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Journal of Clinical & Developmental PsychologyJournal homepage: <http://cab.unime.it/journals/index.php/JCDP/index>**Demands and resources in the organizational context:
promotion of well-being at work**Eliana De Salvo^{1*} , Maria Paola Russo² , Francesco Preiti³ , Francesca Liga² ¹ Department of Health Sciences, University of Catanzaro "Magna Graecia", Catanzaro, Italy² Department of Clinical and Experimental Medicine, University of Messina, Messina, Italy³ Department of Psychology, University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli", Caserta, Italy**ABSTRACT**

The work context is often characterized by the combination of resources and demands that affect the well-being of worker. The literature, through the promotion of the JD-R model, has underlined the impact that these two aspects have on the psycho-physical health of the worker and on the organizational climate in general. The study involved 233 workers from the Italian regions of Sicily and Tuscany and investigated personal resources (e.g. locus of control and resilience), job resources (e.g. organisational climate, work group, etc.), job demands (e.g. workload), and related outcomes (e.g. satisfaction, anxiety, and work-related stress). The results emphasised the significance of focusing not only on the good features (resources) but also on the negative aspects (demands) of the working environment in order to establish a context that protects well-being while simultaneously becoming increasingly engaging for the worker.

Keywords: Job demands, job resource, well-being, job satisfaction, resilience, anxiety

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Introduction

Research on well-being seems to have become a subject of study in modern empirical psychology (Ryan & Deci, 2022). The focus of the intervention is to promote good health, where the key element is the well-being of the individual and no longer the mere absence of disease (Larsen, 2022). Many areas of psychological research are interested in the importance of the relationship between the individual and the environment, especially from an ecological perspective. According to this approach, the well-being of the individual would also depend on the relationships that the individual establishes with the social environment, with the culture of belonging (Das et al., 2020). The working environment specifically seems to be responsible of numerous stress factors that can affect well-being (Ho & Kuvaas, 2020).

Nowadays, drawing attention to the working environment has become more significant, also in relation to the changes that job and industry world have gone through in the last few decades (Bruscaglioni & Gheno, 2000). The challenge today is to be able to maintain and increase a climate of well-being in order to improve the individual's quality of life by focusing on corporate welfare. This concept refers to a set of corporate practices that aim to increase the employee's well-being and motivation, providing, at the same time, the employees with some tools to support their quality of life (Treu et al., 2013).

The welfare project focuses mainly on two areas of intervention (Furfaro, 2020):

1. Work-life balance: through the support tools implemented by various companies to meet the needs of employees such as baby-sitting, school canteens, elderly and dependent care;
2. Promotion of psychophysical well-being: through family support, supportive work environment, more flexible working hours.

Organizational well-being is therefore a multidimensional construct that is based on the ability of an organization to be productive and effective at work, but also to have an interest in promoting the physical and psychological well-being of its employees. Among the dimensions to be examined, for example, the comfort of the working environment, the clarity of objectives, the enhancement of skills, the management of conflict, the quality of interpersonal relationships, openness to innovations and the sense of usefulness, can be included (Castello, 2009). Low levels of well-being increase the likelihood of negative outcomes such as reduced productivity, low levels of motivation (Castello, 2009). Major risk factors include increased pressure and workload, work-related stress, working hours, lack of career opportunities and lack of interpersonal support (Saha et al., 2020). On the other hand, one of the protective factors that has been given the most attention in the literature (Saha et al., 2020) is job satisfaction, generally defined as the set of

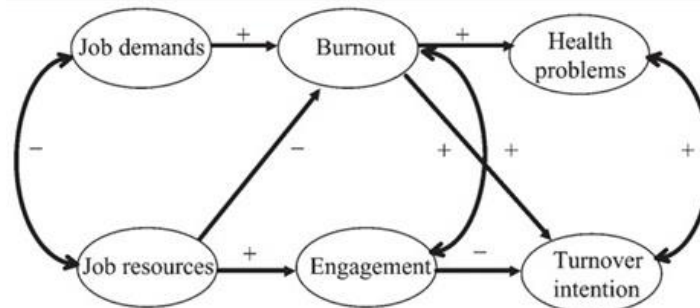
attitudes that the individual develops towards their work (De Vita et al., 2007), specifically it is a positive or negative evaluation with which people relate to working life (Weiss & Merlo, 2015).

Job satisfaction depends on the evaluation that a person makes of their work in terms of the distance between ideal values and achievements: when the values are unattainable, the distance between them and the real objectives achieved becomes wider and consequently increased dissatisfaction will occur (Locke, 2004). According to the studies conducted by Savickas (2004), in order to better study job satisfaction, it is necessary to pay attention to the individual components that could influence it in some ways, for example, the work environment plays a central role in the possibility of increasing satisfaction, as well as adaptation, working hours, internal policies, organization, remuneration or even the possibility of career advancement, in this regard if the worker believes they can aspire to a more successful position, they will consequently perceive more satisfaction (Savickas, 2004).

In this regard, a model that took into account both risk factors and protective factors was the *Job Demands-Resources Model* (JD-R Model) developed by Demerouti et al. in 2001. The model aims to search and understand the antecedents of burnout, but also to predict positive aspects such as well-being at work, factors that will define the individual's work performance (Cortese et al., 2016). The authors argue that this goal is determined by the balance, or counter imbalance, between job resources, i.e. positive characteristics and conversely demands or negative characteristics and sources of pressure; these aspects tend to define the working context in which the employee joins. According to the Job Demands-Resources Model, job demands and resources would be involved in two processes (Fig. 1):

1. The first process is called the process of health impairment and connects job demands to burnout; it refers to the situation in which work demands such an effort on the part of the individual to generate a negative impact on the psychophysical health of the employee (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). According to this process, the excessive work does not allow the individual to adequately recover energy and if this situation occurs for a long time it leads to a consumption of energy resources that can lead the individual to burnout (Cortese et al., 2016);

2. The second process is called the motivational driven process and connects job resources, which perform a motivational function in that they orient the individual towards growth, with work engagement, i.e. good performance (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Therefore, work resources perform a positive function, as they protect the individual from the effect of stressful work demands and, together with the worker's needs satisfaction, lead to a motivational increase (Cortese et al., 2016).

Figure 1. Job Demands-Resources Model

Subsequent research has suggested not only the possibility of including work engagement as an influencing factor in the relationship between resources and job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014), but has also made it possible to better detect the interaction effects between resources and requests on performance, allowing the JD-R model to become a real theory (JD-R theory) (Bakker & Costa, 2014; Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). According to the same authors, it is possible to point out two ways in which resources and demands interact; the first case represents how resources act as a protective factor against the impact that demands have on the health and well-being of the worker; the second case instead highlights how requests are able to feed and expand the impact of resources on motivation and commitment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). In fact, it was found that resources appear with more vigour as protective factors when work increases.

Finally, through this model, the authors were able to investigate the presence of two classifications of requests: challenge demand which, while impacting on the experience of the worker, promotes their energy and growth; hindrance demand that negatively affects the employees, hindering their well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014).

In this regard, the JD-R model is a valid theoretical reference model to be able to define within organizations valid tools to assess and detect risk factors and to prepare an intervention program to increase organizational well-being and improve work performance (Cortese et al., 2016).

The organizational climate survey turns out to be a useful tool to give more importance to subjectivity, facilitate communication and identify possible problems before they can degenerate, but it is also useful to evaluate and increase employees well-being.

It is also well known that in a company in which an assessment is made regarding the working climate, a welcoming relational climate is created at the same time, which favours the improvement of communication processes. Studies on this topic, conducted with civil servants, have indeed shown that the communication is essential to an organization's productivity and

efficiency and when is effective, improves job performance and increases employee's satisfaction. (Sandu et al., 2021).

The present study

The following research investigated the components that influence the individual's working well-being in the Italian context. In detail, the working realities of two Italian regions, Sicily and Tuscany, were examined.

The following research aims to focus attention on the emotional aspects, both positive and negative, that the individual experiences in relation to the work context and how psychological experiences can positively or negatively affect work performance, organizational climate and relationships between colleagues.

Following the guidelines of the JD-R model, the following were examined:

- a) Job satisfaction and anxiety as outcomes of psychological well-being, in relation to the requests-resources model;
- b) The organizational climate, teamwork, comfort level and the worker's sense of acceptance as a protective factor (work resources);
- c) The workload as a risk factor (job requests);
- d) The internal locus of control and resilience, as personal resources.

Specifically, the research objectives focused on:

- 1) Offering workers a moment of collective listening and reflection on issues regarding the company climate and their personal resources;
- 2) Carrying out a research process aimed at focusing on the subjective aspect of work-related stress conducted within companies;
- 3) Analysing the relationship between job demands, work resources and personal resources, focusing on the individual well-being outcomes in the research participants.

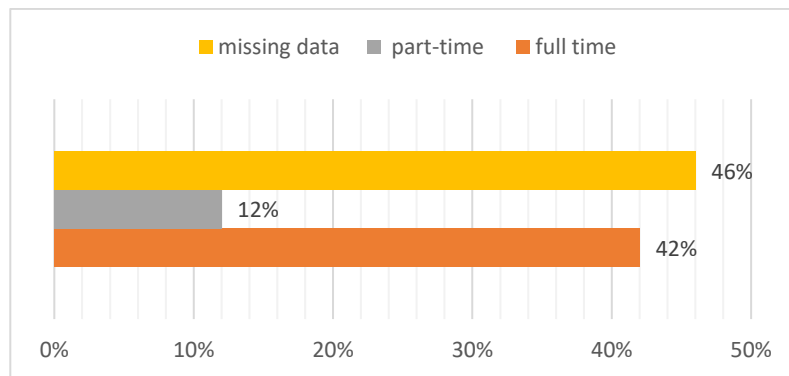
Method

Participants

The group of participants is made up of 233 workers, in detail 60% of these are male, while 40% are female. Then 48% of the participants belonged to an age range between 26 and 35 years, followed by the group aged 36 to 50 with 44%; lower percentages are found in the age group between 18 and 25 years (6%) and over 50 years (2%).

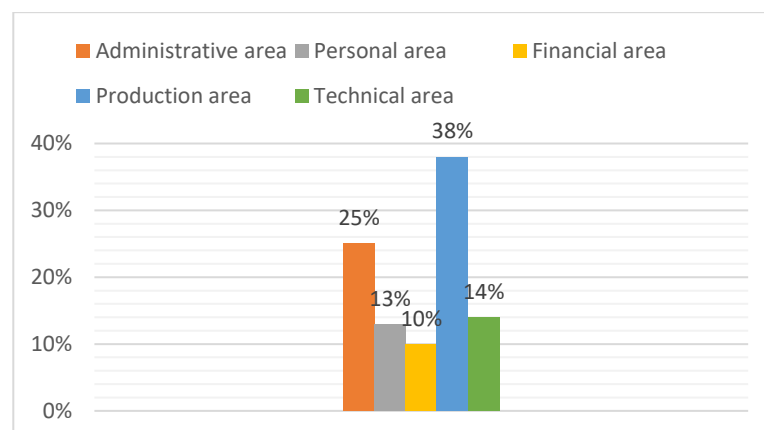
As regards the educational qualification, 36% of the participants obtained the high school qualification, followed by 25% who have the lower middle school license; 23% of the participants have a degree as a qualification and 6% report having obtained their qualification at a vocational school or at a similar educational institute. Regarding the marital status, 68% of the participants report being married or cohabiting, 17% claim to be single, finally 15% claim to be separated or divorced. Regarding the workplace, most of the participants (42%) report being full-time workers (Fig. 2).

Figure 2. Working time



Specifically, with regard to the professional areas investigated, the participants indicated a higher percentage of working in the production area (38%) and in the administrative area (25%) (Fig. 3).

Figure 3. Professional areas



Measures

For the assessment of personal resources, variables such as the individual's internal locus of control and resilience were studied.

Locus of Control. The internal locus of control was assessed through the administration of the "Locus of Control of Behaviour -LCB" (Craig, Franklin & Andrews 1984; example of item: "I can foresee difficulties and manage myself to avoid them"). This is a questionnaire consisting of 6 items that can be evaluated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Resilience. The resilience was analysed by administering the "Resilience Test". The instrument is composed by 7 items evaluated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (very little) to 10 (very much); item example: "I adapt quickly to new developments. I am able of recover from difficulties".

For the evaluation of work resources, the organizational climate, the work team, the comfort level related to the environment and discrimination within the work context were investigated.

Organizational climate. The organizational climate was assessed through a subscale from the "Coaching" tool, divided into 30 items assessable on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always); example of item: "The organization's objectives are clear and well defined".

Work team. The working group was analysed taking into consideration a subscale of the "Coaching" tool, consisting of 7 items that can be evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always); example of item: "In the work group, anyone who has information makes it available to everyone".

Comfort. The comfort related to the work environment was assessed by considering a subscale from the "Coaching" tool, consisting of 13 items that can be evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always); example of item: "How do you rate the comfort of your working environment: ease of access".

Discrimination. Perceived discrimination within the workplace was assessed through the "Social-company interview" tool. The instrument consists of 7 items that can be assessed on a 6-point Likert scale from 1 (not at all) to 6 (completely); example of item: "My gender identity is an obstacle to my enhancement at work".

For the evaluation of job requests, the perceived workload was investigated.

Perceived workload. The perceived workload was assessed through a subscale of the “Coaching” instrument, consisting of 7 items assessable on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always); example of item: “To what extent are the characteristics listed below parts of the tasks you perform? Rigidity of rules and procedures ”.

For the evaluation of job outcomes, three aspects were investigated: job satisfaction, anxiety and work-related stress.

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was assessed through a “Coaching” subscale, consisting of 5 items assessable on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always); example of item: "You are satisfied with what the organization achieves".

Anxiety. Anxiety was assessed through a subscale from "Coaching", consisting of 8 items assessable on a Likert scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always); example of item: "Have you experienced in the last six months a sense of excessive fatigue".

Work-related stress. Work-related stress was assessed using a scale from the “Social-company interview”. The scale consists of 5 items that can be evaluated on a Likert scale from 1 (not at all) to 6 (completely); example of item: “I can do my job at a sustainable pace”.

Preliminary analysis

The descriptive analysis made it possible to better define the participants, to understand in more detail the working context they belong to and the perceived organizational well-being. From the preliminary analysis conducted on the variables of interest, it is in fact possible to note how most of the participants report having a high level of general job satisfaction (54%), followed by 45% who report experiencing an average level of job satisfaction, and finally, only 10% report a low level of general job satisfaction.

With regard to the anxiety variable, only 3% of the participants in the research report having experienced high levels of generalized anxiety at work, compared to 54% who instead reported having experienced an average level and finally 43% who reported having low levels of generalized anxiety. Among the risk factors examined was the work-related stress component, and the analysis showed that the majority of the research participants (97%) experienced low levels of work-related stress, compared to only 3% who experienced higher levels of stress. Some specific aspects of this component were taken into consideration such as mobbing and harassment, both in the form of words and physical behaviour in the workplace, and in this regard most of the research participants reported that they had never experienced these situations at work.

With regard to the studies conducted on personal resources, the descriptive analysis, highlighting higher percentages of participants as "not very resilient", revealed associations between resilience and aspects such as anxiety (Fig. 4), satisfaction (Fig. 5) and work-related stress (Fig. 6).

Figure 4. Cross-analysis between the frequencies of resilience levels and anxiety levels

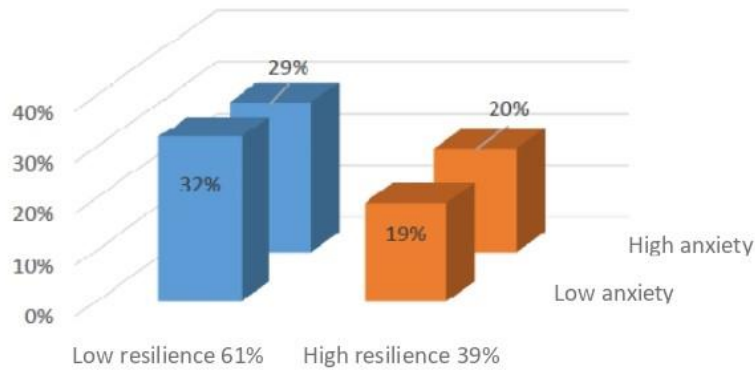


Figure 5. Cross-analysis between the frequencies of resilience levels and levels of satisfaction

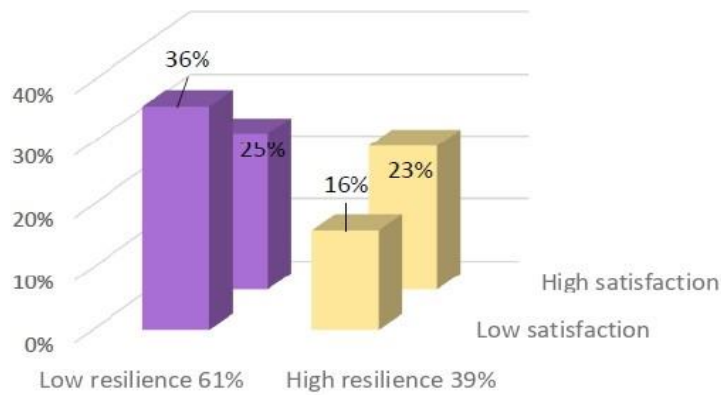


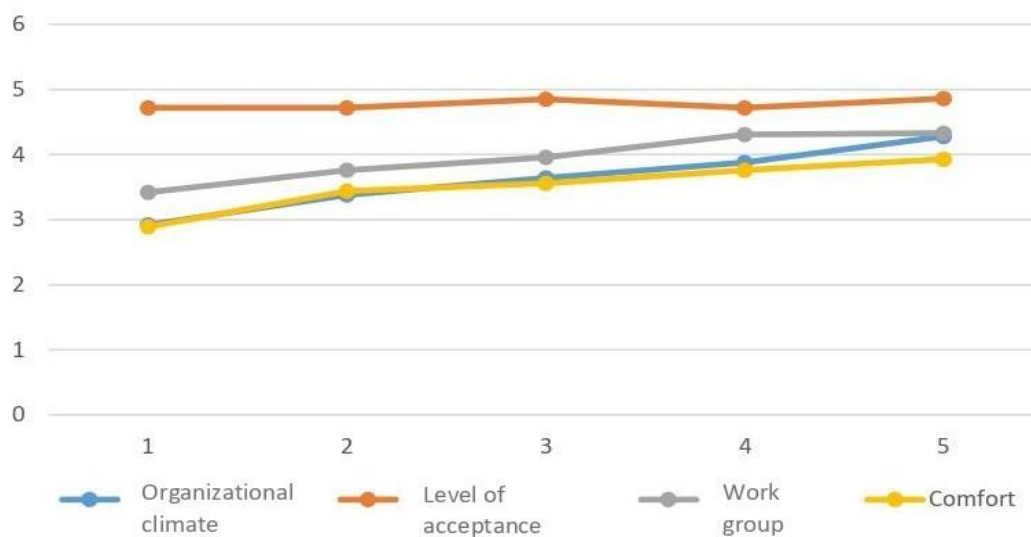
Figure 6. Cross-analysis between the frequencies of resilience levels and work-related stress levels

Results



In order to analyze the associations between job satisfaction, organizational climate, job demands (workload), internal locus of control and resilience, correlations were made, using Pearson's r coefficient. The results are shown in the following graphs (Fig. 7).

Figure 7. Correlation between contextual variables

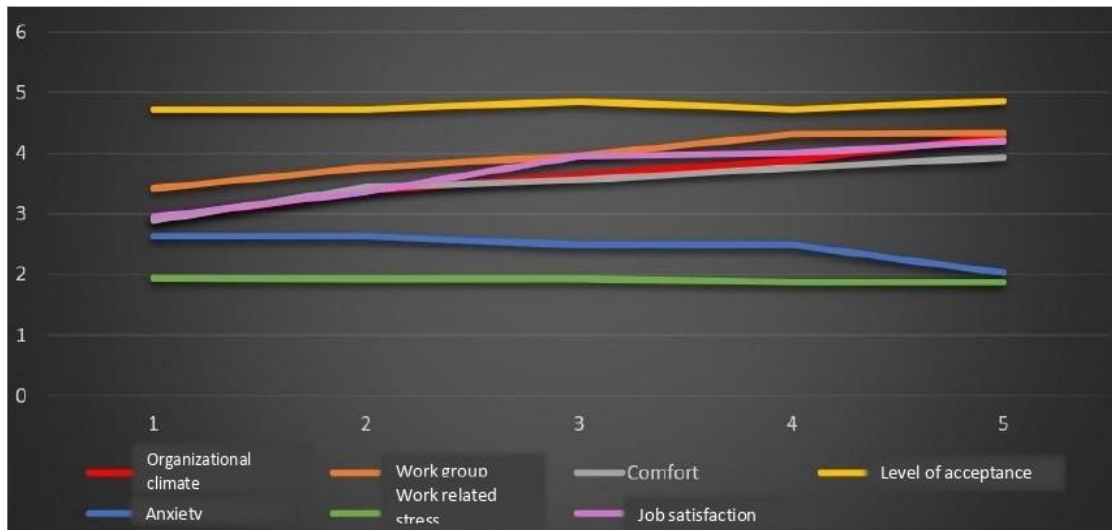


The figure shows that the work resources taken into account correlate positively with each other. In detail, the organizational climate has a positive correlation both with the work group ($r = .57$) and with perceived comfort / safety ($r = .59$). Similarly, the work group has a positive correlation with perceived comfort / safety, but negatively correlates with the workload ($r = -.16$).

Results

In order to analyze the associations between work outcomes (job satisfaction, anxiety and work-related stress), work demands (workload), work resources (organizational climate, comfort / safety levels, working group and level of acceptance / equity treatment) and personal resources (internal locus of control and resilience) further correlation analysis were carried out using Pearson's r coefficient. The results are shown in the following graph (Fig. 8).

Figure 8. Correlation between contextual, work and personal variables and indicators of individual well-being / malaise



The figure shows that job satisfaction is positively associated with the organizational climate, perceived comfort / safety and a sense of acceptance (work resources), while it appears to be negatively associated with work demands, such as anxiety and work-related stress.

Specifically, job satisfaction is positively correlated with the work group ($r = .61$), with the organizational climate ($r = .77$) and with comfort ($r = .47$) and vice versa.

On the contrary, it is possible to highlight how job demands expressed in the research, such as anxiety and work-related stress, decrease as work resources increase. Specifically, anxiety correlates negatively with comfort ($r = -.32$) and with the organizational climate ($r = -.29$) and vice versa. Work-related stress, on the other hand, correlates negatively with the sense of acceptance ($r = -.16$).

Discussion

The research focuses on the evaluation of organizational well-being within the Italian corporate context, focusing on the theoretical demands-resources model (JD-R Model, Bakker & Demerouti, 2007,2014). This model allows for the evaluation and in-depth study of

contextual variables such as security/comfort and work group, as well as individual variables such as resilience and job satisfaction. The research underlines the importance of communication in the organizational environment, as it can sustain functional outcomes, encourage collaboration, clarity of roles, tasks, and functional resolution of conflict situations.

The results obtained from the study highlight the presence of general well-being in employees in the participating Italian companies. Specifically, two constructs were considered regarding detectable personal resources, namely resilience and internal locus of control. Workers report high levels of resilience and internal locus of control, which do not appear to be closely associated with well-being. However, some studies (Pavalache-Ilie & Ursu, 2016) suggest that the internal locus of control is associated with well-being and that subjective well-being correlates with job satisfaction, reasonably leading to the deduction that this type of internal predisposition can in turn be associated with job satisfaction (Pavalache-Ilie & Ursu, 2016; Spector et al., 2002).

In the case of the results obtained, considering more specifically the differences between the levels of resilience among the participants, it is possible to trace a higher association with well-being. In line with literature, workers with high levels of resilience report a higher level of well-being, more job satisfaction and less anxiety. Professional resilience is an element of fundamental importance in the organizational context, as it is associated with a major perception of professional skills, competence, self-efficacy, and therefore major satisfaction with regard to career goals. Some studies define it as a "buffer" in reference to the precariousness of the working environment and to the increase in vulnerability and career adversity (Lyons et al., 2015).

Understanding and encouraging personal resources to guarantee organizational well-being is of fundamental importance. Investing in human resources and skills that can be effectively exploited, because they are easily combined with other complementary activities, or because they are flexibly applied for multiple purposes, is positively correlated with the efficiency of organizational performance. Recognizing that certain types of resources, such as one's own employees, contribute to both the resilience process and the development of strategic skills, can help companies develop better investment strategies.

Investing in human capital creates a foundation for effective management and for the employee's resiliences, development and growth (Kim-Cohen & Turkewitz, 2012).

In terms of human capital, the working context offers important cues on which to reflect. The results regarding this aspect drew attention to organizational climate, work group, aspects such as the perceived level of comfort and safety, highlighting a significant association between them. The attention paid to several aspects considered in the macro area of work resources is

linked to a multidimensional conception of what influences organizational well-being (Coli et al., 2012). This would indicate how the attention paid to multiple facets is necessary to guarantee an optimal context and to achieve the employees' well-being, and consequently corporate productivity. Work resources thus refer to aspects such as social and organizational ones that are functional for the achievement of work objectives, through the possibility of counteracting the pressures and consequent costs in terms of physical and psychological fatigue (Bakker et al., 2008), acting instead as a stimulus for growth, learning and motivation of the worker and the consequent "work engagement" (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

In light of this, referring to the theoretical framework found in the job demands-resources model (JD-R model), the research intends to focus on the positive relationship existing between job resources and the outcomes observed in employees. The results obtained in this study also confirm what has just been highlighted in literature; the job resources, specifically the organizational climate and the work group, have significant associations with job satisfaction, as well as clear evidence of associations between interpersonal relationships between workers and clarity of roles. The latter are elements of fundamental importance for the definition of functional organizational well-being, thus influencing and encouraging effective communication which, as previously found, redefines healthy organizational environments (Haroon, & Malik, 2018). Furthermore, job resources also counteract the pressure dictated by job demands (buffer effect) (Bakker et al., 2008).

Job demands are represented as physical, psychological and social aspects, which seem to require an effort from the employee in the management of their duties (Giannetti & Tesi, 2016). As the results show, the high presence of job demands can be associated with dysfunctional outcomes, such as pressure and conflicts at work, leading to the risk of burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Therefore, if in most of the studies job demands are evaluated negatively, presenting themselves as risk factors for stress and organizational well-being, it is important to highlight how they can also cover a motivational position by taking on a stimulating challenge role (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). In the same way, the results obtained show how the workload is positively correlated not only with anxiety, but also with job satisfaction.

Daily work tasks can cause physiological anxiety and satisfaction if completed successfully. Recognizing and learning functional management of anxiety and modifying interpretations of situations can help individuals reach goals and draw positive elements from unfavorable conditions, such as the acquisition of new skills and functional coping strategies. In the adoption of functional coping strategies, a fundamental role is attributed to role clarity, which can consequently influence employee productivity and self-efficacy. Role clarity refers

to the position that each individual is expected to hold within the company and in particular it refers to the clarity of the specific duties and tasks for that particular role (Lo Presti & Sprini, 2009). This clarity encourages the acquisition of functional coping strategies, improving work performance and increasing employee satisfaction (Lo Presti & Sprini, 2009).

With reference instead to the association of work demands with anxiety, it is useful to highlight that this construct, despite being a threat when it interferes with the individual's ability to deal with external situations, overcoming a certain limit and becoming uncontrollable, can become a motivational element, pushing the subject to act. Recognizing and learning a functional management of anxiety, modifying the interpretation of some situations and events, allows the individual to reach a goal, managing to draw, from an unfavourable condition, positive elements, such as the acquisition of new skills and functional coping strategies (Camuffo & Costantino, 2010).

The research aims to emphasise the importance of understanding and encouraging personal resources to guarantee organizational well-being. By focusing on the positive relationship existing between job resources and the outcomes observed in employees, the study confirms the literature that a favorable working environment, with a good level of environmental comfort, a good quality of interpersonal relationships, and a sense of acceptance, would lead to increased work performance, motivation to work, and perceived effectiveness. Conversely, an unfavorable work environment, with high and irreconcilable work demands, would lead to a reduction in work performance levels, an increased risk of work abandonment, and low levels of satisfaction and effectiveness.

Conclusions

The study emphasizes the importance of monitoring and increasing work well-being in all aspects, particularly interpersonal relationships between colleagues and superiors. Effective communication strategies can be encouraged through information dissemination and reflection on organizational objectives. Research has shown that creating an engaging climate is fundamental for maintaining work well-being, as it is associated with high self-esteem and reduced stress levels. To develop a good organizational climate and high employee well-being, it is essential to consider job satisfaction, values, beliefs, and personal resources. Major attention should be paid to the dimensions of personal resources, in order to evaluate the possible mediation and moderation roles that these dimensions can assume in relation to any negative outcomes, such as burnout or job abandonment. By focusing on these dimensions,

organizations can create a positive organizational climate and foster a positive work environment, leading to increased employee satisfaction and reduced stress levels.

In conclusion if on the one hand the study has some limitations, such as the use of self-report instruments, which raises the risk of replies influenced by social desirability, and the inclusion of surveys done in only two regions of Italy, on the other hand is the first step in comprehending the importance of a number of significant factors to ensure individual and overall wellbeing in the working environment in which one is situated.

Similarly, this study would to encourage future research to focus on the personal evaluation of the work context, for example, using of extra research methods such as interviews, which allow individuals to greater express themselves and allow researcher to gather qualitative data. Furthermore, it may be advantageous to increased generalizability to include more companies that can act as representations for the full Italian area.

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Ethics Approval Statement: the authors complied with the American Psychological Association's ethical standards in the treatment of participants for this work. This research has been approved by the local institutional research ethics committee.

Authors' contribution: EDS assisted with generation of the initial draft of the manuscript, data analyses, study design and concept and manuscript editing, MPR assisted with manuscript editing, data analysis, study design and concept, FP assisted with data analysis, data interpretation, and manuscript editing, FL assisted with data interpretation, manuscript editing, and study supervision.

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