

**The Balancing Act of Valuing Relatedness and Autonomy:
A Qualitative Study among Young Professionals
Entering the Hybrid Workforce**

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Structured abstract

Background and objectives: Both autonomy and relatedness have been extensively examined in the context of hybrid and remote work, mostly focusing on the concepts separated. This study also seeks to explore a potential balance or interplay between the two concepts. As the hybrid work format becomes the future workplace, this study is particularly interested in young professionals entering this workforce.

Method: Data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews with thirteen young professionals who had one month to three years of work experience. Participants were asked about their experiences with organizational integration, encompassing personal interactions, relationships with colleagues, communication within the organization, independence in work tasks, flexibility in work location, and freedom in decision-making. All thirteen interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed, with intercoder reliability scores that were considered acceptable values.

Results: Participants described a strong sense of autonomy that was experienced consistently between work locations. This might be explained by the alignment of autonomy with their growing confidence and familiarity in their roles. In contrast, relatedness emerged as a more fluctuating concept between workplaces, highlighting the necessity of physical interaction to establish personal connections and relationships, which are non-existent in online settings.

Conclusion: This study unveils a balancing act of autonomy and relatedness. There are situations in which relatedness is prioritized, while in other situations, the preference for autonomy may prevail. Furthermore, employees' value for autonomy is cultivated through shared ideas and relationships with colleagues. Thus, establishing relatedness contributes to the development of the individuals' values for autonomy. Subsequently, this study considers approaching autonomy and relatedness as values instead of needs, as values may balance in priority and can change over time, which the results of this study suggest. This assumption raises new questions that allow for future research.

Keywords: autonomy, relatedness, hybrid work, young professionals, organizational integration, work experience, values

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The balancing act of relatedness and autonomy

Over the past decades, the process of digital transformation has changed the nature of work, making the work environment predominantly digital. Technological innovations such as the Internet, email, video-calling, chat, and cloud-based computing are designed to manage data and facilitate communication, which allows organizations and employees to collaborate and communicate while being dislocated from each other (Selimović et al., 2021). These innovations have not only changed how organizations operate but have also redefined the relationships between employees and their workspace. The changing nature of work, accelerated by working from home during COVID-19, has given rise to what is commonly referred to as hybrid work environments. In this working style, employees have the flexibility to work both in the office and outside the office (Vehosalmi, 2022).

The hybrid work style presents unique opportunities and challenges, particularly regarding autonomy and relatedness. Autonomy reflects the desire to have the opportunity to make individual choices that align with personal values and the capacity to exercise control over one's actions and decisions, rather than being a pawn of external pressure. Working outside the office tends to amplify the sense of autonomy through greater self-regulation in task planning, problem-solving, setting goals independently, and critically reflecting on work (Brunelle & Fortin 2021; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Manganelli et al., 2018). However, paradoxically, working outside the office may induce the feeling that employees have to justify their work and maintain a constant virtual connection to the organization (Leonardi & Treem, 2020). The autonomy paradox unveiled by Mazmanian et al. (2013) shows that mobile devices allow for engaging in work-related tasks anywhere and anytime, leading to engaging in work tasks everywhere and every time. Thus, constraining the autonomy that remote work has to offer.

The concept of relatedness refers to a sense of belonging and is characterized by the experience of having meaningful relationships, and being understood, accepted, and appreciated as one is (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Tapani et al., 2022). These relationships are marked by a reciprocal

experience of care and support, where people positively contribute to each other's lives. Traditionally, relatedness has been nurtured in physical office settings, where face-to-face interactions foster personal connections and develop relationships. Remote work is often associated with limited opportunities for spontaneous conversations, informal interactions, and non-verbal cues, which are crucial in building trust and strengthening social bonds (Bleakley et al., 2022). The research of Jaiswal and Arun (2020) has even identified the consequences of employee isolation under such conditions. Therefore, it is assumed that relatedness decreases in the hybrid work environment. Conversely, communication technologies have the potential to overcome the perceived distance that is felt when working outside the office. Employees can connect, collaborate with colleagues, and even have virtual coffee breaks together, thereby fostering a sense of relatedness (Selimović et al., 2021).

Recapitulatory, the hybrid work environment is often referred to as the convergence of the best of both worlds, where both autonomy and relatedness can be fostered, sometimes in the office while other times when working at home. However, it is recognized that existing literature predominately focuses on the experience of autonomy or relatedness, not encountering a potential balance or interplay. Moreover, research on hybrid and remote work centers on employees with prior work experience or those transitioning from office to hybrid settings. As the hybrid working style becomes the future workplace, understanding how young professionals, aged between 23 to 28 years, with one month to three years of work experience, perceive autonomy and relatedness is crucial. Insights on the preferences and challenges of the work arrangement will be valuable for organizations in adapting to the hybrid work environment in the long term. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following research question:

“How do young professionals entering the hybrid workforce perceive autonomy and relatedness?”

2. Theoretical Framework

This section provides an overview of the existing literature concerning autonomy and relatedness in the workplace, emphasizing multiple findings in these domains. The following paragraphs will explain autonomy (2.1) and relatedness (2.2), considering their potential increase and decrease. Subsequently, potential effects, balances, or conflicts between autonomy and relatedness are explored (2.3). Lastly, the importance of autonomy and relatedness for young professionals integrating into an organization is addressed (2.4).

2.1 Autonomy

2.1.1 Autonomy in the workplace

Autonomy can broadly be defined as the capacity to live one's life according to personal motives and reasons. It entails the absence of manipulative or distorting external factors, allowing individuals to act in alignment with their intrinsic desires. The negative understanding of autonomy involves denying people the right to control their lives. Thus, when an individual's movements and actions are under the control of others or when an individual's decision-making and thoughts are manipulated by others, they cannot act autonomously (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Jenkins & Neal, 2023). In the workplace context, autonomy is generally understood as the ability to exercise a degree over the content, timing, and location of one's activities. Concretely, autonomy is reflected by the ability to structure one's tasks, set own goals, decide when to work from what location, and schedule meetings according to personal preferences (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Manganelli et al., 2018; Mazmanian et al., 2013). Research has often linked autonomy in remote and hybrid work to workplace well-being (Charalampous et al., 2019), control (Porter & van den Hooff, 2020), job satisfaction (Brunelle & Fortin 2021), and work engagement (Bošković, 2021). In the following paragraphs constrained and enhanced autonomy in the hybrid work environment will be explored.

2.1.2 Constrained autonomy in the hybrid environment

The shift to working outside the office, away from direct supervision, was initially perceived as a concern from the organizational point of view (Rockmann & Pratt, 2015). Managers' fear of losing oversight could lead to increased monitoring or frequent check-ins, potentially impeding the benefits of increased autonomy for employees when working remotely (Mazmanian et al., 2013; Selimović et al., 2021). Besides, employees working from home may be perceived as inaccessible, disconnected, and not as reliable and effective as employees who work in the office. Leonardi and Treem (2020) demonstrate how communication technologies are implemented to overcome distance felt in remote settings but may create expectations for constant connectivity and justification of work efforts. Therefore, paradoxically, communication technologies undermine the autonomy that was meant to be fostered. Young professionals may feel the pressure to actively exhibit themselves when working from home, comprising their autonomy in designing work tasks according to their preferences. They are not able to take full advantage of the flexibility and freedom that working outside the office has to offer.

2.1.2 Enhanced autonomy in the hybrid environment

Conversely, the hybrid work environment often enhances employees' sense of autonomy by affording flexibility in designing work according to their individual preferences. The absence of direct supervision allows employees to exercise more autonomy over organizing, planning, and executing work-related activities (Brunelle & Fortin 2021). The conceptualization of autonomy often includes a notion of control, in which organizational control diminishes an individual's autonomy. Conversely, less control in the form of monitoring by the organization will increase employees' sense of autonomy (Porter & van den Hooff, 2020). Furthermore, reduced interaction with colleagues requires more self-regulation. Employees have to structure their daily work tasks independently, prioritize their work and goals, and critically reflect on their work without relying on others, thereby enhancing their sense of autonomy (Gagné et al., 2022; Maden-Eyiusta & Alparslan, 2022).

2.2 Relatedness

2.2.1 Relatedness in the workplace

Relatedness refers to a sense of belonging and is characterized by meaningful relationships, being understood, accepted, and appreciated as one is (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Tapani et al., 2022). These relationships are marked by a reciprocal experience of care and support, where people positively contribute to each other's lives. Moreover, much of the value in people's choices is related to connections with other people, and their values, deliberations, and efforts. Therefore, individuals' identities, personalities, and intentions are shaped by the interactions and the relationships they underpin (Jenkins & Neal, 2023). Especially, informal interactions, spontaneous conversations, and non-verbal cues are crucial for building these relationships, thus nurturing relatedness (Bleakley et al., 2022; Wax et al., 2022).

In the workplace, relatedness is established through formal work-related interactions, where employees exhibit themselves and their expertise. However, these connections might remain on a professional level, as personal bonds tend to form during informal interactions, often occurring during breaks and after hours. In these situations, employees engage more deeply with colleagues with whom they have otherwise limited interaction. These interactions expose employees to new perspectives and values, and develop support networks, enabling them to connect with like-minded colleagues. In other words, they interact with people with whom they can nurture relationships that foster their sense of relatedness (Jenkins & Neal, 2023). The importance of relatedness is often studied concerning hybrid or remote work, particularly about connectedness (Tapani et al., 2022), loneliness, and isolation (Wax et al., 2022).

2.2.2 Decreased relatedness in the hybrid environment

One of the most observed challenges of remote work is a diminishing sense of relatedness among employees. Connectedness is characterized by interest, respect, and caring and tends to be less straightforward in online situations compared to face-to-face interaction. Consequently,

establishing and maintaining connections through digital platforms becomes more demanding, leading to a diminishing sense of relatedness, and the intrinsic aspects and values of work (Rauch & Ansari, 2022; Tapani et al., 2022). Screen-mediated interactions are commonly considered more stressful than face-to-face interactions due to the challenges in interpreting non-verbal languages (Gagné et al., 2022). Moreover, an excessive number of video calls, including those intended for social purposes, may increase exhaustion. This phenomenon, referred to as zoom fatigue by Bailenson (2021), may be applicable in the virtual onboarding process as employees are a lot in touch with colleagues. The social interactions may transition from energy-gaining to energy-draining, contributing to a loss of a sense of relatedness.

Furthermore, research by Bleakley et al. (2022) explores the evolution of virtual communication in remote settings. One of their findings highlights that employees perceive the nature of existing relationships as input for social talk. They tend to feel more comfortable with whom they had established pre-pandemic relationships, as it allows them to identify previously social roles more easily. In the context of young professionals, this may indicate developing new relationships can be more challenging. It may require more effort to integrate into the existing inner-circle relations within teams due to a less natural development of relationships, diminishing a sense of relatedness.

2.2.3 Increased relatedness in the hybrid environment

While relatedness in the workplace is often associated with physical interactions, research suggests that relatedness can also be achieved in a digital environment. Relatedness is characterized by the exchange of ideas, information, and knowledge, which can be considered easier facilitated in a digital environment. As shown by Selimović et al. (2021), collaborative tools and platforms enable employees to connect and collaborate with colleagues across geographical boundaries, fostering a sense of belonging to a group that shares common values. Employees working from home have equal access to work services and can participate in meetings and digital coffee breaks. This

collective online presence provides the perception of a community, enabling employees to feel of connection with their colleagues, thereby fostering a sense of relatedness (Brunelle & Fortin 2021; Tapani et al., 2022).

Moreover, it is suggested that connectedness in the workplace can be satisfied through similar platforms as connectedness outside the office. In people's private lives, social media is frequently used to engage with others. Instant messaging and platforms like Slack are in line with the nature of the use of social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram (Meske & Junglas, 2021). Furthermore, Bleakley et al. (2022) have researched the evolution of social talk in remote settings, with one of their key findings being that employee's virtual communication reduces the physical barrier to social interaction that exists in office-based interactions. This allows them to extend the range of social contact within the organization and strengthen existing bonds. Concretely, social conversations occur while waiting for colleagues or clients to attend virtual meetings. This suggests that informal interaction can be established in online settings, fostering a sense of relatedness.

2.3 Autonomy and relatedness: separated concepts?

In previous sections autonomy and relatedness are described as separate concepts. However, studies demonstrate that these concepts are not always clear-cut, and can sometimes be intertwined. This section explores some of the nuanced considerations found in the literature that are considered interesting in the scope of this study.

2.3.2 Relational autonomy

Human interactions shape individuals in terms of values, perspectives, and interests. Early relationships with parents, teachers, and friends contribute to forming opinions and values. Observing others' actions and understanding their motivations develop reasoning that is often adopted in individuals' decision-making and way of acting. Young professionals entering the

workforce are already partially shaped by previous interactions. Nevertheless, without damaging earlier relationships, workplaces usually are important for developing further relationships (Jenkins & Neal, 2023). In their conceptual paper, Jenkins and Neal (2023) identify the role of workplace sociability in expanding workers' autonomy. They discuss that through the collective (i.e., relationships), individuals' autonomy is nurtured. Sharing interests, values, and perspectives with colleagues, contributes to forming one's values. Autonomy is not something individuals learn in isolation, rather it is developed through relationships. The freedom and flexibility hybrid work offers are collective values that gain meaning when discussed with others. From this perspective, relationships are foundational to individuals' ability to realize and maintain their autonomy. Therefore, the concepts of autonomy and relatedness are considered intertwined, giving each other meaning and value.

2.3.2 Alignment with relevant others

Research on remote and hybrid work arrangements has mainly focused on the experiences of working offsite, such as the experiences of higher productivity and improved work-life balance (Barrero et al., 2021). Through interviews, Rockmann and Pratt (2015) have captured the experiences of workers remaining in the office. Although the research is dated from 2015, their findings are still considered interesting in the context of the current hybrid work environment. They identify the lack of personal interactions for the ones who work in the offices, due to the significant number of employees that work remotely. Even though there may be colleagues present, the impersonal nature of interactions can lead to feelings of isolation. Therefore, working in the office may not provide the social interaction that employees are searching for. This phenomenon is referred to as the lonely office by Rockmann and Pratt (2015). Employees in the office may experience a lack of relatedness to their colleagues and the organization. For young professionals entering the workforce, the presence of relevant colleagues to seek guidance and become familiar with the organizations' behavior and norms, is important for integration into the organization.

Employees may align their on-site days with those of colleagues who provide this desired guidance to not get strayed. Additionally, they may align their on-site days with colleagues with whom they value social interaction and seek to develop personal connections. These insights lead to two considerations. First and most straightforward, the sense of relatedness is questioned as employees miss social interaction due to being in different locations. Second, the notion of choice and being in control of one's own decisions which are considered key elements in the concept of autonomy may be undermined when employees align their actions with the schedules of others (Brunelle & Fortin 2021). Therefore, employee's autonomy may be constrained and the urge for relatedness may be dominant. Or they may not be confident or knowledgeable enough in their junior position to cope with the level of autonomy when working from home, thus aligning their on-site days with colleagues, and seeking guidance.

2.3.3 Autonomy paradox

Hybrid work is inseparable from using technologies. In the early stages of remote work, Mazmanian et al. (2013) conducted an interview study to examine how the use of mobile email devices influences professionals' autonomy over the location, timing, and performance of work. Their research shows that employees reported that using technology devices enhances their flexibility, sense of control, and competence as professional workers. Mobile devices release employees from the obligation to be physically present at a certain time or location, thus enhancing their sense of freedom and autonomy. However, the usage patterns of the devices of the employees in their study indicate increased expectations of availability and responsiveness. Employees have the compulsion to be constantly accessible, which shifts the norms of professional engagement. In particular, junior employees feel obliged to be responsive to the seniors above them to perform their jobs well. The use of mobile devices enacted a collective dynamic of escalating engagement, where employees feel responsible for maintaining continuous communication with others. This constant need to be responsive and engaged in work communication may influence employees'

sense of relatedness. Specifically, it may lead to communication focusing even more on work matters than before, as the freedom to use the device anywhere and anytime led to employees using the devices everywhere and every time. Thus, engaging in work matters all the time and diminishes casual and informal social interaction. In practice, their research revealed that the use of mobile devices produced an autonomy paradox that influenced employees' work lives, as it diminished their autonomy. Employees worked longer hours, temporal boundaries were blurred, increased stress, and reduced spare time, instead of taking advantage of the freedom. For young professionals, working from home may lead to experiencing this autonomy paradox and less engaging in informal social interactions.

2.3.4 Conscious choice in dominance

Working on-site offers the benefits of direct social interaction, facilitating quick access to information and the exchange of experiences from colleagues and supervisors, which are crucial for young professionals integrating into the organization (Rockmann & Pratt, 2015). Besides the practical advantages, working on-site brings joy and laughter among colleagues. Such social interactions may be absent in remote work, therefore going to the office contributes to a sense of connectedness with colleagues and the organization (Tapani et al., 2022). However, not all employees enjoy the same opportunities for social interaction at work, some assign greater value to more free time or flexible working hours, thus autonomy. They may experience a reduction in relatedness, nevertheless, sometimes this reduction is perceived as a benefit of hybrid work, allowing for fewer distractions. The interaction primarily revolves around practical matters with limited opportunities for spontaneous and informal discussions, which emphasize task completion (Tapani et al., 2022). Fewer small talks and chats save time, that can be spent on alternative activities, such as enjoying an extra cup of coffee, taking a walk during the lunch break, or spending more time with family (Babapour Chafi et al., 2022). While working from home may lead to a temporary decrease in the sense of relatedness for specific days, employees do not necessarily

perceive this decrease as a loss, therefore not decreasing their overall sense of relatedness (Jaiswal & Arun, 2020). Working from home may be a conscious choice of having less social interaction and having more autonomy. At the same time, when working at the office employees may have calculated they spend more time interacting with others and may experience less focus on tasks that require concentration. This may be a conscious choice in experiencing a sense of relatedness while accepting less autonomy.

2.4 Young professionals integrating within the organization

Onboarding has been defined as the process of orienting new employee to their roles within the organization. This involves making them familiar with the organization at large and the responsibilities associated with their job. Central to this process is socialization, which is the transition from an organizational outsider to an insider (Bauer et al., 2007). The shift to hybrid working styles forces organizations to think about virtual onboarding processes. Organizational socialization and connections are built through shared values, norms, and basic assumptions. Research by Asatiani et al., (2021) determines that the absence of face-to-face interactions, to a certain extent, lessens the ability to understand and be part of the behavior patterns within an organization. This includes becoming familiar with the practical adaption of systems and workplace norms and values. By sharing an understanding of values and practices within a team, it is possible to make employees feel part of the same cultural space, even if they are not able to share the same physical space. The research of Taheri and Grälls (2021) on young professionals integrating into the digital environment emphasizes the importance of gaining belonging within the organization as well as the team to fully become socially integrated. The establishment of strong relationships fosters commitment for the organization, highlighting the importance of establishing a sense of relatedness.

In addition to the organizational effort for a successful onboarding process, Bauer and Erdogan (2011) emphasize the impact of new employees' characteristics and behavior. Young professionals entering the workforce are individuals who have grown up in a highly connected and

technology-driven environment (Aggarwal et al., 2022). They are familiar with working with and communicating through technology devices. According to Racolța-Paina and Irini (2021), young professionals entering the workforce are characterized by the desire for flexible work schedules, which may be attributed to the dynamic environment in which they have grown up. Current technologies, such as social media, allow for communication anywhere and anytime, thus enabling flexibility. This is reinforced by their readiness to accept geographical distance between their workplace and residence. Furthermore, their lack of work experience when entering the labor market may imply a higher reliance on colleagues during the onboarding process. Therefore, building relatedness seems even more crucial, while at the same time, they exhibit a desire for independence, which corresponds with a sense of autonomy (TaHERi & Grälls, 2021). Furthermore, they are described as individuals who are open to diversity, creative, extremely ambitious, and constantly learning-oriented (Chala et al., 2022). New employees are actively seeking feedback from colleagues and supervisors to get a sense of whether their behavior and the work they establish align with the norms of the organization (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011).

Given their familiarity and affinity with the digital environment and their characteristics, young professionals are viewed as a suitable cohort for hybrid work conditions. These new young professionals are the first to experience the adaptation to a hybrid onboarding process. Thereby, how autonomy and relatedness are perceived and established in this environment. Their experiences and perspectives can bring valuable insights for the future of the hybrid work format. The following section will elaborate in more detail on how this research area will be investigated.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

To capture the diversity and depth of young professionals' experiences of autonomy and relatedness in the hybrid work environment, qualitative research was conducted. Interviews were chosen as data collection as these reinforce the purpose of attaining a detailed insight into the experiences of autonomy and relatedness from the perspective of the participants (Hennink et al., 2020). The constructs are not completely conceptualized to the participants, rather the conceptualization and meaning from the participants were captured through semi-structured interviews. As the research involved humans and the possibility of sensitive information, a research plan was submitted to the Ethical Committee of the University of Twente. This was done to ensure the participants of the research conformed to the ethical norms and regulations. The Ethical Committee approved the research without further comments.

3.2 Participants

The participants were reached out to through the researcher's network, which included conversations and WhatsApp. Various inclusion criteria were established to select participants for this study. First, all participants were required to be highly educated (i.e., a minimum of a University of Applied Sciences degree) and be engaged in a hybrid office job. This criterion was included because highly educated employees often have office jobs that allow for a certain sense of autonomy. Second, participants were required to be engaged in a team-based organization, with a minimum of three colleagues. This was required as relatedness is associated with relationships with colleagues, making it essential to have colleagues to interact with. The third criterion was that participants had to work a minimum of three days a week, of which at least one day is spent at the office and one day outside the office (i.e. at home, library, coffee cafe, flexible work spots, etc.). A minimum of three days was included to ensure a certain commitment from the participant towards colleagues and the organization, which can be related to relatedness. The requirement of working

one day at the office and one day outside the office ensured participants' full engagement in the hybrid work environment. Additionally, participants needed to have work experience between one month and three years. The hybrid working environment has become more common since the COVID-19 pandemic that was at the time of this study three years ago, therefore this time span was chosen. Fifth, the participants had to be aged between 23 to 28 years. The minimum age of students graduating University of Applied Science is on average 23 years old, making 23 the minimum age for participants. The average age of university graduates is 25 years. Given the three years of work experience, the maximum age of participants was 28 years. Therefore, an age range of six years was used. Last, the study focused on employees and organizations based within the Netherlands. However, participants' nationality and organizations' foreign-oriented nature were not an exclusion criterion.

In total, thirteen interviews were conducted, of which five participants were male and eight were female. All the organizations were based in the Netherlands, with three of them also having locations outside the Netherlands or Europe. Five participants worked for an organization that has multiple offices within a region of the Netherlands. Three of them considered one of the locations as their primary base but occasionally worked at other locations as well, while the remaining two participants worked at a single location. The participant with the least work experience had been with the organization for just over a month. Most participants had work experience ranging from a year to two years at the organization, meaning they started their jobs after the first lockdown, during which employees were forced to work from home. Therefore, they had voluntarily chosen the hybrid working style. For all participants, except two, this was their first full-time job after graduating. Hence, six of the participants had an internship at the current organization and were offered a full-time job after graduating. Three of the thirteen participants preferred to conduct the interview in person, while the other ten interviews were conducted in an online environment due to geographical distances and busy schedules. Additionally, some participants preferred video-calling during work time, while others preferred to schedule the interview after work. The most chosen

communication software were MS Teams and Google Meet. The details of the participants can be found in Table 1.

Table 1.

Overview of participant characteristics

Participant	Gender	Age	Work experience	Internship	Sector
1	Male	28	1 year, 2 months	Yes	Media
2	Male	26	1 year, 3 months	Yes	Creative
3	Female	25	10 months	Yes	Cultural / Creative / Educational
4	Male	26	2 years	Yes	Financial Services
5	Female	24	1 month	No	Human Resources / Financial Services
6	Male	27	1 year, 7 months	No	Financial Services
7	Female	23	1 year, 8 months	No	Online Marketing
8	Female	25	6 months	No	Services
9	Female	24	7 months	No	Banks / Financial
10	Female	24	1 year, 7 months	Yes	Government
11	Male	28	1 year	No	Financial Services
12	Female	23	1 month	Yes	Media
13	Female	27	11 months	No	Digital Printing

3.3 Data collection procedure

Studies using in-depth interviews have shown that saturation can be reached at small sample sizes, for instance under twenty interviews (Hennink et al., 2020). This study was guided by the adequacy of the data, in terms of richness, diversity, and saturation, rather than the number of participants. Eighteen participants were reached out to, of whom thirteen met the inclusion criteria. These thirteen interviews with a duration of thirty to forty minutes each were considered sufficient

to achieve saturation. Therefore, the researcher did not reach out to new participants. The interviews were conducted in six weeks, from the end of April to the beginning of June 2023.

Participants were given the option to choose between conducting the interviews in person or online, as both were possible and in line with the concept of hybrid work. This allowed the participants to participate from a comfortable place of their own choice such as their home, workplace, or in a coffee cafe. When participating online, participants were able to select their preferred video-calling software. At the start of the interview, participants were informed about the outline of the study's scope, followed by their rights to withdraw from the study at any moment, without further explanation. Additionally, participants were informed about the use of their personal data in the study and were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of their answers. With the consent of all participants, the interviews were recorded using external audio recording software, QuickTime. The interviews were conducted in the participant's native language (i.e., Dutch) to allow for richer responses, as opposed to non-native language (Hennink et al., 2020).

To gain detailed information, open questions were used, which started by asking the participants to describe their work (activities) and the responsibilities they carry. Subsequently, participants were asked to share their experiences regarding integration within the organization. When participants mentioned subjects that relate to the dimensions of autonomy and relatedness, the interviewer delved deeper into those areas. Topics utilized during the interviews included flexibility, independence, accessibility for help, communication within the organization, social interaction, and relationships with colleagues and supervisors. The order of these subjects varied as the interviewer adapted the subjects to the natural flow of the conversation. In cases where topics did not evolve naturally, the interviewer introduced them through various questions, of which examples can be found in Table 2. If a participant's response was predominately focused on the situation when working from home, the interviewer used the question "Does this differ when you work in the office compared to working from home?" to gain insights into both situations. This approach ensured that information was collected comprehensively for both work settings and was

also used when the participants' answers were mainly focused on the situation in the office. The interview concluded with some demographic questions, if not mentioned already, including age, years of work experience, team size, and any organizational restrictions regarding working from home or the office. The set of leading questions and sub-questions can be found in Appendix A.

Table 2

Example question per topic.

Topic	Example question
Flexibility	To what extent do you experience flexibility in your work?
Independence	How do you experience the independence in your job?
Accessibility for help	How did you experience the accessibility for help during the integration?
Communication within the organization	How do you experience the communication within your team and the organization?
Social interaction	How do you experience the social interaction with colleagues?
Relationships	How do you experience the relationships with your colleagues?

3.4 Analysis

To analyze the collected data, all interviews were transcribed, using the online software Amberscript. All transcripts were manually checked and corrected, as the software only ensures 85% accuracy. Afterward, all interview transcripts were coded using ATLAS.ti. An inductive approach was employed in which in the first round of open coding themes were analyzed, such as relationships and accessibility. Based on these themes, codes were derived from the data. Examples of such codes include social interaction and team dynamics for relationships, and insecurity and physical appearance for accessibility. In total, 29 codes emerged that were grouped into 6 categories,

forming the initial version of the codebook. A second round of coding encountered that not all relevant data was adequately described by the current codes. Therefore, another round of open coding was initiated followed by a round of axial coding. This led to new codes that were added to the codebook, along with some codes that were subdivided or merged. For example, the codes of travel time and workplace emerged to the code work location, while the code of bonds was divided in two, namely personal bonds and group bonding. The final codebook emerged from this second round of coding and consisted of 5 categories and 25 codes, and can be found in Appendix B.

To ensure the validity of the study, a second coder independently coded two interviews, which were checked for inter-coder reliability. This was done to ensure the codes were formulated clearly and were relevant. The second coder was explained the purpose of the study and was informed about the coding procedure. Afterward, the second coder was provided with the code book and was given the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback regarding the clarity and relevance of the codes. Subsequently, the second coder coded the interviews. When both coders were done, the codes were checked for inter-coder reliability by measuring the Cohens Kappa. A Cohens Kappa score above 0.61 is considered an acceptable value (McHugh, 2012). All values were above this score, making them acceptable values. An overview of the inter-coder reliability scores can be found in Table 3.

Table 3.

Results of inter-coder reliability.

Category	Cohens Kappa
1 Integration process	.75
2 Relationships	.76
3 Communication	.78
4 Flexibility	.77
5 Freedom	.75

4. Results

In this section, the results of the interviews are presented. Based on the responses of participants, various dimensions were established that form autonomy and relatedness. Autonomy was perceived through flexibility, which involved the ability to determine one's work location and structure one's schedule according to preferences. Second, the ability to perform independently without the need for external dependencies was mentioned as a dimension of autonomy. Last, autonomy was associated with the freedom to design and prioritize tasks, including the absence of the requirement to seek permission, limited monitoring, and reduced necessity to justify one's work activities. Relatedness was perceived through the social interaction that employees encounter with others. The nature of these interactions is influenced by physical and online communication. Furthermore, personal relationships were indicated as a dimension of relatedness. These personal relationships evolve through interaction, making social engagement a fundamental component of building connections.

In the following paragraphs, the dimensions of autonomy and relatedness are presented in more detail. The results are divided into two parts, the first paragraph explains how flexibility, independence, and freedom of decision-making shape autonomy (4.1). Followed by a paragraph that elaborates on how relatedness is shaped through social interaction and personal relationships (4.2). In the second part of the results, the relation between autonomy and relatedness is explained (4.3), ending the results section with a concluding paragraph (4.4). In Table 4, an overview of the dimensions that describe autonomy (4.1) and relatedness (4.2) can be found.

Table 4.

Brief descriptions of the dimensions that explain relatedness and autonomy

Concept	Dimension	Description	Citation	Subparagraph
Autonomy	Flexibility	The ability to structure schedules around set moments and to vary between work locations	I entirely plan my schedule myself. Of course, there are a few fixed moments when the team comes together, and I can plan everything else around that. ----- I can't concentrate in large spaces, and even if there are secluded areas, I still get easily distracted. I appreciate having days working at home where I can start calmly and quietly and find my focus for the day.	4.1.1 4.1.2
	Independence	The ability to self-reliance and the experience of ownership of work tasks, including the absence of monitoring, justification, and requirements to seek permission	I'm responsible for my own schedule, I'm responsible for what I deliver, and for keeping my appointments because I make those appointments yourself. And that's where the responsibility comes into play, as I'm accountable for my own tasks. But that's specifically in my role, my role is quite independent compared to other positions. But it really is something that the organization stands for, which I value a lot.	4.1.3 4.1.4
	Freedom	The ability to prioritize and organize work tasks according to personal needs and preferences	I work 20 hours, I receive assignments, and I'm responsible for handling everything in a proper manner. But there are never any deadlines set by the department or the person asking the questions; I set them yourself. Like, okay, I can provide advice in two weeks or a month, and then I have to stick to that. It has nothing to do with managers planning for me or people telling me what to do. I plan my own work tasks and my colleagues trust that I will accomplish those.	4.1.5
Relatedness	Social interaction	The communication process between team members, which is characterized by a formal or informal tone of voice, and the degree of spontaneity	I think the conversations, especially the ones at the coffee machine, are very important. Also, within a team, I get to know my colleagues better. Not only from a business perspective but also from a personal point of view. I get to know what soccer team they support or whether they play tennis. I think that's a very small investment, for what you're going to get back in the future and what contributes to making the work environment enjoyable. And which is unfortunately missing when working from home. At least, that's my experience.	4.2.1 4.2.2
	Personal relationships	The development of deep connections and personal relationships with colleagues	I have one colleague who has truly become a friend. And there are also a few colleagues with whom we can sit on a terrace and have a good time. So, there are some informal friendship-like connections as well. That's nice. Of course, the older people won't join or there are always some people who are not interested. I can talk to my manager very well. I can tell her when things aren't going well, and she's very approachable. She's not formal at all, just like the rest of us. It is important to me that the manager, and the communication lines within the department are very open. Everyone knows who I am.	4.2.3

4.1 Creating autonomy through flexibility, independence, and freedom

Autonomy emerged as a concept with multiple dimensions. The first and most frequently mentioned dimension is flexibility. Employees find flexibility in being able to schedule their agenda around certain set moments (4.1.1), such as weekly meetings or appointments with clients, and in adapting their work location to personal preferences (4.1.2). Furthermore, independence is often associated with autonomy in terms of work tasks and is found in self-reliance in problem-solving abilities (4.1.3) and ownership of work tasks (4.1.4). Last, freedom in decision-making that is found in prioritizing work tasks (4.1.5) is mentioned as one of the dimensions that contribute to a sense of autonomy. In the following subparagraphs, the dimensions will be explained in more detail.

4.1.1 Structure through meetings

Flexibility emerges as a fundamental dimension of autonomy, frequently highlighted by participants. Participants appreciated the ability to structure their schedules around fixed commitments, such as weekly meetings or client appointments. These set moments provide structure to work routines. Most organizations try to establish these meetings in physical settings. Although participants explained it is not mandatory to be physically present, without valid reasons for remote attendance, they are expected to be physically present. However, when this happens, transitioning to an online meeting has become natural. Besides these meetings participants expressed they are quite flexible in planning their schedules, thus experiencing a high sense of autonomy. As Participant 9 confirmed:

“We have a mandatory workday at the office on Mondays. Well, when I say mandatory, it's more like it's expected that you're there, and the rest of the week is quite flexible.”

4.1.2 Adapting work location to personal preferences

Another advantage of flexibility emerged is the ability to adapt the work location to personal preferences, which is highly valued by participants. This adaptability primarily revolves around practical considerations, allowing participants to optimize their working days. For instance, they can receive deliveries when working

from home, schedule dentist or hair appointments shortly after work, or complete household tasks in between work tasks. This enables participants to engage in leisure activities such as sports or socializing with friends in the evening. Additionally, a frequently mentioned advantage of work location flexibility is reduced travel time between work and home. The ability to align work with personal preferences fosters a sense of autonomy. This is reported by Participant 11, while Participant 7 among others, explicitly mentioned the reduced travel time:

“On Thursday I have a dentist appointment in the morning and a hairdresser appointment at six o'clock in the evening. So, I can decide whether I'll go to [location 1] that day, work from home, or maybe choose to go to [location 2]. I'll determine that tomorrow. It is not fixed yet, and that freedom, that flexibility, is what I enjoy and appreciate.”

“I drive for about 45 or 50 minutes one way, which I did choose myself, of course. But I do appreciate having a day without that, where I can maybe go to the gym earlier or take care of some things at home. And what is also nice, I cannot sit at my desk all day. In the office, we also take short breaks. When working from home I can do a load of laundry or take care of simple tasks during my short breaks. By the evening, I'm done, and I have time for lying on the couch or going to the gym. That's convenient.”

4.1.3 Self-reliance in problem-solving abilities

The flexibility associated with working outside the office requires a certain degree of independence. The absence of direct contact with colleagues reduces accessibility to immediate assistance, compelling employees to rely more on their problem-solving abilities. In the initial stage of the integration process, employees lean on their colleagues more due to their unfamiliarity with various (practical) elements. Participants have expressed they enter a certain curve of learning during this period. Although exploring solutions for challenges that arise in the integration process takes a bit more time, it fosters a sense of

independence. The extent of knowledge streamlines with increasing independence, positively impacting participant's sense of autonomy. Participant 8 explained the following:

"In the beginning, the first two weeks, I was intensively being paired with someone every day. But at some point, you start doing your own thing and learn as you go. That's when I started working from home occasionally, and it worked out fine."

4.1.4 Ownership of work tasks

Most participants indicated equal collaboration within teams and with senior colleagues, even when working on team-based projects with different roles or occupying junior positions. They express a strong sense of ownership over the projects in which they are involved. Participants are entrusted with a certain degree of responsibility, which is greatly valued. This sense of responsibility is mostly reflected by the absence of constantly having to justify their work activities, the hours working on specific tasks, or the requirement to seek permission. Respectively, Participant 13 and Participant 12 express this sense of responsibility:

"I think the scope is quite broad. I can take on anything I want. However, I usually coordinate with my team lead because we serve the market together, so in that sense, I prefer to do things in consultation. But it's not like I have to justify myself or ask for permission when I say, "Hey, can we take this on?". It's more like, "Sure, go ahead, and let's see how it goes."

"The organization expects me to be quite self-reliant in my tasks. I find that convenient. I have this belief that if I have more responsibility, I perform better, due to the feeling that more depends on me. So, they want to encourage independence by giving me projects that are mine to dive into. And I find that enjoyable."

Moreover, most of the participants expressed the experience of a constant level of independence between the office and working from home. This may be attributed to correspondence between independence and participants' confidence in their work tasks. As previously mentioned, in the first stage of the onboarding process employees depend more on colleagues and are more often present in the office. While becoming more familiar and confident with the work tasks, they start working from home more often, resulting in becoming more autonomous. Therefore, this growth in autonomy is linked to the growing degree of independence perceived in general and is not influenced by the environment. As Participant 10 explained:

"I think it's the same. I don't notice any difference. I don't feel like I suddenly become less independent at work because someone is looking over my shoulder or anything. I think that's nice, and because of that, I can also make mistakes. There have been times when I made a mistake and I would say, "Oh, I forgot this, my apologies." But it is never someone pointing it out to me and saying, "You're not doing this well or it's going badly." I mainly engage in self-reflection, and if necessary, I have enough colleagues or my senior, who is my direct supervisor, to ask for help if needed."

4.1.5 Prioritizing work tasks

In addition to flexibility and independence, participants highly appreciated the sense of freedom they attained in organizing their work tasks to personal preferences. This appreciation may be rooted in the recent transition from the freedom of being students to employees. As a student, they had complete control over when and how to complete their study tasks, committing to a full-time job can be perceived as a major transition. They have to engage in a 9-to-5 mentality that may reduce the sense of freedom experienced during their academic years. The freedom to arrange work tasks according to personal preferences enhances the perception of freedom in decision-making, which enhances autonomy. This is highly valued among participants, including Participant 12:

“With the autonomy I get, I can make more decisions about what I want to do that day and how you organize it, which I find quite enjoyable. Because then I can simply determine my priorities. I also like that I'm not necessarily assigned tasks to be completed within a certain timeframe, but now I can just assess for myself: okay, what's important, and what do I want to do first, which I find nice. There is also a certain level of trust placed in me in that regard.”

When working from home, participants mentioned it is easier to disengage from work once they completed their assigned tasks, even when it is before the usual end of the day. The opportunity to finish work earlier is linked to the freedom of working remotely, enabling employees to prioritize their personal needs and interests. Important, leaving work tasks earlier does not impact the completion of the workload, as mentioned by Participant 10. This freedom fosters a sense of autonomy. Conversely, participants expressed this is not common when working in the office, they will stay till the end of the official work hours.

Participant 10: “And there are people who take advantage of flexibility, I'm sure. You can sense it. I haven't heard or seen it myself, but of course, everyone does it. When the weather is nice on Friday afternoon, I will stop at three or four o'clock instead of five o'clock.”

Interviewer: “Yes, but if you worked on Tuesday evening.”

Participant 10: “Yes, then it compensates. But there are also weeks when I don't work on Tuesday evening, and I still stop at four o'clock because I've completed my work. What am I supposed to do? Sit there doing nothing for that last hour?”

4.2 Building relatedness through social interaction and relationships

During the initial phase of the onboarding process, employees often rely more on their colleagues. This varies in terms of getting to know the team, acclimating to the organization's values and norms, navigating through work files, determining whom to approach for specific inquiries, and becoming familiar with one's tasks. The foundation for becoming part of the organization is established through relationships. This process includes meaningful conversations, the discovery of commonalities, for example in sports or

hobbies, and the development of connections. This is established through the fundamental role of informal social interactions (4.2.1). Participants have encountered different dynamics of interaction with colleagues between the work locations, influencing the interaction in terms of formality and spontaneity (4.2.2). Furthermore, the impact of personal touch on developing relationships is highlighted, which is associated with the physical work environment (4.2.3)

4.2.1 Building connections through informal social interaction

Participants reported that casual small conversations help them to establish a connection with their colleagues. These conversations typically happen at the coffee machine, before a meeting, and during lunches. Besides, after-work gatherings, work-related events, or team-building activities are mentioned as stimulating situations to get to know colleagues even better. During these situations, conversations tend to be more informal compared to work settings. Participant 4 describes this as the following:

"I started working at the organization during the pandemic, and after the pandemic, it was the first time a personnel party was organized. I enjoyed getting to know the non-business side of my colleagues, we had a lot of fun, and I noticed that things were immediately different at the office. With some, I bonded on another level."

Participants expressed this informal social interaction occurs less in online settings, as the communication often tends to be work-based. Colleagues are engaging in conversations because of work-related matters, running into each other at the coffee machine does not occur online. However, some participants reported that they still engage in casual conversations. For instance, participant 5 explained how on remote days the team has a Teams call to collaborate on work tasks while engaging in casual conversations about their weekend plans. They are free to join or leave the call, which fosters relatedness while accommodating autonomy.

“Sometimes we just have a video call because we enjoy the company. And then we end up chatting a lot. Sometimes we almost do nothing in terms of work because we’re just engaged in conversations, and they don’t monitor us closely. Sometimes we simply leave when we have some work tasks to do that require concentration. The call is used as an easy check-in on how things are going and to have some contact, so you’re not isolated all day.”

Additionally, participant 7 mentioned the team has a stand-up meeting in the morning on remote days during which non-work-related matters are discussed as well. This approach maintains the feeling of relatedness among employees, allowing them to carry the informal social interactions from to office to their homes. However, since these meetings have specific time slots and are scheduled, they limit the level of spontaneity and have a lower perception of freedom.

“Our stand-up meeting lasts for about fifteen minutes. Well, there are four of us in that discipline now. It doesn’t take fifteen minutes to discuss work-related matters. We talk about our weekends or various things that come up. It’s also nice because you can vent a little to everyone and feel that connection with each other.”

These results suggest that informal social interaction occurs in online settings, although it may have certain limitations.

4.2.2 Degree of spontaneity in interacting enhances a connection

At the office interactions and small talk tend to occur spontaneously and naturally, with employees running into each other in common areas like the coffee corner. These conversations can revolve around work-related topics, such as project updates, or delve into more informal subjects, including sports, hobbies, events, restaurants, or movies. Whether formal or informal, these conversations share a certain degree of spontaneity and contribute to establishing a connection between colleagues, which Participant 13 confirmed:

“Especially during the onboarding period, you do notice that it's just easier to click with colleagues when you are physically together. You engage in small talk more naturally, which helps you get to know each other faster.”

In contrast, this degree of spontaneity is limited in the digital environment, as participants often send a text message to inform about colleagues' availability or consult shared agendas before making phone calls.

Some organizations, including the organization where Participant 6 works, have implemented guidelines that encourage employees to check their colleague's status (e.g., 'busy' 'free' 'in a meeting') before calling. These rules aim to smoothen communication and respect individuals' schedules, contributing to a sense of autonomy while working from home. However, they limit spontaneous interactions.

“It became chaotic, so we introduced a system, some rules for video calling each other. If your status is green, you can make a call. And if, for example, your status is busy, which is represented by a red dot, but you're not in a meeting, then you often send a message asking if the person has a moment to talk.”

Spontaneous, unstructured conversations may occur less in online settings, as the intertwined character of several conversations going on in the office is limited. Causally picking up on conversations around employees does not occur. This lack of spontaneity appears to be a key distinction in the communication dynamics between different work locations, which makes creating a sense of relatedness more difficult.

4.2.3 The impact of personal touch on developing relationships

Developing personal connections is often perceived as more challenging in an online setting compared to a physical work environment, primarily due to the limited informal and spontaneous interactions. This includes having coffee and lunch breaks together and participating in organized activities such as sports or after-work socializing. The ability to show a photo of children while talking about them or show the restaurant where you went last weekend on Instagram is easier when being physically together. This

personal touch of social interaction adds a deeper layer to having conversations and contributes to relationship development. Participants have expressed that social interaction alone does not necessarily lead to strong bonds. The layer of personal touch is key in establishing relationships. Participant 1 addressed this phenomenon:

“Many interns, as well as full-time employees, were hired, which was sometimes quite challenging. We had the full-timers come to the office, even when it wasn't strictly allowed according to the rules, while interns worked from home. I noticed that with that group of interns, I never really established a personal connection. Whereas with interns now that are with us for a month, I already have more of a connection. I would say that the personal connection is almost non-existent when working remotely. Another example, we had a thumbnail maker who was based in Spain. He always worked remotely, and I would speak to him several times a week. He just quit recently, but I had absolutely zero connection with him, despite interacting with him for a year and a half.”

Additionally, the impact of the overall work atmosphere on establishing relationships does almost not endure online. Colleagues discussing work or personal matters contribute to getting to know each other. Sometimes, even overhearing conversations can help define someone's personality, influencing future interactions. These social dynamics only occur in physical settings, making the physical workspace key for establishing connections, and ultimately, a sense of relatedness. This is explained by Participant 11 as the following:

“You also tend to pick up on other things more often. Even if it is, for example, colleague A discussing something with colleague B and you happen to overhear it while sitting at your desk. Sometimes those are quite interesting things. Initially, it may not be relevant to you, but later, you realize that it was helpful to have picked up on those signals. Especially during the onboarding process. For example, I've seen a colleague with a tennis racket next to his desk, and now I know he

plays tennis. And you can initiate a conversation later about tennis. That is a simple example of something you wouldn't have noticed in an online environment."

These findings underscore the interconnected nature of social interaction and personal relationships as foundational for creating a sense of relatedness while highlighting the crucial role of personal in-person interactions in these dynamics.

4.3 Relations between relatedness and autonomy

Besides the dimensions that describe autonomy and relatedness separated, four relations between autonomy and relatedness were revealed. The relations are explained through the following subparagraphs: nurturing individuals' autonomy through relationships (4.3.1), autonomy arising from colleague's invisibility (4.3.2), relatedness may conflict with autonomy (4.3.3), and autonomy recharges social energy (4.3.4). An overview of these relations is presented in Table 5, and elaboration on them is provided in the following subparagraphs.

Table 5.

Brief descriptions of the relations between autonomy and relatedness

Relation between autonomy and relatedness	Description of the relation	Subparagraph
Nurturing individuals' autonomy through relationships	Individuals' values for autonomy are learned through the values of the collective. This implies that a sense of relatedness contributes to establishing individuals' valuation for autonomy	4.3.1
Autonomy arising from colleague's invisibility	When relationships are not developed yet, it is more difficult to reach out to colleagues when working from home. Therefore, individuals have to be autonomous, which sometimes is not necessarily the sense of autonomy they want	4.3.2
Relatedness may conflict with autonomy	Employees aligning their on-site and remote days with relevant others, whether this is for personal or professional purposes, may ignore their preferences of working from home. Therefore, seeking for a sense of relatedness may conflict with their sense of autonomy	4.3.3
Autonomy recharges social energy	Social interaction at the office sometimes drains a lot of energy and causes interruptions in work tasks. Consciously choosing to work from home reduces these effects of social interaction. Employees can complete their individual-oriented work tasks more easily and recharge from social interaction. Having less social interaction on some days makes them value the interaction on other days even more	4.3.4

4.3.1 Nurturing individuals' autonomy through relationships

Feeling comfortable with colleagues and developing personal relationships has a key role in finding one's place and defining one's role within the organization. As individuals gain an understanding of the roles and work tasks of others, they gain clarity about their role within the organization. In this process, communication is crucial and establishes professional relations. Participants have reported these professional relations help them to become familiar with whom to reach out for what. The gain of employees' confidence in their roles, allows them to exercise more autonomy, while their sense of relatedness to colleagues is maintained. This is highlighted by Participant 10:

"I know very well what I need to do. I know my responsibilities. Now it's very clear, whereas before it wasn't. And everyone also knows, if they have a question, they know how to reach me. That also really depends on how long you've been working somewhere, but also on the fact that when I'm in the office, people just come up to me."

The establishment of these communication lines positively impacts work tasks and team dynamics, as internal processes will run smoother. Feeling comfortable within the team enhances confidence in acting as an autonomous employee, including expressing opinions and actively participating in meetings and work processes. This positively impacts employees' engagements within the team, and consequently, their sense of relatedness, which is highlighted by Participant 12:

"I notice that when I feel comfortable, especially in a social context, I'm more inclined to express myself in specific moments. I also feel that I can contribute more, for example, during meetings. I find that when you have a good bond with your colleagues, you're more motivated to dive into something together. You have a project, and you think, "Okay, let's just go for it." I enjoy that aspect."

4.3.2 Autonomy arising from colleague's invisibility

One of the most frequently mentioned difficulties during the integration process is the barrier to asking questions. Participants expressed this hesitation is higher when working from home compared to the office and especially arises for small inquiries. The challenge of these inquiries is that they are often too minor to schedule a video meeting, yet too complicated to be addressed through a text message. Participants indicated that this issue is reinforced by the knowledge of the busy schedules of their supervisors and colleagues. Therefore, participants often experience an inner conflict, whether to disturb their colleagues or to rely on their problem-solving abilities. This inner conflict is stronger in remote settings, where employees are unable to visually gauge the availability of their colleagues, increasing the feeling of disturbance. Sometimes employees ask these questions, whether this is through a video call or a text message. Hence, participants mentioned that sometimes they save these questions until an upcoming moment of contact or try to figure it out themselves. In these situations, participants navigate a certain degree of autonomy of which the desirability may be questioned. The hesitation in asking questions can potentially affect employees' confidence in their work tasks and may raise concerns about colleagues' perceptions of their capabilities. With the result of stagnating their growth in autonomy. Respectively Participant 9 and Participant 6 expressed this inner conflict:

“When using Teams, it is sometimes more difficult to quickly reach out to people. I feel a bit hesitant to keep sending messages all the time, and especially when looking at people's calendars, well, they're packed. I figured they wouldn't make time for a newcomer like me. So, I felt a bit insecure about it, but that's why I started going to the office more often on my initiative. Especially in the beginning, to show that I'm committed, enthusiastic, and in need of assistance.”

“In the office, when I see that you're having a conversation with someone else, I won't interrupt you. But if I see that someone else happens to be sitting next to you, but you're not engaged in a conversation, I can ask you a question. That is something you can sense. However, that's not possible through Teams.”

Participants feeling of burdening colleagues may be attributed to not having fostered a sense of relatedness yet. Employees are insecure about reaching out to colleagues, fearing they might be busy or that their questions are stupid and time-consuming. As stronger connections are fostered with colleagues, employees become more visible to one another. Specific colleagues become associated with specific topics, making them easier to find when questions arise. Consequently, proactively reaching out to them becomes less challenging. Therefore, the development of strong bonds with colleagues fosters a sense of relatedness that results in shorter communication lines, thus becoming more visible. This, in turn, lowers a certain sense of autonomy that was necessary but not necessarily desired.

4.3.3 Relatedness may conflict with autonomy

Although communication technologies are widely integrated, participants expressed a continued preference for face-to-face meetings, especially when involving brainstorming sessions and in-depth discussions about headed directions, concepts, or ideas. The direct interaction between team members enhances the collaborative process, allowing a more dynamic exchange of ideas and the exploration of diverse perspectives. This is explained by Participant 3:

“I think that when, a project plan needs to be written, and you're doing it all online, you may generate fewer unconventional or out-of-the-box ideas. Often, you want to provide a bit more context, and that's just easier when you're physically present. When you're working online, you can certainly write down ideas. But usually, these are ideas that are already more developed, so they can be understood by reading them. If you have an idea that is not yet fully formed, but you want to explain it, being physically present allows you to see what further needs to be developed or elaborated on.”

The physical presence of colleagues also influences participants' decision-making about their on-site and remote days. This phenomenon mostly emerges between colleagues who work closely together or have a

strong social connection. The value of spending time and breaks together or simply being in each other's physical presence positively contributes to the effectiveness or satisfaction of the overall workday, as

Participant 2 mentioned:

"Usually all our projects are team-based. When most team members are in the studio, I prefer to be there as well. It is just easier to collaborate."

Conversely, employees might decide to work remotely when they are aware that colleagues with whom they have a connection are not in the office. Participant 3 expressed this situation:

"Knowing I'm almost the only one in the office makes it easier for me to work from home. When I have almost no one to talk to during lunch, I can also have lunch on my own at home."

These results address a field of tension between autonomy and relatedness. Participants relying their on-site days and remote days on colleagues may be linked to relatedness in two ways. First, and most clearly, colleagues with whom employees have valued social interaction contribute to the perception of relatedness for that day. Besides, as collaborative processes run smoother, employees understand each other better and feel more connected. When this consideration is decisive, the sense of autonomy may be undermined. For example, employees may work in the office even when their work tasks are more suitable for remote work or they prefer working remotely, simply because relevant colleagues are present. Another example is when employees have a meeting that is most suitable for physical appearance, however, the remaining work tasks of the day may be more suitable for remote work. When the employee decides to work in the office, the benefit of the collaborative meeting outweighs the benefit of individual tasks. This dynamic emphasizes prioritizing relatedness while undermining autonomy.

4.3.4 Autonomy recharges social energy

One of the primary advantages of hybrid work is efficiency enhancement. In the office employees easily engage in conversations with others, interrupting their workflow. The key to optimizing efficiency is strategically planning work tasks that require interaction with colleagues or that are suitable for interruption on in-site days and individual work tasks on remote days. Therefore, on-site days predominately revolve around social interactions, while remote days allow for a greater sense of autonomy. This is explained by Participant 9:

"It's just a different way of doing things. I wouldn't necessarily say that I'm more productive. In the office, I often find myself caught up in numerous coffee breaks and socializing, and I think to myself, "When am I going to get my work done?" But when I'm working from home, I have the flexibility to focus without interruptions. I must say, I enjoy that aspect of it."

At the same time, on-site days can be overloaded with social interaction, draining a lot of energy. Having some days with fewer social interactions saves energy, that can be spent on other activities such as sports, reading, and spending time with friends. These activities restore employee's energy, potentially leading to an energized return to the office the following day. An energized appearance may have a positive impact on interactions with colleagues and the overall team dynamics. Participant 11 expressed this overload of social interaction:

"Working from home comes at the expense of social interaction. However, I remember when I made the switch to [organization], in the beginning, I was working in the office every day again. And suddenly, I noticed that it was much more draining in terms of energy. There was simply a lot more social interaction. During those previous years of the pandemic, I wasn't used to that anymore. Therefore, working from home sometimes can be very appreciated."

Employees consciously choose to focus on individual tasks when working from home. Therefore, participants reported that they do not sense a loss of relatedness during these days. In contrast, they value the opportunity to work with less social interaction and less distractions. As Participant 4 explained:

“One advantage of working from home is that you can't be constantly interrupted, or at least less frequently. When I'm at the office and I'm working on something, and someone comes into the office, you can't pretend that you are not available. When working on a specific project and needing to focus, it is a big advantage to be able to dedicate a few consecutive hours to it and make progress. So, when I see someone calling, I consciously decide to ignore it and call them back later. This allows me to make more progress. If I'm working on a project where I don't need to collaborate with others as much and can continue my own, I sometimes choose to work from home to have more focused time and fewer interruptions. For me, working from home is a conscious choice.”

In addition, participants expressed they do not necessarily feel an increase in relatedness when going to the office but experience a greater value in the social interaction engaged in. Thus, enhancing autonomy and focusing on individual tasks when working from home recharges employees' social energy, providing them with the capacity for deeper connections on other days.

4.4 Autonomy and relatedness: balancing acts

Previous sections elaborated on the nuanced experiences of autonomy and relatedness in various contexts. Moreover, the findings imply that autonomy and relatedness are not static concepts but rather dynamic concepts that constantly flow in importance. In some situations, the desire for autonomy takes precedence, while in other situations, employees dedicate dominance to relatedness. Besides, they may influence each other. A high sense of autonomy can foster a deeper desire for relatedness, while the overload of social interactions may increase the desire for autonomy. Ultimately, the experiences of autonomy and relatedness, and especially the valuation of them, are inherently situational. Participant 3 captures this as the following:

"I think it always has its advantages and disadvantages, and it depends on the moment to determine what is more important. So, I don't feel that there's only one thing that always applies. For example, I don't always prioritize social interaction, and I don't always prioritize flexibility. There are just so many circumstances involved, and that's when it's nice to be able to discuss and decide on it together."

5. Discussion

5.1 Main Findings

This study aimed to provide insights into how autonomy and relatedness are perceived among employees entering the workforce in a hybrid work environment. Through in-depth interviews with thirteen young professionals, flexibility, independence, and freedom in decision-making emerged as dimensions that describe autonomy. Relatedness was described by the dimensions of social interaction and personal relationships. In addition, this study aimed to identify potential tensions or balances between the two concepts. From the interviews, it emerged that the valuation of autonomy is intrinsically tied to the development of relationships. The confidence and foundation required for personal growth within an employee's role are nurtured through relatedness. Moreover, the values and norms for flexibility, independence, and freedom in the decision-making of colleagues contribute to the evolvement of an individual's values. Thus, assigning appreciation to autonomy is learned through the collective valuation of the team, while being able to operate as an autonomous employee is learned through the guidance of colleagues. This emphasizes the intertwined character of autonomy and relatedness, reflecting the tension discussed by Jenkins and Neal (2023), who suggested that relationships nurture autonomy.

Diving into the concepts separately, this study revealed that employees experience a consistent sense of autonomy, whether they work at the office or from home, contradicting the suggestion of enhanced autonomy or constrained autonomy. This consistency may be attributed to the inexperience of working full-time, resulting in young professionals' sense of autonomy being adapted to the hybrid environment. Besides, this study showed that young professionals' sense of autonomy streamlines with the growth in operating autonomously, not experiencing enhanced or constrained autonomy. Furthermore, contrary to the autonomy paradox indicated by Mazmanian et al. (2013), young professionals in this study did report not experiencing the need to constantly be accessible through digital technologies. This may be attributed to their familiarity with constant connectivity in their daily lives, using technologies for work not being different (Aggarwal et al., 2022).

As opposed to the sense of autonomy, the sense of relatedness differentiates between work locations. The results of this study are in line with existing research that highlights the crucial role of

informal and spontaneous conversations in establishing bonds, which mostly occur in physical settings (Bleakley et al.,2022). However, this study shows that young professionals do not necessarily experience a decrease or increase in relatedness. Participants expressed they were able to carry a sense of relatedness experienced in the office with them. Besides, they consciously choose to have less social interaction while focusing more on individual tasks, planning their day according to their preferences. Thus, some days with less social interaction do not necessarily mean a loss of overall relatedness. Conversely, it may allow for a dominant sense of autonomy, suggesting a balancing act between the two concepts.

Elaborating on the balancing character, this study unveiled that sometimes relatedness may conflict with autonomy. Young professionals may align their work locations with the presence or absence of colleagues, whether this is due to feeling more connected during collaborative meetings or in seeking connection during breaks and in-between moments. The preference for fostering a sense of relatedness may overrule the sense of autonomy. In their research, Rockmann and Pratt (2015) introduce the phenomenon of a lonely office, in which employees collectively work from home, as no relevant others are present in the office. The phenomenon identified in this study appears to be a response to the concept of the lonely office, as employees collectively commit to work in the office again when they are aware of the presence of relevant colleagues.

This study based the conceptualization of autonomy and relatedness on psychological needs, as defined by Deci and Ryan (2000). They discuss the satisfaction of the needs when they are fulfilled. In the scope of this study, the definition of autonomy and relatedness as needs may need reconsideration. Bidee et al. (2016) introduce the concept of need frustration alongside need satisfaction, acknowledging the dynamic nature of needs that can change over time. Their notion of time and change aligns with the balancing character that emerged in this study. Looking beyond needs, Ester and Roe (1999) review the literature on work and values, suggesting that values can be held at three levels; countries, groups, or individuals. Groups include for example people that belong to the same occupational group, an organization, or subculture. A distinction is made between general values and values that concern a specific domain, such as work values. It is suggested that work values somehow derive from general values. Alternatively, work values may be seen as a source from which general values develop. This way practices

and standards may generate work-related values that generalize into the wider social life. Therefore, values are considered influential. The general value of autonomy that young people hold, may influence the work value of autonomy. At the same time, as values are influential, the values of colleagues may influence young professional's values. Entering an organization that assigns great value to team cohesion and team dynamics, may increase young professional values for relatedness. Acknowledging the influential character of autonomy and relatedness allows for dynamics within the values.

In their research, Ester and Roe (1999) make a second assumption, the change of values. Value change can occur within a value profile of a country, group, or individual. Certain values may get a higher or lower score. Focusing on work values increases in values such as personal development have been noticed in the past. In the scope of this study, this might explain the higher value of relatedness when entering the organization, to become part of the organization. As time passes, a higher value is assigned to the sense of autonomy, including operating on an individual level and prioritizing one's work activities and schedules. Furthermore, there may be changes in the position of values within the value space. Specific values may lose importance compared to other values, while others gain importance. This study shows that in some situations employees assign higher priority to a sense of autonomy, while in other situations relatedness is found more important. This characterizes the changing nature of perceived autonomy and relatedness depending on specific situations, supporting the suggestion to approach autonomy and relatedness as values.

Expanding on the approach of autonomy and relatedness as values instead of needs, research on cultural contexts of these values may strengthen the assumption. The paper of Fajans (2006) views the tension between individuality and sociality in a cultural context. There is a constant tension between the values of autonomy and the need to relate and show compassion for others. Both values exist simultaneously since neither desire dominates exclusively. However, one may overshadow the other depending on the situation. Therefore, considering the context is important for understanding an individual's value for autonomy and relatedness. Another research regarding autonomy and relatedness in cultural context is that of Kağıtçıbaşı (2005). They imply the coexistence of autonomy and relatedness, as a person can both be autonomous and closely attached to someone. When employees work at the office and

engage in collaborative meetings and conversations with colleagues all day, they assign value to a sense of relatedness. Due to their relatedness, conversations occur smoothly, and understanding each other seems to occur naturally. In this specific context, autonomy is less important, thus the valuation is minimized, but that does not mean autonomy does not exist. Employees still operate as autonomous persons in collaborative meetings, however, a higher value is assigned to the collective element as opposed to the individual. Acknowledging the coexistence of autonomy and relatedness highlights the ability to prioritize them as values depending on the situation.

The notion of time, influential character, and the aspect of change of values, while considering the coexistence of autonomy and relatedness that has been viewed in cultural contexts sheds light on considering autonomy and relatedness as dynamic values in the workplace. This consideration raises questions on how the balance in values changes over time as well as how and why changes within the values occur. This encourages further exploration into the evolving nature of these values.

5.2 Theoretical contributions

Two scientific contributions were made to this study. First, this study sheds light on balancing autonomy and relatedness in the hybrid work environment. The crucial role of developing relationships in shaping an autonomous individual with values and norms is acknowledged, as well as the change in priority between autonomy and relatedness depending on specific situations. The assumption of autonomy and relatedness as influential values that can coexist and change in priority depending on the situation and over time, is as far as known by the researcher, a new insight in the context of hybrid work.

Second, this study addresses a gap in the literature by focusing on inexperienced young professionals entering the hybrid workforce. Different from existing research, this study focuses on the integration of employees in this working arrangement, instead of the transition between workplaces or the remote workplace among experienced employees. Therefore, specific dimensions of autonomy and relatedness emerged as crucial, while others were not relevant. In the context of relatedness, the development of relationships arises as the most important dimension, while maintaining relations (Tapani et al., 2022) or the feeling of isolation (Wax et al., 2022) that are mentioned in existing research, were not

mentioned by participants in this study. Furthermore, the proposed increase or decrease in relatedness is not revealed in this study. Although the dimensions of autonomy match the definition proposed in the theoretical framework, the prospect of increase or decrease is not met. Contrary, a streamlining with the growing curve in young professionals' roles was encountered. Therefore, this study reveals new insights into the experiences of autonomy and relatedness among inexperienced young professionals entering the workforce.

5.3 Practical implications

The findings of this study offer several practical implications for organizations to foster autonomy and relatedness in the hybrid work environment. First, during the onboarding process, new employees have to establish relationships with colleagues who can provide guidance, to become familiar with the work tasks and the organization's values and norms. Organizations and team members can support this development by arranging that relevant colleagues are present when new employees are at the office. This can be done by making appointments with team members about their on-site and remote days and aligning them with the on-site and remote days of the new employee.

Second, another possibility is that organizations set specific question and feedback timeslots in which colleagues are available for new employees. Participants have reported that when communication lines become stronger and clearer, they are more confident in reaching out to colleagues. The timeslots stimulate the communication lines between the employee and their colleagues, while relationships are not established yet. As relationships develop, communication lines become stronger, and the timeslots can be scaled back. This fosters a sense of relatedness, as it contributes to developing relationships. At the same time, the feedback provided in the timeslots contributes to employees' professional development in work tasks, allowing them to take more ownership of their work activities over time.

Furthermore, the flexibility hybrid work offers in scheduling, may result in colleagues working on different days at the office, potentially missing out on valuable interaction with the team. Therefore, continuing to enhance team cohesion is a crucial element. This can be achieved through team-building activities or work-related events to encourage employees to come to the office on the same days. These

activities can include team lunches during brainstorming sessions, post-work social gatherings, monthly wrap-up dinners, celebrating birthdays, attending work-related lectures, or celebrating organizations' successes. Additionally, organizations can consider facilitating virtual coffee breaks or an ongoing video call in the background so that employees can join or leave on remote days for employees who miss this connection. These activities promote a sense of team spirit and connectedness without impeding employees' sense of freedom and autonomy.

Lastly, it is important that organizations continuously adapt their practices in response to the evolving hybrid work environment. This can be established by evaluating employee's experiences of integrating within the organization. Based on their experiences, adjustments may be considered regarding optimizing the hybrid onboarding process, fostering a sense of autonomy and relatedness.

5.4 Limitations and future research

This study provides valuable insights on a contemporary and relevant topic, considering the newly emerged hybrid working style after the pandemic and the entrance of young professionals into this work environment. However, like all studies, contributions are limited by the choices made in the data collection and analysis. Therefore, it is crucial to evaluate the outcomes and executions of this study. First, the sample size and the composition of the participants should be evaluated. The initial participants were primarily recruited from the researchers' direct network, with additional participants obtained through the contacts within that network. Due to snowball sampling, the creative and media sectors predominately represent the sample, as this aligns with the researchers' network. As the selection is not random, it may not be representative of the complete target audience of young professionals. Therefore, the generalizability of the findings to the wider population of young hybrid workers may be limited. Moreover, the slight overrepresentation of females in the sample also addresses the need for more diverse participant requirements in future studies.

Another aspect of the study that has to be evaluated is the constructs of autonomy and relatedness. The decision to not explicitly define these constructs before or during the interviews aimed to capture participants' own experiences and definitions of these concepts. However, this approach may have

introduced variations in how autonomy and relatedness are conceptualized among participants. Future research may consider incorporating a mixed methods approach, including a questionnaire that helps to define the constructs and captures the importance to employees. Interviews can be used to explore experiences, and potential changes in experiences, in more depth. This allows for a comprehensive understanding of autonomy and relatedness in the hybrid work environment.

Understanding the experiences of autonomy and relatedness can provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities the hybrid work environment has to offer. Further exploration of these concepts, and the involvement among employees, can contribute to the development of strategies and practices that organizations can adapt to foster autonomy and relatedness. This also highlights the importance of future research in investigating the enduring impact of the hybrid working style on the perception of autonomy and relatedness.

5.5 Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate how young professionals perceive autonomy and relatedness in the hybrid work environment. Autonomy, encompassing the dimensions of flexibility, independence, and freedom in decision-making, was not notably perceived as different between work locations. This finding may be attributed to the inexperience of young professionals, aligning their sense of autonomy to the confidence they gain within their role. Conversely, this study shed light on the challenges faced in establishing relatedness in the online environment. Casual conversations and spontaneous interaction are limited in remote settings, while these are essential in developing connection and personal relationships, thus relatedness. Furthermore, this study highlights the dynamic nature of autonomy and relatedness, demonstrating they often evolve as balancing acts. This evokes the assumption to consider autonomy and relatedness as influential values, as opposed to needs, allowing them to coexist, vary in priority depending on the situation, and change over time. This suggestion raises new questions that allow for future research.

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Appendix A - Proposed interview questions

1. Kun je vertellen hoe jouw baan / werk eruit ziet en welke verantwoordelijkheden hierbij horen?
2. Hoe heb je het ervaren om ingewerkt te worden in een hybride werkomgeving?
3. Hoe ervaar je?

- a. Autonomie

In hoeverre ben je flexibel in je werk en hoe ervaar je dat?

Hoe ziet de zelfstandigheid eruit die je krijgt in je werk?

Hoe ervaar je de verantwoordelijkheden die je hebt?

Hoe ervaar je autonomie in je werk?

- b. Verbondenheid

Hoe ervaar je de sociale interactie met collega's?

Welke communicatiemiddelen gebruiken jullie en hoe ervaar je die communicatie?

Hoe zien de relaties met collega's eruit?

Hoe ervaar je verbondenheid in je werk?

- c. Heb je het gevoel dat de sociale aspecten van je werk in balans zijn met de autonomie en flexibiliteit die je hebt?

4. Demografische vragen

- Wat is je leeftijd?
- Wat is je gender?
- In welke sector werk je?
- Wat is je functie?
- Hoe groot is het team waarin je werkt?
- Hoelang werk je bij je huidige werkgever?
- Wat is de verdeling tussen thuiswerken en op kantoor werken op wekelijkse basis?
- Kan je dit volledig zelf indelen? Of zijn er vanuit de organisatie richtlijnen hiervoor?
- Werk je altijd vanuit huis of ook vanaf andere locaties, zoals koffie cafés, flexibele werkplekken of de bibliotheek?

Appendix B - Codebook

Category	Codes	Subcodes	Definition	Example
Integration process	Onboarding procedure ----		The process the organization has regarding becoming familiar with the work tasks and within the organisation.	
	Integratie proces	Positive ---- Positief	A positive experience with the onboarding process	Ja, nou, ik heb bijvoorbeeld één collega die altijd thuis werkt en daardoor was al veel van de communicatie ingesteld op hybride werken. Dus in dat opzicht hoefde er niet veel aangepast te worden naar mijn wensen als het gaat om thuiswerken of op kantoor werken. Dus de communicatie liep al over Slack, en de weekstart was al online. We gebruiken dan nu gedeelde agenda, zodat je kan zien wanneer iemand op kantoor is en wanneer niet. Dat maakt het ook makkelijk, dat is ook al een systeem, daar hebben we al iets voor. Het inwerken daarvan voelde eigenlijk niet als iets extra moeite, in vergelijking met de andere dingen waar ik ingewerkt moest worden
		Negative ---- Negatief	A negative experience with the onboarding process	Nou ja, niet zo heel goed, want precies in die periode kwam die tweede lockdown. En ik heb één keer een soort van overdracht gehad en toen kreeg ik papieren en red je ermee. Maar ik heb helemaal geen traject gehad en dat is ook iets wat besproken is met mijn leidinggevende en ook door andere mensen in die periode. Daarom hebben ze nu een nieuwe leerlijn ontwikkeld.
		Mixed ---- Gemixt	Both positive and negative aspects	Met inwerken puur voor welke taken ik moet uitvoeren, een probleem, moeilijkheid sorry. Dat was geen daadwerkelijk probleem. Soms duurde het iets langer voordat je iets wist, maar dat lag altijd wel iets te doen waarmee ik verder kon. Alleen om het bedrijf van meet af aan goed te leren kennen, was het wel een probleem, omdat ik, ja nu nog steeds mensen leer kennen die ik al die tijd niet heb gezien, terwijl die niet eens zo bijzonder ver weg van mij staan.
	Accessibility ---- Toegankelijkheid		The approachability of colleagues.	Nou, wat je altijd wel merkt, dat is denk ik, bij alles. Op kantoor loop je makkelijker binnen. En kijk, het is heel simpel: een senior adviseur, die kan makkelijker zeggen van als ik bel, kan die makkelijker zeggen van oh, die neem ik even niet op. Maar als ik gewoon letterlijk tegenover zijn bureau zit of naast hem op kantoor. Dan is die drempel om mij even een soort van af te wimpelen, wat plat gezegd maar om het op die manier te zeggen, ja, dat is voor hem lastiger.
	Feedback / questions ---- Feedback / vragen		The action / procedure of asking question or getting feedback.	Kijk, stel je voor, jij zit nu letterlijk aan de andere kant tegenover mij met een computerscherm, ik kan dan makkelijk zeggen van als dat ik zeg van hé, [naam] wil je koffie? Kan ik ook zeggen van hé, [naam], ik loop hier en hier tegenaan. Hoe denk jij daarover? En dat kan best wel een vraag zijn waarvan ik dacht dat ja, waarvoor je niet de telefoon in klimt. Waarvoor je niet iemand gaat opbellen. Die vragen, dat is een bepaalde categorie type vragen, die stel je wel als je echt letterlijk naast elkaar zit,

Category	Codes	Subcodes	Definition	Example
	Visibility ---- Zichtbaarheid		The ability to see colleagues and their work activities.	maar niet via de telefoon. Daar ga je iemand niet telefonisch mee lastig vallen. Nee, zeker niet, en het is natuurlijk ook zo op kantoor. Het kan best zijn dat ie niet opneemt omdat hij toevallig aan het bellen is. En dat is iets wat je dan op het kantoor ook ziet, dat hij aan het bellen is, ja, daar ga ik geen vragen stellen.
	Physical presence ---- Fysieke aanwezigheid		The effects of being physically present at the organization.	Ja was wel even lastig, vooral aan het begin. Ik heb wel bewust ervoor gekozen, ik woon en werk in [woonplaats], dus ik heb er wel bewust voor gekozen om wat vaker naar kantoor te komen, vooral in het begin. Ik merkte ook wel, gewoon voor mezelf, als jij thuis werkt en vooral in die eerste beginperiode waar je dan op doelt in de zin van inwerken en dat soort zaken, dan is het gewoon heel goed om elkaar fysiek te zien. Dan is het toch makkelijker, ook qua communicatie. En ik denk, als je thuis zit dat je wat meer, een soort van, ja, een grens daartussen krijgt, waardoor je wat minder snel mensen aanspreekt.
	Insecurity ---- Onzekerheid		The insecurity about the position within the team / organization and in work tasks.	Nee, ik denk dat in het begin voor mezelf dat ik het sowieso wel een beetje lastig vond om dat in eerste instantie te doen, omdat nou heel eerlijk gezegd, wist niet echt eens wat online marketing precies inhield. En na een aantal maanden, ik denk daar een half jaar, dat ik toen echt pas dacht: oké, nu weet ik het een beetje, nu weet ik ook wel meer waar ik gewoon mag zeggen: hé, maar dit gaat niet goed en het zijn in mijn ogen misschien hele simpele dingen, bijvoorbeeld het aanhouden van een bepaalde huisstijl. Ja, dat is gewoon heel belangrijk, maar dat is niet belangrijk voor als jij advertenties inricht want het interesseert die persoon helemaal niet. Dus wat ik ook wel geleerd heb, is dat wat voor mij vanzelfsprekend is, dat dat echt niet voor iedereen vanzelfsprekend is. Dus dat je best wel gewoon je mond open mag trekken om daar wat van te zeggen.
Relationships	Connection ---- Connectie		The establishment of similar interests to talk about.	Je merkt wel dat dat het gewoon makkelijker is om met collega's te klikken. Je hebt gewoon makkelijker die smalltalk, waardoor je sneller, ja, elkaar leert kennen.
	Personal bond ---- Persoonlijke band		The development of personal relationships that are characterized by caring and supporting each other.	Ik zit nu natuurlijk even terug te denken aan de periode waar, nou ja nu gaat het redelijk goed met me, maar waar ik doorheen ben gegaan, na het ongeluk van [naam]. En de hele periode daarna, wat we dus allemaal met elkaar gedeeld hebben. Natuurlijk met ene collega, sta je dichterbij, zelfs binnen het team, dan met een andere collega. Maar ja, wat wij met elkaar hebben kunnen delen, of wat ik kwijt kon in ieder geval. En doordat die ruimte er was, heeft dat sowieso weer positieve invloed gehad op mijn werk en wetende dat je in ieder geval met een goed gevoel naar werk gaat.
	Team dynamics / structure ---- Team dynamiek / structuur		The roles and habits within a team	Ja, in het begin weten mensen natuurlijk ook niet helemaal goed wat ze van jou kunnen verwachten. En nou ja, naarmate je langer bent en meer wordt betrokken bij andere projecten, wordt die dynamiek ook wel zo dat ze jou weten te vinden als ze een vraag hebben of iets. Of hé, weet je wel, klopt dit? Of dat je er zelf iets van zegt. Uiteindelijk is het wel gewoon teamwerk en dat staat ook wel hoog, zeg maar in het vaandel, om het even zo te zeggen.

Category	Codes	Subcodes	Definition	Example
	Group bonding ---- Groepsbinding		The development of a strong bond between team members.	Ja, en wat ik heel leuk vind hier, maar wat niet per se een voorwaarde was, maar wat wel bijdraagt aan de werksfeer is dat we ook eens in de zoveel tijd een uitje hebben en dat er getrakteerd wordt als er iemand jarig is en gewoon het algehele bedrijfs gevoel dat je af en toe ook samen op stap gaat en niet alleen maar de deur achter je dichttrekt en zegt: dag.
	Work atmosphere ---- Werk sfeer		The mood that prevails within the organization.	Dit voelt gewoon goed en de sfeer is goed en het zijn hele aardige mensen en gewoon een beetje dat nuchtere toch wel, dat ik dat wel heel belangrijk vind in hoe je met elkaar omgaat.
	Organizational composition ---- Organisatorische samenstelling		The composition of the company, such as size and age of employees.	Bij [organisatie] waar ik nu zit, is het een jong team, dus dat nou ja, dat geeft wel een bepaalde dynamiek. Ook was ik de enige vrouw in ons team toen ik begon, dat is inmiddels veranderd. Nou ja, ik was wel wat gewend natuurlijk, dus dat maakte me niet zo veel uit.
	Work location based on others ---- Werk locatie laten afhangen van de werk locaties van collega's		The alignment of on-site and remote days based on the schedules of colleagues.	We stemmen het wel een beetje op elkaar af. En ik moet zeggen, ik heb wat jongere collega's omheen. En vooral met dat groepje. We zijn met z'n met z'n vijven ja, daar spreken we wel gewoon mee af van: Goh komt morgen naar het kantoor, zullen we samen lunchen dus dat. Daar overleggen we wel over ja. En als er niemand komt, dan blijf ik ook thuis, want ja, anders het toch alleen lunchen, dan denk ik kan ik net zo goed alleen lunchen thuis.
	Connectedness ---- Verbondenheid		The feeling of being connected to the organization and colleagues. Often reflected by respect, good relationships and a good work atmosphere.	De verbinding met mijn collega's, misschien wel een wat kleiner groepje van de totaal, wij gaan heel vaak borrelen. Ja, de wat oudere mensen gaan niet mee of er zijn altijd mensen die er geen zin in hebben. Maar met de mensen met wie ik wel ben, heb ik één collega, dat is gewoon echt een vriendin, een soort van geworden. En ook een aantal collegaatjes waar we op terras mee kunnen zitten. Dus er zitten ook wel wat wat informele vriendschap-achtige dingen tussen. Dat is wel heel fijn en ik kan heel goed bij mijn leidinggevende. Ik studeer hiernaast nog, en daar heeft ze heel veel begrip voor en kan ik goed met haar over praten.
Communication	Social interaction ---- Sociale interactie		The communication process between team members	
		Informal ---- Informeel	Communication processes and conversations that are casual and non-work-related.	Dat klinkt heel stom, maar op vrijdag, dan staat het weekend voor de deur. Ja, dan bespreek je toch vaak wel van Goh, hè, wat ga jij nou dit weekend doen? Of heb je gisteravond nog wat gedaan? Dus ik vind het juist wel leuk dat je dat ook kunt bespreken met elkaar. Of even aan het eind van de dag. Vaak bellen ze ook wel rond vier uur nog effen in van Goh, nou, wat ga jij doen? En dat is het eigenlijk helemaal niet van Goh, wat heb je nou eigenlijk vandaag gedaan? Want dat merkte ik bij mijn stage vorig jaar wel. Dat ze heel vaak aan het einde van de dag belden van: hé, hoe is je dacht vandaag geweest en wat heb je allemaal kunnen doen? En hier is het eigenlijk meer van. Nou, fijn dat jullie allemaal gewerkt hebben, nou wat gaan jullie straks of morgen doen? En dus het is eigenlijk wel heel informeel en tussendoor komen er echt wel dingen.

Category	Codes	Subcodes	Definition	Example
		Formal ---- Formeel	Communication processes and conversations that occur on a professional level.	Ik heb het met bepaalde collega's wel, dat hele informele, maar omdat ik die nu ook al gewoon wat langer ken. Voor sommige collega's, het is binnen de bank toch nog een beetje op status. En ja, je kan gewoon achter je naam zien hoe ver je bent in het proces. Nou, bij mij staat er een eentje achter en bij sommigen dan een vijf. En vijf is één van de hoogste, dus die kan je niet zomaar even aanschieten. Het contact met hen is direct een stuk formeler.
	Collaboration ---- Samenwerking		The cooperation together with colleagues, seniors or managers.	Nou, het is voor de samenwerking wel makkelijk als je een persoonlijke band met degene hebt waarmee je samenwerkt.
	Structure of meetings ---- Structuur van overleggen / vergadering		The structure of meetings in an online environment and in the office.	Ja, dus dan zit hij op kantoor [locatie 2] en ik op kantoor [locatie 1]. Dan hebben we inderdaad online contact, maar dat zijn kleine dingetjes even afstemmen. Stel, er is een beetje een onderscheid tussen een verkooptraject. Een verkooptraject is wat meer oppervlakkig, in de zin van ik moet even met je afstemmen hoe gaan we dit aanpakken. En waarderingen is wat cijfermatige, wat gedetailleerder en ook dat je wat meer contact met elkaar moet hebben. Dus bij dat soort opdrachten is ons wel fijner bij elkaar te zitten, want dan heb je wat meer vragen nodig.
Flexibility	Work location ---- Werk locatie		The ability to choose the work location based on personal preferences.	Nou, meestal zit ik op de locaties [locatie 2] en [locatie 1]. Dan ben ik eigenlijk iedere week wel te vinden. Denk gemiddeld misschien één a twee dagen in de week in [locatie 2]. Vaak twee dagen, misschien [locatie 1], soms drie dagen en soms één dag. Er zit niet echt een vast patroon in. Ik kijk eigenlijk echt een beetje van op dagbasis waar ik ga zitten en meestal hangt dat ook vanaf van bijvoorbeeld dat ik een meeting in [locatie 2] heb, samen met [collega], een senior adviseur, en dan de klant. Die ene dag thuis vind ik wel heel lekker om even geen reistijd te hebben en even niet in de auto te zitten.
	Scheduled appointments ---- Geplande afspraken		The expectation of presence for certain appointments / meetings.	Het is wel eigenlijk het handigst dat inderdaad die brainstorm sessies of meetings, natuurlijk op kantoordagen plaatsvinden. Dus daaromheen kun je dan wel je je thuiswerken inplannen, het beste. Het is sowieso wel flexibel hoor. Ze hebben heel veel flexibiliteit omtrent je thuiswerkdagen dus je mag ook zeggen van de ene keer wil ik die dag, of ik wil nog een extra dagje als het zo uitkomt, dus dat is heel fijn. Maar die creatieve brainstorm dingen, die zijn sowieso natuurlijk handiger als je gewoon face to face bent, dan kun je echt veel uitwisselen en samen denken.
	Schedule ---- Planning		The ability to structure one's agenda.	Ja, ik heb, dat heeft echt niks. Ik kan gewoon zelf kiezen, ook al ga ik om elf uur 's avonds een mailtje sturen. Dat doe je misschien niet zo snel, maar als ik in [stad] zit, werk ik ook gewoon soms eventjes tussendoor, want dan heb ik een spoedvraag en dan moet het eruit. Ja, dan moet ik dinsdagavond even wat doen en dan werk ik vrijdag wat minder lang. Of ik moet woensdagochtend echt een stuk afmaken want ik heb de dag daarna een collegevoorstel, dan ga ik een ochtend drie of vier uur bezig. Nou, dan neem ik vrijdagmiddag vrij.

Category	Codes	Subcodes	Definition	Example
Freedom	Perceived freedom ---- Waargenomen / ervaren vrijheid		The feeling of being able to make decisions according to one preference and without asking permission.	Ik denk dat als ik een werkgever had die van mij verwacht om vijf dagen per week op de werkvloer zijn, dat ik dat dan wel vervelender vind. Ik wel erg fijn om, als ik wat meer moeite heb met opstarten 's ochtends, dat ik dat dan ook in mijn eigen huis kan doen en dat ik ook wat eerder naar huis kan als ik bijvoorbeeld wat minder lekker in mijn vel zit, zodat ik dan thuis kan gaan werken.
	Justification ---- Verantwoording (afleggen)		The (perceived) feeling to justify work tasks.	
		Positive ---- Positief		Het is niet per se dat ik elke keer de behoefte voel om verantwoording af te moeten leggen. Of zo nee, nee, totaal niet eigenlijk.
		Negative ---- Negatief		Ja, als ik fysiek aanwezig ben, dan heb ik het idee dat mensen mensen zien dat ik aan het werk ben. Dus dat ze denken dat ik waarschijnlijk met iets anders druk ben als ik niet reageer. Als ik online ben en ik reageer niet, dan kunnen ze denken dat ik met niet werk gerelateerde dingen bezig ben.
	Efficiency ---- Efficiëntie		The ability to design work tasks in a manner that increases efficiency during the day / week.	Nou ja, ja, ik denk in de zin dat ik wat minder makkelijk, bijvoorbeeld afgeleid raak door andere projecten die gaande zijn waar dan ik even voor nodig ben. Dus dat ik wel wat makkelijker toekomt aan de dingen waar ik aan toe wil komen op een dag dat ik thuis werk. Ik raak het ook wel redelijk snel afgeleid als ik op werk ben, maar dan door werk-gerelateerde dingen, dus dan ga ik daar even mijn mening over geven. Of dat kan ik ook nog wel even eens opzoeken voor je. En als ik thuis werk, dan hoeft dat wat minder en dan kan ik iets meer gestructureerd bezig gaan met de taken die moeten gebeuren die dag. Ik denk dat ik vooral mijn tijd efficiënter gebruik.
	Independence ---- Onafhankelijkheid		The feeling of being independent, mostly in the form of having own projects to carry out and have certain responsibilities.	Ik vond het ook fijn om verantwoordelijkheden te delen en niet altijd zelfstandig te werken. Maar uiteindelijk blijf ik toch mezelf, en ga ik van nature het meest naar van oké, geef mij gewoon een stapel werk en dan werk ik het wel af en ik vind het ook fijn als ik ergens mijn ei in kwijt kan. Dus ja, ik vind dat wel belangrijk.
	Responsibility ---- Verantwoordelijkheid		The feeling of carrying responsibility for one's work and actions.	En bij het bedrijf waar ik nu zit, werd toen vanaf het begin gezegd van: hé, luister, als jij erbij komt, dan krijg je direct verantwoordelijkheid en wordt er ook direct iets van je verwacht. En dat was wel één van de redenen waarom ik dacht ik kies specifiek hiervoor en waarom vind ik dat belangrijk? Aan de ene kant is de ontwikkeling, dat je hoe meer verantwoordelijk dat je krijgt, hoe meer je daar gewoon van leert eigenlijk. En aan de andere kant is het ook gewoon heel leuk als je direct iets mag doen wat echt impact heeft en niet in een stagiaire fase blijft, de koffie haalt en de kopietjes maakt.