

How platformisation transforms the psychological profession: Reflections from a proposal of indicators for the classification of psychological platforms

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Abstract

This article is part of a research context that examines the impact of new technologies on psychological practice. We argue that the use of technological mediators in the execution of the psychological profession goes beyond mere modifications to methods and tools, transforming the very nature of the discipline and influencing the associated professional identity. Specifically, our focus is on ‘psychological platforms’ as emerging work contexts that represent a relatively recent but rapidly growing phenomenon. Beginning with what is present in the literature on the subject of platform classification, this research project is intended to create functional and useful indicators for an analysis of psychological platforms. Based on these indicators, it is possible to reflect on the impact that the various characteristics of psychological platforms have on the psychological profession and psychological professionals themselves. In doing so, we seek to address the following research questions: (a) What are the main characteristics of psychological platforms, (b) which dimensions of the psychological profession are influenced by the use of a given platform in conducting

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psychological interventions and (c) how does the platformisation of the psychological profession affect the role of the psychologist? Our analysis is based on an in-depth literature review regarding the platforms, followed by a desk analysis of 44 psychological platforms operating in the Italian context. By adopting this perspective, this article illuminates the dynamics shaping psychological practice in the digital era and suggests guidelines for future research in this continually evolving field.

KEYWORDS

classification of platforms, information and communication technologies, professional identity, psychological platforms, psychological profession

1 | INTRODUCTION

The adoption of new technologies in the practice of psychology is not a recent phenomenon. As early as 1998, Murphy and Mitchell presented an article on the therapeutic effects that email writing can have, using the term 'telepsychology' to encompass a broad spectrum of technologies (Murphy & Mitchell, 1998). A significant portion of the literature categorises telepsychology under the umbrella of telehealth, integrating psychological interventions with other health-related services. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Advancement of Telehealth defines telehealth as 'the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support long-distance clinical healthcare, patient and professional health-related education, public health, and health administration' (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015, para. 3).

A more specific definition of telepsychology is provided by the Joint Task Force for the Development of Telepsychology Guidelines for Psychologists (2013), which, focusing on the psychological realm, describe it as 'the provision of psychological services using telecommunication technologies...' (p. 792). These technologies may be synchronous (real-time) or asynchronous, including '...telephone, mobile devices, interactive videoconferencing, e-mail, chat, text, and Internet...' (p. 792). The diversity of tools encompassed by the term 'telepsychology' is evident in the numerous labels used in the literature, such as teletherapy, e-therapy, cyber-psychology, teleanalysis, and web counselling (Pierce, Perrin, & McDonald, 2020).

In this extensive and varied research area, the analysis of the relationship between psychology and new technologies has mainly focused on the advantages and disadvantages that may arise from the use of digital mediators. In March 2023, the American Psychological Association (APA) published an article on its website highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of online therapy services. In the same contribution, the authors reported advice from psychologists and legal and ethical experts regarding the criteria that should guide the practitioner when choosing which platform/company to use to carry out their work. In this sense, by supporting professionals in choosing a platform, the APA also showed that the use of technology has advantages and disadvantages for psychologists. Numerous contributions highlight the utility of new technologies, emphasising their strengths (Alleman, 2002; Barnett, 2011; Chakrabarti, 2015; Chan, Li, Torous, Gratzler, & Yellowlees, 2018; Colbow, 2013; Putnam & Maheu, 2000; Riemer-Reiss, 2000; Sampson & Mueller, 2017). While they are fewer in number, there are still considerable studies that present arguments against the use of new technologies within the psychological profession, reflecting on the potential ethical issues faced by professionals (Barnett, 2005; Bauman & Rivers, 2023; Davis, 2014;

Dever Fitzgerald, Hunter, Hadjistavropoulos, & Koocher, 2010; Holmes, 2008; Koocher, 2007; Lee, 2010; Proudfoot, 2004; Rummell & Joyce, 2010).

However, few studies highlight the influence that the use of new technologies can have on the profession itself. We believe that technological innovation brings rapid changes that can transform the traditional practices implemented by professionals. Transforming practices does not simply mean modifying how psychologists practice their profession and the tools used in managing activities; it involves something deeper. In this paper, we argue that the use of technological mediators for professional practice can transform the nature of the psychological discipline, with significant consequences for professional identity. From our perspective, choosing to conduct psychological practice through digital devices has non-trivial implications that involve both the profession and the professional, encompassing material and immaterial dimensions.

Specifically, we focus on digital platforms, which have become significant work and employment contexts for many psychologists in recent years. We approach the study of the platformisation of the psychologist's work by adopting a perspective based on work and organisational psychology. Specifically, this research does not delve into clinical issues, for example, those related to the effectiveness of the psychological interventions of the professionals who use a given platform. Instead, this work is intended to reflect on how the use of a technological medium impacts the psychological discipline and the professional identity of the worker. For this reason, a perspective that focuses on work and organisational factors will allow us to grasp the impact of the phenomenon in question. More specifically, we adopt the theoretical perspective of sociomateriality (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008), as it can be used to investigate the relationship between technology and work. Indeed, sociomateriality is a theory capable of intertwining technology, work and organisation, and it can be used to understand the connection between the social and the material, that is, technologies, in daily organisational life (Orlikowski, 2007).

Our research provides an opportunity to observe the specificities of psychological platforms and analyse their structural aspects to understand their impact on the psychological profession. The analysis of the platforms present in the Italian context allows us to, first, create useful indicators for the classification of psychological platforms. These platforms have various characteristics, which are identified and analysed. Then, based on the literature on platform classification, indicators are created for the classification of psychological platforms. The process that led us to the construction of the indicators for the classification of psychological platforms subsequently allowed us to carry out profound reflection on the relationship between new technologies and the psychological profession. Specifically, considering the various characteristics of psychological platforms allows us to understand their various impacts on the profession and the professional themselves. More precisely, we seek to answer the following research questions: (a) What are the main characteristics of psychological platforms, (b) which dimensions of the psychological profession are influenced by the use of the platform in conducting psychological interventions and (c) how does the platformisation of the psychological profession affect the role of the psychologist? After presenting the phenomenon of platform work (Paragraph 2) and psychological platforms (Paragraph 3), we propose key indicators in the next paragraph. The identification of indicators tailored to the psychological field will allow us to answer the first research question, tracing the main features of the platforms under examination in their potential variations. Subsequently, we will discuss how the identified specificities may influence the psychological profession, highlighting the most relevant implications. The identification of the impact of the platform model on the professional identity of psychologists and the most salient dimensions of the psychological profession, as discussed below, will provide answers to the second and third research questions.

2 | CLASSIFYING PLATFORMS TO UNDERSTAND THEM

The phenomenon of platform work emerged between the late 1990s and the early 2000s but experienced significant growth starting with the 2008 crisis. We are, therefore, facing a trend that has been developing for approximately two decades and become widespread with the advent of the pandemic, necessitating the use of online virtual

interactions at all levels. However, despite increasing interest, scholars and researchers are still attempting to provide a better definition for a phenomenon with boundaries that remain blurred (Pais & Provasi, 2015). This is evident in the various labels for the economic model derived from platform use: the digital economy, the sharing economy, the collaborative economy, the peer-to-peer economy, the gig economy, the on-demand economy and the platform economy (Pais, 2019). This definitional uncertainty is one of the consequences of the fact that the platform model has been adopted in multiple sectors, beginning with its initial use in the buying and selling of goods, tourism and transportation.

Numerous studies focus on low-skilled jobs, such as renting or exchanging goods and home deliveries, but there are also recent studies examining highly qualified professional roles, such as those of lawyers and physicians (Bonifacio, Manzo, Pais, & Paraciani, 2022; Manzo & Pais, 2016). This complexity and heterogeneity on the part of these studies complicates providing a precise definition of the reference universe within the scientific research realm (Arcidiacono, Pais, & Piccitto, 2021). A viable path towards a broader understanding of the phenomenon involves analysing existing platforms through a classification process. In the literature on the subject, there are attempts to distinguish between platforms based on various criteria.

One classification attempt that can be useful for our study is proposed by Srnicek (2017), who divides platforms into five distinct groups. Advertising platforms, with Facebook as a notable example, constitute the first category, relying on extracting and analysing user information to sell advertising space. The second and third groups consist of platforms that possess hardware and software for companies to use, with the distinction that in the first type, cloud platforms, organisations are digital, and in the second, industrial platforms, they are traditional. Product platforms, the fourth type, transform products into services, as exemplified by platforms such as Spotify, which purchase musical products and resell them to users as subscription services. Finally, lean platforms are based on either capital valorisation (capital based) or the matching of labour supply and demand (labour based).

We believe that the platforms under analysis in our study fall into the last category, as they directly mediate professional services. Several authors (De Groen & Maselli, 2016; De Groen, Maselli, & Fabo, 2016; Fabo, Beblavy, Kilhoffer, & Lenaerts, 2017; Guarascio, 2018; Kenney & Zysman, 2016; Mexi, 2019; Pesole, Brancati, Fernández-Macías, Biagi, & González Vázquez, 2018) have also identified criteria for further differentiation, examples of which are given below. First, platforms that act as intermediaries between labour supply and demand can be categorised based on the way the service is performed (i.e., physically, such as babysitting services, or online, such as medical teleconsultation services). A second criterion used is based on the skills that are required of workers, who are generally divided into low/medium skilled or high skilled. Another form of differentiation is represented by the business model depending on whether the platform retains a percentage of the transacted money or applies a fixed commission. How the task is assigned is also a useful criterion for separating platforms that allow the customer to choose a professional from those that take charge of the professional–user pairing. Finally, one can differentiate between platforms that use the monetary remuneration of workers and those that provide a reward through the allocation of credits to be spent on or off the platform itself. Although these criteria represent only some of those identified by the authors within the literature on labour-based platforms, they can help us understand the traits that most characterise them. More specifically, they represent the starting coordinates for conducting the desk analysis we carried out on the platforms we traced, guiding us in the development of categories and dimensions proposed below, which will help us gain an analytical understanding of their multiple configurations.

3 | PSYCHOLOGICAL PLATFORMS

As mentioned in the introduction, the use of new technologies in the practice of psychology has characterised the work of psychologists for at least two decades. However, working via psychological platforms emerged considerably more recently and experienced a significant surge during the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, the World Health Organisation issued recommendations to limit interpersonal interactions and thus contain the spread of the virus

(World Health Organisation, 2020). Consequently, companies and organisations swiftly transitioned to using online technologies to conduct their daily activities (Adalja, Toner, & Inglesby, 2020). Associations of psychologists also moved in this direction, encouraging professionals to continue their activities via online interventions.

In this context, psychological platforms began to develop prominently, rapidly assuming a crucial role in the mental health market over a few years. They are presented as 'online clinics' (Omrani, Alavi, Rivera, & Khalid-Khan, 2017), offering psychological interventions based on various therapeutic approaches. Psychological platforms function as full-fledged organisations, with leadership, a set of rules, specific contracts binding professionals to the platform, privacy practices, a business model and, consequently, an implicit culture (Margherita, Caffieri, & De Maio, 2023). Working through a platform means becoming part of an organisation, which impacts not only the practices of the profession but also dimensions such as professional identity and community belonging. For this reason, we believe that the study of platforms offering psychological services represents an important research area and that research in this area can help us understand potential transformations in the field of psychology. To achieve this goal, we decided to conduct a desk analysis of platforms within the Italian landscape, identifying the characteristics can help us understand the represented phenomenon. Specifically, we identified potential indicators to classify psychological platforms, considering how the different characteristics of the platforms identified could influence the psychological profession in different ways.

4 | METHODOLOGY

The indicators constructed in this paper result from a desk analysis conducted via the examination of websites and app stores, including the Google Play Store and Apple Store. The desk analysis involved observing the various pages that make up the platform (e.g., the main home, the different pages accessible from the menu, the Terms and Conditions, the Privacy Policy, the cookie policy). In general, the researchers analysed every page that a user accessed through the platform by means of an Internet search without having to register or sign up. Given the significant heterogeneity of the platforms dedicated to psychologists, we chose to focus exclusively on those that provide services involving synchronous interaction between professionals and patients, such as video counselling, live chat, phone and in-person sessions. Consequently, we avoided analysing platforms that exclusively offer services via asynchronous means, such as email or chat. More precisely, the inclusion criteria that were adopted in the selection of platforms are as follows:

- Psychological platforms that were active within the timeframe of our study and until the completion of the desk analysis, from January 2023 to 22 September 2023.
- Psychological platforms offering a service in the Italian language or several languages, with Italian being among them.
- Platforms involving synchronous interaction between patient and psychologist.

Regarding the last point, although a psychological intervention can also be carried out asynchronously, as reported by the Order of Psychologists of the Lombardy Region,¹ we have chosen to focus on platforms that favour meetings between professional and patient that occur synchronously because taking into consideration the platforms via which the two subjects can come into contact at different times would have introduced variables that stray too far from the topic at hand.

With this provisional mapping in mind, we concentrated on creating indicators that would be suitable for an analytical examination of the platforms used for psychological interventions. As a pivotal point of reference, we utilised the theoretical characteristics proposed by Eurofound (2018) (Figure 1). The adopted approach was inspired by the Weplat project,² specifically in terms of the classification and mapping work on welfare platforms by Bonifacio et al. (2022). This choice was made because the profession under our analysis can be appropriately situated within this

No.	Characteristic	Variants
1	Relationship between platform, client and worker	Platform owner ≠ client, undefined crowd of clients and workers Employer-owned internal platform (platform owner = client, defined group of workers) Company-owned outsourcing platforms (platform owner = client, undefined crowd of workers) Cooperative platform structure (client = members of the platform, undefined crowd of workers)
2	Geographic scope of the platform	Regional/national International/several countries
3	Size of platform	Number of clients (relative to other platforms) Number of workers (relative to other platforms) Number of tasks or activities (relative to other platforms) Platform revenue
4	Market position of platform	Monopoly Oligopoly Competition
5	Sector, occupations	NACE (alternatively, as often used: transport, household tasks, professional tasks) ISCO (alternatively: task descriptions)
6	Dynamism of platform	Stable/static Dynamically changing
7	Transparency of client and worker	Anonymous Disclosed
8	Fees to platform	Registration (client, worker, task) Successful matching Successful task completion
9	Realisation of payments	Directly between client and worker Through the platform (deposit)
10	Conduct of platform	Existence and characteristics of terms and conditions Adherence to specific codes of conduct (for example, anti-discrimination) Data protection mechanisms Control/surveillance mechanisms Information provided to workers and clients (transparency) Ratings
11	Autonomy, including price setting	Hierarchy-like (low autonomy) (working time restrictions imposed by clients/platform; price determined by platform (standard or minimum prices) or client) Market-like (high autonomy) (worker free to choose when and how long to work; price determined by worker)

FIGURE 1 Eurofound's theoretical characteristics of platform work and their variants.

context. Both studies served as crucial starting points for identifying indicators that are suitable for the study of psychological platforms. We incorporated modifications and integrations to make the indicators more applicable to our research focus. Mapping was indispensable in the construction of the criteria because it allowed us to observe the various characteristics of the platforms. Only by observing the peculiarities and specificities presented by the platforms was it possible for the researchers to understand how they can take on different structures and respond to different needs. Although Eurofound and Weplat were crucial starting points in the definition of the indicators, as they had to be adapted to the field of psychology, the observation of what was already present in the mental health landscape was an indispensable step. For each indicator suggested by Eurofound (Figure 1) and the Weplat project (see Note 2), the authors of this article deliberated regarding its applicability to psychological platforms and the necessary integrations to allow its appropriate use. This led to the development of useful indicators, specifically for the

No.	Characteristic	Variants
12	Additional services offered by the platform	Matching vs. management of tasks Guidance or recommendations for clients and workers Pre-screening of ads or offers Training for workers
13	Type of contract/employment status between platform and platform workers	Employment relationship/labour law Civil law contract
14	Access to social protection	Full access Partial access No access
15	Access to representation	Full access Partial access No access
16	Clients	Private individual Private organisation Public organisation
17	Accessibility of platform (technical)	Generally open Restricted (eligibility criteria, vetting of workers)
18	Accessibility of platform (social)	Generally open Restricted (eligibility criteria, vetting of workers)
19	Form of matching	Competition/contest Procurement/specification/offer
20	Initiator	Client Worker
21	Selector	Client Platform (by algorithm, manual) Platform worker Third party/panel
22	Number of paid platform workers per assignment	One winner Several winners All participants
23	Scale of tasks	Micro Larger (projects)
24	Complexity of tasks	Routine tasks (simple, non-innovative) Complex tasks (moderately complex) Creative tasks (sophisticated, innovative, cognitive)
25	Type of activities	Generalist Specialist
26	Required skills	Low (manual, amateurs) Medium (clerical) High (professionals, specialists)
27	Format of service provision	Online On-location (platform, client and workers in the same location) On-location (platform, client and workers in different locations)

FIGURE 1 (Continued)

classification of platforms dedicated to psychological interventions. Subsequently, in the Discussion, it was possible to reflect on how the various characteristics of the psychological platforms, which led to the construction of the indicators, impact the psychological profession and the professional themselves.

5 | RESULTS

The list provided below offers a significant glimpse into the ecosystem of psychological platforms active in Italy as of 22 September 2023, the concluding date for our desktop research. Currently, the mapping includes 45 platforms that offer psychological intervention services, adhering to the abovementioned criteria. This representation is by no means exhaustive, with the hope of further integrations and enrichments being provided by future research. Nevertheless, it captures a diverse and representative set of current platforms.

The considered platforms are as follows:

- Aptoide
- Belproblema.com
- Centro Apice
- Con te all'estero
- Contactu
- Doctolib
- Doctorium
- E-therapy
- Gli psicologi online
- Guida Psicologi
- H24psicologo
- Hedepy
- Huknow
- iDoctors
- Intherapy
- Loqui
- Mama Chat
- Medelit
- Mindwork
- MioDottore
- Mi Digital Heat
- ParentSmile
- ProntoPro
- PsicoDigitale
- Psicologi Al Telefono
- Psicologi Italia
- Psicologi Online
- Psicologi.me
- Psicologo di base
- Psicologo in Chat
- Psicologo vicino
- Psicologo4u
- Psicon
- Psicoterapia Aperta
- Psiqo
- Psycare
- Santagostino Psiche

- Serenis
- SOS Psicologo
- Sygmund
- Take a sit
- Terapeuta Online
- Therapyside
- Transiti.net
- Unobravo

As explained in the section dedicated to methodology, the intersection of the mapping carried out by us and the criteria created by Eurofound and the Weplat project led to the construction of the indicators described below. We describe and provide commentary on the indicators created in terms of their applicability to the analysis of psychological platforms (refer to Figure 2 for a synoptic view).

1. Relationship between platform and psychologist (indicator derived from Eurofound and Weplat)

The first indicator we focus on distinguishes between variations in the relationships between the three actors involved in the platform model: clients, workers and the platform itself. Eurofound identifies four potential scenarios: (a) the platform owner is different from the client, and workers and clients are undefined; (b) the platform is owned by the employer and is internal; (c) the platform is owned by the company outsourcing the work and (d) the platform has a cooperative structure.

In contrast, Bonifacio et al. (2022) chose to classify welfare platforms in the Italian context based on the legal form they assume, as the most significant differentiation in their study is between platforms with cooperative versus non-cooperative structures. In our study, we consider it sufficient to distinguish between platforms that aim for profit and those that, conversely, are non-profit. Therefore, for this indicator, we propose the following categories: profit and non-profit.

Relationship between platform and psychologist -profit -non profit Geographic scope of the platform -local -supralocal Sector, occupations -psychological platforms (psychological services, psychotherapy services) - health platforms Transparency of the psychologist's profile -public visible identity -private visible identity -anonymity Fees to platform For the psychologist: -during registration (one-off payment to the platform) -on subscription (monthly, annual, etc.) -per service (a percentage is paid to the platform when a psychological intervention is carried out) -on contact (a percentage is paid to the platform when a patient requests an intervention) -successful matching -enrolment is free of charge For the patient: -by service -per package (payment for several sessions) -by subscription (monthly, annual, etc.) -by contact (to make a contact request to a psychologist) -successful matching -free service Realisation of payments -managed and invoiced by the psychologist -managed and invoiced by the platform -managed by the platform and invoiced by the psychologist Autonomy of the psychologist -hierarchy-like (low autonomy) (working time restrictions imposed by platform; price determined by platform) -market-like (high autonomy) (worker free to choose when and how long to work time; price determined by platform) Platform support -support to the psychologist (technical, clinical, administrative) -patient guidance	Type of contract between platform and psychologist -collaboration contracts -employment contracts Also report: -contractual conditions -social protection -representation Users -private individual -public or private organisation Psychologist selection -patient selection (direct or platform-mediated) -matching by the platform (by algorithm or manual) Required qualifications -enrolment in the Order of Psychologists -enrolment in school of psychotherapy -specialisation in psychotherapy Format of service provision -online (videoconference, telephone, chat) -on location Reputational mechanisms -present -present and not visible -absent Exclusivity -exclusive relationship -non-exclusive relationship Language of service -monolingual content -multilingual content -monolingual service -multilingual service Extra-professional services for the psychologist -welfare services -networking events -absentees Gamification mechanisms -addressed to the psychologist -addressed to the patient -absent
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FIGURE 2 Indicators for the analysis of psychological platforms.

2. Geographic scope of the platform (indicator derived from Eurofound and Weplat)

This indicator refers to the territory to which the platform caters in delivering its service. Eurofound (2018) makes a distinction between platforms operating at a regional/national level and those offering services across countries or internationally. Bonifacio et al. (2022) add a third variant, which refers to platforms providing services at the local level, as territorial connection is significant in the classification of welfare platforms. We propose a classification system with two levels, local and supra-local, acknowledging that despite the ability to perform psychological interventions online, some platforms remain structurally linked to their local territories (e.g., platforms created by the public system or associations).

3. Sector, occupations (indicator derived from Eurofound and Weplat)

The occupational sector indicator involves classification based on the type of service offered through the platform. Eurofound refers to International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08)³ and Nomenclature of Economic Activities (NACE)⁴ codes. In addition, the platforms analysed in the Weplat project are divided based on which part of welfare sector they belong to, including health, socio-healthcare assistance, education and childcare. While maintaining the reference to ISCO-08 and NACE codes, it seems relevant to distinguish primarily between psychological and healthcare platforms. This initial differentiation allows us to understand whether the digital infrastructure exclusively provides psychological services or users also have access to services offered by other healthcare professionals. Furthermore, within the psychological services category, it seems appropriate to differentiate between psychological services and psychotherapeutic services. Thus, the occupational sector index will have the following variants: psychological platforms (psychological services and psychotherapeutic services) and health platforms.

4. Transparency of the psychologist's profile (indicator derived from Eurofound and Weplat)

The seventh indicator proposed by Eurofound pertains to the transparency of the profiles of those using the platform and those working on it, which are categorised as anonymous or open. Profile visibility refers to the ability to make content related to operators and users public. For the classification of psychological platforms, the profile transparency indicator will exclusively refer to those of workers to ensure patient privacy. In addition, Bonifacio et al. introduced an additional differentiation between platforms that allow anyone to access information about workers and users and those that require registration on the platform or payment of a fee to view such profiles. Based on this, the proposed indicator distinguishes between visible public identity, visible private identity and anonymity.

5. Fees for the platform (indicator derived from Eurofound and Weplat)

The payment to the platform indicator refers to the moment when the user who has utilised the service makes the payment. Eurofound's classification distinguishes between platforms that require payment (a) during registration, (b) at successful matching and (c) after the service has been provided. In the Weplat project, an additional factor is included concerning the provision of free services, as some welfare platforms offer services without charge. For psychological platforms, we find it appropriate to differentiate between professionals and patients. In the case of professionals, they can choose platforms that involve payment (a) during registration (a one-time payment to the platform), (b) based on a subscription (monthly or annually), (c) per service (a percentage paid to the platform when a psychological intervention is conducted), (d) on contact (payment of a percentage to the platform when a patient requests intervention) and (e) on successful matching, as well as (f) platforms with free registration. On the other hand, patients may be required to pay (a) per service, (b) per package (payment for multiple sessions), (c) by subscription (monthly, annually, etc.), (d) by contact (to make a contact request to a psychologist), (e) successful matching, or the service may not involve payment, (f) free service.

6. Realisation of payment (indicator derived from Eurofound and Weplat)

This indicator derived from both classification systems mentioned above assesses whether the customer's payment for the service offered by the worker occurs within or outside the platform. In the psychological context, platforms, in some cases, not only handle payments but also manage invoicing. Therefore, our proposed

variations for this indicator are as follows: (a) payment is managed and invoiced by the psychologist, (b) managed and invoiced by the platform or (c) managed by the platform and invoiced by the psychologist.

7. Autonomy of the psychologist (indicator derived from Eurofound and Weplat)

As in Eurofound and Weplat, this indicator focuses on the degree of autonomy workers have while using the platform in terms of working hours and pricing. We propose a differentiation between platforms that are hierarchy like (low autonomy) and those that are market like (high autonomy) based on pricing and the ability to choose one's working hours.

8. Platform support (indicator derived from Eurofound and Weplat)

This indicator centres on services that the platform provides beyond its primary function of connecting supply and demand. Eurofound and Weplat focus on services such as activity management, user support, the pre-screening of offers and worker training. First, we choose to differentiate between services aimed at psychologists and those dedicated to patients. For the former category, we propose a distinction between technical, clinical and administrative support. The first group will include all the services related to the technical management of the digital tool and also training activities for psychologists on the use of the technological mediator. The second category of support dedicated to psychologists refers to the activities managed by the platform in support of clinical practice. Specifically, this can include training services, the in-depth analysis of psychological disorders and pathologies, professional updating and supervision and comparison activities among colleagues. Finally, administrative support concerns the services provided by the platform related to invoicing management and training of psychologists in accounting. For patients, we suggest the patient guidance variant, within which activities include technical support in the use of the platform and solving IT problems, as well as the choice of the most appropriate service.

9. Type of contract between platform and psychologist (indicator derived from Eurofound and Weplat)

Eurofound distinguishes between employment contracts and civil law contracts. We propose to differentiate between collaboration contracts and employment contracts. Similar to the Weplat project, we suggest including contractual conditions and protections related to social security and representation by creating a section that collectively addresses labour-related issues.

10. Users (indicator derived from Eurofound and Weplat)

Following Bonifacio and colleagues, we have chosen to rename this indicator using the label 'users' because some platforms offer non-paid services. In addition, we categorise service users as public organisations, private organisations or private individuals.

11. Psychologist selection (indicator derived from Eurofound and Weplat)

This section identifies who performs the matching between the worker and the client. Eurofound and Weplat consider the following variants: client/user, platform, operator and third party. To classify the platforms dedicated to psychologists, we have not identified platforms in which it is the practitioner who chooses the patient directly or chooses from a list of patients made available by the digital infrastructure. Similarly, there are no platforms in which the choice is made by third parties. Therefore, for our classification, we propose the following variations: patient selection (direct or mediated by the platform) and platform-driven matching (via algorithm or manual).

12. Required qualification (indicator derived from Eurofound and Weplat)

Regarding the skills required, Eurofound assesses whether they are low, medium or high. Bonifacio and colleagues add a distinction related to the requirement for an academic degree. We suggest an indicator that divides platforms based on the psychologist's access, which is tied to registration with the Association of Psychologists, enrollment in a psychotherapy school or a specialised degree in psychotherapy.

13. Service delivery mode (indicator derived from Eurofound and Weplat)

The Eurofound indicator distinguishes between services delivered online, services delivered in person with the operator and client in the same place and services delivered in person with the operator and client in different locations. However, regarding the welfare sector, for platforms in the psychology field, the distinction between

platforms offering in-person services is irrelevant because psychological interventions conducted in person necessarily occur in the same location. Therefore, the variants of interest for our analysed indicator will be online and in-person, with an additional differentiation related to the tool enabling contact between the psychologist and patient (video conferencing, phone or chat).

14. Reputational mechanisms (indicator derived from Weplat)

Like the Weplat project, for reputational mechanisms in the platform economy for professional psychologists, we propose the following categories within the platform under analysis: present, present and not visible and absent.

15. Exclusivity (indicator created by us)

For this indicator, we have chosen to distinguish between platforms that bind professionals to the exclusive use of only the platform under consideration in the exercise of their profession and those that do not impose exclusivity. Therefore, the considered variants will be an exclusive relationship and a non-exclusive relationship.

16. Service language (indicator created by us)

We have created an indicator capable of distinguishing, first, between platforms presenting their service in multiple language options and those offering monolingual content. A second differentiation can be made based on the psychologist's language proficiency, as they may provide psychological interventions in various languages. For this reason, the indicator will have the following variants: monolingual content, multilingual content, monolingual service and multilingual service.

17. Extraprofessional services for psychologists (indicator created by us)

This index considers the services that platforms offer to their psychologists, making them available to enhance their personal and professional lives. Specifically, the provision of activities falling under the category of corporate welfare and services aimed at networking among professionals has been observed. Therefore, the proposed indicator consists of the following variations: welfare services and networking events or 'absent' if these are not present.

18. Gamification mechanisms (indicator created by us)

The last identified indicator refers to gamification mechanisms, which are currently present to a rather limited extent but, presumably, increasing in number with the development of psychological platforms. We suggest distinguishing between gamification mechanisms based on their role as follows: those addressed to the psychologist, those addressed to the patient or the 'absent' indicator if these are not present.

6 | DISCUSSION

While, in another context (Ivaldi et al., 2024), we used some of the categories mentioned above to compare and analyse important psychological platforms that are prevalent in the Italian context, this contribution focuses on considerations related to the relationship between the characteristics of the adopted technological device and their influence on the psychological profession. The importance of identifying the various characteristics of platforms for psychological intervention lies precisely in the possibility of reflecting on how elements related to the platform model intersect with the psychological profession. As the APA has done in the past (2023) through recommendations and advice regarding the choice of technological mediator, our contribution represents an opportunity for reflection for professionals. Understanding how technology impacts the psychological profession could be an opportunity to stop and reflect on one's work and professional practice. We believe that this is central to the psychological profession and indicates the assumption of responsibility for patients. Below, we offer observations and comments related to how some relevant and recognised dimensions of psychological professional practice (professional choice, professional reputation, professional autonomy, belonging to the professional community and professional identity) are exposed to the influence of the 'platformisation' phenomenon. This relationship also constitutes an important

reference background for future comparative investigations between platforms. Each professional dimension will be discussed concerning the characteristics of the psychological platforms previously identified and described through the indicators.

6.1 | Professional choice

The platform model being applied to the psychological profession can modify how patients choose the professional to whom they turn. The increasingly easy access offered by an internet connection allows patients to conduct online searches quickly and purposefully. Consequently, in the research phase preceding the contact between the patient and psychologist, the digital identity of the latter becomes valuable. Professionals must promote their practices through digital channels, creating a personal webpage or advertising through social networks. Platforms effectively respond to the need for promotion, serving as an important showcase in the market for psychological services. Some platforms take control of building the personal profiles of professionals by managing their digital identities and promoting their activities. In this sense, platforms not only represent support in terms of publicity for professionals but also play a central role in the construction and development of their digital identities. However, this centrality depends on a characteristic of the platform itself, one that is related to the psychologist's profile transparency (Indicator 4), which we categorised as anonymous or open profiles. The visibility of profiles refers to the possibility of making information about professionals public. Another central differentiation is that between platforms that allow anyone to access psychologists' information and those that require registration or payment to view such profiles. This distinction represents a significant variant, as it has implications for the psychologist's digital identity. The anonymity of professionals on the platform, which mandates the inability to access information, such as curriculum, professional experiences and areas of expertise, makes the creation of a personal presentation page unnecessary. The possibility of constructing one's professional identity and engaging in self-promotion will therefore occur outside the considered platform, for example, on the psychologist's website, social networks or other platforms that the professional uses for practice. In contrast, an open profile, even if access is subject to payment, assumes the presence of a descriptive page for the professional within the platform, on which the patient can access information about the psychologist. Thus, the choice of the professional is not entirely within the patient's domain; rather, it is mediated by the platform, contributing to the construction of the psychologist's digital identity.

In addition, platforms can be considered intermediaries in the choice of a psychologist, as they also play a central role in the phase following the search for a professional, namely the psychologist selection phase (Indicator 11). Often, it is the patient who makes the choice after entering the platform and reviewing the profiles of various professionals. In this case, there may be mediation on the part of the platform itself, which through an algorithm or the work of an operator performing this function manually, selects a group of psychologists based on the patient's request. However, more and more platforms offer a matching service, algorithmic or manual, which directly matches a patient with a psychologist. In this case, the person must fill out an initial questionnaire, within which they must often provide information about their symptoms or psychophysical conditions. Subsequently, based on these data, the platform will return a proposal for a psychologist to the patient, allowing them to accept or reject it. Considering the platform's role as mediator in the choice process allows us to reflect on the various implications of the patient's choice of a professional and the matching proposed by the platform. In the traditional conception, the patient's decision-making process is considered an important phase of the therapeutic process itself and a starting point for building the relationship between the patient and the psychologist. If the platform, through an algorithm or manually via an operator, performs the matching, these assumptions are undermined, with potential repercussions that will be important to study in future research. Furthermore, in the case of direct matching, the criteria used by the platform become central. The initial questionnaire that platforms often choose to use presupposes the choice of a data collection method that focuses on certain information and inevitably excludes other information. For this

reason, it is necessary to understand the criteria used by various platforms in processing information and performing matches, observing potential implications, for example, in terms of effectiveness.

Regarding the criteria used in the choice of a professional, the following considerations seem to be relevant. First, the psychologist, whether they are working online or in person, when chosen by the patient, may have been indicated by another professional who considered the psychologist suitable for the subject's intervention request. In this sense, a preselection has already been made, preceding the patient's choice, by a specialist in the socio-health sector, such as a doctor, social worker or educator. This presupposes the presence of a network of professionals based on competence and interprofessional trust criteria, which will, therefore, mediate the choice of the professional.

Trust becomes an important criterion, even if the psychologist is recommended by a relative, friend, or acquaintance. As with referral by a professional, in this circumstance, there is a preselection, which can be useful in building the relationship between the psychologist and the patient, as it may help the latter begin the journey with a better disposition. In this sense, the choice of the professional by the patient or via the platform's internal algorithm can have important clinical implications. These could be explored in future research projects that adopt the perspective of clinical psychology. Considering the above, the use of a psychological platform seems to alter the traditional process of the patient choosing a professional from several points of view, transforming this dimension of the profession.

6.2 | Professional reputation

With the proliferation of the platform model, psychologists find themselves being evaluated within the infrastructure they use in their practice, subjecting themselves to unprecedented reputational mechanisms (Indicator 14). This has sparked debate regarding the competencies of patients who provide feedback on the performance of highly qualified professionals. Alongside this, questions arise about the focus of the review itself, questioning whether it evaluates the platform, the service provided or the psychologist. If the psychologist is the subject of the assessment, the precise criteria considered by patients—whether these are relational approaches, professionalism, competencies or other factors—are valid subjects of inquiry.

Reviews play a crucial role in shaping the professional reputations of psychologists. This marks a departure from the traditional context, as reputation is now built on patient evaluations, rather than solely on the recognition of competencies and abilities within the professional community. In the platform model, a psychologist's reputation is crafted through feedback from individuals who, despite making use of a given service, may lack the ability to judge its quality accurately. Even work experience becomes a nuanced criterion, as a novice professional with positive reviews may enjoy a better professional reputation than an experienced psychologist. Furthermore, the construction of professional reputation, traditionally a slow process, accelerates in the context of new technologies, potentially leading to discrepancies between perceived and actual professional solidity.

Reviews, especially in personal service contexts, cannot be considered completely reliable. Patients are reluctant to leave negative feedback when the service involves personal interaction, fearing that doing so will harm the professional. Consequently, dissatisfied users often choose not to leave feedback (Arcidiacono & Pais, 2016). Positive reviews may be more frequent and emphasised than negative ones, as users recognise their potential to reward the worker in terms of visibility. Therefore, the professional evaluation mechanism, which has a significant impact on professional reputation, is inherently unreliable.

An additional discussion point is the possibility that psychologists may adapt their clinical practice and interaction with patients to garner positive reviews, potentially sidelining therapeutic objectives. This risk is tied to the fact that professional reputation is anchored to a psychologist's digital identity, which is constructed based on patient reviews. This weakens the professional reputation developed based on recognition by colleagues within the

professional community, as well as the territorial context. This is why, once again, we believe that the dimension analysed is transformed as a result of the dissemination of psychological platforms for professional practice.

6.3 | Professional autonomy

Concerning the professional autonomy dimension of psychologists, two central criteria are pricing and working hours (Indicator 7), as mentioned above. Psychologists opting to establish a VAT number (value-added tax identification number) typically seek work that allows them to completely manage their activities, without adhering to corporate directives. In the platform model, the prevalent collaboration contract type may suit such professionals seeking independence. In some cases, platforms merely functioning as intermediaries between supply and demand do not constrain psychologists regarding pricing. However, many Italian platforms offer fixed pricing to patients, either for individual sessions or packages involving multiple sessions. This pricing strategy relates to the platform's competitiveness in the market, as the ability to offer a competitive rate influences the platform's success. However, this inevitably impacts the autonomy of psychologists, who are not free to set prices based on professional and contextual criteria. The former includes factors such as professional experience, the possession of a psychotherapist title or the number of areas of specialisation. Contextual criteria encompass elements such as the cost of living in a particular city (psychologists in Milan typically charge higher fees than those in Crotone) and any studio rent if the service is conducted in person.

How psychologists manage their work hours completed via the platform can also act as a potential constraint on professional autonomy. While few platforms impose predetermined working hours (e.g., 8:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. or 2:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m.), psychologists are often asked to guarantee availability on specific days (weekdays and holidays) and time slots (daytime or evening). Psychologists may be asked for a certain availability in terms of weekly or monthly hours, and in some cases, platforms inquire about how many hours per week the professional is willing to work. Even this factor contributes to reducing the professional autonomy of psychologists and prompts reflections on power dynamics. Professionals working via a platform due to a lack of other opportunities may be inclined to accept any conditions, both in terms of pricing and hours, creating an asymmetrical situation in which power is entirely held by the platform. This could more easily affect geographies with higher unemployment rates, presenting a risk associated with the 'platformisation' of the profession. Thus, a potential outcome is an economy in which only the most disadvantaged professionals choose to rely on digital intermediation.

Another criterion allowing us to discuss the professional autonomy of psychologists is exclusivity (Indicator 15), implying that professionals are restricted to using only one specific platform in their professional practice. This prompts considerations about how the professional manages their work, with implications for their professional activity and identity. Psychologists bound to a single platform can choose whether to work in person or online as freelancers but cannot use the demand intermediation services of another platform. This obligation ties the professional closely to the organisation, and its business and management rules will influence their activity. Consequently, the construction and development of the professional identity of psychologists working exclusively with a platform will be influenced only by that platform, in addition to potential professional activities outside the technological mediator. In contrast, a professional using intermediation services from multiple platforms will be more independent of individual organisations, ensuring a more diversified professional path in terms of both activity and identity development. However, a platform that mandates exclusivity, particularly if it also offers support services (Indicator 8) to professionals, can become a valuable support for psychologists. Especially for young professionals taking their first steps in the workforce, a platform that provides support services can become a context for growth and the development of knowledge, skills and abilities, impacting their professional identity.

Reflecting on the relationship between professionals and platforms, the final element tied to professional autonomy is reputational mechanisms (Indicator 14), as reviews can have a monitoring and control function regarding a worker's performance. In a Tayloristic organisational model, for example, the manager is responsible for evaluating

activities and possessing the necessary skills for a given task. In the platform model, the managerial role disappears, being replaced by evaluations based on patient feedback. In this sense, the platform becomes what Kornberger, Pflueger, and Mouritsen (2017) define as an evaluative infrastructure that delegates control to patients but retains power. In a work context in which organisations have no responsibility towards workers, who are primarily categorised as freelancers (Indicator 9), the autonomy of psychologists is essentially superficial. The only potential action for professionals is to terminate collaboration with the platform. However, especially in an oligopolistic context, which seems to be the direction of the Italian psychological platform market, this would lead to difficulties in practicing their profession. Therefore, the professional autonomy dimension also appears to change due to the adoption of the platform model for professional practice.

6.4 | Belonging to the professional community

Platforms, beyond their primary function of connecting supply and demand, can create conditions for the development of a sense of belonging within the organisation, offering various services. First, they provide technical, clinical or administrative assistance to professionals (Indicator 8). The first group includes all services related to the technical management of the digital tool, as well as training activities for psychologists regarding the use of the technological mediator. The second category of support for psychologists refers to platform-managed activities supporting clinical practice. This may include training services, the in-depth exploration of psychological disorders and pathologies, professional updates, supervision activities and peer discussions. This type of support is present in platforms that go beyond a mere matchmaking function, accompanying the worker through their professional development. Finally, administrative assistance concerns services provided by the platform related to billing management and training psychologists in accounting.

These types of services are central, especially for younger psychologists, as taking the first steps as a freelancer can be challenging. Therefore, organisational support becomes valuable. In this sense, the platform can become an important reference point for psychologists, assuming the role of a professional community to rely on.

Moreover, many platforms, in addition to support related to professional activities, offer another type of service, which we can define as corporate welfare (Indicator 17). This is provided to improve private and professional life. Specifically, the provision of activities such as fitness courses and yoga sessions and the issuance of gym discount vouchers has been observed. The motivations for platforms to offer such services can be diverse. First, it could be the organisation's desire to create a positive corporate environment for the professionals who rely on it for their activities. However, it is essential to note that in the context at hand, contracts between platforms and psychologists are, in most cases, collaborations rather than employment contracts (Indicator 9). Therefore, it can be assumed that the adoption of corporate welfare services is part of a strategy via which to retain freelance workers, making one platform more competitive than others. The same logic underlies events organised by the platform, both online and in person, that are designed as networking opportunities (Indicator 17) for professionals. Examples include annual events, such as a company's anniversary, or team-building meetings, serving as occasions for psychologists working with the same organisation to connect. Organising such social moments can be useful in terms of creating an internal professional community within the platform, addressing the need for belonging. Gig economy workers, being autonomous, are loosely affiliated with an organisation and often lack organisational attachment (Spreitzer, Cameron, & Garrett, 2017). For this reason, it is easy to understand how platforms aiming to retain psychologists and present themselves as organisations capable of meeting workers' need for belonging offer services and organise events dedicated to workers.

We believe that all the types of services presented, namely technical, clinical and administrative support and extraprofessional services offered to psychologists, are intended to establish a favourable organisational climate and propose an internal community within the platform as a reference point for professional and identity

development. In this sense, platforms become true digital communities, offering an alternative to traditional professional communities such as those represented by professional associations.

6.5 | Professional identity

This dimension is particularly intertwined with the previous ones, demonstrating numerous points of contact with the topics discussed. However, to address the third research question, it seems necessary to dedicate a section to the psychologist themselves and the factors influencing the construction of their professional identity following the phenomenon under examination. Given this, some themes will be developed, as they were not described above, while others will be only briefly touched on to avoid redundancy.

The first topic that helps us understand the transformation of the psychologist's professional identity following the use of the platform is related to Indicator 9 (the type of contract between the platform and the psychologist). The literature includes a heated debate over the classification of platform workers as self-employed, and we believe this will be an interesting topic of discussion for psychologists. Until recently, there has been a widespread belief that self-employed workers were, in general, well positioned in terms of remuneration and enjoyed better working conditions than employees (Mingione, 2020). Today, especially with the development of the platform economy, it has been realised that this belief has no basis in real experience. Platforms have no obligations towards professionals in terms of minimum wage, tax burdens and social security contributions (Schwab, 2016). On one hand, most platform workers, who are not employees, can choose their working hours, deciding when and how much to work. However, companies may choose to accept only the services of those who are willing to work for a certain number of hours and at specific times of the day. In addition, the self-employed, within the traditional definition, provide services to different clients. In contrast, especially in oligopoly or monopoly regimes, platform workers often find themselves collaborating with only one company. Thus, it is easy to understand how platforms can have significant power over workers without any responsibility (Crouch, 2019).

Another interesting theme is related to platform work as an alternative to unemployment. Many workers choose to become self-employed due to their inability to find subordinate employment. Now, increased precariousness has led entire classes of workers to accept professional conditions, giving up their rights to work, representation and bargaining. We believe that what has been said may, at least in part, also apply to psychologists and that it will be essential to delve into the motivations of professionals when they choose to become platform workers.

As mentioned above, the use of the platform for professional practice leads psychologists to build a digital identity, either within or outside the platform. This is necessary for the professional to have visibility on the web. In this sense, professional identity is closely connected to the psychologist's digital identity. If the psychologist's profile is built within the platform, their professional identity will necessarily be linked to the platform itself, depending on its marketing choices, business logic and organisational rules. Choosing to work through a platform means deciding to be part of an organisation, which inevitably provides guidelines that the professional must adhere to. Simultaneously, this is related to the autonomy of the psychologist (Indicator 7), as these organisational rules will influence how the worker practices their profession and, consequently, the type of professional they are now and can become in the future.

In addition to what has already been discussed in terms of autonomy, we believe that the platform's imposition of pricing, often at reduced rates, allows us to consider issues related to remuneration. Specifically, platforms offer psychological intervention services at lower prices than the market, making them more attractive than psychological interventions carried out in presence. These companies argue that adopting a low rate favours a segment of the market that otherwise could not afford the cost of a traditional path. We believe that if the professional shares the mentioned mission, this could influence how they perceive themselves as a psychologist and an individual. In this sense, promoting sessions at a controlled rate would be equivalent to grounding values possessed by the professional and shared with the platform, influencing identity development. However, it seems that imposing lower pricing than

traditional practices could open the door to the risk of polarising professionals, creating two distinct categories. On one side, a few psychologists choose to practice as freelancers, with higher fees and the professional recognition typical of self-employed workers. On the other hand, a large number of psychologists choose to work with platforms offering lower pricing as platform workers, with their reputations depending on online reviews. In this sense, if the professional identity of the psychologist using the platform is built based on reputational mechanisms (Indicator 14), which we have already discussed, how the psychologist perceives themselves as a professional will be influenced. Therefore, reviews represent a new element on which the construction and development of the psychologist's professional identity are based. It is easy, therefore, to understand how practicing the profession through a platform can give rise to a type of psychologist who may present a different professional identity than those using the traditional approach.

On the other hand, we must recognise that platforms, by taking on the role of a reference professional community, which is due to the introduction of support mechanisms for psychologists (Indicators 8 and 17), become contexts from which to draw elements that are useful for building professional identity. Unlike what has been found in the literature on gig economy workers (Petriglieri, Ashford, & Wrzesniewski, 2019), psychological platforms can represent pools from which to draw factors affecting the development of identity for psychologists. The various indicators we have mentioned in this section dedicated to the psychologist themselves have allowed us to discuss how this professional builds their identity when carrying out activities through a platform. We have shown how various factors influence this process of identity construction, transforming traditional ones and creating new ones. The phenomenon of the 'platformisation' of the psychological profession, therefore, not only seems capable of modifying some dimensions of the profession itself but also changing the identity of the psychologist.

7 | CONCLUSIONS

The research provides insights into the internal variety of psychological platforms within the Italian landscape, highlighting key features that are significant for analysis and potential comparison. The possibility of identifying different characteristics between psychological platforms has allowed, first of all, the construction of indicators that are useful for their classification. This allowed us to reflect on the way in which the different specificities impact and influence the practice of the psychological profession in different ways. We believe that constructing criteria and frameworks for understanding platforms dedicated to the practice of psychology can aid in comprehending a continuously evolving phenomenon. Having a clear understanding of the current state of the field allows us to capture the present context and anticipate future developments. The ability to foresee and reflect on potential evolutions of the platform model applied to the discipline of psychology is of central importance, as it allows a focus on risks and potentials. The scientific literature on platform-related themes has served as a valuable starting point for our analysis. Many authors have addressed the strengths, critical issues, potential developments and ethical dilemmas associated with platform work. Combined with our expertise as psychologists in the field of work and organisations, we decided to do the same, identifying dimensions of particular interest within the largely unexplored phenomenon of psychological platforms.

From our perspective, the use of such technological mediators for psychological interventions is not devoid of effects on the profession. In discussing the indicators we proposed, we not only highlighted the main characteristics of the platforms but also examined the implications arising from practicing psychology through them. Specifically, this contribution emphasises the way in which the platform's use modifies the process of building the psychologist's professional reputation, which is influenced by factors such as patient reviews and online promotional activities. In this sense, we highlighted the fact that professional identity is closely connected to the digital identity facilitated by the platform, making the professional's connection with the local context and the reference community fragile. However, we also highlighted how a greater sense of belonging to the digital community could develop, strengthened by the organisation through networking moments, which represent support for the professional. We noted that being

able to reference an organisational structure can benefit the psychologist in terms of technical, administrative and professional assistance. This is especially true for novice psychologists. In doing so, we discussed the fact that being part of an organisation also means adhering to the rules imposed by the platform, which could limit the psychologist's autonomy in carrying out their activities. In addition, the presented indicators allowed us to reflect on further limitations on the psychologist's independence, as represented by fees and working hours being set by management, with implications for professional autonomy. We believe this study may have important implications. The phenomenon of platform work for psychologists is very recent, and an ever-increasing number of professionals find themselves carrying out their work through this digital medium. We believe that reading this paper will allow psychologists who are approaching this new working model to stop and reflect on the implications that the characteristics of the platform they have chosen have for their work and professional identity.

What has been discussed thus far is useful in understanding the potential evolution of the psychological profession and the psychologist's role as a result of conducting activities through platforms. Ultimately, our contribution emphasises the importance of continuous reflection on the relationship between psychology and digital platforms, addressing emerging challenges and capitalising on the opportunities offered by this new professional frontier. Recognising that this contribution represents only a first step in analysing such a broad and rapidly growing phenomenon, we believe it can serve as a stimulus for future research projects. As for our work, we intend to use the criteria constructed here to analyse and classify psychological platforms. By doing so, from our point of view, it is possible to not only understand the characteristics of the platform considered but also reflect on how the digital structure influences psychological interventions and the professionals themselves.

8 | LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Our contribution is configured as research project in an unexplored field. The impact that the phenomenon of work platformisation has on the psychological profession and the professional identity of the psychologist appears not to have been explored from an organisational and work psychology perspective. This created some difficulties, as we were not able to rely on dedicated scientific literature; rather, we had to draw on other fields that study the platformisation of work in general. Nonetheless, this has allowed us to carry out new work, which we hope can be explored in depth with future research. Specifically, we believe it is useful for other perspectives, for example that of clinical psychology, to be adopted. In this way, researchers can delve more deeply into this topic because from our point of view, the exercise of the psychological profession via the platform has numerous implications for various disciplines and fields of research.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Maddalena Gambirasio has contributed substantially to the conception and design, data acquisition, data analysis and interpretation; has participated in the drafting of the manuscript; has given final approval of the version to be published; has participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content; and agreed to be responsible for all aspects of the work, ensuring that questions about the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are properly investigated and resolved. Silvia Ivaldi has contributed substantially to the conception and design, data analysis and interpretation; has given final approval of the version to be published; has participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content; and agreed to be responsible for all aspects of the work, ensuring that questions about the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are properly investigated and resolved. Giuseppe Scaratti has contributed substantially to the conception and design, data analysis and interpretation; has participated in the drafting of the manuscript; has given final approval of the version to be published; has participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content; and agreed to be responsible for all aspects of the work, ensuring that questions about the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are properly investigated and resolved.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no potential conflict of interests.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ https://www.opl.it/public/files/3750-20111102_Stato_arte_ricerca_psicologia_tecnologia.pdf.
- ² <https://www.weplat.it>.
- ³ <https://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/isco08/>.
- ⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/index/nace_all.html.

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How to cite this article: Gambirasio, M., Ivaldi, S., & Scaratti, G. (2024). How platformisation transforms the psychological profession: Reflections from a proposal of indicators for the classification of psychological platforms. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 34(4), e2861. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2861>