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Elaborato finale

**Work as a Calling
in the Humanitarian Sector
Exploring Cross-Cultural Differences**

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Introduction

The idea that work can be understood and lived as a calling has been considered one of the oldest and most-established constructs in the study of work (Thompson & Bunderson, 2019). A recent meta-analysis by Dobrow and colleagues identifies a key tension at the heart of calling theory: there are two different types of calling conceptualised in the literature, marked by internal versus external foci of calling (Dobrow, Weisman, Heller, & Tosti-Kharas, 2023). The lack of a clear and consensual definition in the calling literature had been underlined also by Thompson and Bunderson, who analysed the issues of definition, differentiation, generalizability, and relevance still open in the “Work as a Calling” research (Thompson & Bunderson, 2019).

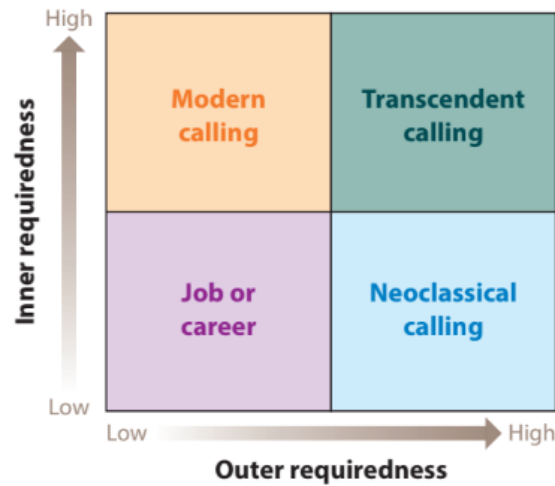
Definitions characterised by what Dobrow et al. define the *external focus*, refer to the *traditional, classical, and neoclassical conceptualisations* of living work as a calling. These perspectives put a strong emphasis on the sense of destiny (i.e. perceiving and living work as something a person is destined to), duty, and obligation to do work that addresses society’s needs (Dobrow, Weisman, Heller, & Tosti-Kharas, 2023). While the more traditional perspectives on work as calling presume the presence of a “divine Caller” (Thompson & Bunderson, 2019, p. 429), this is not required in the neoclassical conceptualisations. In there, a more general “transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self” leaves open the content of the perceived source(s) of calling, which “may range from God to the needs of society to serendipitous fate” (Dik & Duffy, 2009, p. 427).

The *internally (or self-) focused calling* underlines instead the dimensions of passion, enjoyment, and personal meaning (Dobrow, Weisman, Heller, & Tosti-Kharas, 2023) and refers to what have been defined as *modern or secular conceptualisations* of calling. From these perspectives, calling is seen as chosen and enacted as a form of personal expression (Thompson & Bunderson, 2019).

To overcome the dichotomy originated by seeing the two conceptualisations as mutually exclusive, it has been suggested to conceive them as falling along a continuum with the internal/external foci at the opposite ends of the spectrum, or to picture them as orthogonal dimensions in which the full integration of inner requiredness of passion and enjoyment and the outer requiredness of duty and destiny represents the most powerful experience of calling. This option has been presented by Thompson & Bunderson under the name of *transcendent calling* (Figure 1). Dobrow and colleagues suggest that at the core of all definitions lies the idea that people who understand and live work as a calling, experience it as deeply meaningful,

regardless of the focus or source of the calling (Dobrow, Weisman, Heller, & Tosti-Kharas, 2023).

Figure 1 – A framework for calling definitions.¹



The quest for a comprehensive and shared definition of calling has obvious implications for the operationalisation of the concept. Different definitions imply different dimensions and the several calling scales developed over the years measure some, but not others, dimensions of calling². To address the lack of consensus on the components of calling and their operationalisation, Vianello et al. built a comprehensive model which incorporates seven dimensions representing both the neoclassical and modern conceptualisations of calling: identification with the calling domain, pervasiveness of thoughts regarding the calling domain, purposefulness, transcendent summons, prosocial orientation, sacrifice, and passion (Vianello M. , Dalla Rosa, Anselmi, & Galliani, 2018).

The present study adopts this encompassing conceptualisation, for which calling is defined as “a passionate and transcendent summons to pursue a career that motivates people to sacrifice other areas of life for the common good, which pervades all the dimensions of life, is part of an individual’s identity, and gives meaning and purpose to life” (Vianello M. , et al.).

¹ Retrieved from Thompson & Bunderson, 2019, page 432, Figure 3.

² For a thorough review of Calling Scales, see Dobrow et al.,2023, pp. 9-10.

Research Hypotheses

Having addressed *the Question of Definition* as per the choice described above, the present research focuses on *the Question of Generalisability*, summarised by Thompson & Bunderson as the need to further inquire whether “the concept of work as a calling is able to travel seamlessly across cultural, occupational, and socioeconomic boundaries” (Thompson & Bunderson, 2019, p. 436).

The first and second hypotheses underlying this research address the question of generalisability from an occupational perspective.

Research Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis embraces the idea that the strength of the calling experience varies across occupations, expecting to find higher levels of calling in the occupational domain analysed for this research, i.e. the humanitarian sector, in comparison with domains analysed in previous studies, such as teachers, health care workers, professionals and employees working in private sectors³. Such expectation rests on the reflection that callings may be more common in settings where there are both a clear societal need to be filled, which reinforces the sense of outer requiredness, and a need for distinct skills, which in turns foster the sense of inner requiredness, thus creating the powerful integration described above (Thompson & Bunderson, 2019). Both these requirements are assumed to be present in humanitarian sector: humanitarian work is built on the idea of responding to the needs of the most vulnerable people in society, thus serving the common good, and on average requires workers to possess specific skills and competences⁴.

Research Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis is based on the idea that the experience of having a calling can be qualitatively different for people interested in different domains (Vianello M. , Dalla Rosa, Anselmi, & Galliani, 2018). In other terms, some dimensions of the calling can be expected to be more relevant than others in characterising one person’s calling according to the specific occupational domain. In the case of the humanitarian sector, the dimensions of the calling

³ Samples collected in two research studies (Abdirisak Ahmed 2022/2023 and Bettella, 2022/2023) which followed the same definition and operationalisation of calling employed in the present research. To note, the samples of those studies are composed of Italian participants only, while this research includes respondents from a variety of countries, as detailed in the methodology section. Nevertheless, it was considered more appropriate to operate a comparison among studies employing the exact same measure of calling on populations made of workers than among studies employing different scales, also considering that the cross-cultural aspect is not analysed in the testing of Hypothesis 1.

⁴ The original research design included the option of testing also this assumption, by comparing the non-technical staff with staff occupying more specialised positions and answers from groups of workers with different Socio-Economic Status (SES). However, given the very limited number of responses obtained by non-technical staff (5 out of 238 respondents) and the fact that only 10% of the respondents indicated a SES of the family of origin inferior to 5 (on a 1-10 scale, with 1 being the lowest value), this further check did not take place.

which can be understood as closer to the outer requiredness (e.g. Prosocial Orientation) are expected to bear more weight than those representing the inner requiredness (e.g. Passion) in characterising this type of calling, given the pro-social nature of the work. This is meant in relative terms comparing the different dimensions of the same calling, while in absolute terms, all dimensions are expected to contribute to create a strong calling as per Hypothesis 1.

The third and fourth hypotheses concern the cross-cultural aspect of the generalisability question.

Research Hypothesis 3

For decades, scientific knowledge about human psychology has been accumulating findings based on a very specific population, the one more conveniently available to researchers: undergraduate behavioural sciences students from Western, and more specifically American, universities (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). In their 2010 work, Heinrich and colleagues highlighted that findings based on this (sub)population cannot be assumed to be representative of the whole of humanity. The authors claim that the group taken as reference is very unusual, a *WEIRD* population. This wordplay aims at fostering awareness of the risks of generalising findings from this population which is mostly composed of people from Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic societies.

The concept of calling in most of the psychological literature has been conceived as deeply rooted in Western culture: legacy of the Protestant Reformation as per the traditional, classical and neoclassical definitions, or linked to the “modern emphasis on expressive individualism” (Thompson & Bunderson, 2019, p. 430) in the modern conceptualisations. With research in less-WEIRD cultures increasing, so is the need to explore whether calling is conceptualised equivalently across cultures (Vianello M. , et al.). Vianello and colleagues’ recent study, currently under review, addresses the issue of empirically testing whether the multidimensional structure of calling and the relevance of all seven dimensions in defining the construct are valid across cultures. Their overall results confirm the notion that calling is a common human experience and that culture influences the levels of calling’s dimension but not their importance in the construct’s definition.

The present study inquires about the calling construct from a cross-cultural perspective and expects to find a negative correlation between the intra-construct relevance of *external dimensions* of the calling and the *weirdness* of the respondents. In other terms, the calling in/for humanitarian work is expected to be generally characterised by stronger relevance of outer requiredness, as per Hypothesis 2, but this is expected to be stronger in societies identified as

less WEIRD. The definition of WEIRD societies implies in fact a strong emphasis on individualism, especially for what concerns people from the United States of America (USA), who have been identified in a number of analysis to be, on average, “the most individualistic people in the world” (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010, p. 14). On such basis, it is expected to have a stronger prevalence of inner-requiredness (i.e. fulfilment of individualistic needs) in responders from WEIRD societies in comparison to responders from societies more culturally distant from the USA⁵.

Research Hypothesis 4

The last hypothesis concerns the expectation to find a negative correlation between the intensity/strength of the calling and the *weirdness* of the country of origin of the respondents. This is inferred from the previous hypothesis: considering that calling in the humanitarian sector is expected to be qualitative characterised by a stronger relevance of dimensions related to the outer requiredness independently from the country of origin of the responders (as per Hypothesis 2) and that the outer requiredness is expected to be stronger for respondents from less WEIRD countries (as per Hypothesis 3), overall calling is expected to be stronger in those countries. The reasons for this may derive from the prevalence of individualistic values in WEIRD societies presented above, i.e. from the fact that WEIRD societies usually display higher levels of individualism than less WEIRD societies, but also from differences concerning other cultural dimensions among those identified by Hofstede (Hofstede, Hofstede Insights, 2022), as more thoroughly presented in the presentation of the sample.

Another element considered in formulating this hypothesis is that WEIRD countries usually offer a broader range of learning and career opportunities as well as higher social mobility. This element may be expected to create a psychological and socio-economic environment that enables the exploration and fulfilment of callings. As a matter of fact, work volition (e.g. the variable adopted in this study to measure the respondent’s subjective perception of their chances to freely choosing a line of work) is expected to be lower in less WEIRD countries, but it is also expected to be negatively correlated with the strength of the calling, therefore creating a situation where countries with lower social/career mobility also display higher levels of calling⁶.

⁵ Details regarding the calculation of *degree of weirdness* of the countries analysed are presented in the methodology section.

⁶ Details on how this correlation should not be assumed to bear causality value within the scope of this research are further presented in the results and discussion section.

Methodology

Figure 2 – Map representing countries of origin/nationality of respondents.



The survey created for this study saw the participation of a total of 238 workers from 44 countries⁷, who answered the survey using five languages: English, Spanish, Italian, Myanmar language and Arabic⁸. Answers were collected by using an online survey hosted in Qualtrics. Participants were able to access the survey for self-administration after signing the informed consent page, which explained that data produced would have been anonymized and used exclusively in aggregated form for scientific purposes.

Data collection was managed by the psychology graduate candidate student authoring this dissertation, who is a full-time worker in the humanitarian sector.

Data collection started on 6 April 2024 and closed on 5 May 2024⁹; data was collected through anonymous single reusable link¹⁰.

Population of Reference

Seeking complementarity with previous calling studies in which a significant portion of participants is represented by students (Thompson & Bunderson, 2019), the present research focuses on exploring the construct among workers, more specifically humanitarian workers. From the total of 238 answers collected, 219 are from responders working in the humanitarian sector. The distribution of the survey was made with the primary scope of forming a sample of

⁷ See appendix for the complete list of countries and respondents per country. Data regarding the country of origin/nationality was missing from three responses.

⁸ Indicated in order of frequency of use: English – 143 answers; Spanish – 35 answers; Italian – 31 answers; Myanmar language – 24 answers; Arabic – 5 answers.

⁹ This date indicates the export of data utilised for this research. The questionnaire was left open as per the thesis supervisor's advice.

¹⁰ Only one response collected through QR code.

humanitarian workers; it is safe to assume that not-humanitarian workers were only reached through second or third-end distribution: the end-of-questionnaire message invited participants to share with both fellow colleagues and acquaintances working in different sectors. This was added with the idea of potentially using the answers from respondents not working in the humanitarian sector as a control group for testing Hypothesis 1. The total number of answers collected from not-humanitarian workers (18) resulted to be too low to be used as a control group. The answers were therefore maintained in the main sample for testing the research hypotheses, considering that they represent only 7% of the responses and they are therefore assumed not to bear any significant influence on the overall results.

Considering the specific nature of the sector analysed, all organisations for which the humanitarian responders work are assumed to share the four principles of *Humanity*, *Neutrality*, *Impartiality*, and *Independence* characterising humanitarian assistance. These principles originated from the work of the International Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement and were subsequently adopted by the United Nations¹¹. 199 answers come from responders belonging to organisations sharing the additional three principles characterising the RCRC Movement (*Voluntary Service*, *Unity*, and *Universality*). The different components of the RCRC Movement (i.e. the International Committee of the Red Cross – ICRC, the RCRC National Societies and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies – IFRC) are analysed in aggregate manner to ensure the anonymity of the respondents. Looking at the ensemble of organisations the responders belong to, participants can be considered involved in the broadest spectrum of humanitarian aid, engaging in the prevention of, response to and recovery from both natural and anthropogenic disasters, with the main aim of saving human lives, alleviating suffering, and maintaining human dignity. In most of the countries part of the sample, the responders' organisations also engage in development work, where this is linked to disaster prevention and building the resilience of communities. The choice of this specific population of reference is based on the idea that humanitarian workers, especially if employed in organisations sharing the same founding principles and performing very similar activities globally, could well serve for identifying differences that derive from cultural value system, similarly to what claimed by Hofstede regarding the matched samples analysed in his studies on cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2011).

¹¹ See the UN GA Resolution 46/182, retrievable from <https://documents.un.org/doc/resolution/gen/nr0/582/70/img/nr058270.pdf?token=fMeVIf9i1wx6tso7X2&fc=true>

Sampling Method

Participants were recruited on a fully voluntary basis through snowball sampling using the following channels:

1. In-person direct contact between the researcher and colleagues working in the RCRC Movement, who were asked to participate and distribute the survey among colleagues working in the same humanitarian organisation, in other humanitarian organisations, and in different sectors.
2. Personalised emails and/or chat messages (WhatsApp, Viber, Signal, Teams, LinkedIn) sent by the researcher to colleagues working for the RCRC Movement in different countries, asking for participation and further dissemination.
3. Posting on social media channels, in particular LinkedIn¹², calling from participants working for the RCRC Movement.

The choice to rely on a convenience sample derives from the research time constraints: official distribution through institutional channels would have implied approval times which went beyond the timeframe of the research, that was therefore presented to all contacts in the personal capacity of the researcher.

Participants

The sample saw a slight majority of women (56.7%) over men respondents. For what concerns the age, 90% of participants were between 26 and 55 years old, with a few respondents from the other age groups considered in the research. The great majority of participants (83%) had been working in their organisations for at least 2 years, with almost 30% of the respondents employed for more than 10 years in their organisation. Details showed in Table 1.

Table 1 – Participants Demographics¹³

| Age Groups | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| | 18-25 | 26-35 | 36-45 | 46-55 | 56-65 | Over 65 | Total |
| Answers | 4 | 77 | 88 | 51 | 12 | 6 | 238 |
| Seniority – Years in Organisation | | | | | | | |
| | < 1 year | 1-2 years | 2-5 years | 5-10 years | > 10 years | | Total |
| Answers | 18 | 22 | 75 | 56 | 67 | | 238 |

At the time of the data collection, participants were active workers.

¹² Published in the 1st week of April, post shared 6 times and visualised 759 times until 5 May 2024 (LinkedIn analytics).

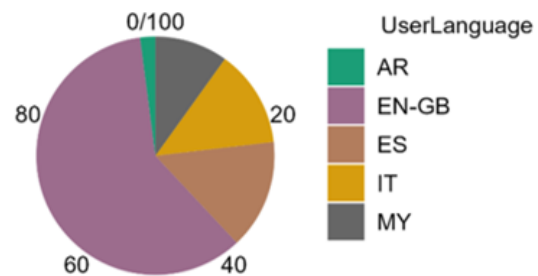
¹³ The table is not meant to indicate a linear correspondence between the age of the respondent and their seniority.

Translations

The research design was originally focused on a more limited number of countries and meant to allow responders to answer in their country's official language, following the recommendation highlighted in previous researches to use native languages in order to avoid language-based biases in answers (Vianello M. , et al.).

However, with the distribution of the survey going well beyond the originally intended target countries, a significant number of responders is supposed to have answered in a language different from their mother tongue. As an example, while over 60% of responders used the English version of the questionnaire, only around 15% of the respondents are assumed to be native English speakers, based on their country of origin/nationality.

Figure 3 – Percentual distribution of response language



The measure of calling used in this study was originally developed and validated in Italian (Vianello M. , Dalla Rosa, Anselmi, & Galliani, 2018), with the English version used for the most recent study by Vianello et al. Such a scale had to be adapted from the focus on “studies” to the focus on “work”. Some of the other validated scales have also been slightly adapted as explained in the *Measure* section. The Italian and English master versions of the whole questionnaire were approved by the supervisors of this research, and the latter was used as reference for the translations into Spanish, Arabic and Myanmar languages. The translations were done by the researcher with support of online translation tools, back translated into English by a person other than the researcher to assess the validity of localised versions and checked by native speakers (two for Spanish version, one for Arabic version, one for Myanmar language version), who engaged in several exchanges with the researcher to evaluate the fidelity of meaning, the adequacy of style, grammar, and idioms.

Cultural Clustering

Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested on the full sample of respondents (238 answers considered). Hypotheses 3 and 4, instead, imply a cross-cultural analysis. To make this as statistically relevant as possible given the dimension of the sample, answers were grouped by clusters based on the cultural distance from a given reference, the United States of America, creating a total of 3 clusters + 1 country on which to test the Hypotheses 3 and 4, for a total of 171 answers considered (see Table 2).

Table 2 – Cultural Clusters, samples for testing Hypotheses 3 & 4. Clusters are indicated in decreasing order of weirdness (from the weirdest cluster, Cluster 1 including the USA, to Myanmar/Cluster 4).

| | Cluster 1: USA, Australia, Canada, Great Britain, New Zealand, Switzerland | Cluster 2: France, Italy, Spain | Cluster 3: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru | Cluster 4: Myanmar |
|----------------------|---|--|---|---------------------------|
| N. of Answers | 48 | 53 | 30 | 40 |

The clustering was created applying the tool developed by Muthukrishna et al. for measuring the psychological and cultural distance between societies and creating a distance scale with any population as the point of comparison (Muthukrishna, et al., 2020). This cultural-distance metric was developed by applying the Fixation Index (FST) technique from population genetics to the World Value Survey (WVS), a large survey of cultural beliefs and behaviours. The result is a *Cultural Fixation Index* (CFST) the authors encourage to use for designing, planning, and justifying comparative psychological projects.

Using the online tool available at www.culturaldistance.com¹⁴, the cultural clustering for the present research was developed as follows:

1. Clusters were formed ensuring internal consistency, through a cross-comparison among all countries belonging to the same cluster. The chosen benchmark to signal cultural proximity among countries within a cluster was fixed at CFST value of 0.060. In other words, the CFST between each pair of countries within the same cluster could not exceed 0.060 for those countries to be considered part of the same cluster¹⁵. This represents a more conservative choice than the one applied by Muthukrishna and colleagues, who indicated 0,077 as upper limit for identifying the first batch of countries on the American scale (i.e. those considered more culturally close to the USA, see Muthukrishna, et al., 2020, pp. 688, Fig. 3). The need for checking internal consistency relies on the notion that, while two countries may be similarly culturally distant from a given point of reference, they are not necessarily similar to each other.
2. Inter-cluster consistency was also checked, to ensure that all countries within a cluster were sufficiently distant from the chosen reference. The United States of America were used as such reference, in consistency with the choice of Muthukrishna and colleagues to build an American scale of cultural distance starting from the most overrepresented country in psychological research, in clear reference to the WEIRD concept described above. Inter-cluster consistency was verified by the same CFST used as benchmark for

¹⁴ The online tool analyses data of 6 WVS waves, from 1981 to 2014.

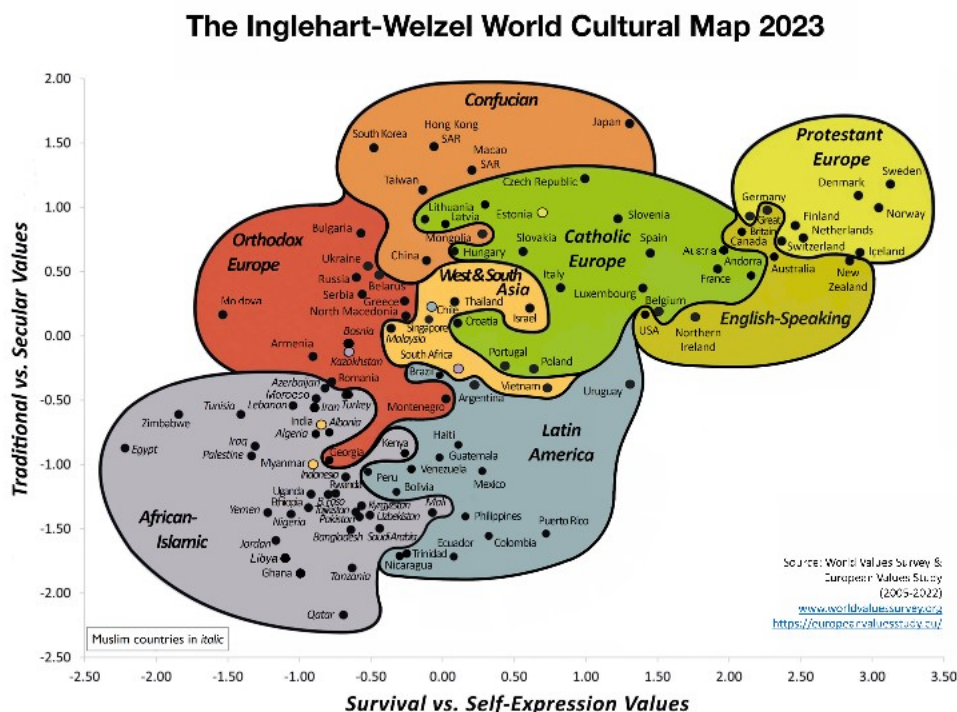
¹⁵ A tolerance of plus 0.001 was applied to two cases and of plus 0.002 to one case to create more relevant samples: Cluster 1: USA - Great Britain (0.061); Cluster 2: France - Spain (0,062), Italy-Spain (0,061). See Appendix for all data on intra and inter-cluster consistency.

intra-cluster consistency. This means that all countries belonging to clusters other than the one with the USA, had to have a value of CFST higher than 0.060 when compared with the USA¹⁶.

Two additional clusters represented by Algeria and Lebanon on the one hand, and Malaysia and the Philippines on the other, presented all the above-described characteristics, but the total number of answers collected (4 and 11, respectively) were not enough to be taken into consideration for testing Hypotheses 3 and 4.

One country presented enough answers alone to be included in the analysis: Myanmar (40). Unfortunately, Myanmar was not included in the WVS waves whose data are used in the cultural distance tool (i.e. up to 2014). Considering that the measure of cultural distance used for this study relies on such a database, it was not possible, especially within the scope of this research, to calculate the cultural distance separating Myanmar and the United States. However, Myanmar appears in The *Inglehart-Welzel World Cultural Map 2023* which was constructed by the author utilising the data from Wave 7 of the WVS (2017-2022), reproduced in Figure 4.

Figure 4 – The Inglehart-Welzel World Cultural Map - World Values Survey 7 (2023)



The map was created by using ten indicators to identify the “Traditional values versus Secular-rational values” and “Survival values versus Self-expression values” dimensions chosen by the authors. For this reason, the map cannot be considered as equivalent to the

¹⁶ A tolerance of minus 0.001 was applied to one case and of minus 0.003 to another case to create more relevant samples: Cluster 3: USA-Brazil (0.059), USA-Mexico (0.057). See appendix for all data on intra and inter-cluster consistency.

www.culturaldistance.com online tool, which instead is based on the whole of the WVS database. Nevertheless, it is here taken as reference to support the assumption that Myanmar can be reasonably considered quite distant from the United States on the American scale of cultural distance. More specifically, for the cross-cultural analyses performed within the scope of this research, Myanmar will be considered as the least weird country/most distant from the United States among the countries considered for the cultural clustering.

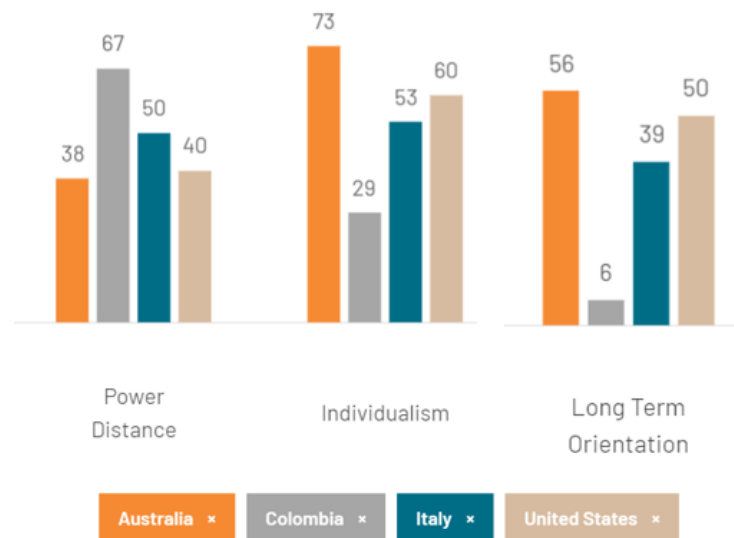
As explained in more details in the Measures section, specific demographic information was collected from responders to verify whether the values of the country indicated as of original/nationality could be considered representing the main culture of reference for the respondent. Most of the cases in which respondents were raised in different countries and/or whose parents were coming from a country other than the one indicated of origin/nationality, did not raise doubts regarding the most appropriate clustering, and remained associated with the cluster/country of origin/nationality¹⁷.

The 3+1 cultural clusters were used also as reference for comparing three of Hofstede's cultural dimensions, analysed through the online country comparison tool (Hofstede, Hofstede Insights, 2022). For this inter-cluster comparison, the country representing the majority of answers for each cluster was chosen: Australia for Cluster 1 (the USA is also indicated considering it was used as reference for measuring the cultural distances); Italy for Cluster 2; Colombia for Cluster 3 (see Figure 5). The comparison suggests the presence of a negative correlation between the dimension of power distance and individualism, which results particularly significant in the cases of Australia and Colombia¹⁸. Power distance is defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally; individualism measures the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members, with high score on individualism accentuating the aversion of being told what to do, i.e. the acceptance of power distance (Hofstede Insights, 2022, consulted on 19 May 2024).

¹⁷ For example, in some cases the respondents spent part of their childhood/adolescence in several countries including the one of origin and the parents were coming from that same country. Only two cases were categorised differently from their country of nationality for the cross-cultural analysis and were included in the cluster of the country where they grew-up, instead of the one of nationality. One case was excluded from the cross-cultural analysis even if the nationality corresponded to a cluster, because of the wide variety of cultural heritage and locations where the respondent had spent the first twenty years of their life.

¹⁸ The Hofstede Insights country comparison tool indicates that Italy as a whole does not have a strong preference for either end of the scale of individualism nor for those of the scale of power distance. This, however, results from a regional divide: the Northern and Central parts of Italy have an individualistic culture and does not easily accept inequalities amongst people as simply a fact of life, while Southern Italy is on the collectivistic side of the scale and have higher acceptance by the less powerful members of society of the unequal distribution of power.

Figure 5 – Power Distance, Individualism and Long-Term Orientation values for Cluster 1 (USA and Australia), Cluster 2 (Italy) and Cluster 3 (Colombia). Adapted from Hofstede’s online country comparison tool (www.hofstede-insights.com)



The country comparison tool describes Colombia as one of “the most collectivistic cultures in the world. Since Colombians are highly collectivistic people, belonging to an in-group and aligning yourself with that group’s opinion is very important. Combined with the high scores in PDI, this means that groups often have their strong identities tied to class distinctions. Loyalty to such groups is paramount [...]. At the same time, conflict is avoided, to maintain group harmony and to save face.” (Hofstede Insights, 2022, , consulted on 19 May 2024). Colombia also results as very normative culture, scoring only 6 in the Long-Term Orientation. This dimension indicates how every society must maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future and how societies prioritise these two existential goals differently. Normative societies, which score low on this dimension, prefer to maintain time-honoured traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion. Despite Myanmar not being present in the database utilised for this tool, the characteristics above described seems fitting very well a society which is still largely based on (ethnic) group identity, that presents great respect for traditions and in which the acceptance of inequalities amongst people as simply a fact of life is also supported by Buddhist approach of all-acceptance.

Measures

The questionnaire created for this research was composed of 8 blocks, for a total of 55 items:

1. Informed Consent
2. Calling
3. Instructions Manipulation Check (IMC)
4. Work Centrality, Work Meaning, Work Volition
5. Socio-Economic Status
6. Demographics
7. Thank you and Debrief
8. End of Survey, including request for further sharing (with link and QR code)

The scales utilised are analysed as follows.

Calling

The main measure of calling employed in this study is the *Unified Multidimensional Calling Scale (UMCS)*, which operationalises the definition of calling incorporating the seven dimensions described in the introductory section. The UMCS is a multi-dimensional measure of calling with the widest construct coverage in comparison with other/antecedent measures of calling: “it measures an internal drive for self-fulfilment, enjoyment, and meaning, which are typical facets of the modern approaches to calling (passion, pervasiveness, purposeful work, and identity) and external references to the source of a calling, in line with a neoclassical approach (transcendent summons, prosocial orientation, and sacrifice)” (Vianello M. , et al.). Originally developed by Vianello and colleagues with 22 items (Vianello, Dalla Rosa, Anselmi, & Galliani, 2018), it was later expanded to 28 items to reach higher internal consistency and an improved factor structure (Vianello M. , et al.), with four items per each of the seven dimensions. This study employed the UMCS-28 and adapted its wording to be focused on work/line of work instead of study¹⁹. The work of Vianello and colleagues currently under review has proved that all 28 items are equally important across countries to define the seven components of calling, suggesting that the seven components of calling are equally important across countries in defining the second-order construct²⁰.

Hypotheses 2 and 3 imply a distinction between dimensions of the calling more related to outer requiredness and dimensions of the calling more related to inner requiredness. Such distinction would allow to test whether a calling for/in the humanitarian sector presents higher values of *pro-sociality* and possibly also *moral duty* and *transcendent summons (TRS)* in comparison to dimensions closer to the inner-requiredness pole (Hypothesis 2), and whether this is

¹⁹ For example, the item indicating “I am passionate about what I am studying” was changed into “I am passionate about my work”.

²⁰ See Vianello M. , et al., currently under review, for a complete review.

particularly relevant in the cases of people coming from less-WEIRD societies (Hypothesis 3). The distinction was made following the idea of a continuum presented in the introduction and in consistency with the definition of calling quoted above which links the seven dimensions to either modern or neoclassical conceptualisations of calling (see Figure 6).

Figure 6 – The UMCS 7 dimensions of calling plus Moral Duty on a continuum.



In addition to the seven dimensions of the UMCS, this study measured the *Moral Duty* component, a measure adapted from *The Call of the Wild* by Bunderson and Thompson. In the appendix of their work, the authors included the scale used in their research on zookeepers, including the Moral Duty scale, developed for their study based on field data and composed of 4 items (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009). The items were adapted to fit the specificity of the humanitarian work sector²¹. The addition of the moral duty component served the scope of reaching the most-balanced spectrum of dimensions along the continuum chosen for testing the study’s hypotheses.

This perspective was adopted to get a better understanding and handling of the complexity of the calling construct, while being fully aware that “dimensions should not be reified. They do not ‘exist’ in a tangible sense. They are constructs: if they exist, it is in our minds (Levitin, 1973)” (Hofstede, 2011, p. 21).

Instructions Manipulation Check (IMC)

The IMC consisted of one single item, asking the participants to select all three response options after a relatively long instruction paragraph.

Work Centrality

Work Centrality was assessed with a single item measure asking respondents to “Indicate how important work is in your life” on a 4-point scale from “very important” to “not at all important”. This item was taken from the World Values Survey, wave 7, Question 5 (WVS, 2017-2021).

²¹ For example, “I have a moral obligation to give my animals the best possible care” was adapted into “I have a moral obligation to assist the most vulnerable people in the best possible way”.

Work Meaning

Work meaning was measured through an adapted version of the *Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI)* developed by Steger, Dik and Duffy (Steger, Dik, & Duffy, 2012). The WAMI is composed of three subscales: Positive Meaning (four items), Meaning through work (three items) and Greater Good Motivation (three items). The last subscale was excluded from this study since its items resulted very similar to those of the Pro Sociality dimension measured in the UMCS. Out of the four items of the first subscale, one was excluded on the basis of having the lowest loading in the corresponding factor (0.60). The total number of items utilised for measuring work meaning was in this way reduced to six, supporting the research design's intention to develop a questionnaire that could have been answered in 5-10 minutes.

Work Volition

The measure of work volition (four items) was taken from the Work Volition Scale developed by Duffy et al. (Duffy, Diemer, Perry, Laurenzi, & Torrey, 2012), using only items 1-4 concerning specifically the volition factor.

Socio-Economic Status (SES)

The SES used in this study was taken from Vianello et al. 2022, who referred to the scale developed by Goodman et al.: a single item very similar to Cantril's Self-Anchoring Striving Scale (Cantril, 1965), included in several Gallup research initiatives, including Gallup's World Poll of more than 150 countries²².

Demographics

The demographic variables considered in this study are the following: Age, Gender, Education, the Organisation the responder worked for (RCRC Movement, Other Humanitarian Organisation, Not Working in the Humanitarian Sector) and the Seniority within the organisation, measured both in terms of position, divided into three categories (Non-Technical / Junior-Middle Management / Senior Management) and in terms of years of employment. In addition, specific attention was put on identifying the main culture(s) of reference for the responder, collecting information on:

- Country(ies) of origin/nationality
- Whether the respondent grew up in that same country(ies) or in (a) different one(s)
- Whether the respondent's family of origin was from the same country(ies) or from (a) different one(s)

²² Goodman, E. Adler, N. E., Kawachi, I., Frazier, A. L., Hiang, B., & Colditz, G. A. (2001). Adolescents' perceptions of social status: development and evaluation of a new indicator. *Pediatrics*, 108(2), E31. Not directly consulted for this study.

Collecting such information was considered important to identify all factors contributing to cultural and psychological differences, i.e. the “kind of worlds we grow up in, the kind of institutions we have to adapt to, the ways our families are structured, and the social and economic world we need to navigate” (Henrich J. , 2020) to avoid wrongly attributing one respondent to a cultural cluster solely on the basis of nationality.

Statistical Analyses and Results

Statistical analyses were performed mainly using JASP, the open-source program for statistical analysis supported by the University of Amsterdam.

The descriptive statistics for all scales are reported in Table 3, while Table 4 indicates the correlation between all dimensions analysed together with the Cronbach's alpha value measuring internal consistency.

Table 3 - Descriptive statistics²³.

| | PAS | IDEN | PURP | SAC | PERV | M. Duty | PROS | TRS | W. Centr. | WAMI | W. Vol. | IMC |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|---------|------|------|-----------|------|---------|------|
| Valid | 238 | 238 | 238 | 238 | 238 | 238 | 238 | 238 | 238 | 238 | 238 | 236 |
| Mean | 3.98 | 4.12 | 4.09 | 3.74 | 3.35 | 3.60 | 4.45 | 3.52 | 1.48 | 4.18 | 3.46 | 1.95 |
| Std. Error of Mean | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.07 | 0.06 | 0.04 | 0.07 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.06 | 0.07 |
| 95% CI Mean Upper | 4.06 | 4.21 | 4.19 | 3.85 | 3.48 | 3.73 | 4.52 | 3.66 | 1.54 | 4.25 | 3.58 | 2.08 |
| 95% CI Mean Lower | 3.88 | 4.03 | 4.00 | 3.64 | 3.22 | 3.48 | 4.37 | 3.38 | 1.41 | 4.11 | 3.34 | 1.82 |
| Std. Deviation | 0.71 | 0.70 | 0.74 | 0.82 | 1.00 | 0.95 | 0.56 | 1.09 | 0.51 | 0.53 | 0.94 | 0.99 |
| Minimum | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.25 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Maximum | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 3.00 |

Table 4 – Correlations between all scales (*Pearson's r*) and Internal Consistency (**Cronbach's α**)

| | PAS | IDEN | PURP | SAC | PERV | M. Duty | PROS | TRS | Work Centr. | WAMI | Work Vol. |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Passion | 0.68 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Identity | 0.60 | 0.74 | | | | | | | | | |
| Purpose | 0.65 | 0.66 | 0.79 | | | | | | | | |
| Sacrifice | 0.57 | 0.51 | 0.58 | 0.79 | | | | | | | |
| Pervasiveness | 0.48 | 0.44 | 0.54 | 0.57 | 0.83 | | | | | | |
| Moral Duty | 0.32 | 0.32 | 0.24 | 0.24 | 0.30 | 0.83 | | | | | |
| Pro-Sociality | 0.41 | 0.51 | 0.39 | 0.38 | 0.24 | 0.26 | 0.72 | | | | |
| Transcendent Summons | 0.42 | 0.38 | 0.41 | 0.41 | 0.41 | 0.53 | 0.34 | 0.88 | | | |
| Work Centr. | 0.44 | 0.41 | 0.45 | 0.48 | 0.38 | 0.33 | 0.18 | 0.25 | — | | |
| WAMI | 0.42 | 0.30 | 0.39 | 0.38 | 0.21 | 0.22 | 0.25 | 0.26 | 0.34 | 0.79 | |
| Work Vol. | 0.35 | 0.14 | 0.20 | 0.18 | 0.07 | 0.09 | 0.14 | 0.16 | 0.12 | 0.32 | 0.85 |

Internal Consistency

As shown in Table 4, internal consistencies are higher than 0.72 across all (sub)scales, except for the dimension of *passion*. To understand whether this result depends on the quality of translations and/or on the fact that a great number of participants answered in a language other

²³ The 7 Dimensions of UMCS (PAS=Passion, IDEN=Identity, PURP=Purpose, SAC=Sacrifice, PERV=Pervasiveness, PROS=Pro-Sociality, TRS=Transcendent Summons) plus Moral Duty (M. Duty in the table) are indicated following the same order of the continuum in Figure 6. The other scales described are Work Centrality (W. Centr.), Work Meaning (WAMI), Work Volition (W. Vol.) and the Instructions Manipulation Check (IMC).

than their mother tongue²⁴, reliability for the passion subscale was calculated for each language. In all five language versions of the survey, the value of Cronbach's α resulted higher than 0.6, therefore excluding the possibility of a bias linked to the language. Another test was run analysing the passion subscale per cultural cluster: this test revealed a rather low level of internal consistency in Cluster 1 (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.44$). This result represents a further confirmation that the low reliability is independent from linguistic bias: Cluster 1 comprises of countries with English as official language²⁵. Table 5 illustrates the mean for each item of the passion subscale divided per cultural cluster²⁶.

Table 5 – Elements Statistics for Passion Sub-Scale divided by Cultural Cluster

| Cluster | | Mean | Std. Dev. | N. |
|---------|--------|------|-----------|----|
| 0 | UMCS_1 | 4,61 | ,650 | 67 |
| | UMCS_2 | 3,54 | 1,247 | 67 |
| | UMCS_3 | 4,18 | ,869 | 67 |
| | UMCS_4 | 4,39 | ,650 | 67 |
| 1 | UMCS_1 | 4,35 | ,785 | 48 |
| | UMCS_2 | 2,85 | 1,255 | 48 |
| | UMCS_3 | 3,96 | ,874 | 48 |
| | UMCS_4 | 3,92 | ,942 | 48 |
| 2 | UMCS_1 | 4,11 | ,870 | 53 |
| | UMCS_2 | 2,87 | 1,127 | 53 |
| | UMCS_3 | 3,85 | 1,045 | 53 |
| | UMCS_4 | 4,17 | ,871 | 53 |
| 3 | UMCS_1 | 4,17 | ,648 | 30 |
| | UMCS_2 | 3,43 | 1,223 | 30 |
| | UMCS_3 | 4,03 | 1,129 | 30 |
| | UMCS_4 | 4,10 | ,923 | 30 |
| 4 | UMCS_1 | 4,55 | ,815 | 40 |
| | UMCS_2 | 3,93 | 1,269 | 40 |
| | UMCS_3 | 4,13 | 1,017 | 40 |
| | UMCS_4 | 4,05 | 1,061 | 40 |

The item presenting the lowest mean in each cluster is the UMCS_2, reading “I enjoy my work more than anything else”, and the variance is particularly significant in Cluster 1 and Cluster 2²⁷. These two clusters include countries with higher levels of *weirdness*. It seems therefore that the reliability of the passion subscale is lower in WEIRD countries/societies and that this depends on the item more closely connected to the dimension of enjoyment. This may indicate a potential correlation between the conceptualisation and relevance of hedonism in a given society and the *weirdness* of that society, and a combined effect on the passion dimension of calling, as defined in the UMCS_28.

²⁴ See Translation section for more details.

²⁵ USA, Australia, Canada, Great Britain, New Zealand. The only exception is represented by Switzerland, but it seems safe to assume that Swiss humanitarian workers participating in this survey possess a quite good professional level of English, being this often a prerequisite to get employed in this sector (to work in Switzerland and/or abroad).

²⁶ Cluster 0 in the table indicates all other countries part of the sample which have not been included in the four cultural clusters.

²⁷ Cluster 2: France, Italy, Spain. Also in this case, the majority of respondents is assumed to have answered the survey in their native language, therefore excluding linguistic biases.

Instructions Manipulation Check

The calculation of the frequency for the IMC revealed that 53% of the respondents did not read the instructions with full attention, with only 110 out of 238 of the participants succeeding in the test, i.e. that selected all three available response options as written in the instructions. Given such a result, a T-test was run for all scales considered, to verify how the respondents who succeeded and the respondents who failed the IMC differ in relation to all scales employed. The *Independent Two-Sample T-Test* revealed that the following dimensions differ significantly between the two groups: *passion, identity, purpose, moral duty, work volition* (see Table 6). Participants who failed the IMC display higher values in these dimensions in comparison to participants who read the instructions more carefully²⁸.

Table 6 - Independent Two-Samples T-Test

| | t | df | p | Cohen's d | SE Cohen's d |
|----------------------|----------|-----------|----------|------------------|---------------------|
| Passion | 2.469 | 234 | 0.014 | 0.322 | 0.132 |
| Identity | 2.548 | 234 | 0.011 | 0.332 | 0.132 |
| Purpose | 1.993 | 234 | 0.047 | 0.260 | 0.132 |
| Sacrifice | 0.553 | 234 | 0.581 | 0.072 | 0.131 |
| Pervasiveness | 0.029 | 234 | 0.977 | 0.004 | 0.130 |
| Moral Duty | 2.030 | 234 | 0.044 | 0.265 | 0.132 |
| Pro-Sociality | 0.306 | 234 | 0.760 | 0.040 | 0.131 |
| Transcendent Summons | 0.966 | 234 | 0.335 | 0.126 | 0.131 |
| Work Centrality | 1.889 | 234 | 0.060 | 0.247 | 0.131 |
| WAMI | -0.623 | 234 | 0.534 | -0.081 | 0.131 |
| Work Volition | 2.319 | 234 | 0.021 | 0.303 | 0.132 |

Considering the dimension of this result, parallel statistical analyses were performed after removing from the sample the answers of participants who failed the IMC. Such analyses are reported in the Appendix for all results that follow as well as for the descriptive statistics and the correlations reported in Table 3 and 4.

Testing of Hypothesis 1

The results in Table 3 show that all dimensions forming the calling in the humanitarian sector are present in the experience of the participants, with the lowest 95% CI Mean across all UMCS + Moral Duty dimensions set at 3.221²⁹. This remains valid also when eliminating the answers of participants that failed in the IMC, with the lowest 95% CI Mean set at 3.16³⁰.

²⁸ See Appendix for the descriptive plot of T-Test for these dimensions.

²⁹ From a scale 1-5, where 1 is "Strongly Disagree" and 5 is "Strongly Agree" referring to the strength of the different dimensions of calling.

³⁰ See Table 3.b. reported in the Appendix.

The expectation to find a stronger sense of calling among humanitarian workers in comparison with other sectors was tested comparing the UMCS sub-scales means resulted from this study with the means obtained in two previous studies that utilised the UMCS_28 on samples composed of teachers, health workers, professionals and employees in both public and private sectors (Abdirisak Ahmed, 2022/2023; Bettella, 2022/2023). Results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7 – One Sample T-Test for UMCS Sub-Scales³¹

| | t | df | p |
|--|-------|-----|--------|
| Passion (Alternative hypothesis: mean greater than 3.31) | 14.24 | 237 | < .001 |
| Identity (Alternative hypothesis: mean greater than 3.33) | 17.36 | 237 | < .001 |
| Purpose (Alternative hypothesis: mean greater than 3.13) | 20.03 | 237 | < .001 |
| Sacrifice (Alternative hypothesis: mean greater than 2.78) | 18.21 | 237 | < .001 |
| Pervasiveness (Alternative hypothesis: mean greater than 2.60) | 11.61 | 237 | < .001 |
| Pro-Sociality (Alternative hypothesis: mean greater than 3.64) | 22.14 | 237 | < .001 |
| Transcendent Summons (Alternative hypothesis: mean greater than 2.72) | 11.39 | 237 | < .001 |

Hypothesis 1 seems therefore confirmed: **workers engaged in the humanitarian sector, which is characterised by both high outer requiredness and high inner requiredness, present on average a higher sense of calling than workers engaged in other sectors.**

Testing of Hypothesis 2

Given the social nature of the work sector analysed, it was foreseen to find higher values in dimensions related to the outer requiredness of the calling, than in those related to the inner requiredness.

The expectation to find a stronger prevalence of Pro-Social Orientation results fully confirmed: the dimension of *pro-sociality* presents the highest mean value (4.445). At the same time, dimensions close to the inner-requiredness end of the continuum also present high values, with *identity*, *purpose* and *passion* following *pro-sociality* in terms of relevance within the construct. *Moral duty*, which was also expected to present high scores, is instead comparatively low. Important to note that this dimension was measured via a different scale than the UMCS and this may partially explain this unexpected result in comparison to the other dimensions. Quite surprisingly if considered the nature of the work that may at times require a 24/7

³¹ See Table 7.b in Appendix for results excluding participants who failed the IMC. Also in that case, all p values are lower than 0.001.

availability, *pervasiveness* resulted to be the dimension with the lowest mean, the second-last being *transcendent summons*.

The different calling dimensions were also analysed per gender performing ANOVA tests, without finding any significant difference, beside slightly higher values in the *pro-sociality* and *transcendent summons* dimensions for women.

No significant correlation was found between the age of the respondents and neither *prosocial orientation* nor *transcendent summons*, whereas previous studies had found such correlation and hypothesised that these dimensions became part of a calling during a later stage of its development and/or that older people gave more importance to typical neoclassical dimensions of calling than younger people (Vianello M. , Dalla Rosa, Anselmi, & Galliani, 2018).

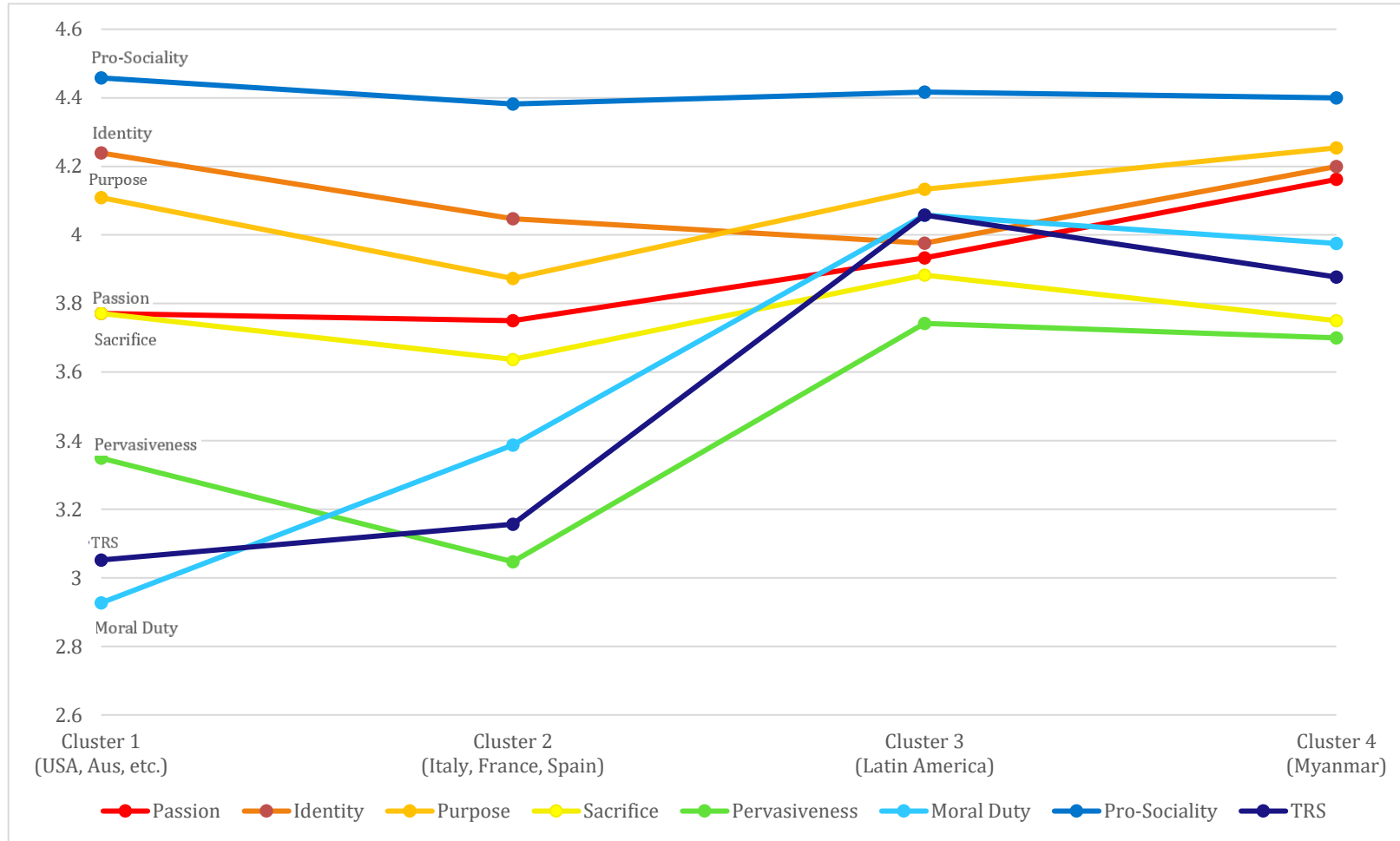
Testing of Hypothesis 3

Hypotheses 3 and 4 were both tested by running ANOVA tests to evaluate the difference between calling measures among the culture clusters identified. Clusters 1 - 4 should be considered in decreasing degree of *weirdness*, having Cluster 1/USA as initial reference point, i.e. highest level of *weirdness*, as for what concerns this study.

The third research hypothesis predicted to find higher levels of the dimensions of calling closer to the outer requiredness pole of the continuum in the less-WEIRD countries. As presented in Figure 7, the research results confirm that outer-requiredness dimensions of calling are higher in less-WEIRD countries. The only exception is *pro-sociality*, which presents the least variability and the highest values across all clusters. This is compatible with the results confirming Hypothesis 2: callings can be considered to differ qualitatively depending on the specific domain and, for the humanitarian sector, the pro-sociality component is the dimension which more strongly characterises this specific calling, also across cultures.

The cross-cultural analysis of the calling dimensions allows for a deeper understanding of some peculiarities observed in the overall results. The dimensions with a relatively low mean in the overall sample, namely *pervasiveness*, *moral duty*, and *transcendent summons*, present the highest cross-cultural variability, resulting particularly low in WEIRD countries, but not so in less-WEIRD countries. The items used to measure *pervasiveness* are the following: “Even when I am not working, I often think about my work”; “My work is always on my mind”; “My days would be less meaningful if I were not often thinking about my work”; “I think about my work every moment of the day”. Lower levels of *pervasiveness* in WEIRD countries may indicate a clearer division, within those societies, between work and private spheres of life.

Figure 7 – Cross-Cultural Comparison of Calling Dimensions (Means). Cultural Clusters are indicated in decreasing order of *weirdness* (from the weirdest cluster, Cluster 1 including the USA, to Myanmar/Cluster 4)³².



³² See Appendix for the detailed values of overall sample and for those referring only to participants succeeding the IMC.

The case of *moral duty* and *transcendent summons* is especially interesting in Cluster 3, where those dimensions result higher than passion and identity, providing an additional confirmation of the prevalence of outer requiredness in comparison to inner requiredness in characterising the humanitarian calling in Latin American countries/cultures.

The fact of having such a wide variability in the moral duty and transcendent summons dimension between the two clusters that represent more-WEIRD countries and the two clusters representing less-WEIRD countries can be taken as **confirmation that the strength of the outer-requiredness dimensions of calling is inversely related to the weirdness of the country/culture of reference.**

Being mindful of the fact that “our species is fundamentally cultural, and thus, [...] cultural differences are also psychological differences” (Muthukrishna, et al., 2020, p. 679), this result seems in line with the idea of a stronger relevance of collectivistic values in less-WEIRD countries than in WEIRD countries, as described in the introduction to Hofstede’s cultural dimensions.

Overall, the cross-cultural differences presented above are valid in both the group of participants that succeeded in the IMC and in those who failed. The dimension of pervasiveness is a partial exception, presenting much lower values in Cluster 3 and 4 in the group that succeeded the IMC than in participants from the same countries who failed the IMC. This is particularly evident in the case of Myanmar, in which the variance of *pervasiveness* between the two groups is much higher than in other countries³³. The dimension of sacrifice also presents a significant difference in Cluster 4/Myanmar, being higher in the group that succeeded the IMC³⁴. This could potentially derive from linguistic biases, considering that almost half of the respondents in Myanmar answered the survey using the English instead of the Myanmar version: the fact of reading instructions with more or less attention could therefore have borne more weight in this case than in other clusters.

Testing of Hypothesis 4

It is interesting to note that the levels of *passion*, *identity* and *purpose* are relatively constant and high across all clusters. This suggests that, while outer requiredness is significantly stronger in less-WEIRD countries in comparison to WEIRD countries, inner requiredness is similarly strong across cultures. Myanmar presents very high levels both in the dimensions

³³ To note, on the overall sample of 238 answers, *pervasiveness* did not result among the dimensions with significant variance between participants that succeeded and participants that failed the IMC.

³⁴ See Appendix for detailed values (means) for each of the calling dimension divided per cluster, for both all participants and for the participants succeeding the IMC only.

closer to the inner-requiredness pole of calling (it scores the highest in *passion* and *purpose*) and in the dimensions related to outer requiredness.

These results seem to confirm Hypothesis 4: **the experience of living work as calling in the humanitarian sector is higher in countries/cultures which are less Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic.**

As expected, this can be related to the fact that respondents from WEIRD countries/cultures present high levels calling dimensions closer to the inner-requiredness pole and comparatively lower levels for outer requiredness (except for *pro-sociality*), while respondents from less-WEIRD countries present high levels of calling also for the outer-requiredness dimensions, contributing to an overall higher sense of calling.

Hypothesis 4 also indicated the possibility of finding a negative correlation between the strength of the calling and *work volition*, following the idea that workers with less opportunities for social mobility tend to feel stronger calling for the work they are currently engaged in. Table 8 shows that, while *work volition* seems to diminish from Cluster 1 to Cluster 3, Myanmar presents a surprisingly high value for this variable, apparently ruling out the option of an association between high level of calling and low levels of social mobility.

Table 8 – Work Volition per Cultural Clusters

| Cluster | N | Mean | SD | SE | Coefficient of variation |
|---------|----|-------|-------|-------|--------------------------|
| 1 | 48 | 3.323 | 0.905 | 0.131 | 0.272 |
| 2 | 53 | 3.142 | 0.876 | 0.120 | 0.279 |
| 3 | 30 | 3.058 | 1.014 | 0.185 | 0.332 |
| 4 | 40 | 3.806 | 0.804 | 0.127 | 0.211 |

The peculiarity of Myanmar respondents presenting highest level of *work volition* in a country thorned by a deep political as well as socio-economic crisis, might be partially explained by the fact that respondents in this country have higher seniority, in terms of position within their organisations, in comparison to other clusters. This is particularly true in comparison to respondents from Cluster 3, that presents low work volition values and almost all answers from respondents employed at technical level or in junior management positions. Another potential explanation could refer to the linguistic bias for respondents from Myanmar mentioned above. The presence of weak correlation between *work volition* and the dimensions of calling was further analysed on the whole sample of answers obtained, as shown in Table 4 at the beginning of the section.

Correlations between meaningfulness in work, as measured by the WAMI scale, and the several dimensions of calling is moderately positive. This seems a confirmation of the fact that calling appears to relate positively to meaningfulness in work, as highlighted in the meta-analysis of Dobrow and colleagues (Dobrow, Weisman, Heller, & Tosti-Kharas, 2023). The results are similar for *work centrality*, which also displays a moderately positive correlation with the dimensions of calling. It is worth noting that within the overall sample, 52% of respondents consider work very important in their life, 45% of respondents consider it rather important, only 1 respondent indicated it as not very important and no one indicated that work was “not at all important” in their lives.

Conclusions

This cross-cultural study involving humanitarian workers in 44 countries produced evidence supporting the idea that work is strongly lived as a calling in the humanitarian sector independently from the country/culture of the respondents. Furthermore, all dimensions of calling utilised in this study resulted relevant across cultures. Future research may further inquire whether results for the item of the UMCS passion subscale which is more closely linked to the concept of hedonism (UMCS_2) are indeed inversely proportional to the *weirdness* of the respondent and whether this may suggest a revision of the subscale. The results obtained in the study also confirmed that the construct of calling varies qualitatively across sectors: in the humanitarian field, the dimension of pro-sociality was confirmed to bear more relevance in defining the construct in comparison to the other dimensions. Quite importantly from the cross-cultural perspective, calling resulted to be negatively correlated to the *weirdness* of the country/culture of the respondents. This mainly resulted from the fact that humanitarian workers in WEIRD countries present high values for the inner-requiredness dimensions of calling (such as *passion*, *identity*, *purpose*), but they have comparatively lower values for dimensions more related to the outer-requiredness pole of the spectrum, such as *moral duty* and *transcendent summons*. Participants coming from less-WEIRD countries (which, in the present study, correspond to more collectivistic cultures and societies with higher tolerance for unequal distribution of power) present instead high values for both the inner- and the outer-requiredness dimensions, resulting overall in stronger calling.

Looking at the future of exploring the experience of living work as a calling in the humanitarian sector and at linking the theoretical analysis to potential practical implementations, cross-cultural research may benefit from mixed-method approaches. Qualitative analyses could in fact allow to gather insights from participants that can further support organisations active in different countries to better understanding how their employees experience their work across the world and how this links to their motivation and performances.

Riassunto in Lingua Italiana

Questo studio interculturale (238 intervistati/e provenienti da 44 Paesi) esplora il concetto di *lavoro come chiamata* affrontando la questione della generalizzabilità attraverso i confini occupazionali e culturali, con focus su un particolare ambito lavorativo: il settore umanitario.

La ricerca ha fornito prove a sostegno dell'idea che la chiamata professionale è più forte in situazioni in cui vi sia un chiaro bisogno sociale da soddisfare, che rafforza il senso di necessità esterna (*outer requiredness*) della chiamata, ed anche il bisogno di specifiche competenze personali, che a sua volta promuove il senso di necessità interiore (*inner requiredness*). Il settore umanitario presenta entrambe queste caratteristiche e i dati raccolti hanno confermato che gli operatori e le operatrici umanitari/e vivono fortemente il lavoro come chiamata. Inoltre, tutte le dimensioni della chiamata utilizzate in questo studio (*passione, identità, scopo, sacrificio, pervasività, pro-socialità e chiamata trascendente* - misurate dall'UMCS_28, oltre al *dovere morale*) sono rilevanti in tutte le culture. I risultati ottenuti nello studio hanno anche confermato che il costrutto di chiamata varia qualitativamente tra i vari settori: nel campo umanitario, la dimensione della pro-socialità si è confermata più forte all'interno del costrutto rispetto alle altre dimensioni.

Dal punto di vista interculturale, la chiamata è risultata negativamente correlata alla *weirdness* (acronimo indicante i Paesi occidentali, con alti livelli di istruzione, industrializzati, ricchi, democratici - Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, Democratic - WEIRD) del Paese/cultura degli intervistati. Ciò deriva principalmente dal fatto che gli operatori e le operatrici umanitari/e dei Paesi WEIRD presentano valori elevati per le dimensioni della chiamata legate al senso di necessità interiore (come la passione, l'identità, lo scopo), ma hanno valori relativamente più bassi per le dimensioni più legate al senso di necessità esterna, come il dovere morale e la chiamata trascendente. I partecipanti provenienti da Paesi meno WEIRD (che, nel presente studio, corrispondono a culture più collettivistiche e a società con una maggiore tolleranza per l'inequale distribuzione del potere) presentano invece valori elevati per entrambe le dimensioni della richiesta interna ed esterna, risultando complessivamente in una chiamata più forte.

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APPENDIX

List of Countries and Answers per Country

| Country of origin | RCRC | Other Hum. Org. | No Hum Org. | Unspecified | Total (Hum.) | Total | Grew up in a different country | Parents from different country |
|------------------------------|------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Afghanistan | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Algeria | 2 | | | | 2 | 2 | | |
| Argentina | 3 | | | | 3 | 3 | | |
| Australia | 12 | | 1 | | 12 | 13 | 1 | 1 |
| Austria | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| Bangladesh | 6 | | | | 6 | 6 | 1 | |
| Bhutan | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| Brazil | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| Canada | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| Chile | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | 1* | |
| Colombia | 17 | | 1 | | 17 | 18 | | |
| Egypt | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| Fiji (& 1 "Pacific Islands") | 3 | | | | 3 | 3 | 1 | |
| France | 9 | | | | 9 | 9 | | |
| Germany | 3 | | 1 | | 3 | 4 | | |
| Grenada | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| Indonesia | 10 | | | | 10 | 10 | | |
| Ireland | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| Italy | 27 | 5 | 5 | | 32 | 37 | 2 | 1 |
| Jordan | | | 1 | | 0 | 1 | | |
| Kenya | 2 | | | | 2 | 2 | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|----|----|---|-----|-----|---|----|
| Lebanon | 2 | | | | 2 | 2 | | |
| Malaysia | 5 | | 1 | | 5 | 6 | | |
| Maldives | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| Mexico | 5 | | | | 5 | 5 | | |
| Myanmar | 23 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 33 | 40 | | |
| Netherlands | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| New Zealand | 3 | | | | 3 | 3 | | |
| Nigeria | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| Pakistan | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| Peru | 3 | 1 | | | 4 | 4 | | |
| Philippines | 6 | | | | 6 | 6 | 1 | |
| Portugal | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Serbia | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| Spain | 9 | | | | 9 | 9 | 2 | 1* |
| Switzerland | 9 | | | | 9 | 9 | 1 | |
| Syria | 2 | | | | 2 | 2 | | |
| Thailand | 2 | | | | 2 | 2 | 1 | |
| Turkey | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| UK | 9 | | | | 9 | 9 | | 1 |
| Ukraine | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| USA | 5 | 4 | 2 | | 9 | 11 | | 2 |
| Vietnam | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| Yemen | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| / Not Specified / | 3 | | | | 3 | 3 | | |
| TOTAL | 199 | 20 | 18 | 1 | 219 | 238 | | |

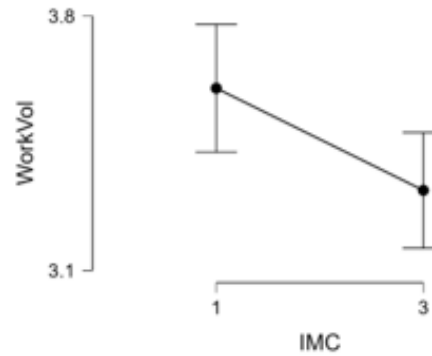
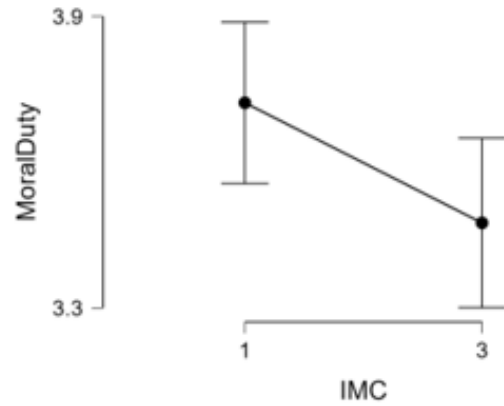
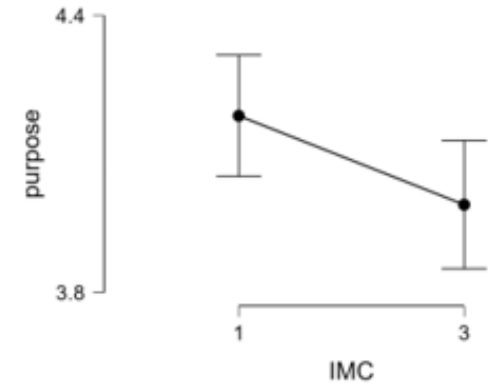
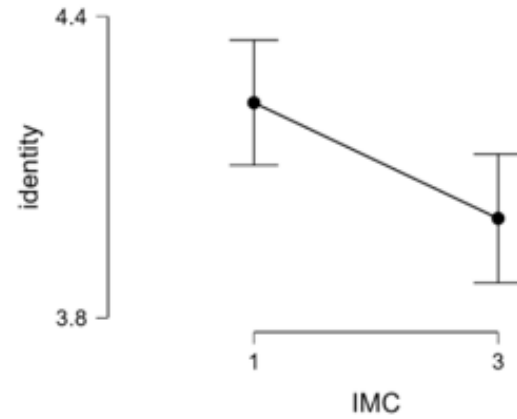
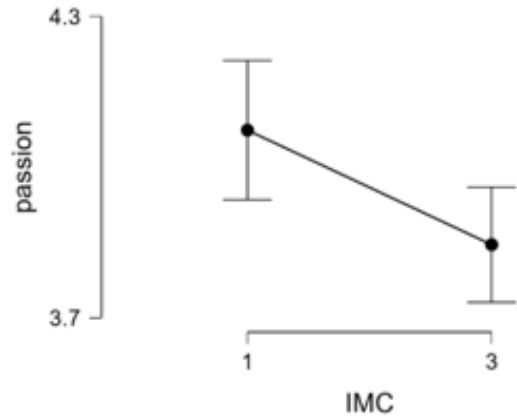
* Responders were added to Cluster 1 based on the country where they grew up/origin of their families

Cultural Clustering: Inter-cluster consistency, CFST > 0.060

| Reference | Cluster 2 | | | Reference | Cluster 3 | |
|-----------|-----------|-------|--|-----------|-----------|-------|
| USA | Colombia | 0,097 | | USA | France | 0,095 |
| USA | Mexico | 0,057 | | USA | Italy | 0,062 |
| USA | Peru | 0,068 | | USA | Spain | 0,070 |
| USA | Brazil | 0,059 | | | | |
| USA | Chile | 0,062 | | | | |
| USA | Ecuador | 0,136 | | | | |
| USA | Argentina | 0,064 | | | | |

Descriptive Plot of T-Test per IMC

The IMC instructed participants to select all three available options. Two participants did not select any option (hence the total number of answers to the IMC is 236 instead of 238 like all other scales).



All results only for participants that succeed in the IMC (110 out of 238 participants)

Table 3.b - Descriptive statistics

| | PAS | IDEN | PURP | SAC | PERV | M. Duty | PROS | TRS | W. Centr. | WAMI | W. Vol. |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|---------|------|------|-----------|------|---------|
| Valid | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 |
| Mean | 3.85 | 4.00 | 3.99 | 3.71 | 3.35 | 3.48 | 4.43 | 3.44 | 1.55 | 4.20 | 3.32 |
| Std. Error of Mean | 0.06 | 0.07 | 0.07 | 0.07 | 0.09 | 0.09 | 0.05 | 0.10 | 0.05 | 0.04 | 0.08 |
| 95% CI Mean Upper | 3.96 | 4.13 | 4.13 | 3.85 | 3.53 | 3.65 | 4.53 | 3.65 | 1.64 | 4.28 | 3.48 |
| 95% CI Mean Lower | 3.73 | 3.87 | 3.85 | 3.57 | 3.16 | 3.30 | 4.34 | 3.25 | 1.45 | 4.12 | 3.16 |
| Std. Deviation | 0.61 | 0.68 | 0.73 | 0.74 | 0.96 | 0.92 | 0.49 | 1.05 | 0.52 | 0.44 | 0.84 |
| Minimum | 2.25 | 1.25 | 1.50 | 1.25 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 3.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 2.50 | 1.00 |
| Maximum | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 |

Table 4.b – Correlations between all scales (*Parson's r*) and Internal Consistency of UMCS sub-scales (**Cronbach's α**)

| | PAS | IDEN | PURP | SAC | PERV | M. Duty | PROS | TRS | Work Centr. | WAMI | Work Vol. |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Passion | 0.53 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Identity | <i>0.40</i> | 0.69 | | | | | | | | | |
| Purpose | <i>0.58</i> | <i>0.58</i> | 0.71 | | | | | | | | |
| Sacrifice | <i>0.34</i> | <i>0.36</i> | <i>0.48</i> | 0.74 | | | | | | | |
| Pervasiveness | <i>0.41</i> | <i>0.35</i> | <i>0.47</i> | <i>0.50</i> | 0.80 | | | | | | |
| Moral Duty | <i>0.25</i> | <i>0.27</i> | <i>0.21</i> | <i>0.12</i> | <i>0.25</i> | 0.78 | | | | | |
| Pro-Sociality | <i>0.15</i> | <i>0.37</i> | <i>0.23</i> | <i>0.10</i> | <i>-0.02</i> | <i>0.25</i> | 0.61 | | | | |
| Transcendent Summons | <i>0.32</i> | <i>0.31</i> | <i>0.34</i> | <i>0.34</i> | <i>0.39</i> | <i>0.42</i> | <i>0.19</i> | 0.86 | | | |
| Work Centr. | <i>0.44</i> | <i>0.40</i> | <i>0.47</i> | <i>0.47</i> | <i>0.37</i> | <i>0.28</i> | <i>0.13</i> | <i>0.26</i> | — | | |
| WAMI | <i>0.48</i> | <i>0.41</i> | <i>0.46</i> | <i>0.31</i> | <i>0.30</i> | <i>0.25</i> | <i>0.23</i> | <i>0.26</i> | <i>0.37</i> | 0.70 | |
| Work Vol. | <i>0.25</i> | <i>0.04</i> | <i>0.09</i> | <i>0.18</i> | <i>0.07</i> | <i>0.02</i> | <i>0.10</i> | <i>0.06</i> | <i>0.02</i> | <i>0.12</i> | 0.77 |

Table 7.b – One Sample T-Test for UMCS Sub-Scales

| | t | df | p |
|--|----------|-----------|----------|
| Passion (Alternative hypothesis: mean greater than 3.31) | 9.27 | 109 | < .001 |
| Identity (Alternative hypothesis: mean greater than 3.33) | 10.30 | 109 | < .001 |
| Purpose (Alternative hypothesis: mean greater than 3.13) | 12.27 | 109 | < .001 |
| Sacrifice (Alternative hypothesis: mean greater than 2.78) | 13.12 | 109 | < .001 |
| Pervasiveness (Alternative hypothesis: mean greater than 2.60) | 8.19 | 109 | < .001 |
| Pro-Sociality (Alternative hypothesis: mean greater than 3.64) | 16.87 | 109 | < .001 |
| Transcendent Summons (Alternative hypothesis: mean greater than 2.72) | 7.31 | 109 | < .001 |

Cross-Cultural Comparison of Calling Dimensions (Means) – Full Sample (Values for Figure 7)

| | Passion | Identity | Purpose | Sacrifice | Pervasiveness | Moral Duty | Pro-Sociality | Transcendent Summons |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cluster 1 | 3.77 | 4.24 | 4.11 | 3.77 | 3.35 | 2.93 | 4.46 | 3.05 |
| Cluster 2 | 3.75 | 4.05 | 3.87 | 3.64 | 3.05 | 3.39 | 4.38 | 3.16 |
| Cluster 3 | 3.93 | 3.98 | 4.13 | 3.88 | 3.74 | 4.06 | 4.42 | 4.06 |
| Cluster 4 | 4.16 | 4.20 | 4.25 | 3.75 | 3.70 | 3.98 | 4.40 | 3.88 |

Cross-Cultural Comparison of Calling Dimensions (Means) – Only participants succeeding IMC

| | Passion | Identity | Purpose | Sacrifice | Pervasiveness | Moral Duty | Pro-Sociality | Transcendent Summons |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cluster 1 | 3.86 | 3.98 | 4.14 | 3.83 | 3.55 | 3.08 | 4.41 | 3.27 |
| Cluster 2 | 3.70 | 3.93 | 3.88 | 3.65 | 3.30 | 3.42 | 4.40 | 3.23 |
| Cluster 3 | 3.87 | 4.05 | 4.06 | 3.67 | 3.51 | 4.06 | 4.40 | 4.01 |
| Cluster 4 | 3.93 | 3.96 | 3.99 | 3.93 | 3.32 | 3.86 | 4.32 | 3.70 |