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Design of strategies for the process of digitalisation and technological modernisation in social services organisations

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EN **Abstract.** This article explores the use of technology by social service professionals during the Covid-19 pandemic, aiming to extract valuable insights to optimise technological transition processes within social organisations. The research views technology as a psychosocial factor within the work environment, assessing its impact on the health and well-being of professionals. A qualitative methodology was employed, utilizing 22 semi-structured interviews with Social Work professionals in Spain. Data were analyzed using Atlas.ti 23 software, following the Grounded Theory approach. The analysis generated 248 codes and 2,543 quotations, of which 57 codes were consolidated under the central theme of "Use of Technological Means." The findings indicate that the use of technological tools during the Covid-19 pandemic helped to reduce the burden of physical documentation, enhance professional coordination-both within organisations and with external entities-and optimise professional-client interactions, among other benefits. The conclusions provide a general framework for designing strategies to facilitate technological transitions in social service organisations, ensuring that technological innovations not only improve workflow efficiency but also enhance the quality of life for professionals within these organisations.
Keywords: Social Services; Digitalization; Social Work; ICT; Covid-19.

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1. Introduction

Societies have been constantly evolving as medical, scientific, political, technological, etc. advances have been made, and people have been adapting their way of life to the new circumstances brought about by these advances (Alfaraz and Tully, 2024). This is called social change. However, these social changes have been occurring more rapidly in recent times, mainly since the end of the last century with the emergence of the so-called Information and Knowledge Society in the 1980s (Knell, 2021). Thus, not only are we witnessing the birth of a new economic sector, but this technological revolution has brought about fundamental economic, cultural and social changes.

Authors such as Santás (2016) highlight the importance of technologies as a differentiating element with the capacity to increase people's relational capital and directly links this fact to the concept of social inclusion and, therefore, to the discipline of Social Work. He warns that technologies are becoming a key element in achieving the objectives that define the profession and that we should therefore not leave them to one side, but rather incorporate them into our professional work. However, as Steiner (2020) points out, although technologies offer new opportunities in social intervention, they also bring with them challenges and difficulties

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that must be addressed in order to make the most of the benefits that technology can offer to the Social Work profession. Although the potential of ICTs is recognised not only for the target groups (Pham et al., 2024) but also for the professionals themselves by facilitating participation, optimising organisational efficiency and reducing costs, among others (Jang and Landuyt, 2023), the digital transformation in social intervention has has gone from being an option to becoming a necessity. This transformation also represents a great opportunity to improve social services (Jacob and Souissi, 2024).

It is clear that the social services system cannot ignore the use of technology and must adapt the resources and services it offers to the current digital environment and an increasingly digitalized citizenship (Codina, 2022). However, as we have pointed out in previous research, the characteristics and profile of the population using these services mean that access through technological means presents significant barriers related to a high average age, a low level of education, a significant percentage of the unemployed population and a monthly income that in most cases does not exceed 800 euros. These characteristics, together with the presence of a smaller number of Internet connection devices in the home, mean that this group of people is particularly vulnerable to the digital divide (Muñoz-Moreno, 2023; Muñoz-Moreno et al., 2023).

The implementation of ICT in social services has mostly been linked to information processing systems, but, given the fragmentation of the protection system in Spain, it is common for the different Autonomous Communities to develop their own computer applications that are not connected to each other. This is despite the efforts made to standardise the protection system through the 1988 Agreement between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Autonomous Communities, which gave rise to the Plan Concertado para las Prestaciones Básicas de Servicios Sociales (Concerted Plan for Basic Social Services Provision). As a result of this homogenisation, the Social Services User Information System (SIUSS) appeared in 1994. This computer application has been criticised by social work professionals as they consider that it restricts the discipline to the mere management of the provision of services and resources and that it is attributed some responsibility for the bureaucratisation of social intervention itself (Gil, 1996, cited in Santás, 2016). Furthermore, the study carried out by Aguilar and Rodríguez (2018) shows that there are significant discrepancies in the registration criteria and resources used between autonomous communities, municipalities and professionals, using, in some cases, information systems and registers parallel to the SIUSS.

Law 11/2007 of 22 June 2007 establishes that the right to carry out procedures and consultations digitally represents the beginning, at least in the will, of the use of telematic media when attending to users. Undoubtedly a slow and progressive change, and not without resistance on the part of professionals, which has led to the coexistence of the traditional forms of paper reports, notes in notebooks, requests for physical documentation, etc. with the progressive extension of databases and electronic documents with digital signatures, and, more recently, even with the development of mobile APPs linked to different services of the administration and organisations.

The incorporation of ICTs in the field of social intervention can help to reduce the high workload of professionals in the social field, as it contributes to making management more efficient, improving planning, reducing waiting times and thus focusing direct social intervention in a more intensive way. The application of technology to this field does not mean that face-to-face contact is eliminated, but rather that it focuses on establishing a quality professional relationship, eliminating unnecessary face-to-face contacts and formalities (Santás, 2016). However, there is also resistance in the professional world to adopting the change provided by these information technologies, as the data show that the older people are and the longer they stay in the same workplace, the greater their resistance to using technological tools (Ferri-Fuentevilla et al., 2023).

Organisations that provide social services must constantly rethink their role in order to be able to adapt to a changing society and respond to the different needs that arise in a context of social change that is strongly affected by the succession of systemic crises. An example of this is the economic crisis that took place in 2008 or others of a socio-health nature, such as the Covid-19 epidemic that began in 2020 and which has had important impacts in multiple spheres of society (economic, social, political, etc.). The latter has made it necessary to rethink not only the tools to address the new needs that have arisen in this context, but also required a major change in the ways of acting at a time when face-to-face care was not possible. Social services had to adapt their means of intervention, incorporating other ways of responding to the needs that arose in a context of particularly serious social emergency. In this way, the development and incorporation of the technologies allowed this work to continue, although not without certain difficulties and reluctance on the part of both professionals and the user population. Tools such as teleworking in many organisations where this option had never been explored before, virtual meetings through Zoom or Google Meet, greater work in the cloud, incorporation of everyday communication tools such as WhatsApp or Telegram to transmit information to users or request documentation without the need to be present in person, home video-visits, telephone or videoconference care, were normalised in this context of limited contact by the COVID (Morilla-Luchena, et al., 2021).

Although some of these changes have endured years later, with better or worse luck, and have been incorporated into work routines, the reality is that they do not seem to have been implemented as a result of a planned and systematic process of digital transformation in organisations, but rather, in many cases, it was more of a temporary response to the pandemic and post-pandemic situation, to the new demands of society itself and to the proactive use that Social Work professionals made of technologies (Fiorentino et al., 2022). In this sense, it is increasingly common to find job offers in NGOs and third sector foundations in Spain in which professionals with technological training are requested, such as “digital drivers” or “digital transformation technicians”.

Santás (2020) warns us of the need to reflect on the evidence that has emerged during this period in order to generate appropriate responses to the scenario in which social services will be operating in the immediate future. A scenario in which the social crisis, derived from the health crisis, will have much more prolonged effects and in which social cohesion may be endangered. In this context, the role of social services is fundamental.

From this perspective, the concept of organisational resilience, understood as the capacity of organisations to successfully overcome adverse situations, stressful conditions or unexpected events without significantly compromising effectiveness (Coutu, 2002; Home and Orr, 1998; Rirkin and Hoopman, 1991 in Pacheco-Mangas et al., 2020), becomes important. Organisational resilience is considered a priority factor for organisations whose main objective is to intervene to improve people's quality of life. In this sense, it is not only about overcoming adverse circumstances and achieving the organisational capacity of the organisation, but also about maintaining the intellectual and social capital that enables the lasting success of the organisation and its adaptation to the new realities arising from the crisis situation (Lampel et al., 2014, in Pacheco-Mangas et al., 2020).

It should be added that online social intervention practices (e-social work) make it possible to address traditional problems that the technological environment is redefining and, on the other hand, the use of technologies in social intervention can be a useful tool for reducing the stigma that certain groups have in accessing social services (Rodríguez-Rivas, et al., 2022). There is no doubt that the use of technology in professional intervention can offer numerous advantages although, on the other hand, some barriers or drawbacks have also been identified to the incorporation of ICT in an area that has traditionally been characterised by direct contact, in which closeness and the non-verbal communication component have been considered fundamental elements in establishing a relationship of trust that allows the success of the professional intervention to be consolidated.

Authors such as Arriazu and Fernández-Pacheco (2013) point out a series of cases in which online social intervention would be justified by the benefits it would bring with respect to traditional professional intervention. One of these cases would be when there are disadvantages in the communication process, such as in the case of people with hearing or linguistic disabilities that could find in these tools a more effective way of communicating and transmitting their needs; another case would be the therapeutic treatment of patients with mobility problems or other disorders or phobias that make it difficult or impossible to move around; intervention in cases where there is a geo-temporal problem, i.e. those cases where there is an incompatibility of schedules that does not allow for regular face- to-face sessions; finally, online social intervention in risk situations would allow for individualised treatment in cases where face-to-face attention is not possible (in the case of intervention with highly conflictive inmates).

These authors identify a number of advantages and disadvantages related to the use of ICTs in social work (Table 1):

Table 1: Advantages and disadvantages related to the use of ICTs in social work

Advantages	Disadvantages
Flexibility, accessibility and fluency in the professional relationship	Problems in access and technical coverage by the professional and/or the user
Further analysis of the verbal component	Problems in access and technical coverage by the professional and/or the user
Ease of registration and systematisation of informationmación	Loss of non-verbal communication
Extending the time frame for problem explanation and diagnosis, allowing for the development of a clear and reflective intervention model.	Need to know the legal and juridical regulations of the user's context in case the professional intervention is carried out in geographical contexts. different.
Favours the anonymity y user confidentiality	The need for specialised training of professionals in the handling and use of this type of tool, as well as its use. constant updating.
It can help to dishabituate the user- professional relationship in the last phases of the intervention, favouring the integral autonomy of the person.	

Source: Arriazu and Fernández-Pacheco (2013).

Having said this, one of the main novelties introduced by this article is the approach to the technological element in organisations as a psychosocial factor, understood as any "condition present in a work situation and which is directly related to the organisation, the content of the work and the performance of the task, and which has the capacity to affect both the well-being or health (physical, psychological or social) of the worker and the performance of the work" (NTP 443: Psychosocial factors: assessment methodology, in Martín and Pérez, 1997, p. 1).

Although there are many and numerous factors present in social service organisations that can affect the quality of working life of professionals (Morilla-Luchena, 2022), focusing on the technological element as a psychosocial factor opens the door for organisations to undertake systematic and planned efforts to incorporate technologies both in management and in social intervention, establishing a good design directly

affecting the risk and protective factors associated with the introduction of technologies and new ways of working in organisations.

The different measures carried out in organisations (or the lack of them) related to ICTs can turn the technological component into a risk factor, with the potential to cause psychological, physical or social harm to people and with the capacity to deteriorate their health, both during and outside the performance of their work (Carrasco et al., 2019).

The personal factors of the human team on which these changes are going to fall, which may serve to facilitate or hinder the process, must also be taken into account, such as the socio-demographic characteristics of the people (gender, age, etc.), their professional training or their own personality (Barrera et al., 2015). The study by Ferri-Fuentevilla et al., (2023) shows that the professional profile in social services is mainly made up of middle-aged women with university studies and with an average experience of 10 years in their current organisation.

In a more visual way, what is expressed in these paragraphs can be summarised in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Technological component as a psychosocial risk in the organisation

Source: own elaboration based on Vaca-Meneses (2024).

Taking into account this context, which highlights, on the one hand, the potential of technologies in the sector and, on the other, their consideration as a psychosocial risk factor, the main objective of this study is to analyse the use of technological means by social service professionals during the Covid-19 pandemic. This will make it possible to extract lessons that can contribute to the more efficient development of technological transition processes in organisations.

In this way, the aim is to provide a general guide to orientate the process of digitalisation and technological modernisation of social service organisations. This should be specified in the different organisations, depending on their characteristics (such as their size), the resources available to them, a prior on-site study of psychosocial risks associated with the technological component and the personal characteristics and factors of the specific people who make up the organisation (familiarity with the use of these technologies, personal resistance to change or previous training, for example). Addressing the technological element understood as a psychosocial factor in the workplace is what makes it possible to design specific strategies within organisations to minimise the risk factors associated with it and to strengthen the protective factors. To this end, it has been considered relevant to explore the workers' own vision during the final stage of the pandemic, their ways of dealing with the situation based on the personal and organisational resources they had, and the use they made of technological means during this period. This analysis allows us to establish a general framework to address this issue and to be able to make it concrete in the different organisations in the social sphere.

2. Methodology

2.1. Instrument, field work and analysis strategy

A semi-structured interview was used and was conducted between May and July 2021. Participants were required to have been in the same job for more than one year in order to have sufficient knowledge of the

organisation and the impact of the pandemic on it. The questions (Table 2) refer to elements of personal and professional assessment of the Covid-19 situation, its impact, strategies and ways of coping at work, and good practices or strategies.

The questions p2 and p4 are the ones that mainly respond to the research objective set out in this article.

Table 2. Semi-structured interview questions to practitioners

p1	Could you give me the context of your work place: organisation, characteristics of the position, functions, territory, scope of action, coordination with other services, or any other element you consider to be of interest?
p2	Could you describe in depth what the impact and adaptation has been like on your organisation to the Covid-19 pandemic?
p3	How have you experienced this situation, in terms of personal, emotional, psychological, family, etc. effects, and what strategies or tools have helped you to How can we cope with such an impact?
p4	Could you give an assessment of the teleworking experience in your organisation, and in your own experience if you have had the opportunity to telework?
p5	What changes, strategies or elements of improvement do you think need to be addressed in order to improve the occupational health of social work professionals? That is, what could be done to increase your well-being as a worker? Source: own elaboration

Source: own elaboration

A qualitative analysis has been carried out using Atlas.ti 23 *software* with analysis of quotations, codes and networks based on the *Grounded Theory* methodological procedure (Glasser and Strauss, 1967), with a *Bottom-Up* Approach based on the identification of codes. As the analysis process progresses, those elements that are directly or indirectly related to the phenomenon under study are incorporated, creating relationships that can be structured into networks.

The coding (minimum units of information) of these interviews was carried out at three levels: a. Open coding (dividing and coding the data into concepts and categories),

b. Axial or network coding (establishing relationships between codes and categories and generating hypotheses) and, c. Selective or family coding.

Density and rootedness have been considered, which, following Méndez (2021), we understand as the breadth of a concept and indicates the relevance and importance, validity, solidity and extension of a category. It refers to the number of citations, the number of times this code appears in the discourse. Density is the semantic depth of the concept and indicates the multiplicity of relationships and theoretical links between categories allowing the understanding of the code in a network context. It refers to the number of connections or links between the different codes.

2.2. Participants

Twenty-two semi-structured interviews were carried out with Social Work professionals in Spain. For the selection of the sample, which was carried out by means of direct contact and the technique of snowball based on the researchers' professional network, it was ensured that most of the Autonomous Communities in Spain were represented, as well as different age groups, sex and areas of professional activity, as shown in Table 3. The fact of closing the fieldwork with a number of 22 interviews responds to the saturation criterion of the sample (Ventura-León and Barboza-Palomino, 2017).

Table 3. Sample characteristics

	Level	Frequency		Level	Frequency
Sex	Woman	16	CCAA	Andalusia	9
	Man	6		Aragon	1
Age (rank)	Up to 30 years	6		Asturias	2
	31-40 years old	10		Castilla La Mancha	4
	41-50 years	3		Castile-Leon	1
	51 y more years	2		Catalonia	1
Scope	Rural	9		Canary Islands	2
	Urban	13		Madrid	1
				C. Valenciana	1

Source: own elaboration

3. Results

The analysis yielded a total of 248 codes and 2543 citations, leaving a total of 57 codes based on the central code "Use of technological media", which are listed in Table 4.

Table 4. Rootedness and density of the codes extracted from the discourse

		Root.	Den.			Root.	Den.
1	**Use of technological means**	**57**	**18**	**29**	Service/activity interruption	20	6
2	Phone attention	50	12	**30**	Professional exchange spaces	19	8
3	Coordination with other services/entities / Networking	50	20	**31**	Professional updating	18	6
4	Face-to-face rotation / Hybrid modality	50	7	**32**	Difficulty of access for users/ technological resources	17	6
5	Management / administrative tasks	50	12	**33**	Activities to keep busy (reading, music, cooking, etc.)	15	3
6	Lack of technological resources	48	10	**34**	Communication with family members	15	1
7	Informal support and peer support	47	10	**35**	Social reports / History	15	5
8	Need for adaptation	42	10	**36**	Special attention to elderly population	14	6
9	Telework	37	24	**37**	Communication problems organization	12	5
10	Intra-organizational coordination / Meetings	36	11	**38**	Work with groups/community	12	4
11	Direct attention	34	6	**39**	Interview	11	3
12	Intervention	33	6	**40**	Excess documentation-paperwork	11	1
13	Links / Proximity to users and prof.	33	9	**41**	Organizational supervision	11	3
14	Information	32	12	**42**	Work center distractions	10	4
15	Lack of resources	31	6	**43**	Streamlining procedures pandemic	9	6
16	Videocall	31	7	**44**	Good planning	9	2
17	Financial assistance	30	7	**45**	Information systems / DB	9	7
18	Address	30	6	**46**	Mistrust of workers	8	7
19	High bureaucracy / Slowness of procedures	29	9	**47**	Control Function	7	5
20	Lack of professional initiative	29	9	**48**	Appropriate housing and facilities	7	2
21	Training during working hours	26	8	**49**	Coordination	6	4
22	Need for political will	25	6	**50**	Technological tools/programs	6	1
23	Lack of training	24	9	**51**	Best practices computer applications	5	2
24	Interdisciplinary team	23	11	**52**	Telework-presence combination	4	3
25	Professional self-care	22	5	**53**	Electronic mail	4	1
26	Reconciliation	22	9	**54**	Investment	4	2
27	Use of WhatsApp / own phone	22	7	**55**	Elderly residence	4	2
28	Advantages No displacement	21	8	**56**	Tablet	3	0
				57	Utility information to Social Policies	3	1

Source: own elaboration

Codes 1 to 28 constitute the first two quartiles in the analysis carried out, ordered according to the criterion of rootedness, i.e. according to their greater or lesser significance in the discourses of the interviewees, who make up the hermeneutic unit of this work.

For its part, the criterion of density or relations established between a code and others present in the discourses and which refers to its semantic depth, would place codes such as “Telework” (Enr.: 37; Den.24), because of their connections with many of the facets explored, such as the opening up to new hybrid working modalities involving a combination of face-to- face and remote work, and the numerous implications concerning the technological tools and training required to undertake these processes of digital transformation, as well as their confrontation or complementarity with traditional ways of proceeding in social intervention and management tasks, such as telephone answering.

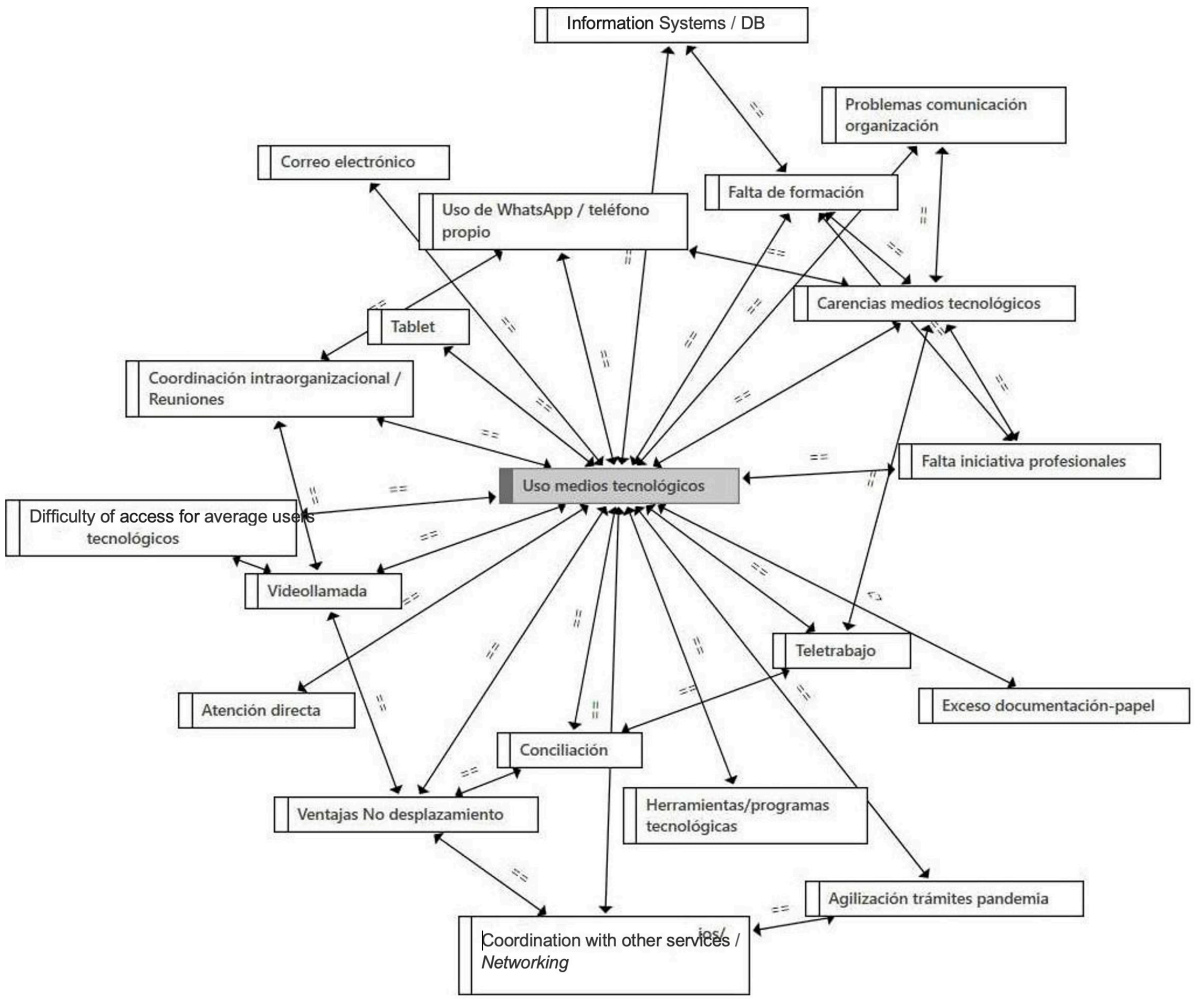
The second most important code according to the density criterion would be “Coordination with other services/entities / Networking” (Enr.: 50; Den.: 20).: 20), evidencing through its relationship with various codes the importance of the introduction of technological tools with respect to this facet of coordination and

its potential as an element that allowed adaptation to the pandemic situation ("Need for adaptation"), relating to elements that have continued to be very present in practice such as video calls, advantages in professional practice of not having to travel to meet, ease of generating new professional spaces and even greater use of WhatsApp to facilitate this coordination and networking.

The network map of relations of the code "Use of technological media" is presented below (Figure 2), this being the code most present in the analysis (highest rootedness: 57, and the third in terms of density: 18) and showing the codes with which it is directly related in the discourses. For the representation of the network, an organic design is used (Méndez, 2021), a style based on the paradigm of directed force and which reveals symmetrical graphic structures or clusters, with a balanced distribution of codes and few points of intersection (p.34).

The general network map that refers to the previous table (Table 4), this time with a radial design (Ibid.), which positions the codes in concentric circles, calculating the radii of the circles taking into account the sizes of the sectors required for each sub-tree, is added as Supplementary Material 1 (Spanish version) due to the number of codes involved.

Figure 2: Network map of the code "Use of technological means".



Source: own elaboration

This network map (Figure 2) shows the different types of relationship between the different codes and the direction of the codes with the selected organic design representation, where "= = " indicates the existence of an association between the codes, " < > " indicates that the codes contradict each other in the discourse.

The codes that are shown to be closest to the central code from which the network has been generated (in this case, "Use of technological means") are those most directly related to it, which could be considered to have a greater influence with respect to this central code under analysis.

Considering the above and taking into account the context of this study, it can be observed that, faced with the situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the professionals made use of technological means to be able to continue carrying out their activity, but on many occasions they resorted to elements that they already used personally, such as WhatsApp or their own phones, tablets or video calls. As one of the interviewees put it:

> "We got a tablet and well... through WhatsApp, which has been our saviour, we made a lot of video calls with the families, seeing that they were well looked after, that they were well cared for, that they were calm, that we were transmitting everything to them...". Woman, under 30 years old, socio-health residential centre.

There are also elements such as the lack of training in technological means, as well as the lack of resources or lack of technological means (for example, the fact of not having a "working" telephone different from the personal one for each professional or the means to be able to work remotely with guarantees). Therefore, it is evident that, in a situation of need for rapid adaptation and in the absence of previous alternatives and a commitment to training in their use, it was simpler to use the means available to the professionals, as well as the means to be able to work remotely that professionals were already used to using in their daily lives. As one of the interviewees put it:

> "... But it is also true that we have discovered that our digital skills are very poor. From that perspective I think it is an opportunity to learn, but I still recognise that it means that we have to make a whole change in behaviour (...) even technologically we were not in a position to attend, not all the computer equipment had what we could call webcams and so on, and that created a situation of total isolation with what we could call the citizens and us as workers (...) we didn't have corporate mobiles for everyone, can you explain that?" Man, over 51 years old, public administration.

The relationship between technological means and the possibility of teleworking, and the relationship of these elements with respect to work-life balance, also features strongly. This question is not the focus of this article, but it is certainly of interest for gender studies, which could explore to what extent the fact that women and men can spend more time at home thanks to teleworking (or save time in commuting) has a positive impact on work-life balance, or whether, on the contrary, it contributes to the continued reproduction of traditional roles such as greater attention to domestic tasks on the part of women.

On the outside of the figure (further away from the central code) are issues such as the usefulness of using technological means for coordination (both within the organisation itself and with others), streamlining procedures, improving the efficiency of information systems and databases, and also their impact on the digitalization and possible reduction of the large amount of documents and reports in physical format that that are handled in this type of entities.

Also at this level are possible elements that should be considered in order to avoid or minimise possible negative consequences, such as those derived from the communication/information channels present in the organisations, the resistance of the professionals themselves when undertaking a process of change and technological transformation in their ways of working, or the digital divide itself and the difficulties that users of the different services may have when introducing a greater presence of telematic media.

4. Discussion

Based on the results presented, the main conclusions are presented in relation to their usefulness for the design of strategies in the process of digitisation and technological modernisation of social service organisations. The code "Use of technological means" is taken as a reference for the analysis, but these conclusions must be understood within the framework of a broader discourse shaped by the perceptions of the different participating actors (Supplementary Material 1) (Spanish version).

It seems clear that digital transformation and the improvement of procedures through the use of technologies are here to stay and must be developed and improved. Beyond the use of technologies as management and bureaucracy tools, technological tools are being designed and used to foster citizen participation and promote social inclusion. In this way, their use in social intervention can improve the quality and effectiveness of professional practice. For example, during the pandemic, telematic accompaniment made it possible to address situations such as stress, anxiety, anguish, demotivation and emotional discomfort (Lopes, 2021). The truth is that, in the field of Social Work, technological elements were already being introduced, and the pandemic accelerated this process, generating new spaces adapted for intervention, such as the use of virtual groups and Facebook for intervention (Méndez-Domínguez and Castillo de Mesa, 2021) as well as video-calling between professionals through platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet (Nomen, 2021).

It is clear that the use of technological tools could help to reduce the problem of excessive physical or paper documentation. In this line, the professionals interviewed highlighted, among other issues, the usefulness of technological means to improve the internal coordination of the organisations, as well as with other services.

In addition, the technology is also linked to its potential to improve communication in organisations, provided that effective processes are in place. Nowadays, the use of data mining for planning is becoming more and more widespread. The creation of data warehouse models and the interaction between them makes it possible to use them for planning in the field of social services. Proof of this is the "Big Data Social" project carried out by Barcelona City Council with the aim of adapting resources according to needs and territory (Nguyen et al., 2021 in Minguijón and Serrano-Martínez, 2022).

The pandemic led to an increased use of digital tools in professional practice and these experiences are valued as effective (Mira-Tamayo et al., 2023), as it provided daily information to the family bringing reassurance, including the use of WhatsApp as a tool for social intervention and effective information (Carrasco et al., 2019), increases efficiency and flexibility in professional practice, (Nordesjö and Scaramuzzino, 2023) while reducing bureaucratic difficulties (Danyliuk et al., 2023).

On the one hand, political will plays a key role, as reflected, at the national level, in the drive for the digital transformation of public services to promote inclusive and sustainable technological development (Ministry of Economic and Social Affairs and Digital Transformation, 2021) or in Andalusia with the approval of the 1st Plan for Research and Innovation in Social Services in Andalusia (2021-2025).

On the other hand, the involvement and cooperation of the organisations' management in the digitisation process contributes to the success of digital transformation initiatives (López-Muñoz and Escribá-Esteve, 2022). Not only the management of organisations, but also the involvement and participation of middle management facilitates the implementation of digitisation processes in organisations and, consequently, their evolution within them (Christodoulou et al., 2022).

However, it is important that organisations have adequate resources. In the discourse, the issue of the lack of technological means appears (enabling mechanisms that work well and respect data protection, servers to work in the cloud, adequate computer equipment, and the process of digitizing documentation itself, which could take time before undertaking new ways of working). There is also a need to analyse the difficulties and barriers of users in accessing the service through technological means that will enable an appropriate strategy to be adopted to reduce the digital divide.

This is undoubtedly a complex process, with different aspects that must be addressed from the local and specific reality of the organisations. Likewise, the need for support in order to adapt to the changes with maximum guarantees emerges from the discourse. Some of the proposals made by the professionals are " Supervision organisational" or the generation of "Spaces for professional exchange" (see Table 4). The generation of these spaces in the organisations, around the processes of digitalisation and technology, it would focus on creating environments that foster digital transformation, of so that communication in the organisation and coordination can be enhanced intra-organisational, giving space to resolve possible issues or difficulties in the process technological transition. As indicated, the way in which these spaces are addressed would depend more on the specific organization, and could range from supervision, understood as professional accompaniment based on experience (Puig, 2016) or the creation of groups for this purpose within the organization, either with a more formal character (digital transition committees/commissions) or more informal working groups, which should be given adequate space and time within the work organization so that so that they are not overburdened in the framework of day-to-day tasks.

In this sense, the creation of physical or virtual environments for professional exchange, from different areas and levels of expertise, can be innovative professional practice within organisations. In these spaces, professionals will have the opportunity to share knowledge and skills with their colleagues, as well as exchange experiences related to technologies, their use in interventions, best practices within the organization, and addressing more emotional or ethical issues associated with the use of technology. These interactions will enhance collaborative learning, information and communication, the quality of interventions, and mutual support.

Alongside this professional accompaniment, the need for training is identified. The accelerated evolution of ICT, including the increasing integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI), poses new demands and opportunities for training and professional retraining in social services. It is essential that professionals social partners are trained in technological tools in order to acquire digital skills and thus be able to attend to citizens in the new spaces of interaction (García-Castilla et al, 2019). This underlines the importance of designing lifelong learning programmes to keeping up to date with technologies and their applications in professional practice (attendance at seminars, workshops, conferences) (Fernández-Riquelme, 2019). Training programs must be tailored to the needs of both professionals and users, advocating for inclusive digitalization in social services that ensures equal opportunity access.

The people interviewed valued positively the relationship between the use of technological means and the openness that this implies for implementing teleworking effectively (due to the benefits it brings for carrying out administrative tasks and formalities), coexisting, in any case, with the necessary face-to-face attention. Previous studies show how the use of technological means in social services has been gaining ground as an essential measure during the Covid-19, becoming an ally to be able to continue carrying out professional practice safely (Morilla-Luchena, 2023). However, telework presents challenges related to the physical and mental health of professionals and the organisation of work, which requires specific adaptations for its effective implementation (Tomasina and Pisani, 2022).

In summary, the approach to technological change in organisations and the possible incorporation of hybrid telework modalities should be made, from the very design of the strategies, incorporating issues such as respect for the Protection of Personal Data and "Digital Disconnection". In relation to this idea, it should be noted that digital disconnection is a right of workers that is included in article 88 of Organic Law 3/2018, of 5 December, on Personal Data Protection and guarantee of digital rights, and is a shared responsibility between organisations and the workforce.

5. Conclusions

Although we are talking about a process that must be specified in each specific organisation, this study allows us to identify a general framework in the design of strategies to undertake technological transition processes in social service organisations, which is specified as follows:

1. Explore the possibilities within the organisation itself to include the use of technologies beyond bureaucracy and management, also for social intervention.
2. Foster a culture in the organisation of readiness for change and "non-resistance", with the involvement of decision-makers.

3. Establish support mechanisms for technological transition, which may take the form of supervision, committees or working groups. Not only at the beginning of the change when there is a greater need for adaptation, but also over time to incorporate new technologies or correct possible deviations.
4. To support training during working hours in the use of ICTs, not only in the use of tools and programmes, but in any aspect that may be relevant to people's relationship with technology.
5. Designing change by ensuring Digital Disconnection and Data Protection.
6. Incorporate the possibility of teleworking in coexistence with face-to-face work (hybrid mode).

This study considers the technological component as a psychosocial factor, which makes it possible to design specific strategies within organisations to minimise risks and enhance protective factors. From this perspective, digitalisation plays a key role in improving organisational resilience, especially in times of crisis such as post-Covid-19. In this sense, there is a close relationship between organisational resilience and digitisation, the latter being a key factor for organisations to foster their resilience and be able to adapt and respond quickly to changing situations (Sisu et al., 2022).

Limitations and future lines of action

This study has some limitations, especially in relation to the demographic composition of the participants. Although interviews were conducted with a representative group of professionals, only 5 of the 22 participants were over the age of 40, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other age groups. Furthermore, it is important to recognise that these findings are qualitative and reflect the experiences and perceptions of a specific group of professionals in a very specific context: the post-pandemic period, which may not reflect long-term changes or changes in different contexts.

For future research, it is essential to deepen the impact of the findings, with special attention to the processes of digital transition in different types of social organisations and the role of technologies in professional practice. It would also be relevant to analyse the impact of hybrid telework modalities, training in digital competences and other elements that were identified by the participants of this study, in order to optimise social intervention strategies in digitalised environments.

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