

# A Multidimensional Concept of Meaningful Work: Theoretical Framework

**Inga Išdonaitė-Medžiūnienė**

SMK University of Applied Sciences, Lithuania

[inga.medziuniene@smk.lt](mailto:inga.medziuniene@smk.lt)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1249-6923>

**Aleksandra Batuchina**

SMK University of Applied Sciences, Lithuania

[aleksandra.batuchina@dest.smk.lt](mailto:aleksandra.batuchina@dest.smk.lt)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0012-9421>

**Abstract.** *The article focuses on the multidimensional concept of meaningful work and the concept of its theoretical framework. Scientific literature presents meaningful work models related to several areas as multi-dimensional or even one area as uni-dimensional. Uni-dimensional models as presented in earlier research allow revealing experiences without specifying them, rather to help capture people's global judgment of the extent to which their work is meaningful. We argue that multidimensional models covering a wide range of areas are purposeful in order to comprehensively study meaningful work and identify significant specific experiences. The completed scientific research analysis allowed us to highlight the core dimensions of a meaningful work concept and form a theoretical framework for further testing. Such multidimensional composition of meaningful work shows a holistic approach and provides a universal instrument for the evaluation of meaningful work at any organizational level and field.*

**Keywords:** *Meaningful work, core dimensions of meaningful work, multidimensional framework.*

## Introduction

The concept of work and the desires of workers have significantly changed. Workers no longer seek only financial benefits, high-quality working conditions, or a favorable working climate. Moreover, they no longer split their life between work and leisure, responsibilities and duties, and time for themselves, but desire to live their life without

**Received:** 2023/08/30. **Accepted:** 2023/10/05

Copyright © 2023 Inga Išdonaitė-Medžiūnienė, Aleksandra Batuchina. Published by Vilnius University Press. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Licence, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

dividing into phases but living it while working. In other words, people of working age look for work/job positions, which create an environment for them to enjoy every moment of their life. Thus, they look for opportunities to fulfill their expectations, values, and beliefs, and to get satisfaction from the work they are engaged in. Moreover, they expect their colleagues and authorities to share the same beliefs and support one's choices. That is why they seek work positions, which can serve as a powerful motivator, resulting in enhanced performance, commitment, and satisfaction levels, which brings them meaning.

The importance and originality of the scientific problem is grounded by relevant social, psychological, and management theories that provide more insights on the elaborated idea and the developed framework. We see a connection of the meaningful work concept with the development of the theory of social capital and the theory of well-being. According to Doan et al. (2023), the relationship between the theory of social capital and meaningful work is revealed through the analysis of social capital impact on individuals' experiences and their work perceptions. The social capital theory refers to the resources and benefits that individuals gain from their social networks and relationships (Doan et al., 2023) even from knowledge sharing in virtual communities, focusing on perceived sociability, self-presentation, improved reputation, and altruistic motive or enjoy helping (Zhao & Detlor, 2023). That is the expression of social capital theory influences individual self-determination which in the last decade became a universal macro-theory focusing on "human motivation, personality development and well-being with a continuing concern regarding the conditions that promote or frustrate human competencies and self-determined behaviors in multiple contexts and domains of life" (Nunes et al., 2023). Furthermore, well-being-oriented human resource management and employee performance interconnection show collectively experienced well-being, trustworthy and cooperative social climate, employee resilience, and employee performance (Cooper et al., 2023).

The previous research indicates that employees who "experience more job variety, development opportunities, and to a lesser extent, autonomy, in their work roles are more likely to frame their work within a broader context and to experience their work to be more meaningful" (Albrecht et al., 2021). The recent research summary on Generation Z's expectations at work shows that they "seek happiness at work and embrace team spirit, demand flexibility, and value material stability" (Lassleben & Hofmann, 2023). However, the research conducted by Lassleben and Hofmann (2023) showed that Generation Z that is coming to the labor market expects the most of "a fun work environment with a positive team atmosphere and supportive relations with colleagues and superiors, followed by flexibility concerning working hours and locations, economic aspects like attractive remuneration and job security, investments in their development and personal growth and a vibrant work environment". These changes especially during COVID-19 pandemic, war, digitization and globalization, challenges, and competition at work have forced people to rethink their values, to search for the meaning of life, which

is considered fundamentally important for human existence and quality of life as well as a person's experience of the desired goal throughout his/her life (Martela et al., 2021). The authors emphasize that a person's quality of life is undoubtedly related to his/her longevity, which is affected by allostatic load (Zilioli et al., 2015) and the frequency of psychological disorders such as depression and suicidal thoughts. Constant allostatic load leads to faster aging or exhaustion caused by long-term adaptive and resilience processes during stressful situations (Peters & McEwen, 2015). Martela et al.'s (2021) studies confirm that work in the modern world has become the main area where people search for meaning and are even ready to accept a significantly lower salary in exchange for more meaningful work.

Meaningful work has become important in developing human resources, i.e., engaging employees in working processes, solving (self-)motivation issues, and providing conditions for personal development. However, Bailey et al. (2019) highlight that there is no clear and serious consensus in the scientific literature. The authors argue that previous theories confuse conceptual and empirical arguments, and thus argue that they lack clear insights into the factors detailing meaningful work. They define meaningful work (citing Chalofsky, 2010) as an "engaging state" related to a person's intrinsic motivation (Bailey et al., 2019). Furthermore, Martela et al. (2021) identify four potential psychological factors that have an impact on meaningful work: benevolence and psychological needs for autonomy, competence development, and communication.

In subsequent studies of 2023, the concept of meaningful work is analyzed from different perspectives, comparing the concepts of decent work and meaningful work. Decent and meaningful work are accepted as the key aspects of modern work, they are of great importance to employees, organizations, and society (Blustein et al., 2023). The authors emphasize that decent work reflects the basic working conditions to which every employee has the right, while meaningful work becomes an aspiration that reflects the importance of the work performed. On the basis of conceptual and empirical studies of decent work and meaningful work, the authors rely on the psychology of work theory, where the satisfaction of needs is essential for the worker, and the social context, organizational conditions, and individual practices (according to efficiency) create opportunities and conditions to perform any work (Blustein et al., 2023). The authors believe that directions for further research can expand the interpretation of the concept of meaningful work and the methods used to encourage a focus on the complex intersection of macro-level and psychological factors, and they also recommend the inclusion of interdisciplinary methods in determining the quality of work to improve the lifestyle of employees and the conditions for working together.

Analyzing the scientific literature, interpretations of meaningful work are found, they are related to several areas (multi-dimensional) or even one (uni-dimensional, for example, working conditions). Blake et al. (2019) explain that multi-dimensional models of meaningful work describe processes or dimensions of meaningful experience

(e. g., contribution to the greater good that can provide meaningful experience and contribute to the understanding of meaningful work (citing Lips-Wiersma & Wright, 2012). However, the authors argue that uni-dimensional models capture people's global judgment of the extent to which their work is meaningful, summarizing personal experiences reflected in multi-dimensional models. Because meaningful experiences are individualized, uni-dimensional models allow us to reveal experiences without specifying certain meaningful experiences (Blake et al., 2019, citing Martela & Pessi, 2018). In order to comprehensively study meaningful work and identify significant experiences, multi-dimensional models covering a wide range of fields should be reasonably used.

This substantiates the **relevance** of the topic. Therefore, we focus on the main *research problem* discussing what multi-dimensional framework (including meaningful work dimensions) would be adequate to use for meaningful work research inside organizations.

The *research subject* is meaningful work dimensions. The *research aim* focuses on highlighting dimensions of meaningful work for a multidimensional framework.

The *research methods* focus on scientific literature analysis, synthesis, and modeling.

The **novelty of the formed multidimensional framework** is based on the following statements:

1. Such a multidimensional framework covers wider areas, which ensures a comprehensive interpretation and exploration of the concept of meaningful work.
2. There are opportunities for broader application, it is possible to evaluate more factors affecting the expression of meaningful work inside organizations.

## Research methodology

The article is based on the theoretical review, as a result, a systematic literature search was performed. Theoretical reviews draw on empirical studies to understand a concept from a theoretical perspective and highlight knowledge gaps (Paré et al., 2015).

The process of selection consisted of four phases:

- 1) General search of proper articles according to the search criteria

A systematic search of empirical studies examining meaningful work in organizational psychology, psychology, and related disciplines' studies published in English in scientific journals since 1960 was performed during the summer of 2023, using APA PsycInfo, PsycARTICLES, Academic Search Complete (EBSCO) Psychology Databases and Google Scholars search. The main search term was "meaningful job/work" with synonyms. More than 11000 publications were found during the search. Eligibility of scientific articles for analysis was assessed by reviewing titles, abstracts and full texts.

2) Adding additional search terms

After the primary analysis, we also included scientific papers that examined such related sub-topics as intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, meaningful leadership, work-life balance, social impact, and commitment to the organization. The total number of papers included in the analysis is 250.

3) Exclusion of incongruous articles

We excluded the studies that were not in the area of meaningful job/work, however, we investigated the mentioned sub-topics, also excluded the empirical studies where already validated questionnaires were used.

4) Systematic and precise analysis of selected articles

In total, 55 articles were analysed, and only 40 were presented in the current article. All chosen articles were written in English and the researches were conducted mostly in Western Europe and the USA.

**The theoretical framework of the research.** We follow the idea of multiple theoretical perspectives and outline our research on the basis of an integrated approach of *idealism* (e.g. Maslow), that emphasizes the significance of the mind and spiritual dimensions in interpreting our experiences and the world around us. Idealists contend that ideas form the foundation of our reality and reject the notion that things exist independently of the mental realm. Also, *behaviorism* (e.g. Skinner), emphasizes the importance of external stimuli and the environmental context in shaping behavior, and *existentialism* (e.g. Irvin), emphasizes the subjective experience of individuals, their unique ways of being, and the search for meaning in their lives (Jarvis, 2005).

## The Concept of Meaningful Work

The concept of meaningful work is currently of intensively significant scholarly focus. Research exploring the concept of meaningful work has encompassed various fields including philosophy, psychology, business ethics, and organizational behavior, among other disciplines. While the term of meaningful work is becoming popular, there is no standard definition, thus several definitions of this term could be found.

The concept of meaningful work is used to evaluate the quality of work (Van der Deijl, 2022), while the contradiction of this definition could be a *bullshit job* (Graeber, 2018), which refers to work that is deemed meaningless or even harmful, as it does not contribute any social value or may even have a negative impact. Despite this lack of value, individuals holding such jobs are still expected to feign the performance of valuable work. Fairlie (2010) defines meaningful work as work and other workplace characteristics that facilitate the attainment or maintenance of one or more dimensions of meaning. Also, meaningful work is when employees believe it is significant and it serves an important purpose (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). Moreover, “meaning of work” is related to the degree of meaning that workers believe their work has, with their personal values, and with their relationships with colleagues and leaders (Rosso et al., 2010). Rosso et al. (2010)

presented four primary routes in which meaningful work is expressed: authenticity, self-concordance, connection with others, and self-perception. This aligns closely with what we have referred to as self-realization in our discussion. Likewise, according to Rosso et al. (2020), contribution as a pathway involves recognizing the impact of one's work and engaging in tasks that serve a higher purpose beyond oneself. As David et al. (2022) stressed, meaningful work is aspirational, reflecting significance at work. It is worth mentioning that a meaningful job goes beyond mere financial compensation and involves a sense of personal fulfillment, engagement, and satisfaction derived from the work itself. However, Chalofsky and Cavallaro (2013) stated that meaningful work is more than just job satisfaction, work engagement, or organizational commitment. It is closely connected to values, passions, and aspirations, and might be experienced differently by individuals, by creating a deeper connection to their work, and also is episodic and fluctuating (Mitra & Buzzanell, 2017). In addition, Tan et al. (2023) define meaningful work by stating that it is not an end in itself, but an ongoing process arising from four important areas such as work tasks, roles of individuals, interactions within or outside organizations, and within organizations themselves. Tyssedal (2023) citing Veltman (2016, p. 117) highlights four main aspects that make work meaningful:

1. Development or implementation of the employee's human abilities in connection with recognition and respect;
2. Promotion/maintenance of personal virtue, including a sense of self-respect, honor, integrity, dignity or pride;
3. Pursuing a personal goal or a useful goal for others, especially in creating long-term value;
4. Integrating elements of the employee's life, such as creating or strengthening personal relationships and values, integrating the employee into an environment or relational context with which he identifies.

Other recent studies have identified and explored other specific factors having an impact on the expression of meaningful work in organizations. They are very diverse and can be synthesized as follows:

1. The main issue in achieving meaningful work is the satisfaction of the employee's needs, while the social context, organizational conditions, and individual practice are simply meant to perform any work (Blustein et al., 2023).
2. In order to experience meaningful work, organizations should create and maintain a work environment characterized by well-designed, appropriate, and quality workplaces, leadership support, organizational culture, policies and practices, quality relationships, and decent work (Lysova et al., 2019).
3. The experience of meaningful work is shaped by the working life policies, the nature of work, and the interaction between the work organization and employees (Laaser, 2022).
4. Meaningful work depends on leaders' awareness of encouraging employees to perform meaningful work while also realizing their own leadership activities (Frémeaux & Pavageau, 2022; Guo et al., 2022).



5. Meaningful work is directly related to commitment to the organization (Kim & Park, 2022) and job satisfaction (Paola et al., 2022; Ertuğrul, 2022).
6. Meaningful work must include dimensions such as the employee's well-being and the meaning of the employee's life (van der Deijl, 2022).
7. Another common view is that creating a greater good or social contribution is what makes work meaningful (Tyssedal, 2022).

To sum up, the concept of meaningful work itself is multi-dimensional including many areas or dimensions with a tight connection altogether indicating how meaningful work is revealed. Specifically, meaningful work is an individual experience that is a continuous process without any end. All engaged parties are responsible for meaningful work experiences and meaningful work promotion in order to develop proficiency at individual and team levels.

## Results-theoretical framework and conceptual model

### *Conceptualization of Meaningful Work*

Considering the composition of meaningful work, the concept tends to be multidimensional. Scientific literature analyzes different dimensions, which are included in the concept of meaningful work. The number of dimensions depends on different authors and sources, and even the composing dimensions might differ greatly. The scientific literature synthesis allowed us to highlight the dimensions of meaningful work and to ascribe or form areas or broader (core) dimensions to characterize meaningful work (Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Synthesis of meaningful work dimensions and core dimensions*

Literature sources	Dimensions of meaningful work	Core dimensions
Turner & Lawrence (1965); Hackman & Lawler (1971); Hackman & Oldham (1975)	Skill variety, task identity, and task significance	Job design Leadership Social impact
Csordás et al. (2022)	Psychological meaning, meaning-making, and greater good motivation	Work and life balance Leadership Social impact
Martela & Pessi (2018)	Significance, broader purpose, and self-realization	
Steger et al. (2012) as cited by Junça-Silva et al. (2022)	Experience of work as significant and meaningful, making sense through work, good motivations, positive impact on others	

Lips-Wiersma & Wright (2012)	Unity with others, developing the inner self, serving others, and expressing full potential	Organizational commitment Leadership
Rosso et al. (2010)	Self-connection, self-concordance and being in close alignment with how one sees oneself, self-realization, the perceived impact of one's work	Work and life balance Social impact
Farlie (2011)	Self-actualizing work, realizing one's life purpose, values and goals through work in one's organization, social impact, and engagement	
Park and Eun-Jee Kim (2022)	Job characteristics, workplace conditions, interactions with other people, social support	Job design Organizational commitment Work and life balance Leadership

Sources: prepared by authors according to the sources indicated in Table 1.

The idea of experienced meaningful work (the degree to which the employee experiences his/her work as one which is generally meaningful, valuable, and worthwhile) was presented by Turner and Lawrence (1965) and by Hackman and Lawler (1971) theory and discussed by Hackman and Oldham (1975) is enhanced primarily by three of the core dimensions: skill variety, task identity, and task significance. Together with job autonomy and feedback, these dimensions construct an instrument to evaluate “motivating potential” (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Csordás et al. (2022) stated that meaningful work might consist of three dimensions: psychological meaning, meaning-making, and greater good motivation. Martela and Pessi (2018) performed a systematic theoretical analysis of definitions of meaningful work and also highlighted three elements: significance, broader purpose, and self-realization. Another three dimensions of meaningful work presented by Steger et al. (2012) as cited by Junça-Silva et al. (2022) are the following: the *psychological meaning of work* which is related to the experience of work as significant and meaningful; the *making sense through work*, which makes life, as a whole, more meaningful by assigning meaning to work; the *good motivations* that are related to the positive impact that work has on others.

Lips-Wiersma and Wright (2012) divide meaningful work into four key dimensions: unity with others, developing the inner self, serving others, and expressing full potential. Worth mentioning, that Rosso et al. (2010) presented similar pathways of meaningful work, which are self-connection, as being about authenticity, self-concordance, and being in close alignment with how one sees oneself, which is closely connected to the idea of self-realization. Also, Rosso et al. (2010) talk about the perceived impact of one's work and doing work in the “service of something greater than the self”.



In addition, Farlie (2011) states that meaningful work is related to self-actualizing work, realizing one's life purpose, values, and goals through work, and social impact and engagement. Also, the author (Farlie, 2011) formed an instrument called *Meaningful Work Inventory*, which consists of 53 items in nine groups: meaningful work, intrinsic rewards, extrinsic rewards, leadership and organizational features, supervisory relationships, co-worker relationships, organizational support, and work demands and balance. Instruments of meaningful work items are represented by the following aspects: self-actualizing work; social impact; job enables one to fulfill one's life purpose, goals, and values; feelings of personal accomplishment; belief in achieving one's highest career goals in one's organization.

Another concept of meaningful work is presented by Kim and Park and (2022), who mentioned 11 items such as job characteristics, sensemaking, workplace conditions, and all instruments include job-related components, also measures related to interactions with other people and the job (e.g., interpersonal relationships and social support) and connected to work contexts and specific professions.

The completed scientific literature analysis shows the complexity of the meaningful work structure proving its multidimensionality. Therefore, based on the scientific literature analysis and synthesis we highlight such important areas that comprehensively may show the meaningfulness of work. We highlight these areas and call them core dimensions: job design/environment, leadership, organizational commitment, work and life balance, and social impact. We state that comprehensive application of the concept would ensure clear and distinct expression and individual experience of meaningful work in organizations and so would give an opportunity to reveal general organizational results of meaningful work.

## **A Multidimensional Framework of Meaningful Work**

### ***Description of Core dimensions of Meaningful work***

Each core dimension is presented separately and in detail, concentrating on each dimension's constituent groups and elements, while creating the final framework of 99 indicators in total.

*Job design/environment* is the concept of multiple dimensions, which according to Edwards et al. (1999) consists of four scales: motivational, mechanistic, biological, and perceptual-motor. Moreover, Morgeson and Humphrey (2006) developed Work Design Questionnaire that included the following groups: task characteristics (autonomy, task variety, task significance, task identity, feedback from job); knowledge characteristics (job complexity, information processing, problem-solving, skill variety, specialization); social characteristics (social support, interdependence, interaction outside the organization, feedback from others) and contextual characteristics (ergonomics, physical demands, work conditions, equipment use). We combined

these two ideas; however, we eliminated the biological, mechanistic factors, because we concentrate more on the inner sense of satisfaction of work, while leaving only the elements, referring to independence/autonomy, new opportunities, clarity, and variety of job duties, security, feedback, healthy competition, and decision-making. In total, 19 indicators of the new job design/environment dimension are included in the framework.

*Meaningful leadership.* The concept of meaningful leadership is connected to the leaders' previous experiences and the meaningful work of their employees (Frémeaux & Pavageau, 2022). Frémeaux and Pavageau (2022) claim that leadership activity consists of moral exemplarity, self-awareness, personal or professional support, community spirit, shared work commitment, and a positive attitude towards individuals and situations. Moreover, as stated by Arnold et al. (2000), it consists of the following constructs: leading by example, coaching, encouraging, participative decision making, informing, showing concern, interacting with the team, and group management. Taking into consideration the afore-mentioned ideas, we also included the self-leadership concept into our created concept, which consists of self-goal setting, self-reward, self-punishment, self-observation, and self-cueing (Houghton et al., 2012) into the category of *meaningful leadership*, justifying that the modern employee should be able to contribute to their own meaningful work and the meaningful work of their employees (Frémeaux & Pavageau, 2022). As a result, our recommended dimension of meaningful leadership consists of 23 indicators.

*Commitment to the organization.* Commitment to the organization in scientific literature is defined as a process (Hall et al. 1970) or as an attitude or an orientation towards the organizations (Sheldon, 1971), and even a state of being (Salancik, 1977). We consider the *commitment to the organization* more as a complex inner sense and agree with Benkhoff (1997), who claimed that the *commitment to the organization* consisted of personal identification with a group of people or organization, desire to stay in it, even while having alternatives and putting extra effort into work. Moreover, it includes emotional ties, perceived obligation, and perceived sunk costs in relation to a target (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Thus, taking these elements together, our basic structure of an organizational commitment dimension includes satisfaction, emotional attachment, care about the future of organization, loyalty, and others. In total, we recommend 20 indicators to be included in the core dimension of organizational commitment.

*Work and life balance.* Our belief is that *work and life balance* help to establish a psychological contract with the organization (Agha et al., 2017). As a result, we adapted Hayman's (2005) instrument, which consists of three constructs: work interference with personal life; personal life interference with work; work personal life enhancement. Moreover, we included some questions about health and stress-coping strategies from the Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (Warwick, 2007). In total, we recommend 28 indicators to be included in the core dimension of work and life balance.

*Social impact* is a perception of the impact of one's actions on others, which positively influences job satisfaction (Grant, 2008). In the construction of this dimension, we include the following directions of social impact: impact on colleagues (Grant & Campbell, 2007), impact on clients/customers (Grant, 2008), impact on people outside the organization and global impact (society, state, planet) (Fairlie, 2011; Izquierdo & Pérez, 2022). In total, we recommend nine indicators to be included in the core dimension of social impact.

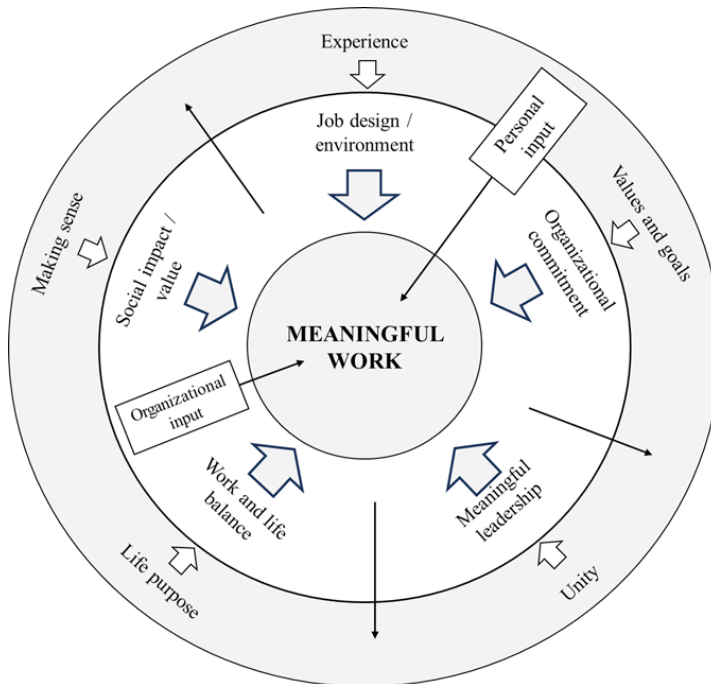
Above mentioned core dimensions and indicators compose our future research instrument to be tested.

### ***Multidimensional Framework of Meaningful Work***

According to the presented framework (Fig. 1) and above presented description, we state that meaningful work inside organizations depends on two main streamlines: organizational community and personal employee inputs. These streamlines should act in a simultaneous manner and at the same time they have an impact on each other. For example, to achieve greater created value, greater social impact, and more meaningful work, it is necessary to create a favorable work environment that meets the needs of both the individual employee and the organization (Hagos & Shimels, 2018). The

**Figure 1**

*Multidimensional Framework of Meaningful Work*



authors confirm that employee relationship development has a positive impact on employee outcomes, including communication, participative leadership, shared goals and values, mutual trust, motivation, and conflict management. This makes employees feel more engaged in their activities and this in return initiates them to excel. Hagos and Shimels (2018) state that companies creating a supportive work environment and developing positive relationships with employees are more productive and, therefore, achieve greater financial results (citing Gills, 2008). However, the authors citing Byton (2008) reveal the previous research results proving that employees engage less when they are not fully satisfied at work (e.g., with management, government or even their co-workers). Hence the greater and more honest or sincere the organizational input is, the more intense the personal input occurs, and vice versa. Just in case when a personal employee input increases, the organizational input is affected by the employee's stronger attitudes and aspirations. On the contrary, the weaker organizational input reduces personal employee input for meaningful work sensation and experience.

Areas of a multidimensional framework of meaningful work at the organizational level are of greater importance because they may stimulate or have an opposite effect. We state that an organizational input to a higher level of meaningful work occurs through such main dimensions of impact as design/environment, organizational commitment, leadership, work and life balance, and social impact or value.

Explaining further all areas of organizational input have a strong connection with the areas of personal employee input. As we state that *job design or working environment* has an impact on the perception and experience of meaningful work, employees gain and accumulate experience which becomes an indicator as we assess meaningful work. Other areas of organizational input have tight connections with personal input areas. *Organizational commitment* is affected by employee values and goals he or she brings from any personal environment and develops in the organization. *Leadership* as an important indicator is closely connected with the sense of unity that the employee is intended to demonstrate and accept. On the contrary, leadership may increase or even decrease the sense of unity, which will have an impact on the level of meaningful work. Also, leadership involves the demonstration of leadership skills of all organizational community members. *Work and life balance* has a relation with an employee's life purpose. When there is a coherence between the employee's life purpose and his or her work, a clear work and life balance occurs and promotes not only meaningful work and satisfaction but also meaning and satisfaction of personal life. Finally, *social impact or social value* that an employee and the whole organization create discloses the meaningfulness people experience and the level of meaningful work. Each member of the organizational community and an organization as a whole should be engaged in making sense of their efforts, the processes they are engaged in, and the final results they witness.

Briefly, we state that meaningful work is a multidimensional concept and present a multidimensional framework of meaningful work. Its multidimensional approach allows

a broader view and understanding of meaningful work in organizations through the implementation of principles of job design/environment, organizational commitment, leadership, work and life balance and social impact/value. And this organizational level with the focus on the employee is interrelated with a personal employee level through personal experience, employee values and goals, sense of unity, personal life purpose, and making sense of what we do. The organizational and personal input balance ensures a higher level of meaningful work perception and experience.

## Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to highlight core dimensions of meaningful work for a multi-dimensional model. Moreover, the analysis once again has shown that the concept of meaningful work has changed and can no longer be considered as unidimensional. As a result, five core dimensions – job design/environment, organizational commitment, leadership, work and life balance, social impact/value – were constructed. Such a multidimensional concept of meaningful work creates a holistic perspective and provides a universal instrument for the evaluation of meaningful work at any organizational level and field. The systemized and clear dimensions of meaningful work are very detailed and yet comprehensive, suitable for the evaluation of a broader number of organizations and their employees. The core dimensions are directly related to sense-making, life purpose, unity, values and goals, and experience.

## Limitations and Future Directions

The presented multidimensional framework of meaningful work has such limitations:

1. The emergence and application of the multidimensional framework are based on several philosophical backgrounds: behaviorism, idealism, and existentialism. However, the concept of meaningful work could be investigated from the perspective of cultural relativism, to see how current concepts and their understanding is different in various cultures and organizational structures.
2. The framework itself is shaped by five core dimensions: job design/environment, organizational commitment, leadership, work and life balance, social impact/value. The framework represents a holistic approach involving a broader spectrum of dimensions for evaluation of meaningful work.
3. The multidimensional framework of meaningful work is of a general nature and could be applied to many various fields of activities and for all employees (no matter their nature of work, profession, etc.).
4. The multidimensional framework of meaningful work is not yet empirically tested, which becomes the focus of future directions.

The comprehensive scientific literature analysis highlighted several directions for further research focus. First, we recognize the importance of developing research

methodology for meaningful work evaluation in organizations. Second, there is a potential to adjust this multidimensional framework of meaningful work to a specific economic activity of an organization (for example, in health science or management). Third, we imperatively recommend conducting specific research with various organizations and contributing to the further development of the framework.

## References

- Agha, K., Azmi, F. T., & Khan, S. A. (2017). Work-life balance: Scale development and validation. In M. L. Heras, N. Chinchilla & M. Grau (Eds.), *The Work-Family Balance in Light of Globalization and Technology* (pp. 109–130). Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.
- Albrecht, S. L., Green, C. R., & Marty, A. (2021). Meaningful work, job resources, and employee engagement. *Sustainability*, 13(7), 4045. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13074045>.
- Allen, N. J., & Meyer, J. P. (1990). The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 63, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.1990.tb00506.x>
- Arnold, J. A., Arad, S., Rhoades, J. A., & Drasgow, F. (2000). The empowering leadership questionnaire: The construction and validation of a new scale for measuring leader behaviors. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 21(3), 249–269. [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1099-1379\(200005\)21:33.0.CO;2-#](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-1379(200005)21:33.0.CO;2-#)
- Bailey, C., Yeoman, R., Madden, A., Thompson, M., & Kerridge, G. (2019). A Review of the empirical literature on meaningful work: Progress and research agenda. *Human Resource Development Review*, 18(1), 83–113. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484318804653>
- Benkhoff, B. (1997). Disentangling organizational commitment: The dangers of the OCQ for research and policy. *Personnel Review*, 26(1/2), 114–131. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00483489710157823>
- Blake, A. A., Cassondra, B.-B., Haley, M. S., & Louis, T. (2019). Outcomes of meaningful work: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Management Studies*, 56(3). <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12406>
- Blustein, D. L., Lysova, E. I., & Duffy, R. D. (2023). Understanding decent work and meaningful work. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 10(1), 289–314. <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031921-024847>
- Cooper, B., Wang, J., Bartram, T., & Lee Cooke, F. (2023). Well-being-oriented human resource management practices and employee performance in the Chinese banking sector: The role of social climate and resilience. *Human resource management: Advancing human resource research and practice*, 58 (1), 85–97. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21934>
- Doan, H.Q., Masciarelli, F., & Prencipe, A. (2023). Social capital and firm performance in transition economies. *Eurasian Business Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40821-022-00227-y>
- Chalofsky, N., & Cavallaro, L. (2013). A good living versus a good life: Meaning, purpose, and HRD. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 15(4), 331–340. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422313498560>
- Edwards, J. R., Scully, J. A., & Brtek, M. D. (1999). The measurement of work: Hierarchical representation of the Multimethod Job Design Questionnaire. *Personnel Psychology*, 52(2), 305–334. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1999.tb00163.x>
- Ertugrul, A. N. (2022). Perception of meaningful work and job satisfaction of accounting faculty members. *Amazonia Investiga*, 11(50), 232–244. <https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2022.50.02.22>
- Fairlie, P. (2010). *The Meaningful Work Inventory: Development and Initial Validation*. Paper presented at the 118th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, San Diego, CA. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/e620962012-001>



Fairlie, P. (2011). Meaningful work, employee engagement, and other key employee outcomes: Implications for human resource development. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 13, 504–521. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422311431679>.

Frémeaux, S., & Pavageau, B. (2022). Meaningful leadership: How can leaders contribute to meaningful work? *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 31(1), 54–66. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1056492619897126>

Graeber, D. (2018). *Bullshit Jobs*. New York: Simon & Schuster. <https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2018.1.2.17>

Grant, A. M. (2008). The significance of task significance: Job performance effects, relational mechanisms, and boundary conditions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93, 108–124. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.1.108>

Grant, A. M., & Campbell, E. M. (2007). Doing good, doing harm, being well and burning out: The interactions of perceived prosocial and antisocial impact in service work. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 80, 665–691. <https://doi.org/10.1348/096317906X169553>.

Guo, Y., Peng, Y., & Zhu, Y. (2022). How does empowering leadership motivate employee innovative behavior: A job characteristics perspective. *Curr Psychol*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-03000-6>

Jarvis, M. (2005). *Theoretical approaches in psychology*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203976241>

Hackman, J. R., & Lawler, E. E. (1971). Employee reactions to job characteristics. *Journal of Applied Psychology Monograph*, 55, 259–286. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0076548>

Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1975). Development of the job diagnostic survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 60(2), 159. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0076546>

Hagos B., & Shimels Z. (2018). A literature review on the effects of employee relation on improving employee performance. *International Journal in Management and Social Science*, 6(04), 66–76. <https://www.indianjournals.com/ijor.aspx?target=ijor:ijmss&volume=6&issue=4&article=005>

Hall, D. T., Schneider, B., & Nygren, H. T. (1970). Personal factors in organizational identification. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 15, 176–190. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2391488>

Hayman, J. (2005). Psychometric assessment of an instrument designed to measure work- life balance. *Research and Practice in Human Resource Management*, 13(1), 85–91.

Houghton, J. D., Dawley, D., & DiLiello, T. C. (2012). The abbreviated self-leadership questionnaire (ASLQ): A more concise measure of self-leadership. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, 7(2), 216–232. <http://dx.doi.org/10.46260/kslp.22.2.6>

Izquierdo, A. L. G., & Pérez, A. M. C. (2022). Work characteristics and occupational health: validation and proposal of a shortened version of the Work Design Questionnaire. *Anales de Psicología/Annals of Psychology*, 38(1), 149–162. <https://doi.org/10.6018/analesps.480481>

Kim, E.J., & Park, S. (2022) Female managers' meaningful work and commitment: Organizational contexts and generational differences. *Baltic Journal of Management*, 17(5), 637–653. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BJM-12-2021-0474>

Lassleben, H., & Hofmann, L. (2023). Attracting Gen Z talents: Do expectations towards employers vary by gender? *Gender in Management*, 38 (4), 545–560. <https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-08-2021-0247>

Laaser, K. (2022). Meaningful work and sociology: An introduction to this themed issue. *Work, Employment and Society*, 36(5), 791–797. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09500170221117082>

Lips-Wiersma, M., & Wright, S. (2012). Measuring the meaning of meaningful work: Development and validation of the Comprehensive Meaningful Work Scale (CMWS). *Group & Organization Management*, 37(5), 655–685. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601112461578>

Lysova, E. I., Allan, B. A., Dik, B.J., Duffy, R. D., & Steger, M. F. (2019). Fostering meaningful

work in organizations: A multi-level review and integration. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 110(B), 374–389. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.07.004>.

Magnano, P., Zarbo, R., & Santisi, G. (2022). Evaluating meaningful work: Psychometric properties of the Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI) in Italian context. *Current Psychology*, 42, 12756–12767. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-02503-y>

Martela, F., Gómez, M., Unanue, W., Araya, S., Bravo, D., & Espejo, A. (2021). What makes work meaningful? Longitudinal evidence for the importance of autonomy and beneficence for meaningful work. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 131, 103631. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2021.103631>

Martela, F., & Pessi, A. B. (2018). Significant work is about self-realization and broader purpose: Defining the key dimensions of meaningful work. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 363. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00363>

Mitra, R., & Buzzanell, P. M. (2017). Communicative tensions of meaningful work: The case of sustainability practitioners. *Human Relations*, 70(5), 594–616. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726716663288>

Morgeson, F. P., & Humphrey, S. E. (2006). The Work Design Questionnaire (WDQ): Developing and validating a comprehensive measure for assessing job design and the nature of work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(6), 1321. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.6.1321>

Paré, G., Trudel, M. C., Jaana, M., & Kitsiou, S. (2015). Synthesizing information systems knowledge: A typology of literature reviews. *Information & Management*, 52(2), 183–199. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2014.08.008>

Peters, A., & McEwen, B. S. (2015). Stress habituation, body shape and cardiovascular mortality. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, 56, 139–150. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.neubio-rev.2015.07.001>

Pratt, M. G., & Ashforth, B. E. (2003). Fostering meaningfulness in working and at work. In K. S. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, & R. E. Quinn (Eds.), *Positive organizational scholarship* (pp. 309–327). San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Rosso, B.D., Dekas, K.H., & Wrzesniewski, A. (2010). On the meaning of work: A theoretical integration and review. *Res Organizational Behav*, 30, 91–127. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2010.09.001>

Salancik, G. R. (1977). Commitment and control of organizational behavior and beliefs. In B. M. Staw and G. R. Salancik (Eds.), *New Directions in Organizational Behaviour* (pp. 420–453). Chicago: St Clair Press. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849200455.n8>

Sheldon, M. E. (1971). Investments and involvement as mechanisms producing commitment to the organization. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 16, 142–150. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2391824>

Tan K.-L. et al. (2023). A systematic review of meaningful work unifying 20 years of theoretical and substantive contributions (2000–2020). *Journal of Advances in Management Research*, DOI: 10.1108/JAMR-11-2022-0225

Turner, A., & Lawrence, P. (1965). *Industrial Jobs and the Worker*. Boston: Harvard University Division of Research Graduate School of Business Administration.

Tyssen, J.J. (2023). Work is meaningful if there are good reasons to do it: A revisionary conceptual analysis of ‘Meaningful Work’. *J Bus Ethics*, 185, 533–544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-022-05205-y>

Van der Deijl, W. (2022). Two concepts of meaningful work. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/japp.12614>

Veltman, A. (2016). *Meaningful work*. Oxford University Press.

Willem van der Deijl. (2022). Two concepts of meaningful work. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/japp.12614>

*Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale* (2017). <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/platform/wemwbs/>

Zhao, L., & Detlor, B. (2023). Towards a contingency model of knowledge sharing: interaction between social capital and social exchange theories. *Knowledge Management Research & Practice*, 21(1), 197–209. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14778238.2020.1866444>

Zilioli, S., Slatcher, R.B., Ong, A.D., & Gruenewald, T. (2015). Purpose in life predicts allostatic load ten years later. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 79 (5), 451–457, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychores.2015.09.013>