



# Organizational Purpose and Meaningful Work: The Role of Work Centrality and Purpose Statements

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## **Abstract**

This study explores the relationships between organizational purpose, work centrality, purpose statement content, and work meaningfulness. The study uses a mixed-methods approach that includes primary data in the form of eight interviews and surveys as well as related theories as secondary data included in the literature review. Quantitative results reveal a partial mediation effect of work centrality and a positive relationship between perceived organizational purpose and meaningful work. Furthermore, meaningful work is directly influenced by organizational purpose, whereas work meaningfulness has a weak indirect effect, suggesting that other influential factors are involved. Qualitative insights offer diverse employee viewpoints regarding the purpose of the organization. The impact of purpose on job satisfaction and the importance of sustainability was acknowledged by the interviewees, however, concerns arose regarding operational alignment with the purpose statement. The purpose statement was perceived as directing daily activities; however, it did not always impact day-to-day operations. The study also investigates whether the relationship between meaningful work and perceived purpose is mediated by the purpose statement's content. The results point to a possible role for content even though it has no significant effect on the relationship between meaningful work and perceived purpose, suggesting the existence of unmeasured variables. Overall, this study adds to the understanding of the ways in which work centrality, organizational purpose, and purpose statement content interact to create meaningful work experiences. These complex results help clarify the intricate dynamics of organizational purpose in creating meaningful work.

### **Keywords:**

Organizational purpose, work meaningfulness, employee perception, purpose statement content, organizational strategy

### **Title:**

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## **Sumário**

Este estudo explora as relações entre o objetivo organizacional, a centralidade do trabalho e o significado do trabalho utilizando métodos mistos. Os resultados quantitativos indicam um efeito de mediação parcial da centralidade do trabalho, com uma relação positiva entre o objetivo organizacional percebido e o trabalho com significado. A investigação revela que o objetivo organizacional influencia diretamente o sentido do trabalho, enquanto este último tem um efeito indireto fraco, sugerindo a influência de outros fatores. As percepções qualitativas dos trabalhadores centram-se no impacto do propósito na satisfação no trabalho e na importância da sustentabilidade, embora existam preocupações quanto ao seu alinhamento operacional. A declaração de objetivos orienta as atividades diárias, mas nem sempre tem impacto nas operações. O estudo investiga se o conteúdo da declaração de objetivos medeia a relação entre o trabalho com significado e a percepção de objetivos, indicando um possível papel do conteúdo, embora este não afete significativamente a relação, sugerindo variáveis não medidas. Em suma, este estudo contribui para a compreensão da interação entre a centralidade do trabalho, o propósito organizacional e o conteúdo da declaração de propósito na criação de experiências de trabalho com significado, clarificando a sua complexa dinâmica.

Palavras-chave:

Propósito organizacional, significado do trabalho, percepção do empregado, conteúdo das declarações de propósito, estratégia organizacional

Título:

Objetivo Organizacional e Trabalho Significativo: O papel da centralidade do trabalho e das declarações de objetivos

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## **1. Introduction**

In recent years, academic and practitioner's interest regarding organizational purpose as an antecedent of individual/organizational outcomes has received renewed attention (Jiang & Johnson, 2018). Both large and small organizations have come to understand the need to establish a purpose that goes beyond profit maximization. Purpose is about bridging the organization's function with the organization's value-driven aspirations (Pratt & Hedden, 2023). It serves as the fundamental reason for the organization's existence and the direction it aspires to pursue. Effective integration with organizational culture makes it a critical component in identifying a company's competitive advantage (Srivastava et al., 2018). Creating a strong culture that is in line with the purpose of the company can help achieve this benefit. Purpose and culture working together gives a company a unique identity and value proposition that makes it stand out from the competition (Srivastava et al., 2018). When an organization's purpose and culture align, they form a strong foundation that shapes the organization's decisions, activities, and interactions, thereby influencing employee attitudes, behaviors, and organizational performance.

Furthermore, a clearly stated organizational purpose not only acts as a guiding principle for strategic decision-making but can also have a significant impact on how employees perceive and find meaning in their work. A sense of purpose that often includes environmental and social responsibility has grown to be a crucial component of an organization's identity and reputation. On top of that, organizations with prosocial purposes are able to create value by improving employees' identification and their perception of the organization's reputation (Henderson & Van Den Steen, 2015; Pratt & Hedden, 2023). In this context, Gartenberg et al. (2019) found that a clear and compelling organizational purpose, aligned with values beyond financial gain, tends to reduce employee turnover as it fosters greater employee commitment and satisfaction, which benefits both the organization and its stakeholders. However, this is only true if management instills a clear sense of purpose especially in mid-level but also low-level employees. This means that it is not enough for the company to have a purpose, it must also be communicated effectively to employees at every level of the company.

Besides academic interest, companies such as BlackRock, one of the world's largest institutional investment firms, have been strong advocates for stakeholder capitalism and emphasize the importance of having a clear sense of organizational purpose and creating value for various stakeholders in order to achieve long-term profitability (Fink, 2022). This aligns with the growing trend that increasingly seeks companies to show commitments to values and

societal goals beyond financial gains (Gartenberg et al., 2019). This shift aligns with stakeholder theory, which advocates for organizations to consider the interests of all relevant stakeholders, not just shareholders (Harrison et al., 2023). In order to establish long-term value, fulfill ethical responsibilities, and cultivate positive relationships, it is imperative to embrace broader societal goals beyond profitability. This strategy not only minimizes risks and improves the firm's reputation, but it also adheres to the inclusive business success premise of stakeholder theory.

Considering the growing emphasis on organizational purpose, there is a need to further understand the mechanisms through which organizational purpose influences employees' experiences and work-related outcomes. In the fields of organizational psychology and management, the concept of "meaningful work" has become a crucial construct as it is found to be intertwined with organizational purpose (Jasinenko & Steuber, 2022; Pratt & Hedden, 2023). Beyond tasks and job responsibilities, meaningful work displays a deep sense of significance and purpose that people get from their professional lives. The concept of meaningful work is associated with higher levels of job satisfaction, better levels of engagement, and lower turnover rates (Jasinenko & Steuber, 2022; Carton, 2018). It is often considered more important than factors like income, job security, or career advancement (Carton, 2018). Moreover, it encourages a sense of commitment and dedication among employees which in turn can positively influence firm performance. Researchers have found the following broad reasons linking organizational purpose with meaningful work: First, purpose scholars frequently believe that an organization's purpose makes its members' work more meaningful, which can also have a positive impact on other organizational goals, such as firm performance. For example, janitors working at NASA felt so connected to the organization's purpose that they believed their work was putting a man on the moon (Carton, 2018). Many more employees at NASA saw their work as contributing to a broader system and used metaphors such as "pieces in a puzzle" (2018:23) to describe their role in the organization's mission (Carton, 2018). Similarly, in the case of Patagonia, purpose serves as the differentiating factor between viewing one's work as contributing to healing the environment and perceiving it as merely operating the cash register (Pratt & Hedden, 2023). These examples highlight how a sense of higher purpose can significantly enhance an employee's perception of meaningful work. Nonetheless, the perception of organizational purpose can also be determined by how significant the work is to its employees (i.e., work centrality). Employees who place a higher centrality on their work are more likely to align their own purpose with the purpose of the company, which will help them feel that their efforts are

significant to the broader mission. This alignment can foster a stronger sense of connection and commitment to the company's purpose among employees. As such, there is a distinction between organizational purpose, which pertains to the company's overarching mission, and work purpose, which relates to the individual level, signifying the perceived importance and meaningfulness of one's own work within that mission (Pratt & Hedden, 2023).

Previous findings from a meta-analysis on meaningful work suggest potential moderating influences on the relationship between meaningful work and organizational purpose such as for example, leadership style, team culture, and co-worker relationships (Lysova et al., 2019). Carton (2018) suggests that organizational leaders play a crucial role in establishing conditions that enhance the meaningfulness of work for their employees. Leaders often communicate their organization's ultimate aspirations, which are broad, far-reaching, and long-term goals, to enhance the work meaningfulness (Carton, 2018). While some leaders successfully motivate employees by communicating these ultimate aspirations, there is mixed evidence of the effectiveness of this approach. In some cases, this approach fails to generate the intended motivation and can even adversely affect employees' attitudes toward meaningful work. In such situations, employees find it difficult to make a link between their day-to-day responsibilities and the organization's overall aspirations, leading them to feel psychologically distant from the organization's goals (Carton, 2018). This paradox, where the very qualities that make ultimate aspirations meaningful (timeliness, grand scale), can make them seem disconnected from employees' daily work and consequently lead to disillusionment and negatively impact motivation (Carton, 2018). Hence, this paper aims to answer the following research question:

*RQ: To what extent does perceived organizational purpose influence the meaningfulness of work among its employees, and how does work centrality mediate this relationship?*

In this research question, work centrality emerges as a potential mediator in the relationship between organizational purpose and meaningful work, especially concerning its impact on employees' meaning-making process. Work centrality, or the degree of importance individuals assign to their employment in their lives, reflects a strong identification with work, where it is viewed as one of the most central and crucial aspects of their existence (Hirschfeld & Field, 2000; Sharabi et al., 2021). It is further argued that people consider work to be an important means of meeting several needs such as securing their basic sustenance and fulfilling their material demands (Sharabi et al., 2021). Furthermore, work affects a person's sense of

accomplishment, self-esteem, social ties, and personal identity (Sharabi et al., 2021). Taking this into account, people will invest considerably more time and energy into their work if they see it to boost their self-fulfillment, material and/or familial requirements, as well as their status (Dejours & Daranty, 2010). Similarly, people with low work centrality don't attach much value to their work in their everyday lives and, therefore, will not allocate much of their resources to it. Therefore, work centrality is a subjective motivator that is impacted by personal preferences; thus, its strength varies depending on how much importance a person gives it (Dejours & Daranty, 2010).

In this context, the following paper aims to investigate the relationship between an organization's purpose and the meaningfulness of work derived by its employees. It focuses on how the perceived organizational purpose affects how meaningful employees believe their work to be by also examining the mediating function of work centrality in this relationship, which is an individual-level factor that could affect this dynamic.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Organizational Purpose**

Over the last few years, there has been a renewed interest in organizational purpose in the management literature. This resurgence is motivated by a fundamental shift in thinking, as highlighted two decades ago in the article of Ghoshal, Bartlett, and Moran (1999) in what they referred to as a 'manifesto on management' which refers to the failure of the prevailing management model. The conventional management approach had placed excessive emphasis on control and self-interest, where companies primarily sought to appropriate as much value as possible while often treating employees merely as assets and stakeholders as adversaries. This perspective has caused many companies to lose sight of the enormous potential of organizations to promote innovation, creativity, and human well-being. The suggested solution was a renewed emphasis on what was thought to be a business's fundamental strength: its capacity to harness human creativity toward a shared purpose (Gartenberg, 2021). However, in the following years, the public lost trust in businesses as organizations became intertwined with significant societal issues such as rising income inequality, declining social mobility, the opioid crisis, and challenges related to media and information integrity. Moon et al. (2011) also mention how businesses such as Chinese baby milk powder producers lost credibility because they were not interested in creating social value and instead chose to harm society to increase corporate profits. These baby milk powder producers in China knowingly used raw milk

containing melanin, a substance strictly forbidden in food processing because it falsely increased the protein content of milk. Consequently, numerous babies died due to kidney problems. Building on Porter and Kramer's shared value work, Moon et al. (2011) classified these businesses as "Selfish Corporations". Additionally, the paper points out that trust cannot be restored by these selfish corporations doing CSR, or reputation-driven social engagements, to enhance their public image. Rather, in order to secure their continued existence, companies must practice business ethics and uphold justice (Moon et al., 2011).

Despite this, businesses have also played pivotal roles in addressing global challenges, such as creating automated farm equipment to combat undernourishment and driving innovation which is exemplified by the rapid vaccine development during the COVID-19 pandemic (Gartenberg, 2021). While businesses both exacerbate and help address significant societal challenges, the role of purpose in this context is becoming more important, yet its exploration within this field remains somewhat limited.

Henderson & Steen (2015) made four observations crucial in understanding the significance of organizational purpose. Firstly, organizational purpose almost universally aligns with pro-social goals, contributing to societal well-being in some manner. Durand and Huynh (2020) support this observation by arguing that "pro-socials", who are individuals that prioritize the greater good over personal gain, play a determining role in enacting practices in line with organizational purpose. They also suggest that when pro-social personal values align with an organizational purpose, pro-sociality increases the congruence of organizational behaviors with organizational purpose. Moreover, this alignment between pro-social values and organizational purpose can significantly influence sustainable practices. When pro-social people are aligned with the mission of the organization, they are more likely to take actions that advance sustainability as well as the goals of the organization. Therefore, activities within the organization that prioritize long-term societal and environmental impact are often driven by this synergy between pro-social values, organizational purpose, and behaviors. (Gartenberg, 2021). However, Durand (2023) argues that the relationship between organizational purpose and pro-social goals is complex and depends on multiple factors. The author cautions that simply proclaiming a purpose is not enough for a company to become purpose-oriented and that the social value orientation of firm members and other factors may play a role in determining whether a company's purpose is pro-social or not (Durand, 2023). Hence, while some companies may have a purpose that aligns with pro-social goals and contributes to societal well-being, others may not.

Secondly, employees within these firms care deeply about the firm's purpose and are often passionate about it, even if their work is not directly related to fulfilling that purpose, such as work done by accountants or janitors, which ultimately leads to higher employee engagement (Henderson & Steen, 2015; Carton, 2018). Thirdly, organizations try to show that their social engagement is authentic, meaning it is not just a means to make money. They want to show that their purpose is genuine, emphasizing that their actions are not just driven by profits as motivation is just as important as action in building a firm's reputation and attracting employees (Henderson & Steen, 2015). Lastly, a firm's purpose can create value by developing or strengthening employees' identity and reputation. Employees accept lower wages and exert more effort because they value the identity and reputation benefits of working for a purpose-driven firm (Henderson & Steen, 2015).

Prior empirical analyses on organizational purpose had been focused on employee's perception of purpose, a concept centered on the subjective judgments of individuals. Purpose is the extent to which employees perceive that their organization has a clear and meaningful purpose that goes beyond financial gain as described by Jasinenko and Steuber (2022). In this article, the authors suggest that perceived organizational purpose is a key driver of organizational performance and a source of competitive advantage. Gartenberg, Prat, and Serafeim (2019) define corporate purpose as a concrete goal or objective for the firm that reaches beyond profit maximization. In their article, the authors use employees' perceptions of their work to explore the connection between purpose and firm performance. This approach is grounded in the belief that the comprehensive data derived from employees' perceptions provides more valuable insights for researchers. By focusing on employees' perceptions, the authors imply that the perceived organizational purpose is crucial in influencing organizational performance and enhancing competitive advantages.

### *2.1.1. Purpose as a Source of Competitive Advantage*

The resource-based view (RBV) of the firm emphasizes that a company's internal resources and capabilities are the basis for a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). It states that resources such as financial resources, physical assets, human capital, and organizational capabilities are critical to achieving a sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Companies can gain an advantage over their competitors by identifying, developing, and effectively utilizing these resources.

A company's sustained competitive advantage is based on the implementation of a value-creating strategy that is unique and not implemented by current or potential competitors. The ability of other companies to duplicate the benefits of this strategy ultimately determines the sustainability of this advantage (Barney, 1991). For example, culture may be a powerful driver of competitive advantage (Srivastava et al., 2018). First, a strong and supportive company culture can help increase employee morale, drive, and commitment, which in turn can lead to higher output and creativity. Second, a culture that is clearly expressed and communicated has the power to draw in and keep top talent by recruiting people who share the organization's standards and values (Srivastava et al., 2018). Moreover, a coherent culture can improve decision-making and problem-solving skills by promoting smooth teamwork and collaboration. Finally, an organization with a strong organizational culture can differentiate itself from competitors by creating a unique identity and brand that resonates strongly with stakeholders and customers (Srivastava et al., 2018). As such, the importance of organizational purpose becomes clear. Integrating purpose into all business activities plays a crucial role by creating the basis for a unique and difficult-to-imitate corporate strategy. According to Barney (1991), a company's identity, culture, and trajectory are shaped by a clearly defined purpose that is specific to it. This demonstrates how an organization's purpose and culture interact to shape its unique character and course, greatly enhancing its ability to stand out from the competition. Moreover, a strongly embedded and accepted purpose can set the direction of the company, shape the corporate culture, and promote a long-term vision, which in turn leads to greater loyalty from employees, customers, and other stakeholders. This can ultimately make the company unique and attractive to customers and (future) employees.

## **2.2. Meaningful Work**

Meaningful work has gained substantial attention among organizational researchers due to its profound impact on positive work attitudes and behaviors (Jiang & Johnson, 2018; Silver, 2023). Since work takes up an excessive amount of our time and is frequently a defining aspect of our adult life, meaningful work is essential to the lives of most people on the planet (Walsh, 2018). Without meaningful work, one loses out on many moral, social, economic, and personal benefits (Veltman, 2016). Meaningful work not only provides a sense of moral fulfillment, but it can also promote positive social interactions, contributing to stronger relationships and a more fulfilling social life. Additionally, meaningful work can increase economic benefits since engaged and motivated employees frequently see advancement in their careers and financial

gains. On a personal level, meaningful work can offer a sense of purpose and self-fulfillment, enhancing self-esteem, well-being, and mental and emotional health. Consequently, one may lose out on these numerous benefits that go well beyond the office if they are not engaged in meaningful work.

Similarly, meaningful work has been linked to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, and organizational citizenship behaviors. As such, scholars have sought better to understand the sources of meaningful work and its implications. For example, prior studies have consistently found a positive association between meaningful work and affective commitment. Employees who perceive their work as meaningful tend to exhibit stronger emotional attachment and commitment to their organizations (Jiang & Johnson, 2018). Silver (2023) argues that the work worth spending time doing is necessary for a person's life to be fulfilling. Furthermore, he points out that the meaningfulness of one's job can be enhanced by knowing that one's work contributes to the livelihood of shareholders or contributes to the lives of other stakeholders, such as work colleagues, community members, or society in general. It is important to remember, nevertheless, that different people may require different levels of emotional and personal interaction with the end users of their work for them to feel that their work is relevant (Silver, 2023). This means that while some employees may require a close connection with the individuals they are directly helping, others may not need this high level of engagement to find their work meaningful. This distinction is important to consider when designing job roles and environments that are intended to be meaningful for employees.

### *2.2.1. Distinction between 'meaning of work' and 'meaning at work'*

In the meaningful work literature, there is no consistent definition on what makes work meaningful. While several aspects of what makes work meaningful have been discussed, namely subjective meaningfulness, self-realization, and social contribution, Tyssedal (2022) argues that these concepts fail to capture how work can be meaningful. Therefore, the author expands upon Walsh's (1994) conceptual framework by introducing a concept of meaningful work where he distinguishes between two categories of meaningful work: meaning of work, where the work itself is meaningful, and meaning at work, where individuals find sources of meaning within the work environment (Tyssedal, 2022). This theory of work is consistent with Walsh's distinction between elements that are meaningful under the action description, which includes work that involves the development of skills and capacities, or work that contributes to a greater good, and elements that are incidental benefits of work, where sources of meaning

are not directly related to work activities itself, but rather arise from other aspects in the workplace, such as social relationships or a sense of belonging to a community (Walsh, 1994). Tyssedal (2022) explains the work of Lab Technician 1, for example, might be meaningful because she is working on developing a new vaccine. Her work is motivated by a sense of purpose that is connected to improving public health, which is consistent with her beliefs and the welfare of society. Here, the inherent worth of the task and its potential social influence are linked to meaningful work (Tyssedal, 2022). The work of Lab Technician 2, on the other hand, might be meaningful due to her deep friendships with her coworkers. While the tasks of her job itself may not have an obvious societal impact like developing a vaccine, she feels fulfillment in the interpersonal relationships she has formed at work. In this case, the social and relational components of her employment are what make her work meaningful, highlighting the significance of healthy workplace relationships and an environment conducive to meaningful work (Tyssedal, 2022).

To describe what makes work itself meaningful, Tyssedal (2022) proposes the ‘reasons account’ which suggests that work itself is meaningful if there are good reasons to do it. According to the author, the significance of work stems from its connection to the reasons we are compelled to perform it, including self-interest, moral obligations, and social contributions. The reasons account differs from previous explanations of meaningful work, which typically point out sources of meaning at work or other issues or goals that are connected to meaningful work, but they don’t explain what it is that makes work meaningful in and of itself (Tyssedal, 2022). According to the author, the reasons account offers a more hopeful explanation for what gives work its meaning. For example, the author uses the example of an assembly line worker in a weapons factory to show how work that is typically regarded as meaningless can take on significance in certain situations. The author posits that in the event of a war against an existential threat to the community, even though the work is repetitive, tedious, and devoid of autonomy and self-realization, assembly line workers’ tasks become more meaningful for compelling reasons. This example clearly illustrates how the author’s reasons account provides a more optimistic explanation for the origin of work’s meaning, implying that work is meaningful to the extent that engaging in it is motivated by strong and important reasons (Tyssedal, 2022).

### 2.2.2. *Meaningful work and organizational purpose*

Jasinenko and Steuber (2022) found that perceived organizational purpose and meaningful work represent distinct constructs. Meaningful work is generally defined as work that is experienced as particularly significant and holds more positive meaning for individuals. Prior literature suggests that meaningful work might be strongly related to organizational purpose, even to such an extent that some studies use meaningful work as a measure of organizational purpose (Jasinenko & Steuber, 2022). One possible explanation by the authors for the close relationship between meaningful work and organizational purpose is the fit between individual values and goals, and the organizational purpose. In other words, when employees perceive that their own values and goals align with the purpose of the organization they work for, they are more likely to experience their work as meaningful. However, when the employee's personal values and objectives and the organizational purpose don't match, it can lead to a sense of dissonance and conflict for the employee. This misalignment can negatively impact job satisfaction and overall wellbeing (Jasinenko & Steuber, 2022). Therefore, it is important for organizations to clearly communicate their purpose and values to employees and to ensure that they are aligned with the values and goals of their employees. Thus:

*H1: The higher the perception of organizational purpose, the higher the perception of work meaningfulness among the organization's employees.*

### **2.3. Organizational Purpose, Meaningful Work, and Stakeholder Theory**

Organizational purpose and meaningful work can be linked to stakeholder theory as they are all interrelated concepts that collectively contribute to an organization's strategic approach and overall success. Stakeholder theory, a foundational framework used in strategic management, proposes that organizations have ethical and social responsibilities to many stakeholders, beyond just shareholders (Harrison et al., 2023). It highlights the need to consider the welfare and interests of diverse stakeholders, including employees, customers, communities, and others. Stakeholder theory is essential to organizations because it stresses managing expectations from different stakeholders. According to Bitektine and Haack (2017), stakeholders have a big impact on an organization's legitimacy, due to their role in shaping perceptions, evaluations, and judgements of the organization within its broader social and institutional context and, in turn, influence how the organization acts and performs. Understanding stakeholder legitimacy becomes vital because diverse stakeholders have unique

expectations and standards for evaluating the legitimacy of an organization (Bitektine & Haack, 2017).

An organization's purpose embodies its mission and core values and serves as the main reason for its existence. A company's purpose often extends beyond increasing profits, encompassing a commitment to create value for stakeholders, aligning with stakeholder theory's principles (Bitektine & Haack, 2017). Stakeholder theory places great emphasis on managing stakeholders' expectations, as their perceptions have a substantial impact on organizational performance and behavior by shaping an organization's legitimacy (Bitektine & Haack, 2017). This alignment of organizational purpose with stakeholder theory promotes meaningful work because understanding and meeting stakeholders' diverse expectations can create a favorable environment for employees to find purpose and significance in their roles, because employees can witness firsthand how their work directly influences and contributes to serving the broader interests and needs of these stakeholders.

Meaningful work refers to the sense of fulfillment and purpose that employees derive from their tasks and contributions (Jiang & Johnson, 2018). Employees find their work more meaningful when they believe it aligns with the organization's mission and values (Jasinenko & Steuber, 2022). The connection with meaningful work is that stakeholder theory highlights employee well-being as a crucial stakeholder interest, which emerges as meaningful work. In addition to improving employees' job satisfaction and well-being, meaningful work also satisfies the ethical principles upheld by stakeholder theory. Moreover, organizational purpose contributes significantly to meaningful work by giving employees a sense of direction and a link between their responsibilities and the organization's mission.

These interconnected constructs work together to create a thorough framework for responsible and effective organizational management. They highlight the significance of considering the interests of diverse stakeholders, grounding the organization's purpose in ethical and social values, and ensuring that employees find their work meaningful and fulfilling. This holistic approach not only advances employee well-being but also contributes to organizational success, as it aligns with stakeholder theory's call for ethical behavior, stakeholder interests to be met, and long-term value to be created for all involved parties.

#### **2.4. Work Centrality as a Mediator**

The concept of work centrality, often associated with the idea of workaholism, has been defined and discussed in various ways in the literature. There is no consensus on a single, universally

accepted definition of work centrality, and different researchers have proposed different dimensions to describe this construct (Ng, Sorensen & Feldman, 2007). However, in the following paper, work centrality refers to the extent to which individuals believe that their work plays an important and central role in their lives, irrespective of their current job (Jiang & Johnson, 2018; Hirschfeld & Field, 2000; Sharabi et al., 2021). It is a stable belief about work that reflects its significance in one's life. Work centrality has been identified as a potential mediator in the relationship between meaningful work and affective commitment, indicating that the strength of this relationship may vary depending on the individuals' level of work centrality (Jiang & Johnson, 2015). While work centrality has been studied as a moderating factor, most of the study has been done on how work centrality affects the relationship between work and family (Jiang & Johnson, 2018).

It is important to note that work centrality and meaningful work are distinct concepts. While work centrality focuses on the importance of work in an individual's life, meaningful work is about the significance and positive value attached to the work itself (Jiang & Johnson, 2018). People with a high work centrality are intrinsically motivated and committed to their work (Jiang & Johnson, 2018).

#### *2.4.1. Work centrality, Job and Career Satisfaction*

Work centrality also plays an important role in understanding the relationship between work-related behaviors and job and career satisfaction (Ng, Sorensen & Feldman, 2007). Some studies have suggested a positive association between work centrality and job and career satisfaction. For instance, Machlowitz (1980) and Ng et al. (2005) have indicated that individuals who derive pleasure from their work and experience guilt or anxiety when not working tend to report higher levels of job and career satisfaction (Ng, Sorensen & Feldman, 2007). Hence, it could be hypothesized that a higher level of work centrality could lead to a higher work meaningfulness. On the other hand, if employees already experience a high level of purpose, work centrality may not play that big of a role in the relationship between perceived organizational purpose and work meaningfulness. Consequently, the aim of this research is to find out if work centrality strengthens or weakens the relationship between perceived organizational purpose and meaningful work.

In this thesis, work centrality emerges as a critical factor that could mediate the relationship between an organization's purpose and the meaningfulness of work among employees. Work centrality encompasses an internal drive to work, and the excessive time spent working, which

can either positively contribute to a sense of meaningful work or lead to detrimental effects on individual well-being and work-life balance (Jiang & Johnson, 2018). Therefore:

*H2: Work centrality positively mediates the relation between perceived organizational purpose and meaningful work.*

## **2.5. The role of the content of the purpose statement**

While having an explicit purpose statement is valuable, it is important to recognize that merely having one is not adequate to make a company genuinely purpose driven. True purpose must extend beyond a written statement; it should permeate the organization through effective and continual communication and actions (Bhattacharya et al., 2023). Ultimately, it should become deeply embedded in the collective consciousness of all employees, serving as a guiding principle for the company's existence that goes beyond profit generation. Unlike a company's mission, vision, and values, purpose is outward-focused, centered on what the company contributes to others rather than how it perceives itself or where it envisions itself relative to competitors (Bhattacharya et al., 2023). Corporate purpose serves as the driving force for all aspects of the business, addressing the fundamental question of why a company engages in its activities. It is expressed in the context of the value a company offers, not only to its shareholders but also to the broader society through its diverse set of stakeholders (Bhattacharya et al., 2023). While Bhattacharya et al. (2023) find that the concept of purpose is particularly effective because it represents an abstract, inspiring, and collective motivation for ethical conduct, Carton (2018) argues that an aspirational purpose that is grand and very long-term oriented can also make employees feel disconnected from their daily work and consequently negatively impact motivation. Bhattacharya et al. (2023) argue that when purpose is broad rather than specific, as with ethical rules and requirements, employees have more flexibility, for example, in comprehending and practicing sustainable behaviors. Taking this into consideration, this paper hypothesizes that a higher perception of purpose will be positively associated with increased work meaningfulness among employees.

While it is widely acknowledged that having a purpose statement alone is insufficient to establish a truly purpose-driven company, the main question is how a company's purpose statement impacts employees' perceptions of the organization's purpose. It is imperative to determine whether a purpose statement actually influences the perspectives of employees or if its primary function is limited to marketing and public relations initiatives.

Therefore, the hypothesis is based on the expectation that employees' perception of the organization's purpose is positively influenced by the content and depth of the purpose statement. It is hypothesized that a purpose statement that effectively communicates important goals, is consistent with the organization's actions, and speaks to the values of its workforce will have a significant impact on how employees view the organization's overall purpose.

*H3: An actionable and well-defined content of the organization's purpose statement moderates the positive relationship between employees' perception of purpose and their work meaningfulness.*

In summary, three relationships between organizational purpose and meaningful work will be examined. Firstly, a general deeper understanding of the relationship between the perception of purpose and work meaningfulness is explored where it is hypothesized that there is a positive relation between the two. Next, based on the literature review, this study hypothesizes that work centrality could mediate the relationship between purpose and the experience of meaningful work. Lastly, the purpose statement might play a moderating role in the relationship between the perception of purpose and work meaningfulness. It is postulated that a well-defined and accepted purpose statement could potentially amplify the impact of organizational purpose on employees' work meaningfulness, highlighting the potential significance of a clear and well communicated purpose within an organization. This proposed interplay of relationships is displayed on the following figure:

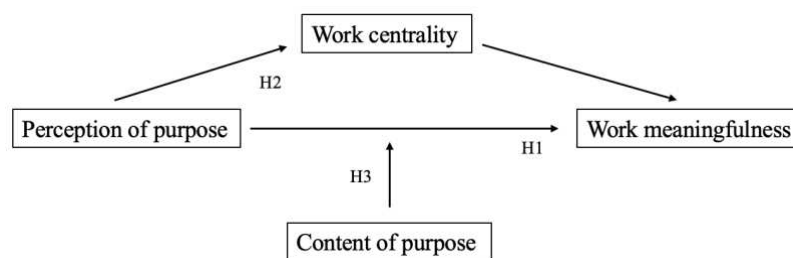


Figure 1 Visualization of the Proposed Hypotheses

### 3. Research Methodology

To test the above proposed hypothesis, mixed research methods were used to collect primary data. More specifically, qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured interviews and quantitative data was collected by conducting an online survey. A mixed methods approach

offers opportunities for results generated through several research methodologies to converge and be validated (Almalki, 2016).

### **3.1. Qualitative data collection: Interviews**

For this study, eight semi-structured interviews were conducted with employees from different companies. A semi-structured interview guarantees comparable data from several interviews by following a set of predetermined guidelines while also offering the freedom to divert from those questions and add flexibility in the conversation flow that allows for deeper data insights on emerging themes. The predetermined questions of the interviews were created based on insights from the literature review and complimentary deeper questions to the survey. Throughout the first few interviews, the questions were adapted based on information provided by the interviewee and their respective background. The interview questions were divided into four sections where each topic of research was examined more thoroughly: perceived organizational purpose, knowledge and perception of the company's purpose statement, individual awareness of work centrality, and meaningful work. The aim of the interviews was first, to gather additional qualitative insights that could either support or challenge the findings from the survey and second, to explore perspectives that might not have been previously considered in the survey analysis. The interview responses can be found in Appendix B.

The eight interviewees were contacted through personal networks and came from diverse professional backgrounds. The profiles of the participants included a range of industries, roles, genders, and tenure within their respective organizations. Based on the participants' availability and preferences the interviews were conducted using various communication platforms such as phone calls, Teams meetings, and Zoom. The duration of interviews ranged between 25 to 30 minutes. The interviewees were deliberately chosen as they all represent different job levels within an organization which enables a more comprehensive understanding regarding the impact of organizational purpose on meaningful work and the influence of work centrality, considering insights and perspectives from entry-level positions to managerial roles.

Industry	Interview-ID	Size	Position	Company tenure	Status quo of the implementation of a purpose
Eventmanagement	1	Small	Project Manager	1 year	No purpose implemented
Beverage	2	Big	CX Manager	5 years	Purpose is implemented
Beverage	3	Big	CX Senior Specialist	10 months	Purpose is implemented
Beverage	4	Big	CX Senior Team Lead	1 year	Purpose is implemented
Beverage	5	Big	CX Senior Team Lead	3.5 years	Purpose is implemented
Beverage	6	Big	Consumer Care Manager	7 years	Purpose is implemented
Beverage	7	Big	Management Trainee	9 months	Purpose is implemented
Consulting	8	Big	IT-Consultant	1 year	Purpose is implemented

Figure 2 Overview of the Interviewees

Qualitative content analysis (QCA) was used to analyze the data (Kuckartz, 2019). QCA uses an inductive method (Mayring, 2019) and categorizes the responses (Grodal et al., 2021). Through categorization, the researcher can derive overarching statements from the data findings (Berelson, 1952). According to Kuckartz (2019), the fundamental steps in this process are analyzing raw data, classifying them into more generalized groups based on similarities in expert opinions or ideas, and ultimately creating categories that aid in the development of theoretical frameworks. To code the interviews, the software MAXQDA was used. This software was chosen as it is easy to use and quite often cited in academic literature as it was in Kuckartz (2019).

### 3.2. Quantitative data collection: Survey

To test and verify the hypotheses a Qualtrics survey was set up and conducted. This survey sought to identify the perceived organizational purpose and its impact on meaningful work among employees. The questionnaire included questions on perceived purpose, meaningful work, work centrality, the purpose statement, and demographics. The survey was distributed to the interviewees and through personal networks such as family, friends, and LinkedIn contacts who were either employees of a company, working students, or interns as they had to have some experience working in an organization to answer the questions asked. The survey was also posted on SurveyCircle, and the interviewees were asked to post the survey in internal company group chats. Furthermore, it was available to complete in English or German as it was distributed to a lot of German contacts who were more comfortable answering the survey in German to provide more correct answers. In total, the survey was composed of 52 questions.

#### 3.2.1. *Dependent Variable*

Organizational purpose was measured with the individual's perception of the company's purpose as it provides a solid foundation for developing a quantitative measurement tool,

ultimately enhancing the precision of assessments regarding potential consequences. By considering the subjective viewpoints of individuals, a deeper understanding of the connections between perceived purpose and significant individual-level results, such as job satisfaction among employees, can be gained (Jasinenko & Steuber, 2022). Gartenberg et al. (2019) also use the Best Place to Work survey to measure the overall strength of employee beliefs in the degree to which their work is meaningful. The authors argue that this way allows them to circumvent corporate cheap talk and measure actual employee beliefs, providing a more accurate measure of corporate purpose (Gartenberg et al., 2019). By considering the subjective viewpoints of individuals, researchers can gain insights into the connections between perceived purpose and individual-level results. This can ultimately enhance the precision of assessments regarding potential consequences of corporate purpose and inform strategies for improving organizational performance and employee well-being. Perceived organizational purpose was measured by asking 12 questions with a five-point Likert scale which were based on survey questions used by Jasinenko and Steuber (2022).

### 3.2.2. *Independent Variables*

**Work meaningfulness** - Ten questions were asked to measure the employees' work meaningfulness which were measured on a five-point Likert scale. These questions were inspired by Jiang and Johnson (2018) which were based on the 10 items from the Work as Meaning Inventory developed by Steger et al. (2012).

**Work centrality** - To measure work centrality, I created ten five-point Likert scale questions based on validated surveys from previous literature (Jiang and Johnson, 2018; Harpaz and Snir, 2003; Bal and Kooji, 2011; and Spence and Robbinson, 1992).

**Purpose content** - To assess whether the purpose statement has a moderating effect on meaningful work, it was first asked whether the company has a purpose statement. However, due to skip logic, some respondents did not respond to this question. Hence, the number of responses to this question was less than the total number of survey responses. Additionally, for respondents whose companies did have a purpose statement, an open-answer question was posed to define the company's purpose, as this allows more freedom to categorize the variable afterward. This open answer question was separately examined in more depth which is displayed in the following section. This approach facilitated the use of a combined variable in subsequent analyses, such as regression models and additional statistical evaluations. As such, additional questions assessing the purpose statement's influence on employees were taken and

adjusted from the work of Bhattacharya et al. (2022). These questions were aimed to assess various aspects of the purpose statement's impact and were measured on a five-point Likert scale. To consolidate these multiple assessments into a single variable, the questions measured on a five-point Likert scale were averaged to statistically test H3 in a regression model.

### 3.2.3. Analysis of the purpose statements

Exploring the presence and content of purpose statements within organizations revealed an array of answers from survey respondents. Among the respondents, 73 confirmed that their organization had a purpose statement, while 12 said they didn't have one. Interestingly, 28 respondents were uncertain or unaware, selecting the response "I don't know". This diverse range of answers demonstrates the ambiguous nature of organizational purpose, showcasing that not all organizations have defined or communicated their purpose, while others may lack awareness of its existence.

Does your organization have a purpose statement?

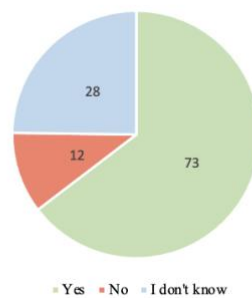


Figure 3 Purpose Statement Distribution

While Figure X presents a preliminary image of the prevalence of purpose statements, the focus analysis that follows attempts to explore the content and thematic structure of the purpose statements that were identified and described in the questionnaire.

These statements are categorized and examined using the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) framework. Through a process of breaking down and comparing the organizational purposes with distinct ESG dimensions, the analysis aims to uncover underlying themes and offer a thorough understanding of the content of these statements as well as any potential implications for organizational practices.

After categorizing the organizational purpose statements according to the ESG framework (see figure 3 below), it becomes clear that the statements represent a wide variety of goals and objectives within each dimension. The statements that were categorized within the environmental dimension predominantly focus on societal welfare, such as efforts to reduce poverty, combat hunger, advance health, and well-being, and fostering quality education. For

instance, a chemical manufacturing company highlighted its goal to produce fertilizers and basic chemicals with the intention of feeding a larger portion of the world's population. This exemplifies a tangible commitment toward addressing global hunger concerns through innovative chemical production strategies.

The topics of inclusive economic growth, technological innovation, community support, decreased inequality, sustainable cities, and responsible consumption and production are central to the social dimension statements. For instance, one survey respondent outlined the company commitment to advancing human resources (HR) and strategic operations, highlighting its role in improving people's lives by supporting their health, wealth, and careers. This is an excellent example of a commitment to fostering a conducive work environment while contributing to economic growth and personal development.

In addition, within the governance dimension, the statements emphasize dedications to sustainable consumption and production, climate action, life on land, peace, justice, strong institutions, and partnerships for collective goals. These statements highlight commitments to social justice, environmental sustainability, and ethical behavior. As an example, by highlighting the decarbonization of aerospace for a safer, connected world, one organization demonstrated its commitment to climate action. This pledge is in line with sustainability objectives, aiming to reduce carbon emissions in the aerospace industry, contributing to a more environmentally conscious global transportation network.

Environmental	Social	Governance
<b>1. No Poverty</b> - Lend money to people	<b>7. Affordable and Clean Energy</b> - Providing green energy for everyone	<b>12. Responsible Consumption and Production</b> - To offer sustainable products in the catering and packaging service - Repairing cars
<b>2. Zero Hunger</b> - Location of production for basic chemicals and for example, fertilizers for feeding the world's population	<b>8. Decent Work and Economic Growth</b> - Full-Service HR-strategic & operations - Consulting - To make a positive difference in people's lives by helping advance their health, wealth, and careers - To improve daily life with products and services - We secure your future - Assisting customers in creating their future - Helping businesses grow better. Making the company we love.	<b>13. Climate Action</b> - Decarbonization of aerospace for a safer, connected world - Making the world more sustainable through renewable energies - Cobalt mining for Evs
<b>3. Good Health and Well-Being</b> - Medical care - Patient care - Retirement solutions - To help elderly and sick people - Provide medical readiness for all Airmen - To provide therapy services to the geriatric population to promote independence - To assist servicemen and their families with services to assist the balancing of personal & work life circumstances - Promotion & strengthening of families, children & young people as well as foster families	<b>9. Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure</b> - To pioneer power - Constructing buildings, particularly industrial - Engineering for photovoltaics and electronics - To become one of the world's leading companies, bringing innovations to improve the way the world works and lives - Safely and punctually transporting people from A to B - Pioneers at heart for the good of generations - To deliver on the promise of technology and human ingenuity - Sustainable, innovative, and personal software development - Support in digital transformation, digital innovation - Pioneering in creating meaningful brand spaces in any dimension - Enabling better organizations - To achieve the world of tomorrow with how business is being done today	<b>15. Life on Land</b> - Animal protection
<b>4. Quality Education</b> - Independent journalism, education in schools - Creating a better world by empowering young people - Childcare	<b>10. Reduced Inequalities</b> - To create expert opinions to facilitate court decisions regarding families and children - Inclusion	<b>16. Peace, Justice, and strong institutions</b> - Audit other legal entities and provide the public with a fair view about their financial situation - To deter threats, defend freedom, and maintain excellence - Auditing
	<b>11. Sustainable Cities and Communities</b> - Building sustainable infrastructure for the future - Aviation Passenger Transport - Serve the community	<b>17. Partnership for the Goals</b> - To achieve a better world by connecting the business of tomorrow
	<b>12. Responsible Consumption and Production</b> - Dreaming big to a future with more cheers - Bringing people together through beer	

Table 1 Categories According to ESG from Survey Responses to Open Answer Question: What is the Purpose of your Organization?

These examples demonstrate how organizations' purposes are primarily aligned with initiatives centred around environmental sustainability, global societal advancement, and ethical business practices, reflecting an effort to create a more sustainable and responsible business environment. On the other hand, there were also eleven respondents that described their company's purpose as "profit maximization" and "making money for the shareholders". It's important to note, however, that such profit-driven goals are also valid purposes in the corporate world. Despite their diversity, these objectives highlight how organizational goals are complex, reflecting the varied values and priorities that shape today's businesses.

#### 3.2.4. *Control variables*

Lastly, demographic, and organizational culture questions were added as control variables to help address potential confounding factors that might influence the relationships between perceived purpose, work meaningfulness, and work centrality.

Age might influence the perception of purpose. While older employees may examine purpose in a broader perspective, considering its alignment with their career paths and the historical background of the organization, younger employees may perceive purpose as the main source for motivation and engagement, seeking alignment with personal values. Boulouta and Pitelis (2014) acknowledge the relevance of CSR in attracting and retaining talent, which aligns with the trend of younger generations seeking employment in companies that demonstrate social responsibility, sustainable practices, and ethical values. The survey respondents could write their age in an open text box.

Job tenure for example can have a strong influence on job centrality as employees with longer job tenures often develop a stronger sense of attachment and identification with their roles and the organization. Over time, they get further embedded in the goals, values, and culture of the organization, which may increase the sense of job centrality. Because they have spent a lot of time at the company, they may view it as an integral part of who they are. On the other hand, employees with a shorter job tenure might also view their work as central as they are just getting a footing in the company and want to grow and advance within the company more quickly. The survey presented respondents with six options to indicate their tenure at their current company. The answer options ranged from “Less than 6 months” as the first choice to “More than 10 years” as the final selection.

Nationality could also influence work centrality as different nationalities often hold varying perspectives on work and its significance in life. People from some cultures tend to perceive jobs as more vital to their identity and social standing since work plays a significant role in their lives. Conversely, work centrality may be relatively low in cultures where ties to one’s family or community are valued more highly. Survey respondents either selected their nationality from the given choices or, if not listed, wrote their nationality in an open text box. Understanding the employees’ perceptions of company culture helps in isolating its impact on work meaningfulness. It helps to separate the effects of the organization’s purpose from the larger cultural background of the organization. Hence, a question was asked to rate the company culture from 1 (Very poor) to 5 (Excellent).

Employees’ work-life balance satisfaction could influence how they perceive the importance and meaning of their work. It’s a crucial component since it may have an impact on a person’s

general level of satisfaction and engagement at work. This variable was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Extremely dissatisfied to Extremely satisfied.

Within an organization, different departments may have different culture, objectives, and sense of purpose. It is possible to assess whether departmental differences have an impact on the relationship between perceived purpose and job meaningfulness by controlling for this variable. People could choose from departments given in the survey or they could write their department in an open text field.

Gender and employment status can influence the individual level of work centrality due to various societal, cultural, and personal factors. People's perceptions of the importance of work in their lives may be influenced by cultural expectations and traditional gender roles. Men have historically been taught to place a higher priority on their employment, which may have resulted in a higher degree of work centrality. However, as social standards have changed, more women are joining the workforce and place more value on their professions, which has affected how important they see employment to be. Regarding the employment status, full-time employees may view their positions as more important than those of part-timers due to their level of dedication and involvement in the company. Greater responsibility and time commitment are typical of full-time jobs, which may result in a higher degree of work centrality. These variables were measured by giving the survey respondents multiple choice options to choose from.

Lastly, monthly net income was measured as a control variable. There were six income brackets to choose from where the lowest was below €500 and the highest was more than €4,000 and an additional option was added for those who preferred not to answer this question as it might be sensitive information for some. This variable was added as it could have an influence on the level of work centrality. While for lower-level income individuals work might hold a higher level of centrality because of financial necessity, higher-income individuals might have more control over their work choices, potentially influencing their level of work centrality. Their opportunity to choose jobs that better fit their interests or values may have an effect on how important their jobs are to them.

#### **4. Results**

In the following paragraphs a thorough comprehension of the results, both qualitative and quantitative data are provided, maintaining a descriptive approach without making any specific connections to the proposed hypotheses.

## 4.1. Interview Results

Appendix B displays the qualitative responses gathered from interviews regarding the measured variables. Each response is marked with an X to indicate mentions across various aspects related to each measured variable. The “Total number of mentions” column displays the frequency of each theme discussed within the interviews.

### 4.1.1. *Perceived Organizational Purpose*

Drawing from the responses of eight interviewees, the findings highlighted recurring themes and diverse perspectives regarding the impact of purpose on work, alignment with societal goals, and the influence of purpose statements.

A consensus emerged among many interviewees affirming a customer-centric approach embedded within the organizational purpose (Interviewees No. 1, 2, 3, 4). Two interviewees (ID No. 1 and 3) underlined how purpose increases job satisfaction, and five people also brought up the purpose’s emphasis on sustainability, pointing out that it has a significant influence on how people interact at work, particularly its significance for younger employees (interviewees No. 2, 4, 6, 7, 8).

However, conflicting viewpoints came up regarding the company’s primary focus despite the stated purpose. While interviewees 2 and 4 said they occasionally make decisions based on the company’s purpose, five expressed concerns, emphasizing that the company still operates primarily from a capitalistic standpoint (interviewees No. 1, 2, 4, 5, 8). Interviewee 2 added that it can be a tough balance between reinforcing the positive values of the purpose while sometimes having to make purely objective and business-focused decisions.

When asked about the company’s official purpose statement, the interviewees acknowledged that it was open to various interpretations (interviewees No. 2, 4, 5). Notably, aspects such as the emphasis on community, working towards a common goal, and the organizational purpose guiding daily efforts were highlighted.

When asked about whether the purpose statement influences the interviewees’ daily work, half of the people said while they think and act on it sometimes, it is not a constant or repetitive thought in daily tasks (ID No. 2, 4, 7, 8).

#### 4.1.2. *Work centrality*

The interviewed employees consistently conveyed that work holds substantial centrality in their lives, with six people highlighting it as a central aspect (ID No. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7). Similarly, four interviewees reported that the alignment between an individual's commitment and the organization's purpose extends beyond regular working hours (ID No. 1, 2, 6, 7).

Moreover, feelings of responsibility and guilt were commonly reported, with five interviewees (ID No. 1, 2, 4, 6, 7) expressing guilt about taking time off work due to feeling responsible for their projects, tasks, or team. Furthermore, three individuals each reported feeling emotional conflict when taking time off and being reluctant to delegate tasks out of fear of burdening others (ID No. 1, 2, 5). Nevertheless, a strong desire to maintain a work-life balance emerged strongly among ID No. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8. Additionally, interviewee 2 highlighted the significance of work in providing a sense of purpose itself being the reason for their high level of work centrality.

Ambition was also identified as a contributing factor influencing the centrality of work in life, with ID No. 2, 4, and 7 affirming its role. Moreover, the company's purpose was cited as an influential factor driving personal growth, motivation, and engagement with work, acknowledged by ID No. 2, 3, and 5.

Lastly, as the topic of taking time off work increasing the feeling of guilt emerged, some people highlighted a correlation between being in a higher job title which comes with more responsibilities, and this heightened feeling of guilt (ID No. 2, 4, 6).

#### 4.1.3. *What Makes Work Meaningful?*

One of the most vital sources of fulfillment amongst the interviewees was the significance of seeing a direct contribution or impact on projects (ID No. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8). Having meaningful friendships in the workplace emerged strongly, with all eight interviewees acknowledging their significance in deriving fulfillment. Furthermore, alignment between individual values, goals, and the organization's purpose emerged as a pivotal factor in deriving meaningfulness, again acknowledged by all eight interviewees.

A sense of feeling connected to the organization's goals and mission was noted by five interviewees, underscoring the importance of fostering meaningfulness (ID No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7). Additionally, personal drive and intrinsic motivation played a role in deriving meaning from tasks and responsibilities (ID No. 1, 4, 5, 7).

Some interviewees also found that the clarity of the purpose within the organization acts as a guideline for employees with four people expressing their role in setting expectations, future goals, and the reason for the company’s existence and from this, being able to find meaning in their workplace (ID No. 1, 2, 6, 7).

Engagement with the product was highlighted as a source of fulfillment by three people (ID No. 2, 4, 8), while others also found fulfillment in witnessing people in their team develop and engage more under their responsibility (ID No. 4, 5, 6).

Another argument that was articulated was that work feels more meaningful when the job tasks are not so repetitive, which circles back to the first argument mentioned, where people find more meaning when they see their direct contribution to society (ID No. 5, 6, 7, 8).

## 4.2. Survey results

### 4.2.1. Descriptive Statistics

The survey encompassed a total of  $n = 113$  observations, with 107 participants successfully completing the questionnaire. With 66.4% of the sample, the majority of respondents identified as German. The average age of participants was 30 years, with the age range spanning from 19 as the youngest to 64 as the oldest. Furthermore, over half of the sample (56.1%) consisted of female participants. Regarding employment status, 55% of the respondents reported being employed full-time and the average tenure was one year. The monthly net income distribution fell into two main categories: between €1,000 and €1,999 and over €4,000.

The descriptive summary statistics of Figure 4 show some the characteristics of the variables under study.

Summary Statistics					
Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
age	107	30.121	11.095	19	64
tenure	107	2.785	1.812	1	6
company_culture	107	3.850	0.877	1	5
work.life_balance	107	3.664	1.132	1	5
senior_management	107	3.551	0.914	1	5
satisfaction	107	3.935	0.904	1	5
income	107	3.888	1.772	1	7
average_purpose	113	3.739	0.702	1.833	5.000
average_meaningful_work	111	3.609	0.760	1.000	5.000
average_work_centrality	109	2.671	0.750	1.000	4.750
average_statement	73	3.797	0.804	2.000	5.000

Figure 4 Descriptive Statistics of Variables of Interest

In this study, various aspects of employee perception and satisfaction within the company were evaluated. Participants rated the company culture on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), yielding an average rating of 3.85, indicating a moderately positive sentiment toward the

prevailing company culture. Satisfaction with their current work-life balance had an average rating of 3.664, suggesting a generally contented stance among employees regarding their work environment. Furthermore, respondents expressed a moderate level of satisfaction (3.551) with the senior management team of the company they work in, similarly, the overall satisfaction with the company reported a mean score of 3.935, demonstrating a reasonably positive sentiment among employees toward the organization as a whole. When assessing the perceived purpose of employees within their companies, participants gave a mean score of 3.739, indicating a relatively positive perception regarding the organization purpose. Additionally, the mean score of meaningful work was 3.609, indicating the perceived importance and fulfilment they get from their work. Employees, however, gave a slightly lower mean score (2.671) for work centrality, indicating that they may not view their jobs as the centre of their life. Finally, a mean score of 3.797 was assigned to the influence of the company's purpose statement, indicating a moderately influential impression of its impact on employees' roles and experiences inside the organization. It should be noted that the variable *average\_purpose* contains 113 responses, while most other variables have 107 responses. This discrepancy arises from incomplete responses since some respondents did not finish the entire survey. These unfinished responses are nevertheless taken into account in the analysis as insightful information was gathered for variables for which respondents gave complete answers, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding.

It is important to note is that while the variable *average\_purpose* has 113 responses, most of the other variables only have 107. This is because some respondents didn't finish the survey so there are some incomplete answers but they are still used as some variables where the questions were answered completely still provide insights.

#### 4.2.2. Correlations

First, a correlation matrix was computed to show the pairwise correlations between the variables in the dataset where the correlation coefficient, which shows the magnitude and direction of the linear link between two variables, was used to analyze the relationships. This showed strong and significant correlations between several key variables of interest to this study. Notably, a strong positive correlation (0.561,  $p < 0.01$ ) emerged between the perception of purpose and meaningful work. Additionally, perception of purpose displayed a moderate positive correlation (0.278,  $p < 0.05$ ) with work centrality. Work centrality also showed a relatively strong positive correlation with meaningful work (0.429,  $p < 0.01$ ) as well as a

moderate correlation with the overall satisfaction of the company (0.257,  $p < 0.05$ ), implying that overall satisfaction in the company might influence how central work is in people's lives. A slightly weaker positive correlation between work centrality and satisfaction with the senior management team (0.208,  $p < 0.1$ ) suggests that people might tend to find work more important in their lives if they are satisfied with their senior management. Company culture also showed a strong positive correlation with meaningful work (0.365,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Similarly, satisfaction with the senior management team exhibited a substantial positive correlation with the perception of purpose (0.428,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that individuals who reported higher satisfaction with their senior management also tended to perceive a stronger sense of purpose. Overall satisfaction in the company also displayed a strong positive correlation with perception of purpose (0.493,  $p < 0.01$ ). A slightly weaker, yet significant correlation was found between perceived purpose and satisfaction with a work-life balance (0.205,  $p < 0.1$ ). The perception of purpose further shows a strong positive correlation with the perception of company culture (0.458,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Moreover, overall satisfaction in the company displayed a strong positive correlation with meaningful work (0.515,  $p < 0.01$ ). Income also had a moderate positive correlation with meaningful work (0.237,  $p < 0.05$ ), suggesting that individuals with higher income levels tend to perceive their work as more meaningful.

The purpose statement showed significant positive correlations with the following variables: perception of purpose (0.689,  $p < 0.01$ ), work meaningfulness (0.411,  $p < 0.01$ ), work centrality (0.246,  $p < 0.1$ ), perception of company culture (0.328,  $p < 0.05$ ), overall satisfaction with the company (0.439,  $p < 0.01$ ), and satisfaction with the senior management team (0.297,  $p < 0.1$ ).

### **4.3. Hypotheses test**

To examine the relationship between perceived organizational purpose and work meaningfulness among employees (H1), two linear regression models were conducted. Initially, a univariate linear regression revealed a statistically significant relationship between work meaningfulness and perceived purpose as shown in Table 3 ( $\beta = 0.608$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that there was a 0.608 unit increase in work meaningfulness for every unit increase in perceived purpose. Subsequently, a multiple regression model was built incorporating other factors which the correlation analysis determined to be significant. Only three of these factors showed statistically significant relationships with work meaningfulness: work centrality ( $\beta = 0.203$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), overall satisfaction with the company ( $\beta = 0.205$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and perceived purpose

( $\beta=0.418$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The results of Table 2 highlight the critical role of perceived organizational purpose in shaping employees' perceptions of work meaningfulness, supporting this influence even after controlling for other important variables. The adjusted R2 of 0.47 in model 2 demonstrates a fair level of explanatory power of the chosen variables. Nonetheless, its relatively lower value implies that there might be other explanatory predictors that are not included in the model.

Dependent variable:		
average_meaningful_work		
	(1)	(2)
average_purpose	0.608*** (0.086)	0.418*** (0.100)
age		0.006 (0.008)
tenure		-0.020 (0.047)
senior_management		-0.069 (0.085)
satisfaction		0.205** (0.087)
company_culture		0.051 (0.095)
income		0.046 (0.036)
average_work_centrality		0.236*** (0.081)
Constant	1.330*** (0.328)	0.348 (0.390)
Observations	111	107
R2	0.315	0.471
Adjusted R2	0.309	0.428
Residual Std. Error	0.632 (df = 109)	0.572 (df = 98)
F Statistic	50.075*** (df = 1; 109)	10.923*** (df = 8; 98)
Note:	* $p<0.1$ ; ** $p<0.05$ ; *** $p<0.01$	

Table 2 Multiple Regression Model for H1

The adequacy of the regression models was assessed by running various diagnostic tests to evaluate important model fit assumptions. Both model 1 and model 2 confirmed the linearity assumption when the residuals were plotted against fitted values. Additionally, the Durbin-Watson test indicated independence among residuals ( $p>0.05$ ), supporting the assumption of no autocorrelation. Homoscedasticity, signifying consistent variances in residuals, was affirmed by the Breusch-Pagan test ( $p>0.05$  for both models). Normality of residuals, established through the Shapiro-Wilk test (model 1=0.003, model 2=0.012), indicated a normal distribution. Moreover, while slight multicollinearity was observed in some predictors (VIFs slightly above 2), they remained within the acceptable range. Importantly, no statistically significant outliers were detected (Bonferroni  $p$ -value  $<0.01$ ) in either model. These results underscore their suitability for robust and valid reasoning in subsequent analyses.

Regarding H2 on the mediation effects of work centrality on the relationship between the perception of organizational purpose and meaningful work, Figure 5 presents a summary of the results.

**Path a** (perceived purpose -> work centrality): The estimated coefficient for the direct effect of perceived purpose (X) on work centrality (M) is 0.299. This suggests that, on average, a one-unit increase in perceived purpose is associated with a 0.299-unit increase in work centrality, assuming a linear relationship. The standardized coefficient (Std.all) is 0.273, which indicates a rather weak positive relationship between perceived purpose and work centrality.

**Path b** (work centrality -> meaningful work): The estimated coefficient for the direct effect of work centrality (M) on meaningful work (Y) is 0.301. This suggests that, on average, a one-unit increase in work centrality is associated with a 0.301-unit increase in meaningful work, assuming a linear relationship. The standardized coefficient (Std.all) is 0.298, which indicates a rather weak positive relationship between work centrality and meaningful work.

**Path c** (perceived purpose -> meaningful work): The estimated coefficient for the mediation effect is 0.518. This suggests that, on average, a one-unit increase in perceived purpose is associated with a 0.518-unit increase in meaningful work, assuming a linear relationship. The standardized coefficient (Std.all) is 0.470, which indicates a moderate positive relationship between perceived purpose and meaningful work.

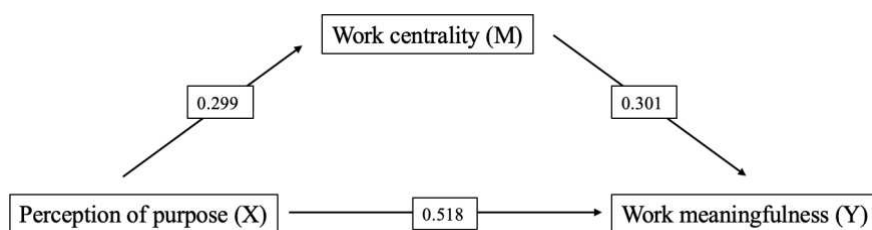


Figure 5 Mediation Diagram

**Indirect effect (a\*b)**: The estimated indirect effect of perceived purpose (X) on meaningful work (Y) through work centrality (M) is 0.090. This suggests that, on average, a one-unit increase in perceived purpose results in a 0.090-unit increase in meaningful work indirectly through its effect on work centrality. The standardized indirect effect (Std.all) is 0.082, which indicates a positive but weak relationship.

**Total effect (c + indirect)**: The estimated total effect of perceived purpose (X) on meaningful work (Y), considering both the direct and indirect effects, is 0.608. This suggests that, on average, a one-unit increase in perceived purpose is associated with a 0.608-unit increase in meaningful work when considering both the direct and indirect effects. The standardized total effect (Std.all) is 0.551, which indicates a moderate positive relationship.

Finally, to investigate the relationships in H3 a moderated regression analysis which includes an interaction term between the perception of purpose and the content of the purpose statement is conducted:

*Work Meaningfulness*

$$= \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{PerceivedPurpose} + \beta_2 \text{PurposeStatement} + \beta_3 (\text{PerceivedPurpose} \times \text{PurposeStatement}) + \epsilon$$

In this equation,  $\beta_3$  represents the moderation effect and if significant it would indicate that the content of the purpose statement moderates the relationship between the perception of organizational purpose and meaningful work.

The regression analysis exploring the moderating effect of the organization's purpose statement on the relationship between employees' perception of purpose and work meaningfulness is displayed in table 3 below. In the first model where no control variables were added, neither the perception of purpose nor the content of the purpose statement emerged as individually significant predictors of work meaningfulness. However, the interaction term between these variables demonstrated a statistically significant coefficient of 0.204 at the 10% significance level. This suggests that while the main effects of the perception of purpose and the content of purpose alone were not significant, their combined influence was associated with work meaningfulness. However, upon introducing control variables in the second model, none of the variables, including the previous significant interaction term, achieved statistical significance, indicating that the included variables collectively failed to explain variations in work meaningfulness. This result could indicate that other unmeasured or omitted variables could influence the relationship between perceived purpose, content of purpose statement, and work meaningfulness in this study context.

In models dealing with multiple predictors, the adjusted R2 serves as a more reliable measure of the model's performance as it considers the number of predictors involved. Model 1 and model 2 both have lower adjusted R2 values compared to their R2 values, suggesting that the inclusion of additional predictors or interactions might not notably enhance the models' ability to explain the variance in the dependent variable.

Interestingly, model 1, which excludes the control variables, exhibits a higher adjusted R2 compared to model 2. This suggests that model 1 could be a better fit. However, with an adjusted R2 value of 0.272 there might be other relevant variables not accounted for in the

models. These unconsidered variables could potentially explain a larger portion of the variance in the dependent variable, making the models' explanatory power limited at this stage.

To conduct a moderation analysis, several assumptions must be met. Since moderation analysis usually comprises multiple regression with an interaction term added, these assumptions are comparable to those of multiple linear regression. Overall, the analysis of model assumptions revealed the model to be a suitable fit for this data. The residuals' scatter plot against the fitted values revealed a linear relationship with no discernible patterns or deviations from the zero mean, hence, the linearity assumption is met. The Durbin-Watson test was used to measure the independence of residuals and resulted in a statistic of 1.9092 with a p-value greater than 0.05, indicating no evidence of autocorrelation in the residuals. Further, the residual plot against the predicted values as well as the Breusch-Pagan test (p-value 0.5504) confirmed the assumption of equal variance (homoscedasticity) of residuals. To test the assumption of normality of residuals, the Shapiro-Wilk test confirmed that the residuals were normally distributed (p-value 0.0067). Multicollinearity is present as the predictors' variance inflation factors (VIFs) were greater than the usual threshold of 5. Nevertheless, this does not refute the tested model because it was anticipated due to the interaction term that was included. Lastly, the Bonferroni outlier test did not detect any significant outliers.

Dependent variable:		
average_meaningful_work		
	(1)	(2)
average_purpose	-0.241 (0.428)	-0.059 (0.447)
average_statement	-0.688 (0.465)	-0.547 (0.485)
age		0.004 (0.011)
gender		-0.004 (0.157)
income		0.073 (0.047)
company_culture		0.096 (0.140)
satisfaction		0.077 (0.120)
senior_management		0.018 (0.102)
tenure		-0.019 (0.068)
average_purpose:average_statement	0.204* (0.117)	0.141 (0.124)
Constant	4.197*** (1.554)	2.805 (1.745)
Observations	73	69
R2	0.302	0.368
Adjusted R2	0.272	0.259
Residual Std. Error	0.595 (df = 69)	0.594 (df = 58)
F Statistic	9.968*** (df = 3; 69)	3.372*** (df = 10; 58)

Note: \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table 3 Multiple Regression Model for H3

## **5. Discussion**

### **5.1. Organizational Purpose and Meaningful Work**

This study explored the relationship between organizational purpose and meaningful work, drawing insights from both interview responses and survey data. Prior literature found that while organizational purpose aligns with broader societal goals, its translation into perceived purpose within the workplace influences employee attitudes and meaningful work. The interview findings provided nuanced perspectives on the impact of organizational purpose on decision-making and its alignment with operational practices. Notably, interviewees emphasized the importance of direct contributions to projects, workplace friendships, and alignment of individual values with the organization's purpose as its vital source of fulfillment. Additionally, the clarity of the organizational purpose acted as a guiding principle, setting expectations, and contributing to employees' sense of purpose in their work.

Aligning with prior studies of Jasinenko & Steuber (2022), the results of the analyses show a statistically significant relationship between perceived organizational purpose and meaningfulness of work among employees. This finding confirmed the hypothesized positive relationship between purpose and meaningful work, emphasizing the pivotal role of perceived purpose in shaping work meaningfulness even after accounting for other relevant control variables. Even though the results confirm the hypothesis, the relatively fair adjusted R<sup>2</sup>, as well as a low number of observations and missing variables, indicates that these results can only prove strong correlations, not causality, between the variables. Based on the qualitative analysis of the interviews, different viewpoints about how organizational purpose affects work experiences were revealed. Many of the interviewees agreed that the organization's mission is customer-centric and that sustainability and job happiness benefits workers, especially younger employees. However, despite the stated purpose, divergent opinions emerged over the company's principal focus. Although a few interviewees agreed that the company's purpose was occasionally matched with their decision making, others raised concerns over the company's core operation from a capitalistic perspective.

The second hypothesis of this study, aimed to explore the role of the content of an organization's purpose statement in moderating the relationship between employees' perception of purpose and work meaningfulness. Previous literature highlighted that the mere existence of a purpose statement does not inherently establish a purpose-driven company (Bhattacharya et al., 2023). It highlighted the outward focus of purpose on what the company contributes to others and its significance for stakeholders beyond profit generation. While

Bhattacharya et al. (2023) suggested that an abstract and inspiring purpose can motivate ethical conduct, Carton (2018) cautioned that overly aspirational purposes might disconnect employees from their daily work, impacting motivation negatively.

The interview data revealed insights into the factors contributing to meaningful work. While interviewees emphasized the significance of direct contributions to projects, workplace friendships, alignment with organizational purpose, connection to the organization's goal etc. there was no indication that the content of the purpose influenced their meaningfulness of work. However, in line with Bhattacharya et al. (2023) emphasizing the importance of purpose beyond a mere statement, the interview findings provided nuanced perspectives on meaningful work beyond the organization purpose statement.

While the initial regression model suggested a potential moderating effect (significant only at the 10% significance level), the subsequent model with control variables did not yield statistically significant results. This non-significant result is in line with existing literature and indicates the complexity of the relationship between purpose and meaningful work. The absence of importance does not necessarily mean that the purpose statement's content is irrelevant for work meaningfulness. Rather, it highlights how complex the relationship is and raises the potential influence of unmeasured or omitted variables in understanding how the content of a purpose statement interacts with employees' perceptions of purpose and their experience of meaningful work. This emphasizes the need for more research to fully understand the ways which different variables interact to shape employees' sense of meaning and purpose in the workplace.

Thus, while the interview insights highlighted diverse factors contributing to meaningful work, the survey results hinted at a potential but non-conclusive interaction between perceived purpose and the content of the purpose statement on work meaningfulness. This suggests that while the content of the purpose statement might play a role, it does not impact the relationship between employees' perception of purpose and work meaningfulness. These results are in line with the literature on organizational purpose that acknowledge the difficulty in directly linking purpose statements to how employees perceive their work environment. The literature highlights the complex ways in which organizational purpose operates, impacted by a range of factors including leadership, organizational culture, individual interpretation, and the integration of purpose into day-to-day operations. The complexity results from the various ways in which employees internalize and perceive the organization's purpose, which goes beyond the purpose statement's wording. This emphasizes the intricate nature of the

relationship between purpose and work meaningfulness by implying that it is influenced by subtle, indirect elements intertwined within the larger organizational context.

Work centrality, defined as the extent to which individuals perceive work as central in their lives (Hirschfeld & Field, 2000; Sharabi et al., 2021), was identified as a potential mediator in the relationship between an organization's purpose and work meaningfulness. In the interviews it was found that there is a strong emphasis on the centrality of work in the interviewees' lives, expressing feelings of responsibility, guilt, and emotional conflict when not working. Additionally, work centrality emerged as a factor influencing personal growth, motivation, and alignment with the company's purpose. The results of this study align with prior research emphasizing the importance of work centrality in shaping individuals' attitudes and behaviors towards work. Consistent with existing literature (Jiang & Johnson, 2018; Ng, Sorensen & Feldman, 2007), the interview findings underscored the strong influence of work centrality on employees, highlighting its role in motivating individuals and shaping their perceptions of meaningful work. The findings also align with the conceptualization of meaningful work as a multifaceted construct encompassing personal values, organizational purpose alignment, and intrinsic motivation (Jiang & Johnson, 2018; Sharabi et al., 2021). However, this study also provides unique insights into the nuanced relationship between perceived organizational purpose, work centrality, and meaningful work, showcasing the complexity of these interactions within the organizational context. The mediation analysis indicated that work centrality partially mediates the relationship between organizational purpose and meaningful work. While a direct positive relationship exists between perceived purpose and meaningful work, the indirect effect through work centrality was found to be positive but weak. This suggests that work centrality contributes partially to the relationship between perceived purpose and meaningful work, indicating the presence of other potential factors influencing this relationship. Overall, these results underscore the significance of work centrality as a mediating factor but suggest the involvement of additional unmeasured variables influencing the relationship between perceived purpose and meaningfulness of work among employees. These findings contribute to the literature on organizational psychology and employee engagement by clarifying the intricate relationship between perceived purpose, work centrality, and work meaningfulness. Specifically, these findings highlight that while employees' perception of meaningful work is positively influenced by perceived organizational purpose, work centrality plays a mediation function but has a weak indirect effect. This also emphasizes the need to go beyond the presumption of a simple relationship between perceived purpose and meaningful work, in favor of more customized and comprehensive methods of improving work

meaningfulness inside organizations. Furthermore, the findings offer valuable insights for organizational strategy by highlighting the role that work centrality plays in bringing employees' attitudes in line with the organization's purpose within strategic frameworks. The results suggest that work centrality is important in forming employee attitudes and behaviors, as evidenced by its significance in influencing employees' view of the organizational purpose. This insight can be used by organizational strategists to create customized employee engagement plans that acknowledge varying degrees of work centrality among employees. Although work centrality could help some feel more connected to the company's purpose, it's important to recognize that different employees have different priorities and adapt engagement strategies accordingly. By doing this, they may strengthen the connection between employees and the company's purpose, which will encourage a more dedicated and engaged workforce.

## **6. Limitations**

There are a few limitations to consider in this study. One notable aspect involves the research methodology, specifically with regard to the survey and interview approach. The sample size may have introduced biases, which could have limited the representation of a range of experiences or perspectives within the company. Although the interviewees offered various hierarchical viewpoints, they were primarily from the same department and company as these were easiest to acquire. Even though they provided intriguing insights, it would have been useful to see how responses differed across a more diverse range of companies. Additionally, it would have been good to have interviewees from middle-sized companies and having lower-level employees, such as those working in a cash register interviewed to see how the perception of purpose and meaningful work differs. Nevertheless, there is enough variance in the survey data by company and industry to enable the generalization of findings to broader contexts. Finally, the accuracy and completeness of the data that was gathered may have been impacted by administrative or technological problems, such as poorly completed survey submissions or errors in data recording. This could explain why there are more observations for some variables compared to others.

## **7. Conclusion**

In recent years organizational purpose has become an essential topic of discussion when it comes to work culture and employee satisfaction. This study examined the complex relationship between meaningful work and organizational purpose, shedding light on the complexities therein. Interviews revealed a range of viewpoints, highlighting the significance

of work centrality and the alignment with organizational purpose with societal objectives. Nonetheless, conflicting opinions of the congruence between the stated purpose and actual practices surfaced, reflecting complexities mentioned in previous studies. Insights from interviews highlighted several factors contributing to work meaningfulness, such as project involvement, meaningful workplace connections, alignment with organizational values, personal drive, and engagement with the company's purpose, all contribute to meaningful work. Survey results further confirmed that there is a strong relationship between meaning of work and organizational purpose. This positive relationship was confirmed by statistical regression analysis, indicating that even after controlling for other pertinent variables, perceived purpose had a considerable influence on how meaningful work is to employees. Weaker correlations between the purpose's content as a moderator and work centrality as a mediator influencing work meaningfulness were observed, suggesting the existence of unexplored determinants.

The study's contributions are found in providing a complementary thorough knowledge of the complicated interactions that exist between work meaningfulness and organizational purpose to existing literature. The results highlight how crucial it is for businesses to recognize the various ways in which workers derive meaning from their work and to ensure that their declared purpose and operational procedures work in harmony. To further our understanding of these interactions, future study should examine additional unmeasured variables that might impact work meaningfulness within the framework of organizational purpose.

### **7.1. Practical Implications**

The findings of this study offer important implications for organizations and managers seeking to enhance employee engagement, satisfaction, and overall well-being. Firstly, it highlights how crucial it is for organizational leaders to not only clearly state their purpose but also make sure that the purpose is integrated into day-to-day operations and decision-making procedures. A sense of authenticity is fostered when a company's purpose is in line with its practical activities, beliefs, and policies. This has a beneficial effect on how employees perceive the organization's mission. Secondly, managers should acknowledge the complex factors contributing to meaningful work, beyond the explicit purpose statement. Employees' sense of purpose and fulfilment can be significantly increased by fostering a work environment that promotes direct contributions to projects, meaningful workplace relationships, and alignment of individual values with organizations' goals. Furthermore, recognizing the role of work

centrality in driving meaningful work for some employees can guide managers in supporting employees' intrinsic motivations while maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Overall, adopting a comprehensive strategy that fosters a variety of sources of meaning at work and incorporates purpose into routine tasks can greatly enhance organizational culture, employee engagement, and productivity.

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## 9. Appendices

### Appendix A – Interview Coding Categorizing Common Themes of Interviewees

		Interview-ID								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total number of mentions
<b>Perceived organizational Purpose:</b> Impact on work, alignment with societal goals, and influence of purpose statements	Purpose is very customer centric and envisions a positive future	X	X	X	X					4
	Purpose increases my job satisfaction	X		X						2
	Focus on future and team improvement		X			X				2
	Emphasis on sustainability impacts work, influencing job satisfaction, especially for younger employees		X		X		X	X	X	5
	The company is still capitalistic first	X	X		X	X			X	5
	Occasional decision-making based on purpose		X		X					2
	Recognition that the official purpose is broad and allows for diverse interpretations		X		X	X				3
	Emphasis on community	X	X		X	X	X			5
	Working towards a common goal				X	X	X			3
	Every day we work towards our purpose	X					X		X	3
	Purpose statement is not a constant or repetitive thought in daily tasks		X		X			X	X	4
Tough balance between reinforcing positive values and utilizing the purpose for business-focused, but necessary, decisions		X							1	
<b>Work centrality:</b> Role of work in life, influence of organizational purpose on work centrality, and guilt about taking time off	Work is a very central part of life	X	X		X	X	X	X		6
	Alignment with the company's purpose influences dedication beyond standard working hours	X	X				X	X		4
	Feeling of guilt due to feeling responsible for one's own projects/tasks/the team	X	X		X		X	X		5
	Emotional conflict associated with taking time off from work	X	X				X			3
	Reluctance to delegate tasks due to the feeling of burdening others	X	X				X			3
	Desire to maintain a work-life balance		X	X	X		X	X	X	6

	Work gives me a purpose		X							1
	Ambition plays a role in how central work is to my life		X		X			X		3
	The company's purpose serving as an engine for personal growth, motivation, and keeping oneself engaged with work		X	X		X				3
	Feeling of guilt increases with higher job title & responsibilities		X		X		X			3
<b>Work meaningfulness:</b>										
Sources of fulfillment, and alignment with personal values	Seeing the direct contribution/impact to and on projects	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	7
	Meaningful friendships in the workplace	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	8
	Feeling connected to the organization's goals and mission.	X	X	X	X			X		5
	Emphasis on personal drive and intrinsic motivation in deriving meaning from tasks or responsibilities	X			X	X		X		4
	A clear purpose provides a guideline for employees regarding the company's expectations, future goals, and reason for existence	X	X				X	X		4
	The importance of alignment between individual values, goals, and the organization's purpose	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	8
	Fulfillment comes from engaging with the product		X		X				X	3
	Seeing people developing and being engaged				X	X	X			3
	Meaningful work if job is not so repetitive					X	X	X	X	4

## Appendix B – Interview Responses

***Interview 1: Event management, Project Manager, Female, 25, has been with the company for 1 year; phone call, duration 30 mins***

### **Perceived organizational purpose:**

- 1. Can you please describe how you perceive the organizational purpose of this company? (what do you think it is)*

I believe our purpose is to deliver top class events for the customer. We make sure that the customer who wants an event gets the exact event that he wants and even better than that – we give 110% to exceed their idea.

- 2. In what ways do you think the organizational purpose impacts your work and your overall job satisfaction?*

It makes me have to also work up to 110% every day so we can make it work and that means I have to put all my effort and focus on every day, and it makes you be very involved in your

job meaning that you not only think about it while you're at work but also outside of my working hours. It just makes your life very involved with the topic and there are not very regulated times.

And yes I am very satisfied because I am personally very interested in the event management business, therefore it is exactly the kind of thing I enjoy doing so I love to involve myself in it deeply. What is also satisfying about the job is that you can get direct feedback about performance based on how customer perceives the service that you offer them. (→ When we reach our purpose, it makes me satisfied with my job a lot)

3. *How do you believe your organization's purpose aligns with broader societal goals or the common good?*

It heavily depends on the event we cater... Obviously we're not a non profit organization or anything like that but we always go beyond of what our client wants, we're in there to be a community. For example, on the F1 racetracks, if someone needs help with anything (even if they are not from our team or our clients team), anyone from our team will help wherever possible. As for the common good, because the nature of our organization (mainly catering business and (luxury) sports events) limits us in doing things for the common good, what we do instead is give a lot of donations to organizations such as local kindergartens, supporting youth, small local sports clubs etc. Our target group doesn't give us many options to do things for the common good so we try to compensate this with donations and extracurricular time elsewhere. However, if a small local sports club wants us to cater an event, we do this at a very very discounted price, where we basically just charge them the costs of the materials, when we have the time and capacity to do so. Now, this may not be directly related to our purpose but it's definitely a big value of our organization.

**Purpose statement:**

4. *How aware are you of the company's official purpose statement, and can you briefly describe it?*

We don't have an official company purpose statement.

5. *Follow up question: Do you think it would make sense to introduce one?*

No, I don't think it would make sense because everybody that works in our company knows what it's about and everybody who works there works there for a reason and if you don't support the purpose of the company that is also known without an official purpose statement, you're not really motivated to stay with the company and don't fit in with the values etc. so you're automatically fulfilling the purpose everyday with your work because you just know what the purpose is, without knowing what the statement is.

6. *Does it have any influence on your daily work?*

Sure. We wouldn't go to work if we wouldn't support the purpose. Every day we work towards our purpose of building top class architecture and contributing to a great event to make customers happy.

**Work centrality:**

7. *How would you describe the role of work in your life? Is it a central or peripheral aspect and why?*

Work to me is central because I sometimes work 12 hour days, sometimes not so much but you always need to be on call and during event seasons you don't really have a fixed work schedule and after you get home you have a different life. During summers you're on the road and on business travels a lot, you can't really see your friends in the evening and do other things because the events are always at different times. Work for me is always at the forefront and I always have it at the back of my mind.

8. *In your opinion, does your perception of the company's purpose play a role in how central your work is to your life?*

Of course, because if it wasn't I wouldn't pick up my phone past 5pm I probably wouldn't have a job anymore, but I also wouldn't reach my personal career goals and I also want to make the customer happy and fulfill the purpose.

9. *Have you ever felt guilty or conflicted about taking time off from work? Can you explain why?*

Absolutely! Because when you have your own project and need to take time off, you either need to give the project to someone else who usually already has a ton of work so you're just burdening someone else with work that actually you should be taking care of and I guess you just see it so much as your responsibility that it's hard to leave your project in the hands of someone who don't really want to take it on because they have their own projects but will nevertheless do it because you asked them to.

→ they don't feel like there's a purpose on the organizational level but motivation mostly comes out of career goals

### **Work meaningfulness**

10. *What makes work meaningful to you? Do you think the organizational purpose aligns with your personal values in this regard? How do you find meaning in your current role?*

What makes my work meaningful to me is knowing that I directly contribute to an event that is known around the world, gets broadcasted, is very popular, and that I was directly involved in making this event happen and making it cooler. I have also made meaningful friendships in my workplace which make my work even more meaningful to me.

Yes I 100% believe that our purpose aligns with my personal values in this regard, we have cool people at work, and my job does exactly the things that I enjoy doing such as being creative and being able to make cool changes I like to see.

11. *Can you recall a specific experience at work that made you feel your job had a positive impact on others or contributed to a greater purpose?*

No.

12. *Do you think organizational purpose affects how meaningful you find your work? If so, how?*

Sure, but I personally find meaning in my work through my own motivation. Generally, I think purpose would help because it gives people a good guideline on what the company expects, where it wants to be in the future, why they exist etc. so if people's values and own goals align with this purpose, they might find their work more meaningful.

***Interview 2: Beverage Industry, CX Manager BU Central, Male, 27, Has been with the company for 5 years; Teams meeting, duration 30 minutes***

**Perceived organizational purpose:**

1. *Can you please describe how you perceive the organizational purpose of this company? (what do you think it is)*

Dream big with a future with more cheers. How I understand it is that Dream Big is part of the company's culture – it's the main aspect of it. Basically, it means set your target to one level or be aspirational and then times it by 10 and I think that's why it's so key and prevalent in the purpose. And to a future with more cheers is about A – focussing on the positivity, the cheers moment that you share together, it's not just about beer but any moment that you cheers together, it's not limiting us. And B – it focusses on and encourages the long-term vision and sustainability of the company and personally how I see this is that we're not thinking about the next 3 years' target but more like 10, 20, 30 and 100 years of the company.

2. *In what ways do you think the organizational purpose impacts your work and your overall job satisfaction?*

Yes it definitely impacts my work. Everything always comes back to that dreaming big aspect. Personally I think about the future a lot for the team. I think about how the team needs to change and improve, so in that sense yes. In terms of job satisfaction I think that most younger people relate to the sustainable aspects of it. I think that makes you think that the company is not just thinking about money but also the long term health of the company. So how you are sustainable you need to make sure you still have money and you're still being profitable but at the same time you're also thinking about how do we use that to make sure that we still have the resources for example that we need to make our products. I see that quite related and it makes me then a little bit more sort of content to be in this kind of a place you know it's not a short term kind of company it's not a flash in the pan kind of tech company it's something long term

3. *How do you believe your organization's purpose aligns with broader societal goals or the common good?*

Yeah I mean again that's sustainability future with more cheers I think it's a positive aspect right and again it doesn't focus just on this so if you have people who want to be drinking beer or you know more sort of other type of non-alcoholic drinkers or whatever or it doesn't exclude them so I quite like this and the sustainability aspect you know making sure we have enough clean water that we're not wasteful that we're carbon neutral. I think that's very aligned with how society is now and kind of what we need to inform and the only maybe negative aspect is yeah it's still capitalistic first I think you know you're still thinking about the money and you're still thinking about the shareholder value which you can argue is that

really the common good maybe not, maybe it's the good of a few but if that feeds into then the rest of it then then that's kind of fine right?

**Purpose statement:**

4. *Does the purpose statement have any influence on your daily work?*

It's not like I think of it every day but it's probably always in the back of my mind. I'm not consciously making decisions every day on it, sometimes I am making decisions based on it so it does impact me yeah so it is impacting my daily work when I make decisions based on it. But it's not like I'm repeating it in my brain every day.

5. *Have you noticed a difference between the company's official purpose statement and what you perceive as the actual purpose and values of the organization?*

Again, it kind of benefits from being quite vague and wide-ranging and that is saying dream big for a future with more cheers because dream big for sure right that's definitely part of the purpose and the values. For a future with more cheers can like I said mean about the money it can mean about like the sustainability can be about having more sales, growing with more customers, whatever and how you do that maybe different people and different teams see it in a different way so maybe it might seem like it's not what the future for more cheers which is that you start then like firing people and cutting budgets but essentially it's more thinking about how to be sustainable as a company in the longer term but then also making these decisions and it kind of encompasses the good and the bad - it is ultimately the end goal you're working towards is making this company long lasting but it doesn't always have a positive impact. I think it feels like sometimes it's not then the positive values are being reinforced it's also being used to sort of reinforce those negative aspects of the business world which is sometimes tough you know but if you're being just purely objective and business focused then you know it's necessary.

**Work centrality:**

6. *How would you describe the role of work in your life? Is it central or peripheral and why?*

Pretty central and I don't like it to be over consuming - it makes up my week it gives me a purpose honestly. You know I have hobbies outside of work and I like to do things outside of work but work is what really gives me a purpose and I enjoy it because of that and I've kind of always been a bit of a let's say career chaser or let's say career planner and so work is pretty key to that and I see having to sort of progress in the career is how I can also then enable like the nice life that you know people want to live and I in the future so work is then pretty key for me to achieve my further life goals I guess and so it is pretty central to what I need to and want to do.

7. *In your opinion, does your perception of the company's purpose play a role in how central your work is to your life?*

Yeah you know it's funny you ask that because I think about it especially recently quite a lot, I've been in the company for 5 years and I was thinking am I really in the right place you

know, what else would I do? The company's purpose and also what we're selling is something I am a clear fan of and if I didn't really connect with that I wouldn't be here so I thought I see people a lot go from this company to places like British American Tobacco go work for cigarette companies and it's like I don't feel that connection - you can come up with whatever purpose they could come up with some catchy purpose right yeah I wouldn't connect with that as a purpose in the same way that I connect with this purpose because of A the product and B sort of the messaging behind it. So that's kind of what engages me to then motivate myself and be engaged with work in the first place and that's why work is so central to my life because I'm then using this as kind of like the engine behind me, to keep growing and to keep working and the dreaming big aspect you know that's also I think a nice way to keep pushing myself. This company doesn't like people to stay comfortable for too long and that kind of feeds into the dream big aspect which I like you know it keeps pushing you, it keeps challenging you to go to something uncomfortable and you learn and you grow from that so again that's all engaging me which is what keeps work kind of central in my life and keeps me motivated to put work kind of not first but you know a high priority.

*8. Have you ever felt guilty or conflicted about taking time off from work? Can you explain why?*

Hell yeah! You know what I used to feel more guilty I think in the past when I was working in like transports, the very fast moving logistical team, I felt guilty to leave the team and especially when it's you know busy periods the same can be said for when being a team lead or whatever if a team is kind of struggling and it's going through a tough time I also feel guilty because I want to be there to support them and fix the problem. When things are quiet and things are kind of going fine I have no issue taking time off. Or if I think it's not really on my team and it's kind of on other people to be fixing things I'm also fine to take time off and I think you get such ownership - a team becomes like kind of yours right you don't want to leave it alone and you don't want it to be in a bad place so you feel you can't to go off away for two weeks and not be able to support or whatever so yeah I do feel guilty. It doesn't mean I don't take time off though. I think it's pretty central to still you know being healthy throughout the year so I got two weeks off this summer for the first time in five years well yeah two weeks off consecutively and I definitely would do not do it again next summer and I see other leads do it right and when I see other people do it you think you know what the world keeps turning it's fine!

*Does your increased responsibility at work influenced your feeling guilty about taking time off from work?*

Oh yeah! I think before being the manager I didn't care I could kind of feel guilty to have to hand my work on to someone else and they have to cover me but it feels way worse when it's you know if things are not working and you're the lead and you leave and it's like who's going to come in and step up and fix it. You hope the team can but again they need you know you feel like they support. So it definitely has made it tougher. I've never not taken a holiday but I have worked on a holiday you know look at emails or jump on a call or you know try to fix something if it's really urgent or burning.

## **Work meaningfulness**

9. *What makes work meaningful to you? Do you think the organizational purpose aligns with your personal values in this regard? How do you find meaning in your current role?*

For me yeah it's about engaging in what we're selling. I actually really struggle with the idea of going to work for like an IT or tech company because how do you engage with something like search engine optimization with Google or whatever, it's not I don't believe in the product it's just I don't really engage with it. With our product it's a passion point for me, it's something I enjoy so yeah the end product that we're selling is what's meaningful to me and then the you know the people around you as well but that comes I think later you don't know that before you take a job. For finding meaning in my current role I think it's quite easy in a customer experience role to find the meaning because the second it goes wrong you can see the pain and you can see the frustration and not just from customers but from other people as well because it impacts the whole company. The second a customer gets frustrated and can't resolve something it becomes a risk to the sales it becomes a risk to other jobs so it's quite easy to find meaning to working in customer experience. This doesn't mean it's always engaging it's sometimes quite demotivating I guess to get constantly sort of negative feedback but I think where the meaning and engagement comes is when things start to turn a corner you start to see the positive things you see things working better you get positive feedback from stakeholders that's when I also find a lot of purpose and meaning in what we're doing. And then the logic is that the company grows with the positive sort of feedback from customers so it's very connected I think to how the company then succeeds.

10. *Can you recall a specific experience at work that made you feel your job had a positive impact on others or contributed to a greater purpose?*

I mean there's loads of experiences and it can be the most tangible onto the ones when you feel and see it so for me we recently organized an Oktoberfest party and because of our connections we were able to get free Maßkrüge for everybody in the CX department. And that was because of our team and our connections that made a little positive impact on the internal team. It's harder when you're working on a big scale so for us with retailers you don't really feel the personal side of things but I think with our current scope you see a lot more with the bars and beer gardens, you really see the frustration when something's gone wrong and it's up to your team to find a solution to this to be able to let their business run. I think that's quite a nice moment when you're helping others, being able to solve their problems and I think that happens quite regularly in these smaller teams.

11. *Do you think organizational purpose affects how meaningful you find your work? If so, how?*

Yes I mean it's hard for me to say because I think first and foremost it's the product for me personally that I engage with and the purpose helps me make decisions and helps other people in the company make decisions and know what we're working towards. If it was a purpose that I didn't believe in then perhaps yes I wouldn't find my work meaningful I'd be kind of like why are we doing this if the purpose was to increase the shareholder value or whatever but when it's more sort of about in the future and working together with people and

achieving big things and these kind of things that does bring some meaning I guess and some motivation and I think after the product is what comes second I guess.

***Interview 3: Beverage Industry, CX Senior Specialist, male, 24, has been in the company for 10 months; Teams meeting, duration 25 minutes***

**Perceived organizational purpose:**

1. *Can you please describe how you perceive the organizational purpose of this company?*

Our official purpose is: “We always dreams big. It’s our culture and our heritage. But more than that, it’s our future. A future that everyone can celebrate, and everyone can share. A future with more cheers”. I believe that our company truly pursues its purpose of dreaming big and creating a future with more cheers. At work, there are no limits when it comes to proposing new ways of working or creating your own projects to enhance and, moreover, the company provides you with a lot of resources to continue growing and improving every day.

2. *In what ways do you think the organizational purpose impacts your work and your overall job satisfaction?*

For example, having access to continuous trainings, having access to LinkedIn learning is giving me the opportunity to growth and what is most important, in the way I want. I can choose what I want to learn. This results in a high level of satisfaction. Regarding the impact in my work, with the constant self-evaluation and 121 with the line manager is easy to define the path you want for your future career development.

3. *How do you believe your organization’s purpose aligns with broader societal goals or the common good?*

I see our organizational purpose as aligning with broader societal goals and the common good by encouraging innovation and personal growth. This not only benefits the company but also contributes to economic and societal advancement.

**Purpose statement:**

4. *How aware are you of the company’s official purpose statement, and can you briefly describe it?*

We are fully aware of the company's purpose. From the beginning, they talk about the 10 values of the company, and you even have them written on the wall. Some of those 10 values would be: to dream big; to lead the change and innovate for our consumers; we believe in simplicity and scalable solutions; among others.

5. *Does it have any influence on your daily work?*

Yes, it does. Actually, the way we are evaluated is aligned with these values. For example, one of the skill evaluated is the ambitious, and they aligned this skill with one of the main purpose of the company, which is “***Creating a Future With More Cheers***”.

6. *Have you noticed a difference between the company’s official purpose statement and what you perceive as the actual purpose and values of the organization?*

No, I didn't.

### **Work centrality**

7. *How would you describe the role of work in your life? Is it a central or peripheral aspect and why?*

This work for me is a peripheral aspect. I don't really see the role of work as a central aspect. I think there are only 2 possibilities when you have your job as central aspect in your life. One is when you really love what you do (that is the objective I want to achieve), the other one (which is shorter in terms of time) is when you really want to get promoted, you need to prove your value to your leader.

8. *In your opinion, does your perception of the company's purpose play a role in how central your work is to your life?*

At one point I would say yes, I do really share some values of the company like: dream big; innovation; customer centricity... Then, sharing this values at the end is pushing me to keep going.

9. *Have you ever felt guilty or conflicted about taking time off from work? Can you explain why?*

No, I haven't. Meanwhile you do what you have to do, taking some time off to refresh is always good and necessary.

### **Work meaningfulness**

10. *What makes work meaningful to you? Do you think the organizational purpose aligns with your personal values in this regard? How do you find meaning in your current role?*

Yes, I do. As I mentioned before, I share some values with the company, then I really appreciate to work in a company where I can share values. This keeps me going and improving every day, no matter if I really like the work or not. In my case, my work itself has not full meaning from this perspective, as most of the part is operational work, but I have the opportunities with LinkedIn learning, trainings and networking, the possibility to find meaning to all this values.

11. *Can you recall a specific experience at work that made you feel your job had a positive impact on others or contributed to a greater purpose?*

Yes of course, for example the event I created. When I joined the company, I saw the communication between people that were doing the same job as me (Inventory Deployment) but for other scopes, have no communication between them, they spoke via teams, mail... but they have never talked to each other face to face. Then, what I did was create an event into our open bar, inviting all the ID's of the office (around 40 people) and having one member of each team to present their teams. After the presentation, we were having beers and enjoyed each other's company. I'm really proud for this event, as I could improve my networking as well as the presentation and communication skills, since I presented my team and I had to convince the rest of the people to do it.

12. *Do you think organizational purpose affects how meaningful you find your work? If so, how?*

At some points yes, for example in the case of the automatization. We have targets to do to receive the bonus (or extra salary). On these targets, one of the main goals is the automatization of some tasks, trying to have more touchless process and reduce the manual work.

***Interview 4: Beverage Industry, CX Senior Team Lead, Male, 24, has been with the company for 1 year; Teams meeting, duration 25 minutes***

**Perceived organizational purpose:**

1. *Can you please describe how you perceive the organizational purpose of this company?*

I think the company's purpose is really grained in the 10 principles that we take as our culture. There's a lot of overlap so from that perspective we're quite closely interconnected with our brands and the principles that we see - I mean we have them on the screens and walls in the office so I think from that perspective the organization is doing quite a lot.

2. *In what ways do you think the organizational purpose impacts your work and your overall job satisfaction?*

So I think we're living quite closely with our let's say mission statements or principles but also just with our slogan (purpose statement) creating a future with more cheers so from that perspective I think it's an interesting play on words. I think it's a bit cultural as well so I mean cheers is something that brings people together something that also has like a positive happy connotation. I would say it impacts my work in a sense that it also brings us colleagues closer together and that the purpose sometimes influences my decisions.

3. *How do you believe your organization's purpose aligns with broader societal goals or the common good?*

I think we rely on the principles and on the mission statement I think the best way to put it is that we're a company of owners in a sense so we try to first of all live through a meritocracy at the same time we have let's say a lot of impact from the beginning of the chain of production until the delivery so that we have a lot of let's say scope to have an impact on a lot of people. We also have a lot of environmental activities also linked with the production and transportation which in the end is also shaping our brands.

**Purpose statement:**

4. *How aware are you of the company's official purpose statement, and can you briefly describe it?*

So I'm aware of it but I think the company could do a little bit more to portray it, the same as they do with the values. It's linked to the company of owners that we're linked to a lot of communities where we can have a big impact, we try to treat our suppliers fairly and in the end we also replicate that with the employees. So I would say we're aware of it but it's a very

big company and it's only one element so on a daily basis it's difficult to visualize the level of impact we have on society.

5. *Does it have any influence on your daily work?*

Yes so basically I portrayed the whole chain and the communities we can have an impact on and then we replicate it on the smaller scale so as a team leader trying to bring these positive values that we have on society also to my people - say it can be from an engagement perspective into striking a work life balance and then also motivating and developing people in that sense.

*Does the purpose statement have any influence on your decision making?*

So I don't think the purpose statement says too much about let's say day-to-day business and making money so from that perspective maybe there is a little bit of let's say deviation or something that's not really mentioned. In the end we're a company where you need to make money so on the day-to-day you need to make cost efficient choices so there's that side of it and the second side it's a little bit more focused on well-being and customer centricity so yeah I think the second one is maybe a little bit more mentioned in the statement than the first so it doesn't have that big of an impact on my decision making.

6. *Have you noticed a difference between the company's official purpose statement and what you perceive as the actual purpose and values of the organization?*

Yeah I think the statement is more focused on the company as a whole and the 10 principles you try to live by them on a daily basis. I wouldn't say that I feel completely aligned with the you know developing centuries of beer drinking but yeah that's also evolving in a sense right now I think close to the bringing a future with more cheers that has a quite positive dictation

**Work centrality:**

7. *How would you describe the role of work in your life? Is it a central or peripheral aspect and why?*

I believe this links to a certain level of ambition. I would say that it's playing a more central part right now because I'm also quite junior in a sense and I don't have a long term partner, I don't have a family to look after etc. so from that perspective it's taking quite a central role and I think with more seniority it perhaps leads to more balance but for now I would say if you have to take a snapshot moment in time it's quite central.

8. *In your opinion, does your perception of the company's purpose play a role in how central your work is to your life?*

Hmm I think it's quite interconnected and there's obviously the company's values, its mission statement and purpose statement which I'm quite in line with but also a very important role plays the ambition part. I set myself some goals I would like to achieve in a certain period of time and there perhaps I would say there's a lot of companies that live by similar principles and I would say ambition to certain extent overarches the principles.

9. *Have you ever felt guilty or conflicted about taking time off from work? Can you explain why?*

I would say with the level of engagement that is often quite high you feel a sense of responsibility and ownership so that has a part to play and I think it also comes with managerial responsibilities that you have this increase but I think the businesses as a whole tries to encourage this like not feeling of guilt to improve a little bit the work life balance. I would definitely say that the managers aspect of it has a lot to do so depending on who your manager is it can have a stronger impact.

*Does your increased responsibility at work influence your feeling guilty about taking time off from work?*

So in the end you obviously have a team but also an organization so we can also delegate some of these parts it's like a handover that we do. This organized structure allows us to delegate the sense of ownership which I would say it's quite well structured but perhaps you cross a level of OK I'm stressed out about my work and operations to I'm worried about how my people are doing and this is a little bit like I would say a transition and you focus more on the people side of things rather than purely numerical. I would say they're both very intertwined but maybe there's like a small transition when you're in charge of your own team.

### **Work meaningfulness**

10. *What makes work meaningful to you? Do you think the organizational purpose aligns with your personal values in this regard? How do you find meaning in your current role?*

I think there's definitely the sense of being aligned with the product or what you're actually doing in your job. So for us we're trying to deliver our product to the end user so I think it's important to see the physical impact of things that's something that's quite important to me. At the same time it's also the people that you work with that you feel a sense of co-responsibility that you work towards a common goal. You need to make sure that you're striving and going towards being the best and achieving the common goal with the right people. I think yes the organizational purpose aligns with my personal values in this regard. I'm going to have to come back to the ambition which makes work meaningful to me so the company looks after your development very well so in a sense you feel like you're working towards the organizational goal and team goal but at the same time you're able to develop yourself – it can be your soft and hard skills, or gaps to strive to be you a better person than you were the day before. In my current role I'm responsible for a team of 5 people which I think drives me on a daily basis. I like this human interaction and the sense of being able to help and develop people so that's a big part of it and at the same time in the process I'm able to develop myself and deliver the KPIs that we have just to make sure that the quality of our services is up to standard.

11. *Can you recall a specific experience at work that made you feel your job had a positive impact on others or contributed to a greater purpose?*

Here I would say that the managerial side has a bigger part to play. In the end we're a business center so we don't see the product that much on a daily basis so it's more the sense of

fulfillment which I have when I see people developing and just being overall happy and engaged.

*12. Do you think organizational purpose affects how meaningful you find your work? If so, how?*

Because we're a business center we feel a little bit out of it so it's the people side that compensates for it a little bit but I would say yes to certain degree because of how the business is shaped. Perhaps in my actual role I'm in touch with the sales teams that we're closer to the clients which I would say has a big part to play in the sense that I feel closer than perhaps other teams and other departments and this gives me a stronger sense of organizational purpose and meaningful work.

***Interview 5: Beverage Industry, CX Senior Team Lead, Male, 30, has been with the company for 3.5 year; Teams meeting, duration 30 minutes***

**Perceived organizational purpose:**

*1. Can you please describe how you perceive the organizational purpose of this company?*

For me it's really broad and more to the core for what we are doing. We are not here to sell eco friendly products. We are here to provide good moments with the products that we have. I perceive the purpose very well because it's the way I also drink, I don't drink alone and a future with more cheers you cannot cheers alone so there's also a people aspect to it. So I do have a good connection to the purpose of the company but obviously the purpose behind is to sell beer.

*2. In what ways do you think the organizational purpose impacts your work and your overall job satisfaction?*

There is no real connection from the perception that I have from a future with more cheers on the daily basis. What I can do is bringing the team together in order to work perfectly and to try to have the best outcome from the team so I adapt to the people that I have and to try to help them grow in the best possible way. So the purpose is also directly related to the people because without the people you cannot do much more so you need to invest in them and spend time with them to see an improvement. So how I see organizational purpose impacting my work is really connecting people together to work better. In terms of job satisfaction I get energy from being sociable so the more people I work with the more motivation I get myself and that's where I find job satisfaction. I have an impact on their way of working or on the way my team improves.

*3. How do you believe your organization's purpose aligns with broader societal goals or the common good?*

If you really look at the facts, we are a "bad company" because we promote alcohol and even if we promote responsible drinking, sustainability etc. at some point it's not really for the common good. Yes we bring people joy, we bring them together for festivals etc. but at the same time if you look at the down to earth stuff, not really.

**Purpose statement:**

4. *How aware are you of the company's official purpose statement, and can you briefly describe it?*

So I'm quite far from social media and stuff like this. I am not following my company's social network to the outside world. Therefore, I'm quite far from the official statement, obviously I look at internal communications better. So from the official statement I have very little awareness. I suppose it's something with creating a future with more cheers which is heavily based on our 10 principles.

5. *Does it have any influence on your daily work?*

Not really. When you focus on work, you really focus on operational points and the core of your job. For CX it is to deliver the products on time and in full and to be there for the customer if they have any problems. So I would say the official purpose statement doesn't influence my daily work.

6. *Have you noticed a difference between the company's official purpose statement and what you perceive as the actual purpose and values of the organization?*

Yes. So there was a scandal with a promotion and as a the person who was promoting the product we didn't support anymore. One of our principles is that we support our people and we value diversity but when we had such an issue with the public opinion, we kind of backed away from our principles and erased the board so here that would be the only point with discrepancies between purpose statement and what we did. Also the board is changing a bit so we don't know what's next. We kind of went from the customer is king to the customer is king but we need to make money.

**Work centrality:**

7. *How would you describe the role of work in your life? Is it a central or peripheral aspect and why?*

Obviously it's very central because it's more than 8 hours of my day that is consumed by work. I'm also thinking about work a lot even when not in the office. I don't think that work can ever be peripheral when you work full time and don't have a family on the side. It's also central because in the end you always have to pay the bills. The work flexibility is good especially in this company but I will have the same schedule and work at the same hours.

8. *In your opinion, does your perception of the company's purpose play a role in how central your work is to your life?*

I would say yes, it really pushes you to improve yourself, so you automatically spend more time thinking about work and how to get to the next step. This kind of ownership that the company promotes is also reflected in my personal life a lot so yeah I would say that it had an impact on the centrality of my work. Also trying to be that owner takes a lot of time and effort from you and I would say it's not for everybody because it also tires people.

9. *Have you ever felt guilty or conflicted about taking time off from work? Can you explain why?*

Of course. You know it's never good, you are also paid for a certain amount of hours and if you have a tiny thing you feel even more guilty.

*Do you feel more guilty in your new role as team lead?*

No because when you're the team lead you're not supposed to do the work your team is doing, you're not really giving them the load of your work so you don't increase their workload.

### **Work meaningfulness**

10. *What makes work meaningful to you? Do you think the organizational purpose aligns with your personal values in this regard? How do you find meaning in your current role?*

For me work is meaningful if the money is good, the people you work with are good and nice, the meaning of your work is so not repetitive and where this job is challenging and can bring me to the next level of what I want to do. I don't want to have the feeling to be just a robot, I want to actually help some people and also see that I'm doing a good job. What's also meaningful to me is when your job is recognized.

Yes I believe the purpose aligns with my personal values in this regard because you're never satisfied, you can always complain on a few things but at the end of the day I sell beer so it doesn't have value point for the common good, for the life in the big sense of it. The things that bring me satisfaction are that I know I do a good job and that people value my help so the things I do have an impact on the business which is aligned with a future with more cheers. How I find meaning in my current role is when I can see the improvement of my direct reports and that they also see me as a 'role model' so for them coming for help to me.

11. *Can you recall a specific experience at work that made you feel your job had a positive impact on others or contributed to a greater purpose?*

I had a client in France who wanted a product that wasn't created and wasn't even sold in France. You have such a good relationship with your clients that you understand their needs and you go the extra mile for them because they trust you and will come back to you. In the end I had to import a British product to France for only one client within just 3 weeks. The product was from London after the Brexit so you can imagine it wasn't easy with the documentation, you do everything to contact the correct people and trying to do everything within a tight timeframe. We struggled a bit but in the end, everything worked out and you had a positive impact on the trust relationship with the client. You also boost your confidence on that you can do those things. So, this experience really showed me that it's all about relationships, Cheers and being together.

12. *Do you think organizational purpose affects how meaningful you find your work? If so, how?*

I think you can find meaningfulness wherever you work. Even if you do a repetitive job you can still find meaningfulness. So for example the people working in a burger shop in the U.S.

who get paid \$3 an hour still do it and might find it meaningful to survive. Whatever the situation you will always find a way to say hey it's meaningful to me without an organizational purpose. So, I don't think the purpose of one company influences the whole meaningfulness of your work. Let's say you work at one company and really believe in the purpose which affect your meaningfulness and you change your job to another company you still believe in that purpose and now you might also believe in the new purpose, so I don't really think that the company's purpose defines so much of your meaningfulness of work. Sure, it can help, you can be part of one's purpose but true meaningfulness of your job you find it on your own.

***Interview 6: Beverage Industry, Consumer Care Manager, Female, 29, has been with the company for 7 years; Zoom, duration 30 minutes***

**Perceived organizational purpose:**

1. *Can you please describe how you perceive the organizational purpose of this company?*

For me the company purpose is to provide the best beer and bring people together. There are 3 main outcomes: one of them being the biggest and best beer company so we need to make sure we deliver the best beer product to our customer and consumer. Then, we bring people together and there one of the main aspects is collaboration: we collaborate to ensure the best product is enjoyed by many people. And the last part of our purpose, for a better world, is that our company still understands the importance of ecology, improving our ecosystem and supporting small countries and making sure we support whatever happens in the world with the capabilities that we have.

2. *In what ways do you think the organizational purpose impacts your work and your overall job satisfaction?*

For me it's the common goal for the company that impacts my work. Even though there are different departments which aren't that similar (logistics, finance etc.) the outcome is similar. Each department is bringing a big value to facilitate the purpose and I think that the overall impact is that the purpose is defined in a different way in a different scaling in each department and the outcome is still there, every department is going to bring one step towards the purpose and if you put everything together the purpose is functioning. So, it impacts my work in a way that all of our dream KPIs and SLAs are quantified through the purpose. We are bridging the gap between purpose and our day-to-day activities through our KPIs.

3. *How do you believe your organization's purpose aligns with broader societal goals or the common good?*

So first of all because we are a beverage company, I think it's part of the nicest segments that we can propose to the customer/consumer. On top of that, this company's broader goal is not just having people drink beer but also making sure that every person can enjoy drinking beer the way they like. For this reason, we constantly innovate our products and tailor out products to our consumers with for example providing sugar free beer, alcohol-free beer, or gluten free beer. We are trying to make some segmentation to make sure we can reach as many people as

possible also taking the people's needs and issues into account to make sure they can still enjoy our beverage.

**Purpose statement:**

4. *How aware are you of the company's official purpose statement, and can you briefly describe it?*

I'm very well aware, it is mentioned everywhere in our company. Our company is doing a very good job that all employees do not lose this sight of why are we working every day, why are we there on a day-to-day basis and what should be the outcome? The outcome should be that every team is playing a different role but the common goal is to make sure that everyone achieves it and we then make the purpose of the company reachable for everyone.

5. *Does it have any influence on your daily work?*

Yes for sure. For me the influence is still relating the KPIs and SLAs on the day-to-day work. Working in the collaboration is filling the work with the purpose of the company. On top of this, in this company the social part is really being emphasized by that purpose and living up to it with all the training for employees it provides, all the open bars, and social events such as Halloween contests, etc. You can see that even the leaders who have a crazy agenda take 2 hours to participate in these kinds of events and go with the people. I also see this as the purpose being influenced by the work because it's not only the KPIs and objectives but also the social objectives being emphasized as well.

6. *Have you noticed a difference between the company's official purpose statement and what you perceive as the actual purpose and values of the organization?*

I think overall it's the same. Of course, sometimes it happens that decisions are taken and at my level at the beginning I may not see the fitting or reason behind the decision and the company has a 10 year plan so it's fitting somewhere. So, in the end I don't think it's always 100% fitting because you may not be convinced right away, but overall yes. Indeed, it can happen that sometimes these values are maybe a bit disformed versus the actual situation or actual decision being taken.

**Work centrality:**

7. *How would you describe the role of work in your life? Is it a central or peripheral aspect and why?*

At the end of the day it's a central aspect of my life. I mean the bare minimum is spending 8 hours a day at work for 5 days a week. However, I do still believe that for me at least there's a barrier to understand when it's time for work and when to close the laptop and not think about work anymore which then should make the work life balance as much as possible.

8. *In your opinion, does your perception of the company's purpose play a role in how central your work is to your life?*

Yes, it does. I think working for a company when you are aligned with the purpose and the values, and you are aligned with what you work makes the difference of enjoying what you're doing. Also, when discussing your work with other people and you feel good about it,

you feel proud about it then I think that really means you believe in the purpose and you kind of agree why your work is so central in your life and not just a hobby.

*9. Have you ever felt guilty or conflicted about taking time off from work? Can you explain why?*

For sure. When you have a situation where your team is in a tough situation, there's a high workload because you are missing people in your team, then of course it's complicated to take time off from work. The reason is kind of simple – it's because you are enjoying work and employees will believe in the company and who are really enjoying the work I think indeed people, including me, feel guilty in a way and it's part of the ownership. This is what our company does well: with this ownership the company is giving you a lot with all of the training and responsibility from an early stage and everything you can do on the side but then in return through this ownership you are giving a lot to this company. So, when you need to take time off you will somehow impact your friends/your colleagues at work and that's something you think of because of the extra workload they might not enjoy their day as much etc.

*Do you feel more guilty in your new role as team lead?*

I think so, in a way when you're moving up as a leader the sick leave part is more tough. How much can I do until when can I leave work. My team is doing it as well so why can't I do it? It's also the people looking up to me. It's not just me and my backup but my whole team that I let down during the day.

### **Work meaningfulness**

*10. What makes work meaningful to you? Do you think the organizational purpose aligns with your personal values in this regard? How do you find meaning in your current role?*

Right now it's that I believe I can bring my touch and I'm not only blindly following processes but I can really present what I feel make sense and my ideas can be voiced. Yes I think that our purpose aligns with my values in this regard because one part of the purpose is the collaboration, bringing people together for more cheers and being able to bring your touch and looking for improvement in any type of department you are in is I think really part of the purpose. At the end of the day it's making sure we have a product that is drunk by millions, billions of people and I think that's fully in line with the purpose and the meaningful work that we do.

In my current role as a manager how I find meaning is through the people. We know the jobs we do are sometimes repetitive, some processes are not the best, however, for me finding the balance and bringing this balance to the team where the outcome is seeing them enjoy their work, improve, and grow, is the best outcome and where I find meaning because in my role because the day-to-day processes don't change as much as the people and being able to see that in one year my specialist is moving up and becoming an expert is the meaningfulness of my work.

*11. Can you recall a specific experience at work that made you feel your job had a positive impact on others or contributed to a greater purpose?*

For me there are 2 aspects there. In every role that I did (I worked in finance, customer experience, and now consumer experience), there is really one common objective: making the process more efficient for our end consumers. We're not just following but improving procedures. If I look at myself as a consumer trying to call my phone company because there is an issue with the bill I think to myself come on they could have done this or this better and I see that from our company it's part of the day to day and we're trying to make sure this is given to all our people and making sure we are improving this, so this is where the job has a positive impact. On top of this, company wise one of the latest examples is when the Ukrainian and Russian conflict happened, our company put a tremendous effort in organizing and supporting our employees who worked in the Ukraine or near the borders, or who had families in the Ukraine. Some of those people just stopped their day to day job and started a new day-to-day job and bringing people together, making sure they brought the employees back safely and also their families. On the job level as well as company level there's a lot of positive impact relating and contributing to the greater purpose.

*12. Do you think organizational purpose affects how meaningful you find your work? If so, how?*

Yeah, for sure. The purpose is related to the day-to-day activities for every individual to the company and how each role in the end aligns with it. If you truly believe in your role and not just looking at the 9-5 job, then yes the purpose is going to be fully aligned because you will see what you are working for and not just looking at the job from a salary perspective but also at the meaningful aspect of work. As an employee you will give as much as you can in your role, you're willing to work extra hours when necessary and you're also joining the voluntary social gatherings of the company. You will be part of all the small things making the purpose valid for the company and really bringing your touch and thinking and feeling the purpose in your day to day activities.

***Interview 7: Beverage Industry, Graduate Management Trainee, Female, 24, has been with the company for 9 months; Teams meeting, duration 28 minutes***

*1. Can you please describe how you perceive the organizational purpose of this company? (what do you think it is)*

Our company has quite a strong organizational purpose. So the purpose is to dream big to create a future with more cheers and they really use this purpose quite a lot so I feel like it's very very present in the company at all times and I feel like it's really a guiding principle that is quite present so for example for other companies I've worked for before I didn't feel like I knew as much about their purpose is or what their kind of vision is and here at this company it is definitely quite strongly visible.

*2. In what ways do you think the organizational purpose impacts your work and your overall job satisfaction?*

In terms of job satisfaction it does really improve it because I can align myself with this purpose and I agree with it so I feel like having those values align is something quite important to me and I think it is really is a good purpose you know it's well written it makes sense for the company we are creating a future with more cheers being a beverage company like it does make sense and I do enjoy it so in that sense I would say it is a positive thing for sure. I would say it doesn't impact my work in a direct way but you know obviously because you can feel the purpose and it's quite visible you always want to kind of align with it but I would say what is more relevant are the 10 principles that are going with the purpose and I would say that those 10 principles are much more guiding in a sense because they're much more concrete so if you look at those that definitely impacts kind of how I make decisions and how I works but much more, for example with like ownership or collaboration and just the purpose is maybe too broad to be connected directly to my everyday work I would say.

3. *How do you believe your organization's purpose aligns with broader societal goals or the common good?*

I think it really aligns because it's thinking about the future, thinking about the future generations, about being sustainable, about bringing happiness and connection so I do think it does really align with societal values and it's quite progressive in that sense.

**Purpose statement:**

4. *How aware are you of the company's official purpose statement, and can you briefly describe it?*

I'm very aware and I feel especially like most new joined employees are briefed quite a lot on this purpose statement and I think at one point I knew those 10 principles by heart so definitely quite aware.

5. *Does it have any influence on your daily work?*

I would say not as much on my daily work, it's more the 10 principles that affect my work but in general it's nice to have this guiding, bigger sense of knowing that you're doing something to bring consumers together for example. Now, doing my rotation in the brewery I'm working on the packaging and our goal is to package the beer in the best way so that it's the best experience for our consumer so in that sense it is in line with our bigger purpose which is then creating more cheers and we do that through a good way of packaging for example.

6. *Have you noticed a difference between the company's official purpose statement and what you perceive as the actual purpose and values of the organization?*

Not so much. I think it does really align. Obviously, there are differences in the way that maybe the work environment is or the way people work in teams or some structures or values but overall I would say it is definitely quite aligned. I also think it wouldn't really be an option for it not to be aligned because it's something so important to the company so if you work here you usually align with it anyway.

**Work centrality:**

7. *How would you describe the role of work in your life? Is it a central or peripheral aspect and why?*

It's quite central, especially now being in the beginning of my career I would say it is really one of the or maybe the most central part of my life. I don't think it will be like this my whole life but for the moment, starting a career, for sure.

8. *In your opinion, does your perception of the company's purpose play a role in how central your work is to your life?*

I guess indirectly because I chose this company based on their values and that goes along with the purpose statement and my work is so central to me because I like this company, I like my job and so obviously I chose it for this reason and to build a career in this company but then on the other side I'm not thinking about the purpose all the time when I work and think oh because we want to create a better future for more cheers I'm going to work harder today.

9. *Have you ever felt guilty or conflicted about taking time off from work? Can you explain why?*

Yeah for sure. When you work especially on a project where you're responsible for and you take time off, it's not really always the best feeling knowing you're losing time in a sense to work on it, so I've definitely felt guilty before. But nevertheless, I do value work-life balance a lot and I will take the holidays that I am entitled to for sure.

### **Work meaningfulness**

10. *What makes work meaningful to you? Do you think the organizational purpose aligns with your personal values in this regard? How do you find meaning in your current role?*

For sure the colleagues and work environment are really crucial to me and how I work in the team. I feel like everyday, that's the most important that you work well with others or have a good atmosphere. Having the purpose, or knowing that my work is something valuable and helps the company, others or just someone in some way. I'm really motivated the least when I know I'm working for nothing like I'm doing a meaningless task. Having a career goal and knowing that if I perform well it might result in higher career growth is also what makes work quite meaningful.

Currently I'm doing a project in packaging. I've developed a data tracking platform system which I have now integrated into the team so it is meaningful straight away because it is being used everyday and really see the practicality of what I'm doing is really important to me and with my colleagues as well knowing that they are supportive and I can work well with them and also knowing that I am being evaluated on my project gives me meaning where people are looking at my work and it's not going unnoticed.

11. *Can you recall a specific experience at work that made you feel your job had a positive impact on others or contributed to a greater purpose?*

Yeah I think the project I'm doing right now. Just seeing straight away that I have improved something, I've managed to change a manual process into a digital one and seeing all the

benefits that it brings, making things much easier and more engaging.

*12. Do you think organizational purpose affects how meaningful you find your work? If so, how?*

Yes for sure, especially in our generation or with my peers I have noticed it is so much more important, people want to work for a company that they align their values with and which they stand behind so if a company doesn't have a meaningful or valuable purpose that you yourself find positive, you will not work well or find meaning in your work. So in that sense I think it's very important and even if you don't notice it on a daily basis, it does really impact the working environment in general.

***Interview 8: Consulting, IT-consultant, Female, 24, has been with the company for 1 year; Phone call, duration 27 minutes***

*1. Can you please describe how you perceive the organizational purpose of this company? (what do you think it is)*

I don't perceive our purpose as very unique. Like there are some companies that have a really unique purpose where you can also distinguish them from others because of their purpose but I don't think our company has a very extraordinary purpose. I think it's as with most companies we have a purpose but there's not that much behind it. Our purpose is building a better working world.

*2. In what ways do you think the organizational purpose impacts your work and your overall job satisfaction?*

I would say not much. I see the purpose everyday but it's not like it guides me through my work, through my job that I know that the purpose is that and that so I would say not in many ways – actually not at all. Of course I'm doing things that make the working world a better place because I'm a consultant so yes of course it's somehow true, but it's not because of the purpose that I do this job it's more because it makes sense that I do my job that way.

*3. How do you believe your organization's purpose aligns with broader societal goals or the common good?*

Of course my work is somehow connected towards the common good because making a better working world is strengthening the economy and therefore increasing GDP etc. and maybe then also the society in a way because when a society is wealthier people might feel better. Of course we also have sustainability goals etc., which is not stated in the purpose but still very important to us, but I don't know how good this is all transferred to the reality – yes you can have these goals but do you really fulfill them is the other question... So, yes it kind of aligns but maybe not the maximum that you could do.

**Purpose statement:**

*4. How aware are you of the company's official purpose statement, and can you briefly describe it?*

Yes, so as I already mentioned it's building a better working world. Currently, the focus is especially on the technology transformation here so I would say it's just doing the best so our clients' jobs can be easier, more automated to make their work also more efficient.

5. *Does it have any influence on your daily work?*

Yes, because I work in technology transformation so I try to help our customers do things more efficiently, do things differently than they did before, so yes it influences my daily work.

6. *Have you noticed a difference between the company's official purpose statement and what you perceive as the actual purpose and values of the organization?*

I mean of course like the actual purpose will probably be making money. I mean of course there's always a focus on what are the numbers, what market entries do we currently have, who are our customers or how are we growing - so that's always the main focus I would say. I mean there are less variety of projects of course there are some values but at the end it's still about how profitable the company is so it's not like that we are like a social enterprise and we like spend a lot of money just out the good of our heart.

#### **Work centrality:**

7. *How would you describe the role of work in your life? Is it a central or peripheral aspect and why?*

I mean of course it's central in a way to I spend a lot of time on it but it's like not the main thing I always think about or talk about. Like in my free time I'm not talking about work a lot because it's like still work, I don't have the feeling that the work I do is like my own purpose in life like my main points so not that much.

8. *In your opinion, does your perception of the company's purpose play a role in how central your work is to your life?*

Yeah kind of. I think if the purpose was different or if the purpose was more social or environmentally friendly and really undertaken so not just being stated in the purpose but actually implemented throughout the company not just to make money, then I think it would make a difference. But with it just being a statement and in the end it's still about capitalism, I think it's mostly the same.

9. *Have you ever felt guilty or conflicted about taking time off from work? Can you explain why?*

No.

#### **Work meaningfulness**

10. *What makes work meaningful to you? Do you think the organizational purpose aligns with your personal values in this regard? How do you find meaning in your current role?*

I think what makes work meaningful to me is that I can see a difference or an affect on something rather than just doing powerpoint slides which won't make any differences.

Knowing I can have an impact with my work and maybe also having an impact on society or the environment and even political influence would make work meaningful to me.

Of course I think everyone strives for improvement in some ways but it's not that I strive for a better working world in my free time so in some ways it does align and in others it doesn't. How I find meaning in my current role is speaking to customers, seeing that they are happy with the results etc., talking and working with colleagues and hearing from them also helps me find meaning.

*11. Can you recall a specific experience at work that made you feel your job had a positive impact on others or contributed to a greater purpose?*

Currently, I'm investigating an IT system for our customer to help them realize some results they want to improve on and that's great but it wasn't really an exceptional experience for me.

*12. Do you think organizational purpose affects how meaningful you find your work? If so, how?*

Yeah I would say so. I mean to have a purpose is one thing but to really implement it and really live by it is another thing. But if you really do so, really work towards this goal and don't just put pretty letters somewhere, I would say of course it affects me. For example, I cannot imagine working for a company that is building weapons, even though their purpose might be to make the world more peaceful because by building weapons they don't really act like it in my opinion. So, if you can see the results of working towards that purpose it would also make me proud to work for that company.

## **Appendix C – Qualtrics Online Survey Questions**

### **Part 1: Perceived organizational purpose:**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your organization's purpose: 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

- My organization aims to contribute to the common good.
- My organization seeks to create a positive change in the world.
- My organization aims to achieve something that goes beyond its own benefit.
- My organization remains true to its core values even when conflicts occur.
- My organization is fully committed to its overarching goals.
- My organization credibly embodies its core values.
- My organization's overarching goals provide orientation in complex situations.
- My organization's higher goals guide decisions and actions.
- My organization's overarching goals provide stable guidance in times of rapid change.
- My organization unites through inspiring higher goals.
- My organization conveys the idea of being part of something bigger.
- My organization inspires by providing a higher cause.

### **Part 2: Purpose Statement:**

- What is your company's purpose?
  - o Open text field
- Does your company have a purpose statement?
  - o Yes
  - o No
  - o I don't know
- Where did you find the purpose statement?
  - o Remembered it
  - o Internet
  - o Official data
  - o Other (open text field)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the organization's purpose statement: 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree)

- I am aware of the organization's purpose statement and can recall its content.
- The organization's purpose statement positively influences my understanding of our goals and actions.
- I believe that the organization's purpose statement is a driving force behind our work and decision-making.
- The organization's purpose statement motivates me to align my efforts with its goals and values.
  
- To what extent is [company name] stated purpose appealing? (1=not at all, 5=to a great extent)
- To what extent is [company name] stated purpose inspiring? (1=not at all, 5=to a great extent)

### **Part 3: Meaningful Work:**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your work: 1(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

- I have found a meaningful career
- I view my work as contributing to my personal growth
- My work really makes no difference to the world. (reverse coded)
- I know my work makes a positive difference in the world.
- My work helps me better understand myself.
- My work helps me make sense of the world around me.
- The work I do serves a greater purpose
- I feel good about the ways we contribute to the community
- When I look at what we accomplish, I feel a sense of pride
- I'm proud to tell others I work here

### **Part 4: Work centrality:**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the centrality of work in your life: 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree)

- The most important things that happen to me involve my work.
- The major satisfaction in my life comes from my work.
- I have other activities more important than my work (reverse coded)
- I am persistently thinking about work when not working.
- I feel guilty when I take time off from work.
- Work is an important part of who I am.
- Work is the most important thing in my life.
- I am a better person when I am working.
- When I work, I feel that I am doing what I should be doing.
  
- Please indicate the overall importance of work in your life (from 1=low to 5=high)

**Part 5: Control Variables: Organizational culture**

- How long have you worked at [Company Name]?
  - o Less than 6 months
  - o 6 months – 1 year
  - o 1 – 2 years
  - o 2 – 5 years
  - o 5 – 10 years
  - o More than 10 years
- Please rate [company name] culture on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is ‘Poor’ and 5 is ‘Excellent’
- How satisfied are you with your work-life balance at [company name]?
  - o Very dissatisfied
  - o Somewhat dissatisfied
  - o Neutral
  - o Somewhat satisfied
  - o Very satisfied
- How would you rate the performance of the senior management team at [company name]?
  - o Very poor
  - o Poor
  - o Neutral
  - o Good
  - o Excellent
- Considering your overall experience, how satisfied are you with your time at [company name]?
  - o Very dissatisfied
  - o Somewhat dissatisfied
  - o Neutral
  - o Somewhat satisfied
  - o Very satisfied

- Which industry is your company in?
  - Aerospace
  - Automotive
  - Beverage
  - Consulting
  - Event management
  - Financial Services and Banking
  - Healthcare
  - IT
  - Other (please specify)
- In which department do you work in?
  - Customer experience
  - Finance
  - Human Resources
  - IT
  - Legal and Compliance
  - Marketing
  - Sales
  - Supply Chain and Procurement
  - Other (please specify)

#### **Part 6: Control Variables: Demographics**

- What gender do you identify as?
  - Male
  - Female
  - Diverse
  - Prefer not to say
- How old are you?
  - Free text field
- What is your nationality?
  - German
  - French
  - Belgian
  - Spanish
  - Other [Free text field]
- What is your employment status?
  - Part-time
  - Full-time
- What is your monthly net income?
  - ≤ €500
  - €501 - €999
  - €1,000 – €1,999
  - €2,000 – €2,999
  - €3,000 – €3,999

- $\geq$ €4,000
- Prefer not to say