Examining How Belongingness and Uniqueness Aspects of Inclusion Inform Social Identities and Well-being During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

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Abstract

Recent research on social inclusion suggests that inclusion is better understood as the satisfaction of both uniqueness and belongingness needs. Considering these two dimensions, Shore et al. (2011) developed the Inclusion Framework determining four different inclusion-based orientations (inclusion, assimilation, differentiation and exclusion). In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, I empirically investigate the Inclusion Framework and examine social identities and well-being consequences of employees with different levels of belongingness and uniqueness perceptions. To do so, I conducted a cross-sectional survey of 454 British employees. Two inclusion-based clusters (inclusion and exclusion) were identified. Employees in the inclusion cluster felt higher levels of organizational and familial identities as well as higher self-esteem, work engagement and lower burnout. There was no significant difference in gender identity levels between both clusters. These results are in line with expectations based on the Inclusion-Identification Model and are useful to inform managers about beneficial organizational practices towards their employees. Additional exploratory analyses suggest that employees who commuted to work before and during COVID-19 are more present in the exclusion than in the inclusion cluster.

Keywords: inclusion, uniqueness, belongingness, social identity, well-being, COVID-19, teleworkers

Examining How Belongingness and Uniqueness Aspects of Inclusion Inform Social Identities and Well-being During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The aim of this study is to examine how perceptions of work group inclusion, understood as having both belonging and uniqueness needs satisfied, affect social identities and well-being in the context of a worldwide pandemic where the workplace location of many employees has changed.

Organizational research is becoming to understand the importance that employees feel included[1] in their workplaces and work groups (e.g. Pelled et al., 1999; Shore et al., 2011; Chung et al., 2020). Thus far, inclusion has been found to be positively related with multiple well-being and performance outcomes (e.g. Acquavita, et al., 2009; Mor Barak et al., 2006; Jansen et al., 2014; Cho & Mor Barak, 2008; Chung et al., 2020; Adams et al., 2019). Moreover, in their Inclusion-Identification Model (IIM), Adams et al. (in progress) argue that inclusion effects on well-being are mediated by individuals' social identities; that is, it is through stronger identities that inclusion improves well-being. Note that the IIM follows Shore et al. (2011) 's understanding of inclusion as the satisfaction of both belongingness and uniqueness needs.

Taking into account this model, the current thesis investigates the effects of belongingness and uniqueness perceptions on social identities and well-being outcomes. Specifically, I focus on three social identities (organizational, familial, and gender identities), one general aspect of psychological well-being, self-esteem, and two aspects of organizational well-being, burnout and work engagement (all these constructs are explained below). Moreover, while the inclusion literature has mainly focused on inclusion based on demographic characteristics like ethnicity, race, age, gender, or educational level (e.g.

[1] Note that throughout the text when I talk about inclusion I refer to *perceptions of social inclusion*.

Acquavita et al., 2009; Janssens & Zanoni, 2008; Cho & Mor Barak, 2008) this study investigates how different types of work location are related to inclusion. As a consequence of COVID-19, many employees have adapted their work arrangement from working in the office to doing partial or complete telework (Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés, 2020). Arguably, this changing working structure could be impacting perceptions of belongingness and uniqueness. Therefore, I exploratorily analyze how types of work location relate to inclusion.

This research is valuable in three ways. First, by diverging from the traditional way of understanding social inclusion, it provides an empirical contribution to the recent inclusion literature that understands inclusion as the satisfaction of both belongingness and uniqueness needs (Shore et al., 2011; Chung et al., 2020). Second, it leverages on the unprecedented situation we are currently living in, the COVID-19 pandemic, to better understand how changes in work location could influence inclusion perceptions. Third, its results can have practical value for managers who can implement organizational practices to improve employees' well-being.

Conceptualizing inclusion

Traditionally, social-psychological and organizational research has focused on the consequences of exclusion, ostracism, rejection, or discrimination (e.g., Williams, 2007; Schmitt et al., 2014; Bobowik et al., 2017). In some instances where the focus has been on inclusion, inclusion has been understood as the opposite of exclusion. An example of this is Mor Barak and colleagues' development of inclusion-exclusion measures (Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998; Mor Barak, 2005). The authors understand inclusion-exclusion as a "continuum of the degree to which individuals feel a part of critical organizational processes

such as access to information and resources, involvement in work groups, and ability to influence the decision making process" (p. 48, Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998).

Departing from the exclusion focus, Brewer (1991) 's Optimal Distinctives Theory (ODT) builds from social identity theory and focuses on inclusion. She suggests that the most beneficial level of inclusion takes place when individuals identify with social groups in a way that both needs of belongingness and uniqueness are equally "activated". In that sense, Brewer (1991) 's theory is the first to remark that inclusion is a combination of belonging and uniqueness perceptions and highlights the necessity of a compromise between opposing belongingness and uniqueness needs in order to achieve inclusion.

Shore et al. (2011) build from ODT with an important twist. The authors understand that there is no tension between the achievement of belongingness and uniqueness and that, in fact, inclusion takes place when both needs are (highly) satisfied. As such, they define inclusion as "the degree to which an employee perceived that he or she is an esteemed member of the work group through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs for belongingness *and* uniqueness" (p. 1265, italics added). Note that, in contrast to the unidimensional definitions of inclusion mentioned above where inclusion is understood as the opposite of exclusion or as compromise between belongingness and uniqueness, Shore et al. (2011) understand inclusion as a bidimensional construct composed by belongingness and uniqueness. As such, they create a 2x2 Inclusion Framework with four cells depicting different employees' orientations: (a) inclusion (employees experiencing high belongingness and uniqueness), (b) assimilation (employees experiencing high belongingness but low uniqueness), (c) differentiation (employees experiencing high uniqueness but low belongingness), and (d) exclusion (employees experiencing low belongingness and

uniqueness, see Figure 1 at Shore et al., 2011). As explained below, this study will empirically test Shore et al. (2011) framework.

Exclusion-based and inclusion-based models

Previous authors have theorized about the consequences of exclusion/rejection (inclusion), explaining how social identities can be a buffer from its negative effects (enhance its positive effects) on well-being (Branscombe et al., 1999; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009; Adams et al., in progress). In this regard, it is interesting to take a deeper look at the construct of social identity defined as "the part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his[her] knowledge of his[her] membership of a social group together with the emotional significance attach to that membership" (Tajfel, 1974; as cited in Ellemers & Haslam, 2011).

The exclusion and inclusion-based models refer to two types of social identities: subordinate and superordinate identities. Subordinate identities refer to social categorizations that have elements of differentiation with the overall group (and can be a potential source of discrimination). For instance, in an organizational context with employees from different ethnicities, one subordinate identity could be their ethnic background. Conversely, as all employees are members of the same organization, the superordinate identity would be their organizational identity.

The Rejection-Identification Model (RIM; Branscombe et al., 1999) focuses on *subordinate* identities and argues that, while perceived discrimination has negative effects on well-being, perceived discrimination will also increase the subordinate identities of rejected individuals which in turn will increase their well-being, thus alleviating the negative effects of discrimination. The Rejection-*Dis*identification Model (RDIM; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009) builds from the previous model but highlights the role of the *superordinate* identity. Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. (2009) argue that perceived exclusion will decrease superordinate

identity and in turn, increase hostility to members from the superordinate group. This decrease in superordinate identity also explains the negative impact that exclusion has on well-being (Bobowik et al., 2017).

As reviewed by Bobowik et al. (2017), these rejection-based models have received mixed support. The inconsistency of the literature's findings led Adams et al. (in progress) to develop the Inclusion-Identification Model (IIM). The IIM differs from the models above in one fundamental way. It centers around the concept of inclusion arguing that reducing exclusion, discrimination, or rejection, is not enough to promote positive social identities and well-being, but that *active* inclusion is actually required. In line with Shore et al. (2011), active inclusion is achieved when belongingness and uniqueness needs are satisfied. The IIM predicts that high levels of perceived uniqueness and belongingness will positively influence subordinate and superordinate identity, which in turn, will increase employees' well-being.

Following the IIM model, this study tests how the belongingness and uniqueness aspects of inclusion influence social identities and well-being outcomes. Note that because of time constraints I will not focus on the mediation role of social identity relating inclusion and well-being, but only focus on the fundamental relationships of the model. As such, in the next section, I describe how uniqueness and belongingness influence social identities, in the following one I relate these inclusion dimensions with well-being outcomes.

Identity consequences of the belongingness and uniqueness dimensions of inclusion

As described above social identity refers to the cognitive awareness and emotional attachment to a social group (Ellemers & Haslam, 2011). Among the wide range of social identities that humans can identify with, I focus on three: organizational, familial, and gender identities. First, as this project examines inclusion in the workplace, the superordinate identity is organizational identity. This is defined as "perception of oneness with or

belongingness to an organization, where the individual defines him or herself in terms of the organization(s) in which he or she is a member" (Mael & Ashforth, 1992, p. 103). Previous research indicates that this identity explains how employees approach their work, interact with colleagues, and consider joining or leaving organizations (Ashforth et al., 2008).

On the other hand, as subordinate identities, I consider gender and familial identities. First, gender is a salient social category that has been found to have protective well-being effects for women (Karelaia & Guillé, 2014). Second, familiar identification might stem as a relevant identity as employees are currently opting for work arrangements that allow them to achieve greater work-life balance (Broschak et al., 2008).

Based on correlational evidence testing the IIM (Adams et al., in progress), arguably one could expect that the group of employees scoring high on belongingness and uniqueness (inclusion orientation) will experience high levels of superordinate identity. Considering the theoretical arguments of the RDIM, it could be expected that the opposite will be true for the group of employees scoring low on belongingness and uniqueness (exclusion orientation).

The link between inclusion and subordinate identities has been less clear in the exclusion- and inclusion-based models. Nevertheless, in one of their two cross-sectional studies Adams et al. (in progress) found a positive relationship between inclusion and ethnic-identity. Thus, one could expect to find that groups of employees with inclusion orientations will experience high levels of gender and familial identities. On the other hand, given the mixed-findings relating exclusion perceptions and subordinate identities it would be difficult to make a prediction regarding that relation.

To my knowledge, no empirical findings are linking Shore et al. (2011) 's belongingness and uniqueness aspects of inclusion with superordinate (but see Chung et al., 2020) and subordinate identities. As such, it is difficult to ascertain what would happen when

employees have high perceptions only in uniqueness or belongingness. The acculturation literature (for a review see Berry, 2017) can provide insights into that. Specifically, Bourhis et al. (1997) 's model of host community acculturation orientations depicts that an assimilation orientation takes place when a host group accepts that immigrants adapt to the host culture but rejects that they maintain their own culture. Conversely, a segregation orientation takes place when a host group accepts that immigrants maintain their own culture but reject that they adapt to the host one.

Considering this, if a group of employees perceive that others accept them in the work group but that their different characteristics are not valued (assimilation orientation), it could be expected that they would identify with the superordinate group but separate from their subordinate identities. Moreover, for the group of employees who do not feel accepted in the work group but feel their identity is valued (differentiation orientation), one could expect that they would disengage from the superordinate identity but hold to their subordinate identities.

Well-being consequences of the belongingness and uniqueness dimensions of inclusion

Well-being is broadly defined as optimal functioning and psychological experience (Deci & Ryan, 2008). As a measure of psychological well-being, I focus on global self-esteem. This measure provides a self-evaluation of how individuals see themselves in general (Rosenberg et al., 1995). I also focus on two organizational well-being measures, work engagement and burnout. These last two measures are conceptually related, they measure the state of energy and confidence (work engagement) vs. the state of exhaustion and doubtfulness (burnout) that employees feel when performing their work (Maslasch et al., 1997).

Inclusion has been found to influence a variety of well-being and performance outcomes (e.g. Acquavita et al., 2009; Mor Barak et al., 2006; Cho & Mor Barak, 2008;

Jansen et al., 2014; Chung et al., 2020). For instance, Mor Barak et al. (2006) found that inclusion was negatively related to stress and positively related to well-being. Their findings suggest that the later relation then influenced job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Mor Barak et al., 2006). Moreover, the relationship between perceptions of inclusion-exclusion and job satisfaction was also found in Acquavita et al. (2009). Similarly, Cho and Mor Barak (2008) found that inclusion perceptions of South Korean workers were positively related to their organizational commitment and job performance.

Using a bidimensional measure of inclusion, Chung et al. (2020) found that inclusion was positively related to helping behaviors, creativity, and job performance. Moreover, examining the distinctive effects of belongingness and authenticity components of their inclusion scale, Jansen et al. (2014) hypothesized and found considerable support for (a) belongingness predicting affective outcome, (b) authenticity predicting productive outcomes, and (c) an interaction term combining both dimensions adding strength to the main effects.

Based on these findings and the inclusion- and exclusion-based models, it could be argued that employees with an inclusion orientation would experience the highest levels of self-esteem, work engagement and the lowest levels of burnout. Conversely, employees with an exclusion orientation would experience the lowest levels of well-being.

The acculturation literature is again useful to help make expectations about well-being effects only when either belongingness or uniqueness are perceived as high. Studying a sample of immigrants, Berry et al. (2006) found that " people who are largely embedded within their own cultural milieu and show little involvement with the larger society" (ethnic profile, p. 103; Berry et al., 2006) had higher levels of psychological well-being[2] than those "high on national identity and on assimilation and very low on ethnic identity" (national

[2] Psychological well-being was assessed with measures of self-esteem, life satisfaction and psychological problems (Berry et al., 2006).

profile, p. 104; Berry et al., 2006). Moreover, these two groups experienced lower psychological well-being than individuals with an integration profile but higher than members under the diffuse profile (for information on these profiles see Chapter 4 in Berry et al., 2006).

Therefore, one could expect that employees with differentiation orientations would have higher well-being outcomes than employees with assimilation orientations, and also that these last groups of employees would fall in between the employees with inclusion and exclusion orientations.

Employment structure during COVID-19

At the time that this thesis is being written, the spring of 2020, the world is living through a worldwide pandemic affecting many aspects of people's lives. Given that an effective way of preventing the spread of the disease is to maintain social distance (World Health Organization, 2020), many employees have changed their current working situations (Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés, 2020). As a matter of fact, working from home when possible is recommended by health and governmental institutions. For instance, in June 2020, when the survey for the current thesis was taken, the British government was recommending to its citizens to stay home and to try to work from home (GOV.UK, 2020a).

Because of this situation, there are five different types of working employees: those that (a) rarely worked from home before but now work from home every day ("newbie teleworkers"), (b) sometimes worked from home before and now work from home every day ("somewhat experienced teleworkers"), (c) have always worked from home and continue to do so now ("experienced teleworkers"), (d) currently work from home but still commute to work some days ("parly teleworkers, parly commuters"), and (e) continue to commute to work every day even during the COVID-19 pandemic ("commuters").

Previous research suggests that working away from the central workplace influences constructs related to inclusion. For instance, empirically analyzing the perceived isolation that teleworkers felt, Bartel et al. (2012) found that the degree of physical isolation experienced by employees diminished their organizational identification through lower respect perceptions. Interestingly, their measure of respect evaluates "the extent to which respondents perceive that they are included and valued as members of the organization" (p. 748), which resembles this paper's conceptualization of inclusion.

I believe the current situation can be useful to gain nuanced insights on the inclusion effects of changing work locations. Comparing the five different groups of employees mentioned above can help us to have a greater understanding of whether the intensity of telework or familiarity with it, can impact perceived uniqueness and belongingness of employees.

Research questions and hypothesis

The first objective of this study is to examine whether the Inclusion Framework (Shore et al., 2011) could be replicated through cluster analysis (Research Question 1 [RQ1]). Imputing the belongingness and uniqueness dimensions in the cluster analysis, I expect to find between two (at least inclusion and exclusion) and four (at most inclusion, assimilation, differentiation, and exclusion) clusters.

The following hypotheses are contingent on the number of clusters found in the cluster analysis. While I write the hypotheses assuming four clusters are found, if a two cluster solution fits better, only those clusters can be considered in the hypotheses.

Regarding the effect of the inclusion-based clusters on social identities, I hypothesize that employees in different clusters will experience different levels of organizational, familial, and gender identities. Specifically, I expect that employees in the inclusion and

assimilation clusters will experience higher levels of organizational identity than employees in the exclusion and differentiation clusters (Hypothesis 1). Moreover, I expect that employees in the inclusion and differentiation clusters will experience higher levels of gender and familial identities than employees in the assimilation cluster (Hypothesis 2). As argued above, given the mixed findings on the RIM model I do not make any hypothesis on the effects of the exclusion cluster.

Regarding the effect of the inclusion-based clusters on well-being consequences, I hypothesize that employees in the inclusion cluster will experience the most positive well-being outcomes, followed by employees in the differentiation clusters and employees in the assimilation clusters; employees in the exclusion cluster will experience the lowest well-being outcomes (Hypothesis 3).

Finally, given the unprecedented nature of the current COVID-19 situation, I will keep the analysis of the relation of types of work location on inclusion, as exploratory. Specifically, I will explore the distribution of employees into inclusion-based clusters by work location type (RQ2).

Methods

Design and procedure

The study had a cross-sectional design. When opening the survey, participants were welcomed to the study and explained the purpose of it. Then, they were asked to accept a consent form and were guided to answer specific measures of interest in the same order as these are reported in the "Measures'" section. After answering an attention check, and whether they believed they qualified for the study, participants were debriefed.

I recruited participants online using Prolific and paid them £1.25 for their contribution. Subjects were preselected to have British nationality, to have worked in their

current organization for more than five months, and to adhere to the five types of work locations described above.

Sampling and sample characteristics

I aimed at recruiting 500 participants. The rationale for this sample size was based on the fact that I am interested in studying five types of work location. As these five types depend on the unprecedented events caused by COVID-19 I could not rely on theory to estimate an expected effect size (and thus I could not compute a priori power analysis). As such, I tried the study with 100 participants per type of work location, that is, a total of 500 participants. Five hundred and four participants completed the survey.

I analyzed the data of participants who reported they would qualify for the study, had been employed (i.e. participants that reported being employed, self-employed, or being students and employed) in the last five months, had no missings in demographic variables and no zero values in the income question. Moreover, after excluding the above participants, 35 (7.2%) failed the attention check. As including the participants that failed the attention check changed the results of the second research question I did not include them[3].

This resulted in a final sample comprising 454 participants (60.8% female, 0.2% diverse, age: $M = 36.28$, $SD = 10.17$). Participants were highly educated (61.5% hold a bachelor's degree (level 6) or higher, see Table 1), were mainly employed (83% employed, 14.5% self-employed, 2.4% student and employed) and had a mean income of £29,711 (SD = 23,784). Table 2 shows that even though 100 participants per type of work arrangement had been preselected through Prolific (see the first question in Appendix B), in my sample there were not 100 employees per work location type. This discrepancy happened (1) because 50

[3]All these exclusion criteria, but excluding participants with zero income values, were preregistered (https://osf.io/jen6g). Despite not being preregistered, a participant with zero income value was excluded as this value indicated that he might actually not be employed or not willing to report his income.

participants were excluded, and (2) as a consequence of a delay between the time participants answered the Prolific preselection question and the moment they answered the same question in this study. It is plausible that, for instance, during the mentioned delay some participants stopped commuting some days to work and instead started fully working from home.

Table 1
Distribution of Valid Participants across Education Levels.

	Sample	
	n	%
Less than high school degree (Level 1)	1	0.22
High school graduate/GCSE (Level 2)	46	10.13
A levels, BTEC or similar (Level 3)	123	27.09
Certificate of higher education, diploma of higher education or similar (Level 4 or 5)	4	0.88
Bachelor's degree or similar (Level 6)	189	41.63
Master's degree or similar (Level 7)	82	18.06
Doctorate or similar (Level 8)	8	1.76
Other	1	0.22

Note: More information on what the education levels correspond to can be found in GOV.UK (2020b)

Table 2
Distribution of Valid Participants across Work Location.

	Sample	
	n	%
Newbie teleworkers	119	26.21
Somewhat experienced teleworkers	83	18.28
Experienced teleworkers	84	18.50
Partly teleworkers, partly commuters	65	14.32
Commuters	96	21.15
Other	7	1.54
Total	454	100

Note: All teleworkers are home-based teleworkers.

Measures

Sociodemographic information. Participants were asked to answer their gender, age, and employment status in the last five months. Moreover, as control measures for the hypothesis testing, I added questions regarding the highest level of education achieved and

estimated annual income. These questions were added as proxies for employees' position in the organizational hierarchy as it seems plausible that employees higher in the organizational hierarchy feel higher levels of uniqueness and/or belongingness. Moreover, previous literature on work arrangements has highlighted how the consequences of alternative work arrangements such as teleworking have a different impact on low vs. highly skilled workers (Spreitzer et al., 2017).

Exploring additional characteristics of the sample, and specifically, looking at whether there are gender and age differences on the other demographics, several significant differences can be noted. First, there is a significant difference between mean income across gender ($F(2, 451) = 11.63$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .049$). Observing the average income for each gender group, it appears that males had a higher income than females and than a participant self-categorized as diverse-gendered. Second, employees with different employment status differed in their mean age ($F(2, 451) = 35.26$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .135$). Specifically, post hoc tests suggest that (a) participants that are self-employed are older than other types of employees and (b) participants that are students and employed are younger than other types of employees (p-values < .001). Third, employees working in different locations differed in their mean age ($F(5, 448) = 6.78$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .070$). Post hoc comparisons suggest that "experienced teleworkers" are significantly older than employees in all the other work location types (p-values < .049). Finally, groups of participants with different education levels also differed in their mean age ($F(7, 446) = 2.84$, $p = .007$, $\eta_p^2 = .043$). Comparing the average age across employees with different education levels, one can see that participants with lower levels of education are older than participants with higher levels of education.

Type of work location. To validate the Prolific preselection, participants choose between the five types of work location previously mentioned: newbie employees, somewhat

experienced teleworkers, experienced teleworkers, partly teleworkers partly commuters, and commuters. Participants could also choose the option "other" if none of the answers applied to them. This and the following measures can be found in Appendix B.

Inclusion. Inclusion was measured with the work group inclusion measure from Chung et al. (2020). This 10-item measure taps into perceptions of belongingness (α = .88) and uniqueness (α = .83) of employees in their work groups. This and following measures were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) unless it is otherwise stated.

Identities. Regarding participants' social identities, first, participants were asked about their gender identity with a 6-item scale (α = .77, Masondo & Adams, in progress). Secondly, they were asked about their familial identity with a 15-item measure adapted form Dimitrova et al. (2017, α = .96). Thirdly, they were asked to answer six items regarding their organizational identification (α = .88, Mael & Ashforth, 1992).

Well-being. First, participants answered two forms of organizational well-being: burnout and work engagement. Burnout was measured with the 5-item Utrecht Burnout Scale (α = .92, Schaufeli & van Dierendonck, 2000) and work engagement with the 9-item version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (α = .93, Schaufeli et al., 2006). For these measures, participants answered how frequently (from 1 (never) to 7 (always) they felt what the item statements described. Secondly, they answered a 10-item self-esteem scale (α = .91, Rosenberg, 1965).

Results

Preliminary analysis

The preliminary analysis consisted of checking for missing values and examining the psychometric properties of the scales used. Checking for missing values, I found one

participant missing one item of the work engagement scale and one participant missing the income question. The first missing was imputed with expectation-maximization (EM) imputation. As explained above, the participant with the missing in the income question was excluded from the analysis.

Regarding the measures' psychometric properties, first I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis for the inclusion scale. The results show that a two factor structure with uniqueness and belongingness dimensions correlating with each other had good fit ($\chi^2 = 95.27$ ($df = 34$), CIF = .972, RMSEA = .063), and fitted better than a unidimensional factor structure ($\chi^2 = 368.78$ ($df = 35$), CIF = .859, RMSEA = .145). The difference in fit between the two models was significant ($\Delta\chi^2 = 273.51$, $p < .001$). This confirmed the presence of the uniqueness and belongingness dimensions in Chung et al. (2020) scale. Moreover, all the scales showed good internal consistency, with alphas higher than 0.77 (see methods), and most scales covered the whole range of response options.

Cluster analysis

In this and next two sections I describe the main analyses which were preregistered in OSF (https://osf.io/jen6g). In this section, I describe the cluster analysis performed to answer RQ1. In the next section, I test hypothesis 1 and 3 through analysis of covariances (ANCOVAs). In the subsequent section, I describe a χ^2 -test between the inclusion-based clusters and the work location types performed to answer RQ2.

RQ1 stated that between two and four inclusion-based clusters would be found. I performed a hierarchical cluster analysis using Ward's procedure and squared Euclidean distances. The input variables were the uniqueness and belongingness scales. Based on inspection of distances between clusters and the dendrogram, a two-cluster solution appeared to fit the data better. Moreover, in line with the previous theorizing, the two-cluster solution

showed that employees in one cluster scored high in both uniqueness and belongingness while employees in the other cluster scored around the scale midpoint (3 in a 5-point scale) in both uniqueness and belongingness. Based on the cluster mean scores (see Table 3) it was decided that the first cluster, representing included employees, would be named "inclusion cluster", while the second cluster, representing moderately excluded employees, would be named "exclusion cluster". Two ANOVAs suggest that employees in each cluster significantly differed in their average levels of belongingness ($F(1, 452) = 532.94$, $p < .001$) and uniqueness ($F(1, 452) = 310.68$, $p < .001$). Effect size estimates suggest that the mean difference in these two dimensions is large ($\eta_p^2 = 0.54$ and 0.41 for belongingness and uniqueness respectively).

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviation of Inclusion Dimensions by Inclusion-based Clusters.

	Inclusion cluster (n = 348, 77%)		Exclusion cluster (n = 106, 23%)		ANOVA across clusters		Effect size
Variable	M	SD	M	SD	*F*	*p*	η_p^2
Belongingness	4.16	0.50	2.86	0.52	532.29	< .001	0.54
Uniqueness	4.11	0.47	3.15	0.54	310.68	< .001	0.41

Note: Belongingness and uniqueness scales range from 1 to 5.

Hypothesis testing

In order to test the stated hypotheses, six analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) were performed with the inclusion-based clusters as the independent variable, education and income as covariates and identity and well-being measures as dependent variables (see Table 4 for a summary of the ANCOVA results).

Hypothesis 1 stated that employees in the inclusion cluster would experience higher levels of superordinate identity than employees in the exclusion cluster. The ANCOVA supports the hypothesis, as employees in the inclusion cluster felt significantly higher organizational identity than employees in the exclusion cluster ($F(1, 450) = 52.52$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.10$).

Hypothesis 2 made predictions regarding the levels of subordinate identities for the inclusion, assimilation and differentiation clusters but not for the exclusion cluster. Thus, this hypothesis cannot be tested here. Nevertheless, one can inspect the ANCOVAs results and observe that while there is no significant difference on gender identity across cluster groups ($F(1, 450) = 3.21$, $p = .074$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.01$), there is a significant difference in familial identity across clusters ($F(1, 450) = 12.84$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.03$); employees in the inclusion cluster felt significantly higher levels of familial identity than employees in the exclusion cluster. Comparing the results of the first three ANCOVAS, the mean difference between clusters for organizational identity had a medium to large effect size, but mean differences in subordinate identities had a small effect size.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that employees in the inclusion cluster would experience higher well-being than employees in the exclusion cluster. The ANCOVAs show that hypothesis 3 is confirmed for the three well-being measures. Employees in the inclusion cluster (vs. exclusion cluster) experienced significantly higher self-esteem ($F(1, 450) = 12.26$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.03$), work engagement ($F(1, 450) = 98.85$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.18$) and lower burnout ($F(1, 450) = 38.01$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.08$). It is interesting to note that the largest mean difference between the two clusters occurred for the work engagement measure, followed by the measure of burnout. The mean difference in self-esteem across both clusters is of a small to medium effect size.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviation of Study Dependent Variables by Inclusion-based Clusters.

	Inclusion cluster (n = 348, 77%)		Exclusion cluster (n = 106, 23%)		ANCOVA across clusters[1]		Effect size
Variable	M	SD	M	SD	*F*	*p*	η_p^2
Organizational identity	3.62	0.79	2.96	0.90	52.52	< .001	0.10
Gender identity	3.80	0.58	3.68	0.60	3.21	0.074	0.01
Familial identity	4.23	0.76	3.93	0.83	12.84	< .001	0.03
Self-esteem	3.62	0.72	3.33	0.76	12.26	0.001	0.03
Burnout	3.76	1.08	4.55	1.41	38.01	< .001	0.08
Work engagement	4.70	0.95	3.64	1.00	98.85	< .001	0.18

Note: Organizational, gender, familial identity and self-esteem range from 1 to 5. Burnout and work engagement range from 1 to 7.

[1]Covariantes in ANCOVAs are highest education level accomplished and estimated average income

Results from analysis of variance (ANOVAs), without the income and education covariates, are displayed in Appendix A. These results parallel the ANCOVAs results: while all identities were stronger in the inclusion cluster vs. the exclusion cluster, the difference of gender identification across clusters was not statistically significant. Moreover, like for the ANCOVAs, all measures of well-being were significantly more positive in the inclusion vs. the exclusion cluster.

Relation between types of work location and inclusion-based clusters

RQ2 aimed at examining the distribution of employees into the inclusion and exclusion cluster by the five types of work locations. To analyze this relationship I conducted a χ^2-test. As can be seen in Table 5, there appears to be an association between cluster membership and work location type (χ^2 (5) = 11.12, p = .049). Specifically, considering the

adjusted standardized residuals one can see there is a larger than expected number of "commuters" in the exclusion cluster compared to the inclusion cluster. For no other work location type, there seems to be a large discrepancy between the expected and actual counts.

Table 5
Distribution of Employees into Inclusion-based Clusters by Work Location.

	Inclusion cluster			Exclusion cluster		
	n	%	ASR	*n*	%	ASR
Newbie teleworkers	94	27.01	0.70	25	23.58	-0.70
Somewhat experienced teleworkers	69	19.83	1.54	14	13.21	-1.54
Experienced teleworkers	65	18.68	0.17	19	17.92	-0.17
Partly teleworkers, partly commuters	53	15.23	1.01	12	11.32	-1.01
Commuters	62	17.82	-3.15	34	32.08	3.15
Other	5	1.44	-0.33	2	1.89	0.33
Total	348	100	-	106	100	-

Note: $\chi^2(5) = 11.12$, $p = .049$. ASR = adjusted standardized residuals. All teleworkers are home-based teleworkers.

Discussion

Recent inclusion literature suggests that inclusion is better understood by taking into account both belongingness and uniqueness perceptions (Shore et al., 2011; Chung et al., 2020). Following this conceptualization of inclusion, this thesis' first goal was to see how many clusters of employees could be found by taking into account the belongingness and uniqueness dimensions of inclusion. If a four-cluster solution was found, it could mean that Shore et al. (2011) 's Inclusion Framework had been replicated with cluster analysis. A second goal was to compare the levels of (a) social identification with different social groups (organizations, family and gender) and (b) well-being (self-esteem, burnout and work engagement) across the inclusion-based clusters. The final goal was to explore whether there was an association between the inclusion-based clusters and employees' work location type. To answer these questions, a cross-sectional survey was conducted with British participants from Prolific.

First, to my knowledge, this was the first study to empirically examine the Inclusion Framework (Shore et al., 2011) through cluster analysis. In my sample of British employees using the Prolific platform during the COVID-19 pandemic, I could not replicate the 2x2 Inclusion Framework. As a matter of fact, the cluster analysis fitted best with two of the clusters: one in which employees had high levels of belongingness and uniqueness (referred as the inclusion cluster) and another in which employees had significantly lower levels of belongingness and uniqueness (referred as the exclusion cluster). As the differentiation and assimilation groups could not be found, this raises the question of whether the Inclusion Framework should be reassessed.

Second, the results suggest that employees in the inclusion cluster felt higher levels of superordinate (organizational) identity. However, the role of the subordinate identities was not clear. While employees in the inclusion cluster felt higher levels of familial identity than employees in the exclusion cluster, there was no significant difference between both clusters in terms of their gender identification. These results are in line with previous mixed-evidence regarding the role of subordinate identities. As mentioned, while the RIM suggested that excluded employees would feel higher subordinate identities (Branscombe et al., 1999), this effect has not been broadly supported (for a review see Bobowik et al., 2017). Unfortunately, the study at hand does not allow to clarify how subordinate identities of employees are felt when they feel included vs. excluded. However, note that as employees in the inclusion cluster felt higher familial identity, my results provide partial evidence against the RIM.

Moreover, results show that employees in the inclusion cluster felt higher self-esteem, work engagement, and lower burnout than employees in the exclusion cluster. Notably, the strongest effect size was for the work engagement measure. This suggests that while being included can affect multiple well-being outcomes, it especially influences the state of energy

and confidence that employees have at work (i.e. work engagement). Note that even if I did not test the mediation role of social identity on the relation between inclusion and well-being, the results of this survey provide some evidence for the expectations of the IIM (Adams et al., in progress).

Third, it appears that people with different job locations systematically differ in their inclusion perceptions. However, I was not able to detect a clear pattern explaining how the intensity and/or familiarity with telework influences inclusion. It appears that the exclusion cluster contains a higher proportion of "commuters". This result contradicts previous findings showing that teleworkers experience lower perceptions of being included and valued members of the organization (Bartel et al., 2012). This could be explained by the fact that this study was conducted at the time of extraordinary circumstances (COVID-19) influencing employees' usual practices.

Trying to understand the above findings, some potential explanations seem reasonable. First, it could be that "commuters" in the sample are employees who are now explicitly or implicitly forced to commute to work despite governmental recommendations of not doing so. Arguably, if these employees feel they need to commute even if they do not want to do so, they may feel unprotected by their organization, thus feeling detached from it. Secondly, it could be that employees that have to commute during COVID-19 have different types of jobs than the rest of the employees in the sample. People that do not need to commute during COVID-19 might have higher skills than commuters. Nonetheless, further research should be conducted to support these arguments.

Practical implications

This study further extends the prevailing evidence suggesting that if managers want their employees to be healthy and motivated at work they need to make sure that their

workforce feels included. As a consequence, I would suggest that managers implement organizational practices to strengthen employees' belongingness and uniqueness perceptions. In order to understand what kind of practices should be implemented, it is interesting to look at research from Janseens and Zanoni (2008) and Hofhuis and colleagues.

A qualitative study by Janssens and Zanoni (2008) suggests that three organizational practices have a positive impact on inclusion. First, organizations should implement practices that ensure equal treatment among all employees. Second, practices should be put in place so that all employees are able to express their identity. Third, practices that valorize the competences of minorities should be put forward. Moreover, work by Hofhuis and colleagues (Hofhuis et al., 2012; Hofhuis et al., 2016) discuss one type of organizational climate that foster (a) employees' dual identity patterns, so that employees feel identified both with the superordinate (organizational) and subordinate (e.g. cultural) identities and (b) positive job-related outcomes such as improved job performance. Their proposed organizational climate is named "diversity climate" and is characterized by creating an environment where there is "openness towards and/or appreciation of individual differences", Hofhuis et al., 2016, p. 1).

As such, the practical recommendation would be to create practices that actively include employees. These practices should (a) elicit the idea that all employees are treated equally, (b) put forward that diversity among employees is an asset and (c) stress that employees should follow their own working style to maintain their unique identities.

Limitations and further research

It is important to recognize the limitations of the current study. First, the study had a cross-sectional design which means that I cannot make causal statements about the relationship between the variables of interest. Secondly, I did not employ a probabilistic

sample of British employees (but surveyed Prolific participants) meaning that results cannot be generalized to British workers' population.

Despite these limitations, the present study is best viewed as a contribution from a larger set of studies examining the IIM by Adams et al. (in progress). These other projects address some of the limitations posed in this study. As a matter of fact, those studies were performed in different samples (e.g. Muslim Dutch employees, employees from Germany, Indonesia and South Africa, university students) and had different designs (some had experimental designs and another included longitudinal data). Further research should also employ probabilistic sampling.

A third limitation should be noted. In the third part of this study, five types of work location were considered. However, it is important to note that working from home in the current situation of COVID-19 should not be equated to teleworking in a normal setting without a worldwide pandemic. For instance, teleworkers before COVID-19 could interact with more people than in the current situation where social distancing or even lockdowns have been applied. Moreover, currently, parents that telework are engaged in child-care duties as most schools are closed, which can affect the time they devote to work and their productivity, potentially influencing their burnout and work engagement. Further research empirically examining the relation between inclusion and different types of work arrangements should be done under non-pandemic circumstances.

Conclusions

This study showed that, when performing a cluster analysis imputing the belongingness and uniqueness aspects of social inclusion, a two cluster solution had best fit. In one of these clusters, employees had high perceptions of belongingness and uniqueness and in the other cluster, employees had moderate perceptions of these two dimensions. This

result raises the question of whether Shore et al. (2011) 's theoretical framework is able to reflect the real perceptions of employees during the pandemic. Indeed, it questions whether employees can feel unique while not feeling belonging and vice versa.

In line with the IIM (Adams et al., in progress), the study also showed that employees in the inclusion cluster felt higher levels of organizational and familial identities as well as higher levels of self-esteem, work engagement and lower levels of burnout compared to employees in the exclusion clusters. These results are relevant to inform managers about what practices they can implement to improve their employees' well-being. Finally, in this study, performed during the COVID-19 pandemic, employees that commuted to work were more present in the exclusion cluster compared to the inclusion cluster. As this finding diverges from previous literature, I hope that they motivate future research on the impact of diverging work arrangements on uniqueness and belongingness perceptions.

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Appendix A

Table A1

Means and Standard Deviation of Study Dependent Variables by Inclusion-based Clusters.

	Inclusion cluster (n = 348, 77%)		Exclusion cluster (n = 106, 23%)		ANOVA across clusters		Effect size
Variable	M	SD	M	SD	*F*	*p*	η_p^2
Organizational identity	3.62	0.79	2.96	0.90	52.73	< .001	0.10
Gender identity	3.80	0.58	3.68	0.60	3.16	0.076	0.01
Familial identity	4.23	0.76	3.93	0.83	12.34	< .001	0.03
Self-esteem	3.62	0.72	3.33	0.76	12.66	< .001	0.03
Burnout	3.76	1.08	4.55	1.41	37.68	< .001	0.08
Work engagement	4.70	0.95	3.64	1.00	98.91	< .001	0.18

Note: Organizational, gender, familial identity and self-esteem range from 1 to 5. Burnout and work engagement range from 1 to 7.

Appendix B

Type of work location measure.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, are you working from home?

- Yes, I am working from home everyday. I rarely worked from home before COVID-19 (less than 1 day a week). [Newbie teleworker]
- Yes, I am working from home everyday. I sometimes worked from home before COVID-19 (1 day a week or more). [Somewhat experienced teleworker]
- Yes, I am working from home everyday. I always worked from home before COVID-19. [Experienced teleworker]
- Yes, I am sometimes working from home, but still commuting to my workplace on other days. [Partly teleworker, partly commuter]
- No, I am still commuting to work everyday, even during the COVID-19 pandemic [Commuter]
- Other

Inclusion measure.

Please indicate the degree to which you personally agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the work group in which you work.

- I am treated as a valued member of my work group. [Belonging]
- I belong in my work group. [Belonging]
- I am connected to my work group. [Belonging]
- I believe that my work group is where I am meant to be. [Belonging]
- I feel that people really care about me in my work group. [Belonging]
- I can bring aspects of myself to this work group that others in the group don't have in common with me. [Uniqueness]
- People in my work group listen to me even when my views are dissimilar. [Uniqueness]
- While at work, I am comfortable expressing opinions that diverge from my group. [Uniqueness]
- I can share a perspective on work issues that is different from my group members. [Uniqueness]
- When my group's perspective becomes too narrow, I am able to bring up a new point of view. [Uniqueness]

Gender identity measure.

These statements are about gender. When you respond think about yourself as a man or a woman.

- I feel a bond to other people of my gender.
- I know what typical behaviors of males and females are.

- I understand pretty well what it means to be a man/woman.
- I participate in activities typical for my gender.
- I am glad to be a man/woman.
- Being a man/woman is an important part of how I see myself.

Familial identity measure.

In the following questions think about your family. Please indicate how much you personally agree with the statements below.

- I consider myself part of my family.
- I see myself as a member of my family. Being a member of my family is an important part of who I am.
- I perceive myself as part of my family.
- I feel strongly connected to my family.
- I see problems of my family as my problems.
- Being part of my family has much to do with how I feel about myself.
- I have a strong sense of belonging to my family.
- My life is closely related to the life of the members of my family.
- I feel respected by my family.
- If someone said something bad about my family, I would feel that it refers to me.
- When I make plans, I listen to my family.
- I help my family.
- I support and care for my family even if it takes extraordinary time.
- I talk about my problems with my family.

Organizational identity measure.

These statements are related to your thoughts and feelings about the organization you work for and your behavior towards it.

- When someone criticizes my organization, it feels like a personal insult.
- I am very interested in what others think about my organization.
- When I talk about my organization, I usually say ‘we’ rather than ‘they’.
- My organization’s successes are my successes.
- When someone praises my organization, it feels like a personal compliment.
- If a story in the media criticized my organization, I would feel embarrassed.

Burnout measure.

These statements are about how you feel at work.

- I feel mentally drained from my work.
- Working all day is really a strain for me.
- I feel burned out from my work.
- I feel used up at the end of the workday.

- I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.

Work engagement measure.

These statements are about how you feel at work.

- At work, I feel bursting with energy.
- At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.
- When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.
- I am enthusiastic about my job.
- My job inspires me.
- I am proud of the work that I do.
- I am immersed in my work.

Self-esteem measure.

The following questions are about how you feel about yourself.

- I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal level with others.
- I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
- All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
- I am able to do things as well as most other people.
- I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
- I take a positive attitude towards myself.
- On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
- I wish I could have more respect for myself.
- I certainly feel useless at times.
- At times, I think I am no good at all.