	①	②	③	④	⑤
11	I do things that challenge me.	①	②	③	④	⑤
12	I do something to broaden my horizons	①	②	③	④	⑤
13	I feel I can decide for myself what to do	①	②	③	④	⑤
14	I decide my own schedule.	①	②	③	④	⑤
15	I decide for myself how to spend my time	①	②	③	④	⑤
16	I take care of things the way I want them done	①	②	③	④	⑤
17	I can indulge in boredom.	①	②	③	④	⑤
18	I do activities that do not require special mental effort (e.g. TV series, use social networks, nap)	①	②	③	④	⑤
19	I indulge in sweet idleness.	①	②	③	④	⑤

D30. Thinking about your work in general, please indicate your satisfaction with the following aspects, using the response scale from 1 - Very dissatisfied to 5 - Very satisfied

		1 <i>Very dissatisfied</i>				5 <i>Very satisfied</i>
1	Your job prospects	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	Physical working conditions	①	②	③	④	⑤
3	Working relations	①	②	③	④	⑤
4	The way in which your capabilities are utilised	①	②	③	④	⑤
5	Your work as a whole, taking into account every element	①	②	③	④	⑤

D31. Read out any moods you might be feeling in relation to your work and indicate how often you experience them:

		1 <i>Never</i>					7 <i>Always</i>
1	I feel emotionally drained from my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
2	I feel tired when I get up in the morning and have to face another day of work.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
3	I feel frustrated with my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
4	I feel I work 'too much' in my job.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
5	I feel at the limit of my endurance.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦

D32. Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>			4 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	For the same financial impact, I would decide to quit my job.	①	②	③	④
2	If nothing would prevent me from leaving my position, I would do so.	①	②	③	④
3	My intention is to leave my organisation.	①	②	③	④
4	You can't find worse than the job I have now.	①	②	③	④
5	I often think about leaving the organisation where I work.	①	②	③	④

PRIVATE LIFE-WORK RELATIONSHIP

The following statements concern the relationship between your private life and your work

D33. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement:

			1				7			
			Strongly disagree				Fully agree			
1	I am satisfied with my work balance and private life.		①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	
2	My work gives me the energy to carry out activities outside work that are important for me.		①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	
3	I am able to meet the demands of my private life and career equally		①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	
4	I achieve a good balance between work stress and personal time to regenerate.		①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	
5	I am satisfied with how my priorities are distributed in relation to my work and my personal life.		①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	
6	My personal life is negatively affected by the my work.		①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	
7	When I finish my work, I am too tired to do the things I want to do.		①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	
8	My job makes it difficult to maintain private I would like.		①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	
9	I often neglect my personal needs because of the demands of my work		①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	
10	I miss out on important personal activities because of my work.		①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	

APPENDIX G – Diary Study 3

Note: The following diary of Study 3 is my translation into English, but it was originally in Italian.

We welcome you to the daily questionnaire on occupational well-being.

Answering the questionnaire will not take you more than 5 minutes. It is essential that you read the questions carefully and complete the questionnaire in its entirety. Participation in this study is voluntary and anonymous.

We guarantee that the confidentiality of your data will be preserved in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr Sara Petrilli (sara.petrilli@unicatt.it).

We thank you for your cooperation and availability.

Consent to participate in the study:

I have read, understood and accepted the research information and agree to participate in it:

- ☐ (1) Yes
☐ (0) No

In order to identify the person who filled in the questionnaire while guaranteeing anonymity, we ask you to indicate below the first and third letter of your first name, followed by the penultimate letter of your surname and your day of birth in double digits (e.g. for Sara Petrilli, born on day 4: SRL04): _____

THE MODALITY/CONFIGURATION OF HIS WORK

In this section, we ask you to enter some information regarding the mode and configuration of your work

D01. Today I worked:

- ☐ (1) On site
☐ (2) Remotely

D02. Indicate what day it is today:

- ☐ (1) Monday
☐ (2) Tuesday
☐ (3) Wednesday
☐ (4) Thursday
☐ (5) Friday

D3. Based on the way you work today, please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>				5 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	Overall, I am satisfied to have worked in this mode today.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	This way of working has enabled me to do my job better today than I could have done in any other way.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3	If I had the chance to change the way I work today, would have been unlikely to do so	①	②	③	④	⑤
4	By working in today's mode, I was able to reconcile my work and private life to a greater extent.	①	②	③	④	⑤
5	Working in this mode today, I feel that my productivity has increased	①	②	③	④	⑤

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOU, YOUR COMPANY AND/OR YOUR WORK

In the following section, we ask you to reflect on the relationship you have with your company and/or your work.

D4. The following statements concern perceptions associated with your work. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>					7 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	I find my work today rewarding from a personal point of view.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
2	I feel that my work today has brought very little to my life.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
3	I think the work done today has given a meaning to my life.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦
4	The goals I had to achieve today in my work were challenging and meaningful	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥ ⑦

D5. The following statements relate to your perception of your work. Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>				5 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	My work today was the most important aspect of my day.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	Without the work done today I would feel I have no identity.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3	All my successes today are directly related to my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR WORK

In this section, you will find a list of statements concerning what you might think of yourself in relation to your work.

D6. Below you will find a list of statements concerning what you might think of yourself in relation to your work:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>				4 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	Today I think I have a number of qualities.	①	②	③	④	
2	Overall, I am satisfied with myself today.	①	②	③	④	

D7. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>				5 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	Today I was able to decide how to carry out my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	Today I was able to decide for myself the pace of my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤

D8. The following statements refer to how you feel at work. Indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement:

			1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>			4 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	Today, while working, I felt I could deal effectively with the unforeseen events		①	②	③	④
2	Today I felt I could handle any problem that came my way.		①	②	③	④

RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK

In the next section we ask you to think about the relationships you have at work

D9. In relation to your superior (if you have more than one, please think of the person you consider to be your direct manager), please indicate your degree of agreement with the following statements:

			1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>			5 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	My manager told me today if he is satisfied with my work.		①	②	③	④ ⑤
2	My manager today took an interest in my problems and my desires in relation to my work.		①	②	③	④ ⑤
3	Today I felt appreciated by my manager		①	②	③	④ ⑤
4	Today my manager intervened to help me solve my professional problems		①	②	③	④ ⑤
5	My manager was friendly and helpful to me today		①	②	③	④ ⑤

D10. In relation to your relationships with the people you worked with today, please indicate your degree of agreement with the following statements:

			1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>			5 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	Today I perceived a good atmosphere among the people I work with		①	②	③	④ ⑤
2	Today I perceived a sense of cooperation between the people with whom work.		①	②	③	④ ⑤

WELL-BEING AND FEELINGS/WORK-RELATED PERCEPTIONS

In this section, we ask you to think about the feelings, perceptions and moods that your work arouses in you.

D11. Please indicate your level of agreement and disagreement with the following statements:

			1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>			5 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	This morning, I felt regenerated physically.		①	②	③	④ ⑤
2	This morning, I felt regenerated mentally.		①	②	③	④ ⑤
3	This morning, I felt full of new energy.		①	②	③	④ ⑤

D12. Read each feeling you experience with respect to your work and indicate how often you experience them:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>	7 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	Today at work, I felt full of energy.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
2	Today at work, I felt strong and full of vigour.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
3	I am passionate about my work today.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
4	Today I was enthusiastic about my work.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
5	When I woke up this morning, I felt like going to work/working.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
6	Today I felt happy when I worked intensively.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
7	Today I was proud of the work I have performed.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
8	Today I was completely absorbed by the my work.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
9	Today I was literally immersed in the my work.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	

D13. How satisfied are you with your work today on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦

D14. Read out any feelings you might have about your work and indicate how often you experience them:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>	7 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	Today I felt emotionally drained from my work.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
2	Today, I felt tired when I got up in the morning and had to face another working day.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
3	Today, I felt frustrated with my work.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
4	Today, I felt I was working 'too much' in my work.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	
5	Today, I felt on the verge of endurance.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	

D15. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>	4 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	Today I would like to change jobs.	① ② ③ ④	
2	If nothing would prevent me from leaving my position, I would do so today.	① ② ③ ④	

PRIVATE LIFE-WORK RELATIONSHIP

D16. The following statements concern the relationship between your private life and your work. Please indicate your degree of agreement and disagreement:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>	7 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	Today I am satisfied with my work balance and private life.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	

2	The work done today gives me the energy to do activities outside work that are important for me.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
3	Today my personal life is negatively affected of my work.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦

D17. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.
Today, after work:

		1 <i>Strongly disagree</i>				5 <i>Fully agree</i>
1	I am managing to mentally detach myself from work.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2	I am taking a break and relaxing.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3	I am taking time out to relax by doing things mentally stimulants.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4	I am freely deciding how to spend my time	①	②	③	④	⑤
5	I am managing to indulge in boredom.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6	I am doing activities that do not require particular mental effort (e.g. TV series, using social networks, taking a nap)	①	②	③	④	⑤