

Cultivating inclusive remote workplaces: A serial mediation analysis of employee outcomes

Andri Georgiadou¹  | Solon Magrizos^{2,3}  | Dorothea Roumpi⁴  | Shlomo Tarba² 

¹Nottingham University Business School,
University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK

²The University of Birmingham, Birmingham,
Edgbaston, UK

³Faculty of Economics and Business
Administration, Vilnius University, Vilnius,
Lithuania

⁴School of Labor and Employment Relations,
Pennsylvania State University, University Park,
Pennsylvania, USA

Correspondence

Andri Georgiadou, Nottingham University
Business School, University of Nottingham,
C31 Business North School Wollaton Rd,
Nottingham NG8 1BB, United Kingdom.
Email: andri.georgiadou@nottingham.ac.uk

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ABSTRACT

The transformation of traditional workplace arrangements has introduced unique challenges for fostering inclusion and retaining organizational identification among remote workers. This study examines how inclusion climate influences employee outcomes in remote work settings - a context that has become increasingly prevalent yet remains understudied in terms of inclusion dynamics. Through a two-wave study involving a sample of 156 remote workers, we find that organizational identification mediates the relationship between perceived inclusion climate and well-being. Furthermore, we demonstrate that subjective well-being mediates the relationship between organizational identification and key employee outcomes, namely job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviors, and employee retaliation. Importantly, our results reveal a serial mediation effect, where organizational identification and subjective well-being sequentially mediate the relationship between perceived inclusion climate and both job satisfaction and employee retaliation. These findings contribute to our understanding of the mechanisms through which inclusion influences remote workers' well-being and behavior.

KEYWORDS

employee retaliation, inclusion climate, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviors, organizational identification, remote work, well-being

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of traditional workplace structures has fundamentally altered how employees perceive inclusion and derive meaning from their job. Recent studies show that whilst 98% of employees prefer some form of hybrid working arrangements (Haan, 2023), this shift has introduced new challenges for retaining organizational culture and fostering belongingness (Georgiadou, Ozkazanc-Pan, & Özbilgin, 2024). The transition to fully remote or hybrid work has exposed critical gaps in how organizations approach inclusion, particularly as digital technologies reshape workplace connections (Zahoor et al., 2024). In this context, our study investigates the critical role of perceived inclusion climate in shaping employee outcomes in remote work settings.

The quick shift to remote work has exposed four critical issues in contemporary work practices. First, it has

revealed the exclusive nature of many workplace structures (Georgiadou, Roumpi, et al., 2021). For many employees, this adjustment has blurred the boundaries between professional and personal life, effectively transforming the 'work-from-home' experience into a 'sleeping in the office'. Second, it has highlighted the limited understanding of inclusion as a crucial aspect of organizational approaches in the new workplace context (McDowell, 2014; Rodrigues, Guest, & Budjanovcanin, 2016). Third, while early research exploring the effects of use of digitalization and information technologies suggests improved inclusion and belongingness among employees, more recent research findings indicate the opposite effects (Bianchi, Kang, & Stewart, 2012; Zahoor et al., 2024). Finally, it has become evident that the issue of change is primarily centered on the micro-individual rather than the meso-organizational level (Bolton & Muzio, 2008).

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The introduction of remote and hybrid work arrangements has greatly changed the modern workplace, presenting both challenges and opportunities for organizations. In this new workplace, cultivating an inclusive organizational environment becomes more important than ever to foster productivity, employee belonging, and engagement (Ferdman & Deane, 2014; Nishii, 2013). Additionally, investing in inclusion provides a two-fold advantage: it enables organizations to capitalize on emerging opportunities and enhance their resilience in the face of current and future challenges. An inclusive workplace promotes psychological safety, encourages involvement and respect for all employees, fosters authentic self-expression, and guarantees equal access to decision-making processes and advancement opportunities (Pless & Maak, 2004; Shore, Cleveland, & Sanchez, 2018). All these requirements are essential for creating a workplace where individuals feel valued, supported, and empowered to contribute their best work.

Despite the fact that previous research has examined the antecedents and outcomes of inclusive climates in conventional workplaces (Chung et al., 2020; Mor Barak et al., 2016; Randel et al., 2018), the knowledge regarding the nomological network of inclusive climates in virtual and remote work contexts is still limited. In particular, the abrupt transition to work-from-anywhere due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has brought to the surface some important issues, such as social isolation, communication barriers, and the blurring of work-life boundaries, that hinder the creation and/or sustainability of inclusive work cultures and have a potential negative impact on employees' well-being (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020; McGuire, Germain, & Reynolds, 2021; Magrizos et al., 2023). In addition, studying the effects of inclusive climate in the context of remote work responds to the calls that have been made to examine the challenges that appear to come with the digitalization of the workplace. In particular, several scholars (e.g., Antonacopoulou & Georgiadiou, 2021; Bianchi, Kang, & Stewart, 2012; Wang, Liu, & Parker, 2020; Zahoor et al., 2024) have argued that the digitalization of the workplace can intensify inclusion-related issues, for instance, those related to status differences. This study investigates the relationship between perceived inclusion climate and the outcomes of

remote workers, with organizational identification and subjective well-being as serial mediators of this relationship.

This study examines the complex interaction between a perceived inclusion climate and the outcomes of remote workers, with organizational identification and subjective well-being serving as serial mediators in this relationship. In doing so, we contribute to the growing literature on how organizations can effectively support remote workers and promote their well-being. Our theoretical framework (Figure 1) is embedded in the human-oriented organizational literature, which suggests that a strongly perceived inclusive climate is characterized by resilience, social solidarity, genuine concern for others, and morality (Rayner, 2009). Against this backdrop, we postulated that employees' identification with their organization will be strong and positively impact their subjective well-being, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction and positive organizational citizenship behaviors, while reducing their propensity for retaliatory behaviors. Drawing on social identity and social capital theory, we further hypothesized that a strong sense of identification, and, in turn, subjective well-being, would serially mediate the relationship between the perceived inclusion climate and employee outcomes.

This study makes several contributions to literature. First, it highlights the importance of human-oriented behavior in organizations in light of the post-COVID workplace, which now extends beyond traditional physical office spaces. Organizations must now consider the individual needs of team members in defining new work arrangements, creating inclusive and supportive climates, and sharing information effectively (Triana et al., 2021). Furthermore, remote and flexible work practices require a new mindset in managing people's expectations and accommodating their needs (Branicki, 2020; Janse van Rensburg & Smith, 2021). Consequently, managers need to trust their employees to produce quality work and must also be flexible and adaptable themselves. For instance, compassion and empathy should be central to the organizational approaches during times of crisis (Bahn, Cohen, & van der Meulen Rodgers, 2020).

Second, we argue that a perceived high level of inclusion climate is important to enhance workplace

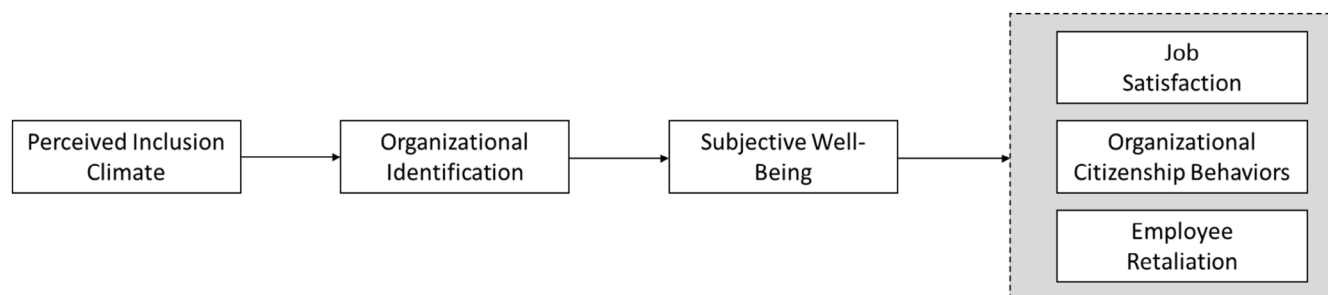


FIGURE 1 Conceptual model.

identification when working from home in turbulent environments and that a high level of organizational identification is related to better subjective well-being, job satisfaction, and usage of organizational citizenship behaviors and lower intentions of retaliation. Hence, organizations can contribute to the solution of the problem if they guarantee meaningful work relationships with their employees and follow the rules of organizational culture.

Finally, this study clearly emphasizes the need for a human-oriented approach in the post-COVID workplace and explains how organisations can support their employees through inclusive practices to improve work attitudes. The results show that inclusion is essential for managing the effects of new workplace arrangements like work-from-anywhere on employees' subjective well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviours. When employees have stress and anxiety, they make them feel valued and supported by inclusive practices. By adopting these approaches, it is possible to enable organizations to develop a shared sense of connectedness and belonging, which in turn will benefit the well-being of their employees and the effectiveness of the organization. Therefore, the requirement for inclusion should be considered, especially during a crisis.

CONCEPTUALIZATION AND THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

Inclusion in the new workplace

In the new workplace, inclusion refers to the subjective experience of belongingness and the degree to which individuals are afforded equal access to both formal and informal organizational processes and resources (Georgiadou, Ozkazanc-Pan, & Özbilgin, 2024; Lazazara, Za, & Georgiadou, 2025). Inclusion is considered a complex construct with multifaceted dimensions and has been linked to desirable organizational outcomes such as increased innovation and performance, although its measurement and operationalization are still being debated (Georgiadou & Syed, 2021; Mor Barak, 2013).

Mor Barak's (2015, p. 85) "*two-stage process model of inclusion*" offers a useful framework for understanding how organizations address diversity and inclusion. This model proposes that reactive organizations focus on increasing diversity in the workplace during the first stage, while proactive organizations concentrate on leveraging diversity initiatives to foster inclusion during the second stage. However, the exact mechanisms through which these diversity initiatives translate into greater inclusion remain uncertain.

A number of studies have sought to identify specific strategies for promoting an inclusive organizational culture. For example, Gotsis & Grimani (2017) presented a dynamic model of inclusion which is based on the

principles of allegiance, listening, and working together. Using an institutional theory perspective, Theodorakopoulos & Budhwar (2015) stated that inclusive organizations are based on the three pillars of cognitive, normative, and regulative pillars that define the understanding of what is right and wrong, and how decisions should be made within the organization.

Inclusion is now more relevant than ever; nevertheless, there is a requirement to explore in depth the nature and effects of the concept, especially in the context of the new emerging workplace (Shore et al., 2011). Nevertheless, past literature shows that people's perceptions of inclusion are related to their levels of organizational commitment (Hwang & Hopkins, 2012), organizational identification (Shore et al., 2011), job satisfaction and well-being (Le et al., 2018), and career development (Mor Barak, 2013). Moreover, research has proposed that organizations that embrace inclusive management practices fare better in terms of organizational performance, such as the stock value and organizational attractiveness (Bradley et al., 2024; Roumpi, 2022; Roumpi, Giannakis, & Delery, 2019). Individuals recognize that organizations with a strong perceived inclusion climate are fulfilling their diversity commitments and obligations, which leads to heightened organizational commitment and loyalty (Li et al., 2019).

In the current era, organizations face the challenge of effectively managing the risks and difficulties that their employees encounter in both physical and virtual work environments. The complexity of this challenge is amplified by the unpredictable macro socio-economic context that organizations operate within (Zagelmeyer & Gollan, 2012). Consequently, organizations must establish a foundation that can redefine traditional business approaches and pivot toward a hybrid-context oriented model that accommodates the needs of a diverse workforce. Scholars have argued that individual experiences can serve as a fundamental catalyst for detaching oneself from social establishments (Worts, Fox, & McDonough, 2007). Drawing upon symbolic interactionism (Dennis & Martin, 2005), which emphasizes the centrality of individual experiences in shaping social reality, it can be contended that employees' subjective experiences in hybrid work environments significantly influence their perception of the social reality of the workplace.

As stated by Antonacopoulou & Georgiadou (2021), experience is not just a result of socialization process but rather is a process of synthesis and an interpretive and communicative rendering of individual experiences and social relationships. This emphasizes the role of the experience of inclusion in organizations because it is a way of providing direction, inspiration, and enablement that allows people to stay connected to the mission, objectives, and vision of their organizations. Without the employees' buy-in, many organizations would have failed to navigate through the recent crisis. The importance of inclusion in preventing workplace withdrawal behaviors

has been highlighted by recent research examining how cultural and institutional factors shape employee responses to remote work arrangements (Georgiadou, Vezyridis, & Glaveli, 2025).

The blurring of traditional boundaries between the workplace and homeplace necessitates a reevaluation of the conceptualization of inclusion to encompass and represent the new types of workplace arrangements. While research on inclusion has emphasized the importance of context, we argue that explicit attention must be paid to place when considering context (Georgiadou & Syed, 2021). By exploring the relationships between a perceived inclusion climate, organizational identification, subjective well-being, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviors, and employee retaliation in the context of working-from-anywhere, organizations can ensure that their employees trust them and feel supported, connected, and included in this new workplace. This is a means to counteract the stress, insecurity, violation of the work-life balance, and detrimental impact on well-being triggered by the ongoing macro-level crisis (Li et al., 2022; Mihalache & Mihalache, 2022). Despite the growing body of literature investigating current and future work models, the role of inclusion in this macro-level ‘turbulence’ and the ensuing new workplace arrangements still needs to be assessed (Georgiadou, Ozkazanc-Pan, & Özbilgin, 2024).

Our study emphasizes the challenges that organizations may face when individuals are or are perceived to be excluded from the corporate culture. The importance of inclusion and inclusive leadership during the pandemic is highlighted by Caligiuri et al. (2020), who note that effective leaders “have the skills to adapt to the demands of the context when needed” (p. 701). In addition, inclusive leadership in the disruptive setting of COVID-19 is enacted through continuous adaptability on leaders’ perceptions of the context and followers’ perceptions of inclusion (Beijer, Knappert, & Stephenson, 2024). This adaptability is crucial in fostering an inclusive environment in the evolving workplace.

Perceived inclusion climate

Nishii (2013, p. 1754) introduced the construct of an inclusive climate as the mechanism by which “*relational sources of bias*” are eliminated, ensuring that an individual’s identity group status has no bearing on their access to resources. Inclusive climates also create opportunities for heterogeneous individuals to establish personalized, cross-cutting ties and integrate ideas across boundaries in joint problem-solving. She also argued that the presence of an inclusive climate can help to diffuse relationship tensions that may occur in inclusive teams.

This paper, while extending on this foundation, and in response to the call for finer grained analysis in the context of remote work, defines inclusion climate as

the collective perception of the extent to which organizations incorporate fairness, equity and the inclusion of diverse employees in their policies, practices and procedures (Georgiadou, Ozkazanc-Pan, & Özbilgin, 2024; Nishii, 2013). This definition goes beyond previous conceptualizations, which are mainly focused on demographic diversity to include other important aspects such as diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) practices, availability of resources, and the creation of a place where everyone belongs and is valued. In remote work where the sense of isolation can be heightened by physical distance, the importance of an inclusive climate is therefore particularly important.

To make a more coherent conceptual framework, we also elaborate more on this definition by identifying several key attributes that are more closely related to remote work. An inclusive climate not only includes demographic diversity but also ensures equity and inclusion through policies and practices that celebrate and include the voice of diverse groups of people. This is in line with Shore et al. (2011) who noted that both belongingness and uniqueness are crucial in inclusive climates. In remote work situations, this could look like having diverse membership in virtual meetings, promoting equal opportunities for career growth regardless of physical presence in the office, and encouraging everyone on the team to participate.

Furthermore, an inclusive climate provides equal access to both material and intangible resources and rewards (Mor Barak, 2015). In the remote work context this extends to digital resources, information and skills and capabilities as well as opportunities for networking. It also entails making sure that all the employees have the right technology and support to work from home as well as to solve the issues that may occur as a result of different living and working conditions and the absence of technology (Aydos et al., 2021).

Inclusion climate is also characterized by the extent of psychological safety and belonging that it provides to all employees (Li & Peng, 2022). This means creating virtual spaces where nobody should feel uncomfortable, where everyone can freely express themselves and their opinions, ideas, and concerns. This feeling of belonging is especially difficult to create in remote work, which makes it an important focus area for organizations that are trying to build inclusive climates (Vallabh et al., 2024).

Inclusive climates also contribute to the incorporation of diverse employees into all aspects of organizational life (Mor Barak, 2015). In remote settings, this could mean that all employees - regardless of where they are physically - can engage in decision-making processes, contribute to important projects, and shape the organizational culture. This integration is important in order to ensure the overall organizational identity and to avoid the isolation of remote workers (Bartel et al., 2012).

As Nishii (2013) pointed out, an inclusion climate helps to build cross-cutting ties. In remote work contexts

this means putting in place structures and processes that allow and encourage collaboration across geography, functions and levels. This aspect of inclusion climate is most significant for the generation of innovation and knowledge in distributed teams (Carmeli et al., 2010).

The capability of an inclusive climate to mitigate relationship tensions is particularly important in remote work settings where miscommunication is more likely to happen, and relationship building is harder. An inclusive climate in remote work environments therefore has to have provisions for conflict management and relationship management in the virtual world (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006).

The cultivation of such an inclusive workplace climate can be claimed to be important not only for people with different characteristics, but also for organizations. According to Avery et al. (2007), people who are from minorities share more negative work experiences than positive ones, which in turn leads to frustration and low job satisfaction. Inclusive organizational climates have been found to have positive effects on employee outcomes (including those of employees from underrepresented groups) such as affective and organizational commitment and engagement (Li et al., 2019). Therefore, an inclusion climate can be seen as a supporter of the 'business case' for the diversity management strategies that an organization is implementing. It is also highlighted that an inclusion climate can help to demonstrate the engagement of key stakeholders in the promotion of inclusive behaviors, practices, and values (Li et al., 2019) and improve the effectiveness of inclusion in top management teams (Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006).

However, as it has been mentioned above, although there are many benefits of investing in inclusion in the workplace for people and organizations, the role of inclusion climate in improving working experience in non-traditional ways of working, such as the new hybrid workplace, has not been explored. The existing research also shows that positive organizational climates can decrease negative behaviours and beliefs, for instance, by decreasing trust, stress, isolation, and sense of belonging (Nishii, 2013). We suggest that through fostering inclusion, organizations can enhance their employees' organizational identification, subjective well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviours, as well as reduce employee retaliation, even in a remote or hybrid work context where face-to-face interactions are infrequent.

Inclusion climate and organizational identification

Organizational identification is a concept that is based on the assumption of the shared understanding of the micro (individual), meso (team), and macro (organization)

levels and entails the development of a coherent value system among individuals and groups (Hatch & Schultz, 2002). Organizational identification facilitates the creation of a sense of connectedness among employees, which in turn creates a feeling of belongingness and loyalty to the organization's mission and vision (Ashforth & Mael, 1996) beyond the workplace. People are trying to reach harmony with the larger organizational group, and therefore try to make individual and group-level goals coherent. In contrast, a low level of identification with the employer may lead to reduced morale, motivation, and performance and increased counterproductive behaviors, stress, and retaliation (Rothausen et al., 2017), especially in situations of high levels of volatility, structural change, and uncertainty (Psychogios & Prouska, 2019).

Organizational identification is rooted in self-categorization theory, whereby people adopt social identities that they deem appropriate (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). It refers to the perception of oneness or belonging to a given organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). This perception can be as narrow as the cognitive aspects of identification (e.g., "I am") or as wide as to include identity content, i.e., beliefs and values, and even identity behaviors that are induced by organizational identification (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008). Organizational identification resolves the question of "Who am I?" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) and is a type of social identification that leads people to seek empowerment, connectedness, and meaning, all essential components of a perceived inclusive climate (Denhardt, 1987).

Studies show that a high level of organizational identification can lead to desirable outcomes for the organization in terms of job satisfaction, reduced turnover and absenteeism and enhanced employee well-being (Chughtai & Buckley, 2013). Therefore, organizational identification and its management may be important for building up the organization's environment that is open to everyone and beneficial for both the individual and the organization.

According to social constructionism, previous studies have pointed out that organizational culture and identity are in a dynamic relationship with the sensemaking process (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006). However, previous research has not fully addressed the differences between organizational culture and identification, which have been used interchangeably. In fact, while organizational culture is often tacitly embedded in everyday organizational practices and rituals, organizational identification is primarily a self-reflective and relational construct (Pratt, 2003). This distinction highlights the need to treat organizational culture and identification as complementary yet distinct phenomena, and that their understanding adds unique insights into the sensemaking process of organizations.

Fiol (2001) postulates that employees create a sense of meaning from their organizational identification, and

that organizational identities serve as a source of organizational continuity. These identities provide a framework for employees to comprehend and attach profound meaning to organizational behavior (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006). During times of significant change, such as the introduction of new workplace arrangements, strongly held identification values may be further reinforced. This is because such changes can cause intensified feelings of antagonism, insecurity, a greater need for connectedness, and uncertainty. Organizational culture is a fundamental dimension of the sensemaking process in the workplace, and identity involves how individuals define and experience themselves, partly influenced by their activities and beliefs, which are grounded in and interpreted using cultural assumptions and values (Hatch & Schultz, 2000, 25).

Farooq, Rupp and Farooq (2017, 958) argued that an individual's organizational commitment depends on the attractiveness and distinctiveness of the organization's attributes, values, and practices as compared to other organizations. In this context, CSR initiatives are seen to have a significant effect on employee organizational identification by way of perceived respect and prestige. That is, if an organization has a culture that fosters and celebrates diversity and inclusion, then it can be said that the organization has values and practices that are different from those of other organizations that do not include and diversify. Theoretically and empirically, scholars have outlined the relationship between the inclusive culture and diversity management practices and job applicants and employees' attitudes and other work outcomes as positive (Stevens, Plaut, & Sanchez-Burks, 2008). Therefore, it is proposed that there is a positive relationship between inclusive culture and organizational identification.

Organizational identification is a relational phenomenon where employees incorporate the organization's values, norms, and interests into their self-concept (Van Knippenberg & Sleafbos, 2006, 572). Hence, the recent adoption of hybrid workplace arrangements has the potential to either enhance or diminish organizational identification. First of all, organizational administrative decisions while working from anywhere can greatly affect the identity of the organization and thereafter, affect the levels of employees' organizational identification. On the one hand, practices such as layoffs, furloughs, and pay cuts can lead to the violation of employees' values, which are incongruent with the organization's values and result in decreased levels of organizational identification. On the other hand, the policies and practices that improve the organization's inclusion climate may increase the fit between the personal and organizational values and, hence, increase organizational identification. Second, working from anywhere has drastically reduced the level of interpersonal contact with colleagues, which has in turn altered the organizational norms and may affect the levels of organizational identification.

However, those employers who provide an inclusive business environment and a positive overall culture may be able to prevent this or may even observe enhanced levels of organizational identification among their employees. Research findings also show that there is a positive association between an inclusive organizational climate and employees' levels of loneliness, belongingness, and uniqueness (Randel et al., 2018). Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. A perceived inclusive climate is positively related to organizational identification.

Perceived inclusion climate and well-being

Although the literature on well-being in the workplace is extensive, there exists significant variation in its definition and operationalization (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2014). A number of paradigms pertaining to work-related well-being adopt a hedonistic perspective that emphasizes pleasure and positive experiences (e.g., high job satisfaction) (Ryan & Deci, 2001). A significant body of literature acknowledges both eudemonic and hedonistic aspects of well-being, with the former featuring personal learning and growth opportunities, autonomy, and self-actualization (Fisher, 2010). Given the employee-centric lens of these approaches to well-being, clearer links are made possible between well-being and explicit job characteristics such as organizational identification (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006) or organizational culture, including inclusive business practices and trust in organizational leadership (Carr et al., 2003).

Focusing more specifically on subjective well-being, the need-fulfillment theory (Tay & Diener, 2011) suggests that high levels of well-being can be achieved by realizing both psychological and physical needs of individuals. Such individual needs, in line with the livability theory (Veenhoven & Ehrhardt, 1995), are influenced by societal conditions and systems. Building on this theoretical foundation, we contend that a positive organizational climate of inclusion can yield positive impacts on employee well-being.

Empirical evidence suggests that inclusive climates in organizations have a positive effect on the motivation, engagement, and turnover rates of employees as well as on the overall financial performance of the organization (Ferdman & Deane, 2014). This is important, especially during the times of change, as scholars who have earlier stressed on the significance of inclusion during such times, stating that it enhances job satisfaction and commitment, and that its effects on organizational effectiveness may be mediated through employee well-being (Antonacopoulou & Georgiadou, 2021; Gotsis & Grimani, 2017). If properly promoted, a positive climate for inclusion can help integrate differences and thus

enhance individual well-being by addressing their identity needs for connectedness and belongingness (Mor Barak et al., 2025). Inclusive climates can also help reduce the consequences of the persistent group-level inequalities and create a context in which individuals perceive receiving fair and equal treatment, which in turn leads to perceived self-efficacy and empowerment (Gotsis & Grimani, 2017). Hence, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2. The relationship between perceived inclusion climate and well-being is mediated by organizational identification.

Employee outcomes

Beyond the individual level of employee well-being, the constructive outcomes of organizational identification may affect work-related attitudes and behaviors. It can therefore be theoretically postulated that organizational identification, through subjective well-being, impacts two important employee attitudes and behaviors; job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviors, while reducing retaliatory behaviors. The identification process can offer employees a feeling of belonging and an identity, which in turn may improve organizational citizenship behaviors and decrease retaliative behaviors as research indicates that those who identify with their organizations are likely to engage in behaviors that are conducive to the organization's goals (Karanika-Murray et al., 2015). Therefore, when employees experience high levels of organizational identification are more likely to be motivated and engaged and, therefore, more productive and efficient, because they consider the well-being of the organization as their own (Van Knippenberg & Van Schie, 2000).

The relationship between an individual and an organization plays a critical role in the extent to which organizational culture impacts employees' commitment and well-being levels (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). This relationship fulfils the basic psychological needs of safety and belongingness for the employees and has a significant influence on their subjective well-being and even their health (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008). In terms of organizational social capital theory, such a strong bond enables individuals to share trust, collaborate, and pursue collective goals that encourage collective action, resulting in greater organizational effectiveness and success (Georgiadou & Syed, 2021, 5). The sense of identification with the organization fosters greater support and collaboration, particularly in challenging circumstances and new workplace arrangements, leading to greater subjective well-being and better employee outcomes. Research suggests that optimal employee outcomes are contingent upon enhancing employee well-being, which can be achieved by implementing workspace arrangements that promote organizational identification (Knight &

Haslam, 2010). Based on this, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. The relationship between organizational identification and a) job satisfaction, b) organizational citizenship behaviors, and c) employee retaliation is mediated by subjective well-being.

As explained by the social identity theory approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), individuals assign themselves to different categories on the basis of their group affiliation. This approach recognizes that people can have multiple social identities, e.g., gender, national, professional, or religious, and that any of these can be the target of identification (Karanika-Murray et al., 2015). According to social identity theory, people incorporate their experience of working in an organization through this identification process, which, in turn, affects their employee outcomes in the form of job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviors, and retaliation.

To build on the concept of social capital (Georgiadou & Syed, 2021), we claim that members of the in-group have better levels of belongingness, connectedness, trust, engagement, and participation, which are valuable for individuals and organizations. In this framework, we suggest that perceived inclusion climate is an antecedent of strong organizational identification in a new workplace context. We further propose that higher levels of organizational identification will lead to improved employee subjective well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviours, as well as reduced retaliation. Hence, we postulate the following:

Hypothesis 4a. The relationship between perceived inclusion climate and job satisfaction is serially mediated by organizational identification and, in turn, by subjective well-being.

Hypothesis 4b. The relationship between perceived inclusion climate and organizational citizenship behaviors is serially mediated by organizational identification and, in turn, by subjective well-being.

Hypothesis 4c. The relationship between perceived inclusion climate and employee retaliation is serially mediated by organizational identification and, in turn, by subjective well-being.

By 'serially mediated', we mean that the relationship between the independent variable (perceived inclusion climate) and the dependent variables (job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviors, and employee retaliation) occurs through a chain of mediators

(organizational identification followed by subjective well-being) in a specified order.

METHODS

Research design and context

Our study employed a two-wave design with a one-week lag between stages, conducted in July 2020. This design was chosen to reduce common source bias by collecting dependent and independent variables at different time points. The context of our study was the COVID-19 period, where many employees were working remotely for the first time due to pandemic-related safety measures.

Participant selection and sampling strategy

Respondents were recruited via the Prolific Academic online platform, using specific filtering criteria to ensure our sample consisted of US nationals located in the US, employed full-time for for-profit businesses, and working remotely (from home) 100% of their time for the first time due to pandemic safety measures. On the basis of these criteria, we recruited 180 participants. While this sampling strategy allowed us to focus on a specific subset of workers directly affected by the pandemic-induced shift to remote work, we acknowledge that it may limit the generalizability of our findings to other types of workers or work arrangements.

In the design of our survey questionnaire, we included two attention check questions to confirm the validity of the responses; eight participants failed them and were thus discarded from the rest of the analysis. On average, our participants were rewarded with US\$4 for completing the survey. After removing some incomplete questionnaires, we ultimately collected 156 valid questionnaires. Ethical considerations were prioritized throughout the research process, with participants being informed about the study's purpose and their rights, guaranteed anonymity, and given the option to withdraw at any time without penalty. Ethical approval was granted by a large US University.

In terms of demographics, 101 of our respondents (65%) were female, and 92 (59%) said they were the primary wage earners in their household. The average time they had spent working for their current employers was 7 years ($SD = 6.1$), and their average age was 37.4 ($SD = 11$).

Research tools and measures

We measured perceived inclusion climate at Time 1 and organizational identification at Time 2. Subjective well-being was measured at both times.

Perceived inclusion climate was assessed using a seven-point Likert-type scale scales ranging from 1 ('Strongly disagree') to 7 ('Strongly agree'), with 15 items developed by Nishii (2013) ($\alpha = 0.965$). Example items included: "My employer values workers for who they are as people, not just for the jobs that they do", "My employer values work-life balance", "My employer actively seeks employee input".

The participants were asked questions regarding their levels of identification with their employer by rating five items (Smidts et al., 2001) on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) ($\alpha = 0.893$). Example items are "When someone criticizes my employer, it feels like a personal insult", "When I talk about my employer, I usually say "we" rather than "they"" and "My employer's successes are my successes".

Subjective well-being was measured by asking the participants to rate how often they felt their life, overall, was 'interesting', 'worthwhile', 'enjoyable', etc. using the eight items developed by Burroughs & Rindfleisch (2002) ($\alpha = .939$) on a seven-point Likert type scale (1 = never to 7 = always). We measured subjective well-being at two points in time over a one-month period and calculated a universal score (Diener et al., 1999). This method was in line with evidence suggesting that the sampling of emotions and feelings at random moments in the respondents' lives reduces any memory biases that might affect retrospective evaluations of well-being (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999).

We measured all DVs on a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = never to 7 = always). Specifically, we measured employee Job Satisfaction with 4 items following Pond & Geyer (1991) with sample items "All in all, I am satisfied with my job" and "In general, I would say that I like my job". We measured Employee organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) with 17 items adapted from Podsakoff et al. (1990). Sample items include: "I help others who have heavy work loads", "I express resentment with any changes introduced by management" (reverse scored), and "I help make others more productive". Finally, we measured workplace Retaliation following Skarlicki & Folger's (1997) scale with five items including the following: "Call in sick when not ill" and "I try to look busy while wasting time".

Control variables

We considered the effects of COVID-19 as a control variable. Due to the unforeseen disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, working-from-anywhere has become the new reality for millions of people all over the world (e.g., Akkermans, Richardson, & Kraimer, 2020; Restubog, Ocampo, & Wang, 2020). This mode of working is not designed around a definite, commonly shared working space, and thus does present some advantages,

TABLE 1 Mean, standard deviation, and intercorrelations for the study's variables.

Variables	Mean	S.D.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5
1. Perceived Inclusive Climate	4.65	1.34	1				
2. Organizational Identification	4.16	1.46	.676**	1			
3. Subjective Wellbeing	4.94	1.01	.300**	.329**	1		
4. Job Satisfaction	4.98	1.38	.699**	.683**	.482**	1	
5. OCB	5.41	.66	.466**	.522**	.324**	.489**	1
6. Retaliation	2.64	1.06	-.348*	-.264**	-.328**	-.420**	-.420**

N = 156.

* $p < .05$.** $p < .01$.

such as the engagement of traditionally marginalized groups of individuals, and the empowerment of vulnerable social groups (Haddon & Brynin, 2005). As a potential consequence of the aforementioned disruption, employees were likely to experience feelings of isolation and exclusion not only from the social aspect of the work environment, but also from any future career progression and development prospects (Georgiadou, Metcalfe, et al. 2021).

Concerns had been raised in regard to belongingness in virtual teams (Gao & Sai, 2020) even before the social distancing imposed in response to the COVID-19 outbreak had brought about the rebranding of all these forms of working as 'remote work' (Martins, Gilson, & Maynard, 2004). Physical distance may reinforce some individuals' tendencies to favor people who are similar to them, whereas it may reduce opportunities for spontaneous discussions and interactions between different individuals who may be nearby or passing through. For these individuals, being in an organization with an inclusive culture may mitigate, to some extent, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their lives by promoting higher levels of engagement and barrier-free communication (Shore, Cleveland, & Sanchez, 2018). This is in line with Groarke et al. (2020), who highlighted the prevalence of loneliness and emphasized the need for social support to reduce the impact of COVID-19. An organizational inclusive culture may reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation by encouraging participation and reducing communication barriers (Shore, Cleveland, & Sanchez, 2018).

We measured the impact of COVID-19 by means of a single-item question ("Have you or anyone close to you been affected by COVID-19?") which was adapted by similar single-item measures of perceived health (Devine et al., 2003) after changes in the work-life balance (Linna et al., 2012). We purposefully measured this question with one item as a means to learn complicated or sensitive information that may be seen as less intrusive and more straightforward and easily understood by all participants, exhibiting content and face validity (Devine et al., 2003).

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Descriptive statistics and correlations

Table 1 presents all the studied variables' descriptive statistics and correlations.

Common method variance

To reduce common source bias, we collected our dependent and independent variables at two different points in time ('temporal separation'; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). Further, the items within each construct were randomized, and the respondents were informed that all their responses would be kept anonymous. However, to further alleviate any concerns, we performed Harman's single factor test before conducting our analysis. The results indicated six factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1 emerging from an unrotated factor analysis of the study's variables, and that the largest single factor accounted for 32.26% of total variance. Therefore, common method bias appeared to be an unlikely concern in our study.

Data analysis

Prior to testing our hypotheses, we performed confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the scales' unidimensionality and discriminant and convergent validity. All variables were entered into the Mplus (version 8) structural equation modeling software to assess whether the items captured the intended constructs. All items fit their relative factor with no cross-loading. All scales were found to be unidimensional and valid, as the standardized loadings were found to be above 0.6 and the average variance extracted (AVE) to be higher than 0.6 and of the square of the highest correlation among the studied variables. The scales were also all found to be internally consistent, as all Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) coefficients were higher than 0.7 (Fornell

and Larcker, 1981). The chi-square value and fit indices for the three models were as follows: Model A (Inclusion Climate, Organizational Identification, Subjective well-being, Job Satisfaction) $\chi^2/df = 1.49$, $p < 0.01$, Comparative Fit Index = 0.951, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.057. Tucker–Lewis index = 0.944. For Model B (Inclusion Climate, Organizational Identification, Subjective well-being, Employee OCB): $\chi^2/df = 1.92$, $p < 0.01$, CFI = 0.951, RMSEA = 0.057 TLI = 0.944. Finally for Model C (Inclusion Climate, Organizational Identification, Subjective well-being, Employee Retaliation): $\chi^2/df = 1.56$, $p < 0.01$, CFI = .935, RMSEA = 0.060 TLI = 0.925. Overall, given the fit index recommendations made by Hu and Bentler (1999), the measurement model was considered adequate to proceed with the hypotheses tests, which were conducted using the SPSS software.

We performed regression analyses to test the effect of a perceived inclusion climate and found that it significantly predicted organizational identification (Beta = 0.676, $p < 0.01$), thus confirming Hypothesis 1. We tested our regression models by means of an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. Specifically, we used the PROCESS macro in SPSS 25 (Hayes, 2012) to explore our mediations and serial-mediation hypotheses (Hypotheses 2–4). In all cases, we took the bootstrapping approach, running the analysis using 5,000 bootstraps (Preacher et al., 2007). As expected, we found a significant mediating effect (Effect = 0.1180, Boot LLCI = 0.0113 and Boot ULCI = 0.2345) of organizational identification on the relationship between a perceived inclusion climate and subjective well-being, which provided support for Hypothesis 2. The direct effect of perceived inclusion climate on subjective well-being was found to be not significant (effect = 0.1082, $p = 0.1653$, Boot LLCI = −0.0451, Boot ULCI = 0.2614), showing

that organizational identification fully mediates the relationship between perceived inclusion climate and subjective well-being. Our results also confirmed the mediations predicted by Hypothesis 3—i.e., that subjective well-being partially mediates the relationship between organizational identification and a) job satisfaction (effect = 0.0901, Boot LLCI = .0380, Boot ULCI = .1574), b) organizational citizenship behaviors (effect = .0253, Boot LLCI = .0009, Boot ULCI = .0563), c) employee retaliation (effect = −.0649, Boot LLCI = −.1200, Boot ULCI = −.0252).

More importantly, however, the central tenet of our study was that employee perceptions of their organization's inclusion climate may relate to organizational identification, which in turn increases subjective employee well-being and, ultimately, enhances employee job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviors and reduces employee retaliation. To test Hypothesis 4a–4c we examined the proposed indirect effects by estimating bias-corrected intervals using bootstrap analysis (Hayes, 2012), while controlling for the independent variable of the effect of COVID-19. As can be seen in Table 2, a perceived inclusive climate was found to have a direct and significant negative effect on employee retaliation and a positive effect on organizational citizenship behaviors and job satisfaction. Further, in line with our hypotheses, this effect was found to be serially mediated by organizational identification and subjective well-being for job satisfaction and employee retaliation. However, the results of the serial mediation of the relationship between perceived inclusion climate and organizational citizenship behaviors by organizational identification and subjective well-being were found to be borderline significant (CI: −.0005, .0368). Based on these results, we found support for Hypotheses 4a and 4c, but we did not find support for Hypothesis 4b.

TABLE 2 Process results for hypotheses 4a–4c.

	DV: job satisfaction		DV: OCB		DV: retaliation	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Intercept	−.04	.42	4.02	.27	4.99	.48
Effect of Covid-19	.07	.15	−.14	.10	−.044	.173
Perceived Inclusion Climate	.41	.07	.10	.45	−.216	.081
Organization Identification	.32	.07	.15	.042	.001	.075
Subjective Well-Being	.34	.07	.11	.047	−.257	.083
R ²	.63**		.3261**		.1762**	
df	(4,151)		(4,151)		(4, 151)	
Direct effect	.41**	.07	.10*	.05	−.22**	.081
Indirect Effect	.043*	.23	.013*	.01	−.0319*	.0194
CI of indirect effect	[.0022, .0933]		[−.0009, .0351]		[−.0767, −.0022]	

N = 156 employees. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported.

Bootstrap sample size = 5,000. CI: Confidence Interval; LL: lower limit; UL: upper limit.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

DISCUSSION

The primary aim of our research was to gain a better understanding of how the perceived inclusion climate influences various aspects of working from anywhere. In order to do this, we proposed and examined a model (Figure 1) which explains the role of organizational identification and subjective well-being in the relationship between perceived inclusion climate and employee outcomes when working from anywhere. The findings of our analysis give a clearer picture of the process of building inclusive climates in remote work environments. In line with our hypotheses, we observed that perceived inclusion climate was positively related to organizational identification and subjective well-being, which in turn predicted job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviors as well as reduced employee retaliation. These results highlight the need to create inclusive work environments to enhance employees' well-being and other positive outcomes, especially in the light of major shifts in work arrangements. Furthermore, our study contributes to literature by expanding the study to a new work context: working from anywhere.

Our results align with and extend existing research on the benefits of inclusive climates in several ways. First, by establishing the mediating effects of organizational identification and subjective well-being, we offer a more specific explanation of how inclusion climate influences individuals and their behaviors. These findings are consistent with social identity theory as advanced by Tajfel & Turner (1986), which state that people obtain their identity from groups to which they belong including their organizations. Hence, if employees have a positive experience of the work environment in terms of inclusion, they are likely to have a high level of organizational commitment, which in turn improves their well-being and motivates them to engage in positive work behaviors (Chung et al., 2020; Randel et al., 2018). These results are in line with current research on cultural factors in the workplace, and the evidence shows that inclusive climates can help to avoid employee disengagement and quiet quitting even in remote work (Georgiadou, Vezyridis, & Glaveli, 2025).

In line with self-determination theory (Ryan & Patrick, 2009), the current study shows that an enabling context, in the form of an inclusive culture, helps people realize their identities through participation, support, and engagement. This is in line with the work of Gotsis & Grimani (2016) who suggested a positive relationship between an organizational climate for inclusion and organizational identification, citizenship behaviors, and well-being.

In this paper, we also apply the socially embedded model of thriving at work (Spreitzer et al., 2005) to remote work. According to this model, people are more likely to thrive and feel and learn when they are situated in socially supportive contexts that offer both autonomy and support. The results of our study show that the

models of an inclusive climate can be a valuable resource for thriving in virtual work, as it creates a sense of belonging, safety, and support for meaningful work even when there is no face-to-face interactions.

The results also support the previous findings on the advantages of an inclusive workplace in terms of well-being and other positive organizational behaviors (Mor Barak et al., 2016; Nishii, 2013). The importance of creating a culture of inclusion is further highlighted by our study, which shows that an inclusive climate can strengthen organizational identification even in times of change. This is in line with other studies that have established the role of an inclusive climate in building resilience in remote work. For instance, Zahoor et al. (2024) argued that an inclusive climate can help to reduce the negative effects of digitalization on employee resilience. In the same manner, Li et al. (2024) established that in the context of managing a crisis (e.g., pandemic), inclusive management practices were linked with more resilience in the form of robustness and agility.

This article offers an important contribution to the organization identification literature by analyzing a key boundary condition – the shift from the traditional workplace to remote work due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As far as we know, this is the first study to examine the relationship between a macro-level-imposed change and business practices, such as an inclusive climate, and the levels of employee organizational identification and subjective well-being. Organizational identification, however, becomes more significant as remote work policies remain a part of the workplace. In this regard, remote work policies may have adverse effects on employees through a decrease in social identity due to a reduced sense of belonging and weak social bonds with the other members of the organization. Due to remote work, many everyday practices and rituals are eliminated, which may lead to a drastic change in the meaning of organizational life for the employees (Magrizos et al., 2023). Moreover, non-inclusive organizations may lead to the fusion of the private and work life, which in turn may result in the reduction of work-related identities.

Organizational identification is significant for several work-related attitudes and behaviors; for instance, task performance and turnover intentions. It has been established that organizational identification is more closely linked to performance than organizational commitment. Hence, if organizational identification is reduced in the context of hybrid work models, organizations may witness higher turnover intentions and lower in-role and extra-role performance. The study builds on previous literature, examining the role of organizational identification in remote work and offers good practices for organizations to foster a inclusive work environment in order to enhance employee well-being and performance (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008; Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Riketta, 2005; Van Knippenberg & Van Schie, 2000).

Finally, the results of our research highlight that even perceptions of low levels of inclusion climate have a significant impact on employee sense of belonging, uniqueness, and identification in times of crises and in the context of working-from-anywhere (i.e., in the absence of physical connectedness). These findings agree with the work done by Mor Barak (2019), who argued that a good climate of inclusion can eliminate any barriers between employees and bring them together. This is in line with our argument that an inclusive climate (of any kind) is the recognition of employee needs, especially during ‘turbulent’ times: connectedness, belongingness, and support. This, therefore, enhances the employees’ organizational identification with accompanying positive well-being. It also emphasizes the need of taking into consideration the inclusifying the concept of inclusion in the workplace, both in its symbolic and material aspects, in order to build resilience.

Our findings suggest that perceptions of low levels of inclusion climate have a significant effect on employee sense of belonging, uniqueness, and identification in the context of remote work arrangements. These results are consistent with recent work conducted by Mor Barak (2019) that argues that a positive climate of inclusion may lessen any boundaries that separate employees and enhance commonality. We argue that an inclusive climate (of any degree) signals the satisfaction of employee needs, especially in turbulent times when connectedness, belongingness, and mechanisms of support are particularly important. This strengthens the employees’ sense of organizational identification, which has positive effects on their well-being. Our results underscore the importance of inclusifying the notion of inclusion in the workplace and suggest that both the symbolic and material dimensions of inclusion need to be considered to cultivate resilience.

Theoretical perspectives support our findings. For instance, social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987) dictate that people’s identity is derived from social categories and groups – from being an organization or a team. The absence of physical proximity may be an issue for remote workers regarding the development and preservation of a solid sense of identity and belonging. However, an inclusive climate at low levels can enhance the perceived social connectedness and group identification that may enhance their well-being. The significance of inclusion in the workplace is also backed by social exchange theory of Blau (1968), organizational support theory of Eisenberger et al. (1986), and ethical theories of Magrizos & Roumpi (2020), which stress the role of reciprocal relationships between employees and the organization. Inclusive practices and support mechanisms are crucial in the development and sustainment of these mutual obligations and thus, employee well-being.

IMPLICATIONS

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has affected different aspects of people’s lives such as their well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors. For instance, Wanberg et al. (2020) pointed out that the pandemic has increased depressive symptoms and lowered life satisfaction of individuals. Similarly, Feng & Savani (2020) observed that there was a decrease in job satisfaction among employees. Furthermore, Park et al. (2021) argued that the pandemic has adversely affected the organizational citizenship behavior of employees. Therefore, to reduce these negative effects, organizations should engage in inclusive business activities.

There is therefore the need for organizations to reorganize their business strategies to embrace empathy, determination, resilience, and a more people-centered approach that entails everyone in the organization. This is because inclusive business practices are vital in reducing the effects of turbulent times on the subjective well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors of individuals. This is because home-based workers have been found to suffer from a lack of inclusion and sense of belonging, as well as feeling lonely at work (Andel, Shen, & Arvan, 2021; Carnevale & Hatak, 2020; Georgiadou, Ozkazanc-Pan, & Özbilgin, 2024).

In the current world of economic uncertainty and ambiguity, it is important for organizations to understand and manage their employees’ experiences of inclusion at work. The purpose of this study is to explore the possible benefits of organizational investment in employees, especially in the new workplace arrangements, as this can result in increased levels of employees’ engagement and commitment. The creation of a diverse culture where each employee is appreciated, accepted, and secure can be seen as part of this investment as it has been proven to have a positive effect on employee attitudes and behaviors. The task of creating a culture of inclusion should be shouldered not only by upper management but by all team leaders and individuals at the micro-level. From a macro-social perspective, this research aims to establish the importance of such investment in improving the workplace atmosphere and promoting sustainable organizational performance.

This study also constitutes a call to researchers to review current management theories and frameworks in light of the present work context, which focuses on the importance of remote work and distributed teams. Specifically, it is important to understand the processes through which inclusion is understood and experienced by employees in these new forms of work and to identify the approaches that are most effective in promoting inclusion in these contexts.

The findings of this study have several practical implications for organizations that want to develop more

inclusive climates and help employees' well-being in remote and hybrid work contexts. First, the results of our research show that leadership is the key driver of the tone that is set for inclusion and belonging. Managers can create inclusive climates by exhibiting enthusiasm toward diversity, equity, and inclusion, demonstrating inclusive behavior, and seeking to include and value the input of diverse groups (Randel et al., 2018). In remote settings, this may entail conducting virtual team activities, establishing clear norms for inclusive communication, and guaranteeing that all members of the team have an equal chance of accessing resources, information, and training (Faulds & Raju, 2021; McGuire, Germain, & Reynolds, 2021).

Second, the results of our research suggest that strategies for improving organizational identification and subjective well-being are most effective in enhancing employee outcomes in remote work settings. To enhance identification, managers should define a clear and meaningful organizational mission and values, link individual efforts to organizational objectives, and provide opportunities for remote employees to meet and engage with fellow teammates (Chung et al., 2020; Wiesenfeld, Raghuram, & Garud, 2001). To support well-being, organizations can implement policies that support work-life balance, offer resources for stress and mental health, and encourage workers to create healthy work environments that can be done from anywhere (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020; Yarbber & Sims, 2021).

Finally, our study also shows that it is necessary to monitor and evaluate inclusion in remote work contexts. Organizations can use pulse surveys, focus groups, or employee resource groups to find out how inclusive they have felt at work, what needs improving, and how things are changing over time (Zeng, Zhao, & Zhao, 2020). Through proactive measures of eliminating exclusion and constant efforts toward cultivating inclusive workplaces, organizations can create work environments that enhance employee engagement, performance, and well-being.

LIMITATIONS

The present study is not immune to limitations, which may moderate the conclusions drawn from its findings. First, the self-report measures utilized in this study may potentially introduce common method variance in the data collected (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012), a concern which we addressed by introducing temporal separation in data collection and running post-hoc tests. Nonetheless, the possibility of common method bias cannot be entirely ruled out.

Second, our study did not account for potential moderating effects of individual differences on the relationship between inclusive culture and employee identification during a major change. For instance, Schneider & Sting (2020) identified five cognitive frames (utilitarian,

functional, anthropocentric, traditional, and playful) with regard to digitalization that may influence employees' perceptions and responses to organizational change. Future research could explore such individual differences to gain a more nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between inclusive culture and employee identification in the new workplace.

Also, while our study focused on the immediate post-COVID context, the findings may be generalizable to regular remote or hybrid work environments. Arguably, the 'forced' remote work due to COVID-19 proved that such work arrangements can be effective from an organizational point of view and, thus, are likely to continue as workplace practice (Roumpi, 2023). While the context of COVID-19 and the immediate post-COVID period are somewhat unique in terms of the levels of well-being and stress individuals faced, research findings indicate that for employees who telecommuted even before COVID-19 the potential for high levels of stress and decreased well-being was significant due to blurring of the boundaries between life and work (Allen et al., 2020). Consequently, we believe that our results would be generalizable outside of the immediate post-COVID period. Nevertheless, we cannot rule out the effect of temporal proximity of COVID-19 on our results. Our study was conducted in July 2020, when the impacts of the pandemic and the shift to remote work were still rather acute for many workers. This timing could have affected respondents' perceptions of inclusion climate, their organizational identification, and their overall well-being in ways that might not be representative of more stable periods.

Finally, this study was conducted in a U.S. context in for-profit organizations who had recently transitioned to full-time remote work, and results may vary across different cultural settings. Taking a cultural values perspective, for instance, it can be anticipated that individualism/collectivism could potentially influence the impact of inclusive climate on organizational identification and the subsequent well-being of employees. In a context that is characterized by high levels of collectivism, employees who work remotely would be more likely to experience a sense of isolation as they tend to create their identities on the basis of a collective or a community (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998) and, therefore, the impact of inclusive climate on organizational identification could be stronger. While we believe that the fundamental relationships between inclusion, identification, well-being, and employee outcomes are likely to hold across contexts, the strength of these associations may vary depending on cultural norms, organizational practices, and the nature of the remote work arrangement (e.g., fully remote vs. hybrid).

Future research could extend our findings by examining these relationships in diverse cultural settings and across different types of remote work arrangements. For example, investigating the impact of inclusion climate on employee outcomes in collectivistic vs. individualistic

cultures could shed light on how cultural values shape the experience of belonging and meaningful work in virtual environments. Similarly, comparing the effects of inclusion climate across fully remote, hybrid, and flexible work arrangements could provide insights into how different degrees of virtuality influence the dynamics of inclusion and identification.

In our study, we investigated the mechanisms through which the perceived inclusive climate may affect job satisfaction and employee retaliation in the context of remote work. In future research, employee-related factors that may moderate these relationships should be explored in more detail. For instance, employees' personality traits or the perceived availability of employment opportunities may influence how much or even whether a perceived inclusive climate affects job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviours, and employee retaliation. For example, Phillips et al. (2024) established that the relationship between perceived organizational support and retaliation intentions is positive for the stuck employees (those who want to leave but believe they have no choice but to stay with the organization). Therefore, it is possible that the effect of an inclusive climate on employee retaliation through organizational identification and subjective well-being depends on employees' leaving intentions and their actual capacity to leave their employers.

CONCLUSION

This paper adds value to the literature on how organizational climates for inclusion affect employees' outcomes in remote work. The findings of this study also reveal the significance of organizational identification and subjective well-being as mediators of the relationship between perceived inclusion climate and job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviors, and employee retaliation. In incorporating the notion of inclusion into the domain of virtual work, this study offers up-to-date and practical findings that can help organizations deal with the challenges of the changing work environment.

To the best of our knowledge, this research adds to the existing literature on workplace inclusion, organizational identification, and employee well-being. First, it continues the discussion of these concepts in the context of remote work, which is currently more frequent. Second, it emphasizes the significance of perceived inclusion climate in enhancing employees' work attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, and reduced retaliation. Third, it offers evidence in support of the theoretical relationships between inclusion climate, organizational identification, and subjective well-being.

Future work should further examine these relationships in other cultural settings and other forms of work organization to confirm their generality. Furthermore, the analysis of the leadership role in the creation of an inclusive climate in remote work can provide practical

implications for managers. As more people work from anywhere or in a hybrid manner, it is of paramount importance to build inclusive work climates that enable employees to feel included, engaged, and well. Organizational leaders need to set the stage for inclusion by demonstrating inclusive behaviors, offering opportunities for connection and growth, and ensuring that all employees have an equal access opportunities to organizational resources and policies. Therefore, the key to effective remote and hybrid work environments is to ensure organizations adopt an inclusive work climate that enables all employees to thrive.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

All authors contributed to the conceptualization and design of the study, discussed the results, and contributed to the final manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

There are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship and/or publication of this article.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

ETHICAL INFORMATION

This research was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines, including obtaining informed consent from all participants and protecting their privacy and confidentiality throughout the study. Microsoft Word's Rewrite Suggestions feature was used to improve the clarity of the writing of this manuscript.

ORCID

Andri Georgiadou  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0384-405X>

Solon Magrizos  <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-5847-5581>

Dorothea Roumpi  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7890-0154>

Shlomo Tarba  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1919-084X>

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Andri Georgiadou is the director of Equality Diversity and Inclusion and an associate professor in the Nottingham University Business School. Her work revolves around two main themes: fostering inclusion and diversity in the workplace and exploring how AI and algorithmic solutions can contribute to more inclusive and sustainable work environment. Dr. Georgiadou is an associate editor of *Gender, Work & Organization* and the chair of the Diversity and Equality EuroMed Academy Research Interest

Group. Her research has been published in leading peer-reviewed journals, including the *Journal of Organizational Behavior*; *Human Resource Management*; *Human Resource Management Journal*; *Gender, Work & Organization*; *Journal of International Management*; and *Journal of Business Research*, among others. She has also contributed to numerous book chapters and has edited books. She actively collaborates with a wide range of organizations, providing support to achieve sustainable results in enhancing inclusion within the hybrid workplace.

Solon Magrizos studies issues related to (ir)responsible companies, consumers, employees, and tourists. His work also focuses on corporate social responsibility (CSR) with an emphasis on small-to-medium and social enterprises, and the perceptions and reactions of consumers to CSR initiatives. He has published his work in various internationally recognized (ABS 3*/4* and FT50) journals such as *Human Resource Management*, *Journal of Travel Research*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *Information Technology and People*, and *European Management Journal* and in the proceedings of several academic conferences.

Dorothea Roumpi is an associate professor of Human Resource Management in the School of Labor and Employment Relations at Penn State University. She earned her Ph.D. in Management from the Sam M. Walton College of Business at the University of Arkansas. She also holds a master's degree in Human Resource Management and a bachelor's degree in Economics from the Athens University of Economics and Business in Greece. Dr. Roumpi's research has been published in top-tier, peer-reviewed journals, including the *Journal of Management*, *Personnel Psychology*, *Human Resource Management*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, and the *Human Resource Management Journal*, among others. She has also contributed several chapters to edited volumes. Her work has been presented at major academic conferences such as the annual meetings of the Academy of Management, Strategic Management Society, Southern Management Association, and the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology. Her scholarship has been recognized with multiple honors, including the Roy C. Buck Award and the Strategic Research Foundation Dissertation Research Grant from the Strategic Management Society. She has also received reviewer awards from *Human Resource Management*, *Human Resource Management Journal*, *Human Resource Management Review*, and *Journal of Global Responsibility*. Dr. Roumpi currently serves as an Associate Editor for *Human Resource Management*, and is a member of the

editorial boards of Human Resource Management Review and Compensation & Benefits Review.

Shlomo Tarba is a chair (full professor) in Strategy and International Business, and between August 2015 and September 2018, he served as head of Department of Strategy & International Business and a member of Senior Management Team of Birmingham Business School, the University of Birmingham, UK. In recognition for his significant contribution to the social sciences, he was awarded in March 2020 the Fellowship of the Academy of Social Sciences (FAcSS). Professor Tarba is currently an associate editor of Journal of Product Innovation Management. He previously served as a deputy and co-editor-in-chief of British Journal of Management and associate editor of Human Resource Management Review. His papers are published in journals such as Journal of

Management, Journal of International Business Studies, Journal of Organizational Behavior, Academy of Management Perspectives, Human Resource Management, Human Relations, Journal of Product Innovation Management, California Management Review, Journal of Corporate Finance, Journal of Service Research, and Public Management Review.

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