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PSYCHOLOGICAL INSIGHTS OF HYBRID WORKPLACE CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

Key elements of a hybrid workplace culture, including technological functionality, the proportion of time spent working, and the experience of autonomy, are linked to employee engagement, organizational culture, and work-life balance. This paper aims to find out how to understand the psychological insights of hybrid workplace culture and their influences on the organizational culture, employee engagement and work-life balance, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), productivity & work satisfaction, and work stress. These concepts have received particular attention with the ongoing global pandemic. Consequently, the literature review highlights the insights gained from psychology regarding the workforce in organizations. In this context, the interplay between leadership, work-life balance, productivity, and stress emerges as a compelling and pertinent subject for investigation.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This study adopts the approach of a philosophical/conceptual discussion. The review of hybrid workplace leadership, employee engagement, work life balance, impact on productivity and work stress from 1978 to 2022. The studies were explored using keyword searches such as "hybrid workplace", "remote working", "work from home", "psychological factors" and "workplace culture", from the selected databases, namely, Scopus, Web of Science and Emerald, Science Direct, Wiley and Google Scholar.

Findings: This study finds that different psychological factors like leadership, employee engagement, work life balance and diversity, impact on productivity and work stress play crucial role in development of an ideal hybrid workplace culture. The results of this research indicate several practical applications for organizations, executives, and human resources professionals. The objective is to enhance the psychological well-being of employees, ensuring they feel secure, appreciated, and prepared to perform their duties effectively.

KEYWORDS: Hybrid Workplace, Organizational Culture, Employee Engagement, Work Life Balance, Productivity & Work Stress.

Introduction

The move towards remote and hybrid work was happening long before the pandemic in the 1970s, as rising petrol prices initiated by the 1973 OPEC oil embargo resulted in increased commuting costs. But COVID-19 accelerated the transition. During the lockdown the pandemic forced employees to transfer the work regularly done in the office to their homes. Such arrangements made working full of challenges, from providing the right tools to managing productivity and morale.

This arrangement could also involve the same party of people, where they get to show up physically on site of the company and take the rest of the week's days to work remotely (Cook et al., 2020).

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The application of psychology within the workplace offers numerous advantages for both employees and employers. The primary objective is to enhance the psychological well-being of employees, ensuring they feel secure, appreciated, and capable of performing their duties effectively. This approach not only alleviates stress but also boosts employee productivity, ultimately leading to improved business results for employers. This document is organized as a conceptual paper. The initial section presents the theoretical framework, which succinctly defines the role of psychology in the workplace and the concept of hybrid work culture. Subsequently, the next section offers a comprehensive overview of various psychological factors influencing hybrid workplace culture. The paper concludes with a summary of the findings.

Research Methodology

The integration of psychology in the workplace provides significant benefits for both staff and management. The main aim is to improve the mental health of employees, ensuring they feel safe, valued, and competent in their roles. This strategy not only reduces stress but also enhances employee efficiency, ultimately resulting in better business outcomes for employers. This document is structured as a conceptual paper. The first section outlines the theoretical framework, which clearly defines the function of psychology in the workplace and the idea of a hybrid work culture. The following section presents a detailed examination of various psychological elements that affect hybrid workplace culture. The paper concludes with a summary of the key findings.

The search strategy involved an automatic search of prominent online databases, including Scopus, Web of Science and Google Scholar, as the primary sources of the scholarly articles and research findings. The articles were identified using the keyword search, "hybrid workplace", "remote working", "work from home", "psychological factors" and "workplace culture".

In study selection process both quantitative and qualitative studies were selected which involved psychological factors- hybrid workplace leadership, collaboration, belongingness, employee engagement, work life balance, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), performance and work stress.

Sr. no	Criteria Reasons for inclusion and exclusion
1 Publication type	Exclusion Exclude conference proceedings, working papers, abstracts and dissertation abstracts.
2. Pre-1978	
3 Articles in English	Inclusion Papers written in English were included because of the dominance of the language in the scientific community
4 Peer-reviewed journals	The papers from peer-reviewed journals were included because of the higher quality and reliability of these journals
5 Full paper availability	The access to the full papers is mandatory
6 Quantitative and qualitative	Empirical studies represent the specific interest of this review empirical studies

Theoretical Background

Psychology at Workplace

Workplace psychology is the scientific examination of human behavior within professional settings, which is essential for evaluating individual, group, and organizational dynamics. This field of study utilizes research to pinpoint solutions that enhance both the well-being and performance of organizations and their employees.

Organizational Culture

The culture of a workplace encompasses the beliefs, attitudes, practices, rules, norms, and customs that prevail within it. An optimal workplace culture emphasizes activities that foster and exemplify trust. A robust set of core values, respected and upheld by all employees, contributes to the positivity and effectiveness of the work environment. Culture represents a complex mindset that shapes employee behavior and characterizes the workplace. Subcultures develop, but it's essential to focus on strengthening culture by sticking to what's valuable to everyone (Gangnes,2022).Workplace culture is to an organisation what personality is to an individual (Schuneman, 2019).

Schein (2004) highlights that "the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture; that the unique talent of leaders is their ability to understand and work with culture; and that it is an ultimate act of leadership to destroy culture when it is viewed as dysfunctional."

Beno(2021) in a study examined the positivity and effectiveness of an on-site and hybrid working model from Austria. The mixed research method detected significant differences in 25 out of 29 statements where hybrid workers are more often supporting, caring, rewarding, forgiving and inspiring than cubicle workers. Evidently, as shown by the data obtained, organizations that offer a hybrid working model have a very high score of positivity and effectiveness in providing the best place to work. The hybrid workers provide more support to each other. They look after their team members who are desperate and show compassion for one another. They provide emotional support to one another and honor talents of each other. In such a culture employees build strong interpersonal relationships.

The practice of learning to forgive and showing how much help we can offer to others (Luskin, 2003) appears to be more easily implemented in a hybrid working model.

Work from home leads to social and professional isolation and hampers knowledge sharing (William & Longge, 2005). When working from home contact with coworkers is significantly reduced for employees, this can lead to fewer interruptions (Bailey & Kurland, 2002).

According to Kim(2022) in hybrid workplace helping the employees feel more comfortable about the work they do and the way they do it contributes much more to building a healthy culture. A positive culture starts with positive workers, so focus on ensuring employees have everything they need to be productive at a hybrid workplace.

The organizations that are looking to adopt a hybrid workplace culture will need to find psychological factors which play crucial role in development of an ideal hybrid work culture. Golden et al., (2005); Virick et al., (2010) found a curvilinear relation between remote work and job satisfaction, and that remote work is positively related to job satisfaction when there are lower levels of teleworking. Here are some psychological strategies that are useful to enhance hybrid work culture.

Leadership

The process of leadership is one through which a leader holds an influencing power over the thoughts, behaviours, and attitudes of the employees (Ramadevi & Narayanamma, 2016) and it plays an important role in the organization in driving growth and success.

The research indicates that advanced cognitive, digital, and self-leadership skills will gain greater significance. Self-leadership involves comprehending one's role, recognizing aspirations, and intentionally directing oneself towards the attainment of personal objectives. In essence, it encompasses an understanding of our actions, the motivations behind them, and the methods employed. Selfleadership empowers individuals to regulate their own conduct, enabling them to influence and guide themselves through the application of targeted behavioral and cognitive strategies (Manz et al., 2013). The first concepts of self-leadership were part of a shift from boss-centered to follower centered leadership models and were inspired by cognitive evolution theory and its emphasis on intrinsic motivation, social learning theory and self-control systems (Kerr & Jermier, 1978). Later frameworks of self-leadership expand the initial individual level towards team settings and link with positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship (Mayfield et al., 2021). The self-leadership approach can be beneficial for a team where individuals rarely meet or they work from distant locations (Houghton et al., 2002). As the leader and team members work remotely, the leaders' influence can decrease (Gazor, 2012). One of the biggest obstacles when transferring to a remote working climate has been the employers fearing the loss of productivity and commitment to work due to the underlying trust issues (Dhir, 2020). Bryant and Kazan (2012) state that self-leadership is the answer to how to develop, survive and thrive in these volatile, uncertain and complex situations. Hence, self-leading team members are a good fit for work in a virtual environment (Siebdrat et al., 2009).

Bjarntoft et al. (2020) examined leadership behaviour using the three-dimensional leadership behaviour model. This established framework categorizes leadership behaviors into three types: relationoriented, which emphasizes consideration, trust, and social interaction; structure-oriented, which focuses on setting clear objectives, providing instructions, and monitoring completed tasks; and change-oriented, which prioritizes innovative work methods, visionary thinking, and development. It has been utilized in prior studies to assess the impact of leadership on both individual and organizational results. All three leadership behaviours may increase efficiency, job satisfaction and health among workers (Larsson &Vinberg, 2010).

Since remote working tends to be task-oriented and depend on relationships between leaders and their followers, individual coaching should go beyond assisting each followers' task to exchange

social/personal information with each other (Zaccaro & Bader, 2003). These individual coaching activities could include private chat, telephone or video meetings to highlight and understand the needs of each follower, which has been proven to be beneficial (Brake, 2006). Such relationship-building activities build trust which is one important premise for succeeding when implementing mutual adjustments (Moe & Smite, 2008). These activities also provide the opportunity to enhance followers' motivation to exert greater efforts in work-oriented activities (Liao, 2017).

Employee Engagement

Hybrid workplace setup could potentially serve as a silver lining that includes the best of two worlds. Employee engagement is related to a wide range of behaviors and attitudes. Employee engagement can be defined as 'a positive, fulfilling motivational state of work-related well-being' (Wood, Oh, Park, & Kim, 2020). In their definition of employee engagement, Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma and Bakker (2002) distinguished three dimensions: vigor (high levels of energy and mental resilience, a willingness to invest effort in work), dedication (a strong psychological involvement in one's work, a sense of meaning, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge) and absorption (immersion in one's work, being completely focused and happily engrossed in work). As an example, more engaged employees lead to more productivity at the workplace, generating more customer satisfaction and development of profits (Chanana, 2020). Additionally, employee engagement is often characterized as an inner state of mind where employees aim to engage cognitively, emotionally, and physically in their role in the company (Chanana, 2020; Kahn, 1990). Employee engagement has become increasingly relevant for companies, even to the extent of being qualified by global companies as a key success factor (Surma et al., 2021) since it has a direct impact on work culture and turnover (Chanana, 2020). It explains its growing importance amongst companies and a need to find various ways to engage the company's workforce (Surma et al., 2021). Employee engagement has consistently been correlated with several important organisational outcomes (Bailey, Madden, Alfes, & Fletcher, 2017) that constitute a competitive advantage (Schneider, Yost, Kropp, Kind, & Lam, 2018), such as enhanced commitment and performance, reduced absenteeism (Schaufeli, 2013), and organisational effectiveness (Khodakaram i& Dirani, 2020). For this reason, organizations should plan the implementation of remote work with a longterm perspective if they are to observe positive consequences for both organizations and employees (Toscano et al., 2022).

However, although work overload is an important antecedent of WHI, it does not necessarily result in WHI when employees experience sufficient resources (Bakker et al., 2011).

A scarcity of resources combined with demands, such as the conflict between work and family roles, promote WHI and tend to erode work engagement and well-being (Wood et al., 2020).

Ten Brummelhuis and Bakker (2012) applied COR (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002) to develop the workhome resources (W-HR) model to gain insights into how personal resources interact with demanding aspects of the work domain. Working-from-home relates to both contextual and personal resources. Hobfoll (2002) made the distinction between contextual resources and personal resources. Personal resources are intrinsic to the individual and encompass elements such as personal traits, availability of time, and physical stamina. Contextual resources, on the other hand, exist externally and are derived from the individual's social environment, including their home working conditions or the assistance offered by their supervisor. For example, enhanced autonomy (a contextual resource gained from remote work) can be leveraged to rearrange work schedules to meet an individual's family time needs (a personal resource).Ten Brummelhuis& Bakker, 2012).

Work-life Balance

As mentioned by Teevan et al., (2021), most employees would prefer a hybrid workplace as an alternative by combining working part-time from the office and home. Additionally, it was stated by Caminiti, (2022) that most white-collar employees would prefer the option to blend remote and office work. According to a Microsoft survey from 2021 and Niebuhr et al, (2022), this is due to employees' expectations of combining remote and on-site advantages to increase their productivity, better work-life balance, higher job satisfaction, and higher autonomy. The employees can benefit by getting better mental and physical health, improved work-life balance and lower spend and overhead (Courtney, 2020). Microsoft has already embraced this concept as it plans to incorporate a hybrid workplace for employees that would want this type of setup as regulations will be lowered by enabling its employees to choose which day they would want to work in the office (Naor et al., 2022).

In recent decades, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on the health and wellbeing of employees (Peeters & Demerouti, 2014), and as such, work life balance is receiving great attention from both researchers and practitioners as a means of nurturing employees' well-being (Jones et al., 2013; Kinnunen et al., 2014; Wagner et al., 2014).

Kalliath and Broughs(2008) define work-life balance as the individual perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual's current life priorities.

Itam and Singh (2012) identified in their study of the Indian retail sector in Hyderabad, policies aimed at encouraging corporate training highlighted the positive correlation that exists between work and personal life, stress and training, and work engagement. Boskovic (2021) confirms our findings since he characterizes working remotely as greater freedom of choice concerning the choice of place, time, and how the tasks are performed.

On the other hand, managers find it difficult to assess employee productivity in terms of output and motivate them, when working from home (Kossek& Thompson, 2016). This increases their job pressure and affects their work as well personal life, while working from home (Taskin& Sewell, 2015). This extra pressure can affect their personal and family life.An individual behavior that may challenge work life balance is performing excessive overtime work, which can include frequently bringing work home, answering emails outside of regular working hours, and working during weekends and holidays (Mellner et al., 2014). Durbin & Tomlinson (2010) claim that the main reason for absence of work-life balance is unpredictable finish times and long working hours. The managers struggle to find a balance between their personal and professional life due to unavailability of dedicated workspaces, network issues, distraction, burdening of work.(Vijay &Sreejith, 2021).This leads to boundary blurring between work and these work to home spillover or interferences have a huge impact on family life (Clawson & Gerstel, 2014).

Work life balance can be promoted by organizational initiatives focusing on minimizing excessive job demands, increasing psychosocial resources, supporting boundary management, and enhancing perceived flexibility(Bjärntoft et al. 2020). The impact of occupational elements and personal behaviors on work-life balance can be understood through the lens of Boundary Theory, which posits that individuals strive to establish and uphold physical, cognitive, and behavioral boundaries between their professional and personal lives to facilitate a more manageable daily existence. (Berthelsen et al.,2014). The extent to which an individual manages to achieve boundaries depends on the individual's boundary management and preferences regarding whether work and personal life are separated ("segmentation") or intertwined ("integration") (Mellner et al., 2014).

Bjarntoft et al. (2020) found that over-commitment and quantitative job demands were strongly associated with reduced work life balance (large and medium effect size), while boundary management was strongly associated with better work life balance (large effect size). Additional elements that were notably linked to a positive work-life balance encompassed effective work organization, leadership styles, workplace social community, support from coworkers, a culture that fosters flexible working, workplace influence, and well-defined availability expectations. Therefore, these organizational factors should be taken into account by managers aiming to enhance work-life balance in flexible work settings. (Hill et al., 2008).

According to the JD-R model, family-related job resources, such as work–family culture and family-supportive supervisor behaviors (FSSBs), can play a pivotal role in enhancing work engagement (Peeters et al., 2009; Qing & Zhou, 2017), whereas a lack of resources and high demands, such as role conflicts (WFC, FWC), role overload, and the emotional demands of family roles, may reduce work engagement and well-being (Opie &Henn, 2013).

Productivity and Work Satisfaction

Performance of the organisation will be directly impacted by effective and efficient staff performance. According to the resource-based perspective, employees are resources or assets that can add strategic value to the company and boost its competitiveness (Madhani ,2010).Performance management is essential in an organisation since it will ensure that workers perform properly and assist realise the goal and vision of the latter (Ying ,2012). By forming virtual teams, many firms are utilizing advancements in communications technology to boost performance. When members are geographically valuable and organizationally dispersed, creating virtual teams gives organizations

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the flexibility to leverage knowledge, skills, and perspectives that would not otherwise be available for office collaboration (Greenberg et al, 2007). The role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is guite significant amid the new normal. However, no one cares about the ICT professionals working 24/7 to keep everyone connected and running smoothly (Arshad, 2020). Various studies have found the positive impact of remote work on productivity (Vittersø 2003; Collins 2005; Bloom et al. 2013). Remote work facilitates cross-functional cooperation, inter-organizational engagement, and information exchange, all of which have a beneficial impact on the performance of innovative product creation. According to Kazekami (2020), productivity increases when remote work hours are adequate, but it decreases when they are excessive. Moreover, remote work enhances overall life satisfaction, which in turn boosts productivity. Kazekami's research indicates that the productivity gains from remote work are particularly significant for employees who spend over an hour commuting or who travel via overcrowded public transport during peak hours. A survey by Harvard Business Review and The Energy Project, involving more than 20,000 employees, revealed that only 18 percent felt they had sufficient time for strategic or creative thinking. Studies have consistently shown that remote work effectively minimizes energy and time wastage, thereby leading to increased productivity.. In a global survey by Kamouri & Lister (2020), 2,500 respondents provided information on how much of their commute time employees spent working and how many interruptions they experienced at work versus at home. Less interruptions at home, according to respondents, allowed them to save 35 minutes every day. Numerous pre-academic investigations have shown that remote workers really work for around half the time they would have otherwise spent commuting. Similar findings were obtained from the Global Work from Home Experience Survey by Kamouri & Lister (2020). Employees claimed that, on average, 47% of the time they would have otherwise spent commuting was spent working voluntarily. This emphasizes the advantages of education and the effects of selection in implementing contemporary management techniques like work from home. However, all of the experiment participants were call center agents, whose work is heavily individualized. . According to van der Lippe & Lippényl (2019), interaction with coworkers is crucial for productivity and efficiency in an organization where employees work in teams. It is difficult to set up teams where employees who only work remotely can function effectively and maintain the same level of productivity as those who work in an office. National Equity Fund recorded a productivity increase of 50%, and Apollo Group observed a productivity increase of 34%. (Lister 2021).

Neufeld & Fang (2004) found that remote work productivity was positively associated with attitudes and beliefs, situational factors and social factors, and unassociated with individual factors. Moreover, Neufeld & Fang (2005) reported that the furthermost crucial determinants of Work from Home productivity were attitudes and beliefs about remote work as well as social interactions with manager family members. In turn, the most critical determinant of employees' attitudes and beliefs were social interactions with colleagues, managers and family members. Felstead & Henseke (2017) found evidence that supports the social exchange theory with remote workers working harder, doing unpaid work and/or putting in further effort in return for the prospect to revise when and where they work. According to DeFilippis et al. (2020), there have been more emails sent and received as well as an increase in the length of the typical workday by 48.5 minutes, or 8.2%. Employees might not have worked continuously throughout the day, though; they might have created more flexible timetables to take into account frequent interruptions. Last but not least, according to Gallus research, remote workers are more engaged than those who do not (Lister 2021). Activities, employee performance, organizational accomplishments, and the transition to remote work patterns are all being impacted by this new normal period.

Stress and Remote Work

Before the pandemic, research about the relationship between remote work and stress has produced inconclusive results. On one hand, there are those that found that remote work reduced work role stress (Duxbury et al.,2014; Gajendran et.al, 2007), although the magnitude of the effect appears to be small. Simultaneously, the research indicated that a decrease in stress levels was facilitated by an enhancement in job autonomy: the greater the autonomy afforded to remote workers, the lesser the stress, burnout, and fatigue experienced, alongside improvements in overall happiness and quality of life. Conversely, some studies have suggested that remote work is associated with elevated stress levels. (Song et al, 2020), specifically by increasing work–life conflict (Russell et al , 2009)or affecting work–life balance (Sullivan, 2012).Nevertheless, the mechanisms driving these effects are not always clear and

are dependent upon a range of individual and environmental factors. Gender and parental status, for example, play key roles in the nature and experience of working at home, as this arrangement tends to promote a more traditional division of labour, with women often using home-working as a tool to maintain work capacity in periods of increased family demands, such as after childbirth (Chung & van der , 2019). Discussion

Our research findings have uncovered valuable psychological insights regarding remote work. The effects of a sudden and unforeseen shift in work conditions on the psychological, emotional, and physiological well-being of employees were not thoroughly understood. However, there is a general agreement that positive employee well-being is a crucial factor for achieving favorable performance in the workplace. The study indicates that a hybrid work environment can effectively combine the advantages of both traditional and remote work, offering employees enhanced flexibility and a better work-life balance. This, in turn, boosts their engagement and increases productivity, life satisfaction, and overall efficiency for employers. Eric Yuan, the Founder and CEO of Zoom, anticipates that advancements in artificial intelligence will introduce a physical dimension to video conferencing, enabling individuals to experience the sensation of handshakes in a virtual setting. Yuan further believes that many workers will not return to the traditional office after the pandemic full-time, instead the world will become a hybrid workplace (Kleinman 2020). Organizations can enhance their remote work initiatives by fostering stronger connections between employees and managers through transformational leadership. The significance of trust and the guality of the relationship between managers and employees becomes increasingly critical. as they appear to influence job performance. Effectively organizing meetings and virtual events is essential for sustaining a positive relationship. Furthermore, research indicates that when developing strategies for long-term remote work, it is advisable to alternate employees' presence between the office and their homes. (Golden & Veiga, 2005; Zappalà, Toscano, & Topa, 2021).

Toscano et al.(2022) found a positive relationship between the percentage of office work performed at home and more positive opinions about home working and greater remote work employee engagement. According to Joyce et al. (2010), flexible work arrangements-including working from home-that give employees more autonomy and choice are generally deemed to be beneficial to their welfare. These arrangements may also help with work-life balance.

Future Research and Limitations

The study has limitations that demand further attention from the researchers and academicians. First, the present study only analyzes the psychological insights of hybrid workplace culture such as employee engagement and work-life balance, productivity and work satisfaction, and work stress. In addition to these psychological factors other factors like organisational commitment, recognition and rewards, team motivation may also influence a hybrid workplace. Examining other variables excluded from the study might be constructive. For further investigation it would be recommended to look into the psychological insights of hybrid work culture from different perspectives in different companies through empirical research. Additional analyses and research should be carried out, particularly in various countries, to determine the practicality of the concept. Only the evidence that the researcher considered to be a key factor in meeting the research's purpose is used in this study. Therefore, it is suggested that these findings be quantified by follow-up studies for further validation and relationships between different psychological factors and productivity or psychological well being can be reviwed.

Conclusion

With regard to moving hybrid work from a conceptual level to a realistic level, this paper might be regarded as making theoretical contributions. If an organisation adopts the insights from our study to create better and more efficient work policies, this could also have practical implications. In order to increase employee work engagement, organisations should base their hybrid workplace design decisions on the goals of the tasks that need to be completed. Although hybrid work poses many leadership problems, leaders believe it improves their quality of life and that of their employees. Organisations should practise trust-based leadership as opposed to control-based. Furthermore, the evolving landscape necessitates a reevaluation of office design to accommodate the hybrid work model, ensuring it meets employee needs and optimizes engagement. This approach not only enhances employee involvement but also boosts productivity and efficiency for the organization. Solutions to address these challenges include team-building activities such as virtual guizzes, sailing trips, complimentary lunches, and formal arrangements for in-person team meetings. Additionally, one-on-one meetings are recognized as the most effective method for building rapport and evaluating an employee's well-being. Our paper demonstrates that a hybrid workplace may provide employees the best of both worlds by improving their work-life balance and giving them more flexibility, which in turn boosts employee engagement while also boosting productivity and efficiency for the company. The hybrid workplace's implementation and setup must be purpose-driven in order for the equation to provide this favourable outcome. Organizations that provide flexible work arrangements can enhance work-life balance for employees by emphasizing the importance of information on work organization, establishing clear guidelines and policies for flexible work, and setting explicit expectations for availability beyond working hours. Additionally, it is recommended that legal regulations ensure the functionality of technology, the proportion of working hours, and the experience of autonomy.

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