



Freelancers' Well-being in the Media Field

Lauri Purovaara

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences

Bachelor's Thesis

2022

Degree Programme in International Business

Abstract

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| Author(s) Lauri Purovaara |
| Degree Bachelor of Business Administration |
| Report/Thesis Title Freelancers' Well-being in the Media Field |
| Number of pages and appendix pages 30 + 5 |
| <p>The thesis examines the well-being of freelancers' in the context of the media field. The commissioning company Streamhill Oy operates in the tv-media industry, and the author of the thesis is the owner of the commissioning company. The industry primarily uses freelancers as a workforce. Because many professionals have quit working in the industry in the past or changed their careers, findings in the study may help to understand why some individuals leave the industry and what motivates others to work in the media field. This information is important for the industry to develop in the right, healthier, and more sustainable direction. The research methods in the study have been qualitative interviews; participants in interviews were freelancers who have been working in the film and tv-media industry. The method of analyzing the results has been qualitative data analysis, and the results are discussed at a later stage.</p> <p>The freelancers discuss their motivations to work in the media field, possible stressors they may face as acting as a freelancer and the stressors they have faced from the industry, and features of work that increase or decrease their well-being. In addition, freelancers discuss about how they experience international productions affecting their well-being and what coping mechanisms they use to recover from possible stress.</p> <p>The results find many positive and negative aspects of working as freelancers in the media field. In addition, the findings show significant stressors in many aspects of freelancing and from working in the media field. The discussion includes further suggestions for the industry executives to improve the design of film and tv productions to increase freelancers' well-being in the media field, based on the key findings of the study and suggestions from the interview participants.</p> |
| Keywords Freelancer, Media Field, Well-being, Motivations, Lifestyle, Stressors. |

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1 Introduction

This paper is a bachelor's thesis research for the Degree Programme in International business with a specialization in Entrepreneurship at the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. This paper will investigate freelancers' well-being in the tv-media field. In addition, this paper will look at what motivates freelancers working in the media field and the uncertainties they might face in the industry.

1.1 Background to the topic

In 2016 about 2000 companies were operating in the media field, employing directly approximately 21 000 people in Finland (Tähkää 2018). Many people in the media-field act as a freelancer. Freelancers are usually hired by larger studios or production companies to work on productions of different kinds: from a short production of a few hours to larger projects lasting for months; contracts for the productions vary a lot from each other. These aspects may create uncertainties in freelancers' life. On the other hand, something drives people to work in the industry; there are many talented and creative individuals working in the media field. This paper will examine how the industry affects freelancers' well-being, their motivations to work, and whether there are any stressors in their work. In addition, this paper will also look more closely at freelancers' treatment in the media field.

The topic was selected because the author has worked in various tv productions for years; he wanted to know how people inside the industry feel about their well-being and how they see the effect of the media field on their well-being. In addition, because of his experience, he has seen that many tv professionals have exited the industry or changed their profession in the past. Therefore, he wanted to know why some people leave and what motivates others to stay in the media field.

1.2 Research question

The thesis aims to study freelancers' well-being in the media field. The information gained from the thesis could be used to improve working circumstances in the industry. Freelancers and individuals working in the media industry can use this information to evaluate their actions, which affect their well-being; companies hiring freelancers can take note of how to improve working conditions affecting well-being. The research question and investigative questions are presented on the next page. Furthermore, lastly, the overlay matrix is presented on pages two and three. The table presents the IQs and chapters of the theoretical framework concerned with the certain IQ, and the chapters where results are discussed.

RQ. How are freelancers in the tv-media field experiencing their well-being?

IQ 1. What are the motivations to work in the media field as a freelancer?

IQ 2. What increases freelancers' well-being working in the media field?

IQ 3. What are the stressors and uncertainty factors in the media field?

IQ 4. How do international productions affect well-being?

IQ 5. What are the coping mechanisms freelancers use?

Table 1. Overlay matrix

| IQ's | Theoretical Framework | Research methods | Results |
|--|--|--|---------|
| IQ 1. What are the motivations to work in the media field as a freelancer? | 2.1 Media field context 2.2 Defining freelancing 2.3.2 Motivations to work 2.3.3 Lifestyle and self-actualization | Qualitative interviews of freelancers. | 4.1 |
| IQ 2. What increases freelancers' well-being? | 2.2 Defining Freelancing 2.3 Defining well-being 2.3.3 Lifestyle and self-actualization 2.3.4 Social aspect of well-being | Qualitative interviews of freelancers. | 4.2 |
| IQ 3. What are the stressors and uncertainty factors in the media field? | 2.1 Media field context 2.3.1 Stressors as well-being factors 2.3.4 Social aspect of well-being | Qualitative interviews of freelancers. | 4.3 |

| IQ's | Theoretical Framework | Research methods | Results |
|---|--|--|---------|
| IQ 4. How do international productions affect well-being? | 2.3 Defining well-being 2.3.1 Stressors as well-being factors 2.3.2 Motivations to work 2.3.3 Lifestyle and self-actualization 2.3.4 Social aspect of well-being | Qualitative interviews of freelancers. | 4.4 |
| IQ 5. What are the coping mechanisms freelancers use? | 2.3 Defining well-being 2.3.3 Lifestyle and self-actualization 2.3.4 Social aspect of well-being | Qualitative interviews of freelancers. | 4.5 |

1.3 Demarcation

The thesis will look into motives that keep people working in the media field and aspects influencing freelancers' well-being: internal and external influences. The thesis focuses on finding motivations to work and downsides in the media field. In addition, the sample of freelancers was narrowed down only to freelancers in the tv-media; otherwise, the selection would be too broad.

1.4 Benefits

The author is an entrepreneur in the company Streamhill Oy; the thesis is done for his own business, which will act as a commissioning company. The research will benefit the company, the authors colleagues in the media field, and the studios and production companies hiring freelancers. The author will gain more knowledge about different phenomena inside the industry, and the commissioning company can act accordingly in the future when hiring freelancers. Hopefully, the findings of the thesis and recommendations will reach parties who have the power to make changes to the industry, e.g., producers and executives of the production companies. In the discussion chapter, there are recommendations for production design affecting the well-being of freelancers. Recommendations are based on interviews with people working in the industry as freelancers.

1.5 Key concepts

A freelancer is a person whose work is a task-based short-term job, usually for multiple employers; without being an employee, they work for themselves. This type of work allows the freelancer to work concurrently with multiple companies. (Sivakumar 2022.)

The media field is a broad concept that can include audio and video-related jobs. The media and entertainment industry includes television, film, radio, and print media, including items such as movies, tv series, news, music, books, and magazines. (Carnegie Mellon University 2022.)

Well-being is a broader and deeper concept compared to the word happiness; it describes in a holistic way how someone is doing (Vernon 2014). Moreover, well-being is a natural human goal; people want their life to be good (Huppert 2013).

The stressor describes stress causes: *"Stressors are situations that are experienced as a perceived threat to one's well-being or position in life, especially if the challenge of dealing with it exceeds a person's perceived available resources"* (Scott 2021).

1.6 Comissioning Company

The case company for the thesis is Streamhill Oy, established in February 2021 and owned and founded by the author Lauri Purovaara. He acts as the CEO of the company and runs it by himself. Only the accounting is outsourced to an accounting firm, but Lauri communicates actively with the accounting firm. Streamhill employs one person along with the entrepreneur; this employer is a talented cinematographer and editor, and he works in many different positions in a large variety of productions, from reality tv to sports productions. The company focuses on tv broadcast media, and most of its work is in news and sports broadcasts. Streamhill Oy is a subcontractor to major film and tv companies such as NEP Finland and ITV Finland. Lauri works as a multicamera director in MTV3 news broadcasts, Finland's most-viewed commercial news show. In addition, he acts as a multicamera director in Eurojackpot draw, which is broadcasted to a large part of Europe. On top of these, the company's both men are working in various sports broadcasts in different positions in many productions and other TV entertainment productions. In addition, they have been working in the same productions internationally as well, such as in a reality-tv show which was filmed in Spain in 2021. The production was intensive and lasted for more than two and a half months. The thesis framework "media field" is the industry where Streamhill Oy operates, and the results will touch the entrepreneur and the employer; the thesis outcome will give valuable information for the company.

Streamhill Oy is in collaboration with multiple production companies, both technical and content production companies. How the media field supply chain is functioning is presented below with a figure and supported with bullet points on this page.

- Streamhill Oy provides expertise to multiple production companies and technical production companies, whether directing, vision mixing, camera operation, or whatever skill is needed.
- Technical production companies provide technical equipment and some staff, which is key to tv productions.
- Production companies responsible for the content, and it works in collaboration with technical production companies and freelancers to bring the show's vision alive.
- End-product is made with collaboration with many parties, whether it is news, reality tv, sports, or lottery; the finalized program is delivered to tv channels where it will be aired.

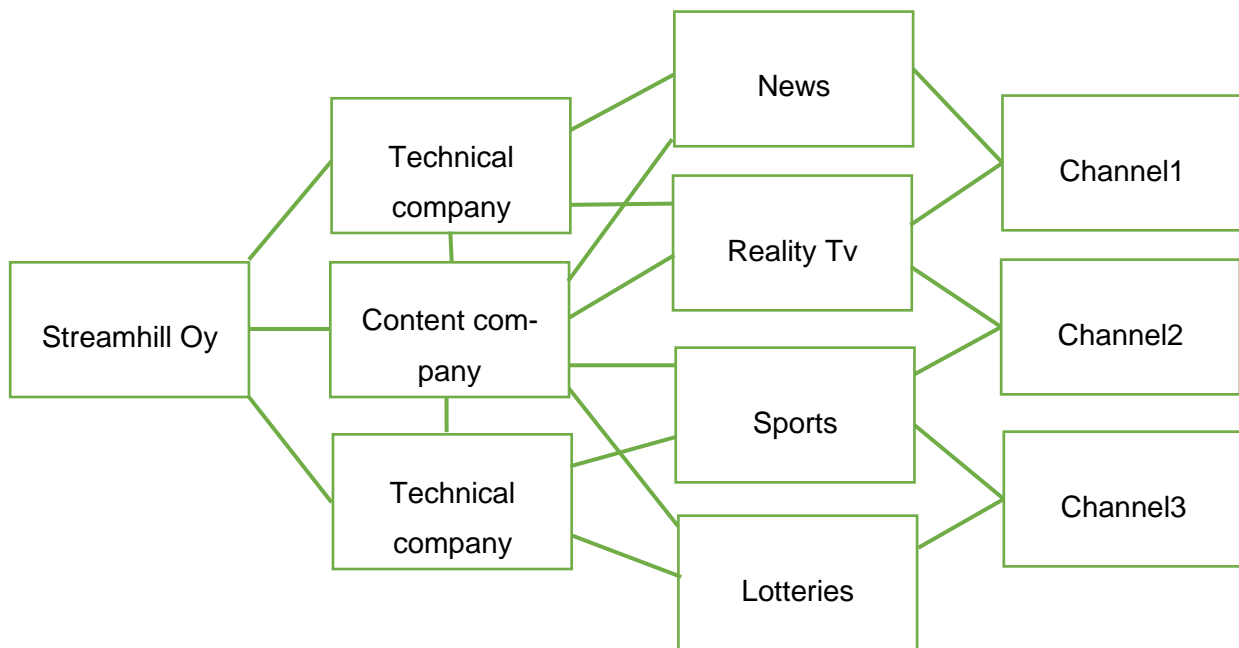


Figure 1. The production supply chain of the commissioning company.

2 Freelancers' Well-being in the Media Field

The thesis will study about the media field as a context where freelancers are working. In addition, in theory framework, concept of freelancing, and concept of well-being with it's sub consepts are also explained. The research method in the thesis is qualitative interview.

The theoretical framework will be discussed in this chapter to clarify the structure of the thesis. Section 2.1 explains the media field as the operating environment for freelancers. The next topic will present what it is like to work as a freelancer and what type of work they do in chapter 2.2. The next topic, 2.3 is about well-being, one of the critical factors in the thesis framework; how well-being is defined. Also, one key element is the stressors, which are discussed in sub-section 2.3.1. Next, sub-section 2.3.1 will explain motivations to work and why people generally work. The following sub-section, 2.3.3, will describe lifestyle and self-actualization as well-being factors. Finally, social relationships are discussed in the sub-chapter 2.3.4, where the meaning of social relationships as a well-being factor is explained.

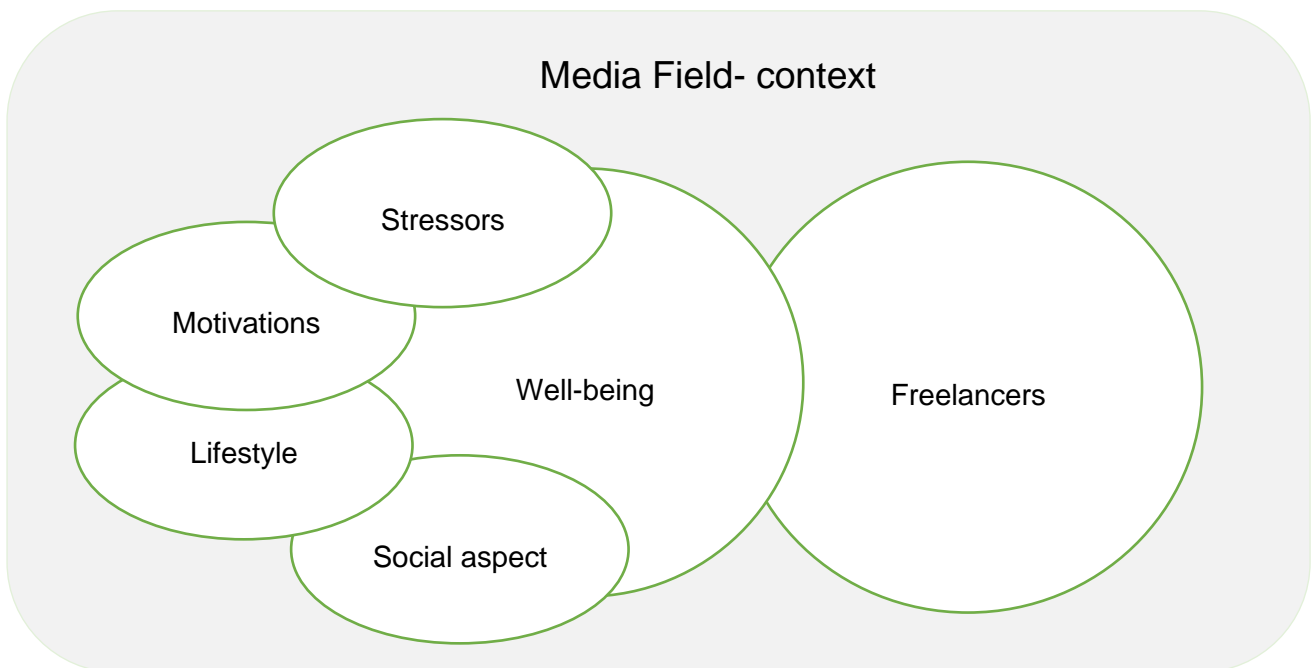


Figure 2. The aspects of well-being, and the relation of well-being and freelancers in a context of the media field.

2.1 The media field, and film and tv industry context

The media field is a broad concept that can include audio and video-related jobs. The media and entertainment industry includes television, film, radio, and print media, including items such as movies, tv series, news, music, books, and magazines. (Carnegie Mellon University 2022.)

In the media industry, companies share information with audiences via unique forms of media: tv, radio, podcasts, magazines, and websites. The industry employs various individuals in different tasks; different media have multiple tasks for professionals with unique skills. (Dye 2022.) In the film and tv industry, these talents may work, for example, as director, producer, writer, makeup artist, camera operator, editor, or possibly light and sound engineer. (Resnik & Trost 1996.)

In 2016 about 2000 companies were operating in the media field in Finland, employing directly approximately 21 000 people (Tähkäpää 2018). Compared to the UK, there were more than 15 000 companies solely in the film and tv media industry in 2019 (Navarro 2022a.), employing approximately 82 000 people. (Stoll 2021.) The ministry of education and culture in Finland conducted a study in 2016 where the 90 most profitable film and tv companies' turnover was estimated to be approximately 76 million euros, and the whole film and tv industry was estimated to be 133 million euros. (Valtioneuvosto.fi 2018.) In the UK in 2020, filmed entertainment gained 2,64 billion British pounds gross revenue (Navarro 2022b.), which is approximately 7,34 billion euros, calculated on today's 10.11.2022 exchange rate in xe.com. (Xe.com 2022).

Tv media jobs are highly competitive in the UK. Before the 1980's media workers were mostly in long-term salaried positions when the field was highly regulated; there was only public service broadcaster BBC with few highly regulated private sector broadcasters, such as regional ITV franchises. Since the 1980s, regulation has changed drastically, and today, many of the BBC's productions are produced by independent production companies. The liberation of the industry impacted the work environment and how people are hired. Before, people were working long-term with monthly salaries; today, people are hired on mostly short fixed-term contracts. This transition has led tv professionals to become freelancers. (Dex, Paterson, Sheppard & Willis 2000.)

In the UK, the transition from highly regulated public organizations drawn industry to a liberal competitive market has led to shrinking budgets. Because of the pressure to reduce production costs, the lower budgets mean cuts in labor costs because of the labor-intensive nature of the industry. Some workers have become powerful players in the field, such as star directors and writers who can bid up the price. Others may have found themselves as weak players who might need to chase the payment on unviable terms. This means that now the workforce must negotiate

rates for every job, which before was a steady salary with yearly increments. (Dex, Paterson, Sheppard & Willis 2000.)

2.2 Defining freelancing

Freelancer is person whose work is task-based short term jobs, usually for multiple employers without being employee; they work for themselves. This gives liberty for the freelancer to work concurrently to multiple companies. (Sivakumar 2022.) Freelancer offers their expertise and skills of certain area for prescribed amount of time, usually concentrated time period, but can be also a regular slot of the week, or even month or year. After contract period, freelancer must find another assignment. (Platman, Salaman & Storey 2005.) In early literature at mid-1970's freelancer was described as borderless worker. (Huđek, Tominc & Širec 2020.)

Freelancing has different sides considering it as an alternative way of working. Depending on the freelancer's work, the freelancer often has flexible working hours and the power to decide on jobs and clients. On the other hand, freelancers might not have a steady income, and their workload might be unstable. The freelancer might find it challenging to distinguish time between personal and work time. In addition, the freelancer does not have employer benefits like health insurance. (Mir 2021.)

In USA 36% of the work force is concerned to be part of gig economy, and forecasts shows that if the growth of gig economy will keep the current pace, more than 50% of their work force will be part of it by the year 2027; UK has similar forecasts than USA considering the growth. (Huđek, Tominc & Širec 2020.) In Finland there were 123 000 self-employed individuals in the beginning of millenium, and in the beginning of year 2018 there were already 183 000 self-employed individuals (Freet 2019). Even though the concept of self-employed might be different from the concept of freelancing, the number of self-employed gives a picture of the situation in Finland since there is no reliable data on the number of freelancers in Finland.

Legally, the terms self-employed and freelancer are the same in the UK, but there are some differences. All the freelancers are self-employed, but not all self-employed people are freelancers. Typically self-employed is a entrepreneur, business owner, or founder of a start-up; they tend to have more autonomy than freelancers. On the other hand, freelancers usually work for many short term projects for multiple companies. (Cresswell 2021.)

In the UK, many of the risks of making tv programs have shifted from production companies to freelancers. This shift means more uncertainty to freelancers working in the industry, such as not knowing if they will find a new contract for the next production. In addition, this means that

freelancers must negotiate their rate for every production. (Dex, Paterson, Sheppard & Willis 2000.)

2.3 Defining well-being

Word *happiness* well describes someone's feelings of joy and feeling good, but a better word for describing how someone is doing overall is *well-being*: it is a more profound word, and it carries wider than the word happiness (Vernon 2014). Well-being is a natural human goal; people want their life to be well (Huppert 2013). There is a link between subjective well-being and quality of work, for example, workplace trust, a job that requires skills, a job that offers variety, and a job that can be completed satisfactorily (Huppert 2013). Subjective well-being refers to how people are actually experiencing their lives (Huppert 2013). On the other hand, objective well-being refers to well-being on a societal level: health, education, employment, security, housing, and the environment (Huppert 2013). One having a job is positively connected to subjective well-being; in contrast, unemployment is related negatively to subjective well-being. Other work-related aspects, for example, commuting time and work-life balance, have also been connected with subjective well-being. (Huppert 2013.) Objective well-being can be seen as welfare; there might be a strong or weak connection with subjective and objective well-being (Huppert 2013).

Psychological well-being is about living in a good state. Positive well-being stimulates creativity, a growth mindset, and flourishing, which has seen as essential attributes for entrepreneurs. By contrast, negative well-being can include outcomes such as psychological strain and distress or weakened mental health. (Wach, Ute, Weinberger & Wegge 2020.)

The earliest idea of positive mental health was presented in 1958. The idea of positive mental health included six elements: autonomy, self-actualization, attitudes of an individual towards his own self, integration, perception of reality, and environmental mastery. The idea has developed since, but still, in 1989, the study has partly similar descriptions: positive relationships, autonomy, personal growth, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. A study from the year 2013 made a list of the components of psychological well-being, and the scientist's effort was to conclude it in an objective way. In order to find the components that form well-being, they studied the common mental disorders with internationally recognized criteria. For each symptom they found, they listed the opposite attribute. The result was the list of ten features representing positive mental health which they call flourishing, the opposite of ill-being well-being: emotional stability, engagement, competence, optimism, positive emotion, self-esteem, positive relationships, resilience, meaning, and vitality. (Huppert 2013.)

Furthermore, there may have a connection between well-being and some of its assumed causes; it might also be a bi-directional relationship. Some of the health, socioeconomic, personal, and lifestyle components connected to well-being, also known as drivers of well-being, may also be the result of well-being as its reason. For example, having good relationships or rewarding work might advance well-being; a significant level of well-being might also grow the possibility of creating good relationships and finding rewarding work. (Huppert 2013.)

Well-being is also dependent on gender, personality, age, and values. The study has found that females have higher average well-being levels than men worldwide. In addition, a study in the US shows that women had higher levels of life satisfaction compared to men from the 70s till the mid-90s, and then the sides changed; men were more satisfied in life than women until the end of the study year 2000. Similar results were reported in twelve different European countries, even though the gender gap was smaller than in the US. They found out from international comparison that the gender gap is significant in economically developed countries, among educated people, and concerns more urban areas than rural areas. (Huppert 2013.)

Age has a correlation with well-being. The relation between well-being and age has been described as U-shaped: the highest well-being levels have been measured in young adults and people in early old age, decreasing after age 70. The result is the same both among men and women. The dip in well-being happens between ages 35 and 55, which is often the period of ultimate career development, responsibilities for the family, and financial needs. (Huppert 2013.)

People with high level of well-being tend to have features that are more self-enhancing compared the ones with low level of well-being. Positive attributial styles such as high self-esteem and optimism might have contribution to holistic well-being. Aspects of motivation or goal orientation may increase subjective well-being. For example, well-being is enhanced when the goals are intrinsically motivating, when one has a sense of development towards a goal one values, and when chasing the goal is in line with personal values. In addition, practicing personally meaningful projects may have a significant effect on well-being. (Huppert 2013.)

2.3.1 Stressors as well-being factors

When someone experiences stress, a stressor is an event causing the stress. Stressors are situations experienced as a possible threat to well-being; if the challenge exceeds the available resources. When encountering stressors, the stress response of the body is triggered; a sequence of physiological reactions fires up, allowing one to fight or run. A common understanding is that the described event seems like stress; because often, when people discuss stress in life, they are actually discussing about stressors. Stressors launch the stress response leading to stress experience, so the stressors cause stress. (Scott 2021.)

The situation that a stressor is depends on the person. Although some aspects of life usually stress most people, such as conflicts in relationships, demands in work, and a hectic schedule. Every possible stressor does not cause stress for all. Everyone has different stressors depending on one's unique set of resources, perception of things, and worldview. Something that seems like a possible threat to one might be seen as a challenge to another. Stressors may also be vague; a trip to a shopping center might be a stressor for someone who does not enjoy crowds; a visit to the mall may be a significant stressor. For example, a person with introverted nature may become stressed because of a long trip to a mall, which would be a thrilling experience for someone extroverted. (Scott 2021.)

Situations that most likely are causing stress are unexpected or rogue, uncertain, unclear or unfamiliar, or may involve conflict, loss of something, or expectations of high performance. In addition, stress might be caused by events with limited time, for example, the pressures of deadlines at work. Finally, stress might be caused by social situations, such as family demands, insecurities at work, or long work travel. (Michie 2002.)

People have different individual resources which help meet work demands and pressure. The resources are individual characteristics and skills for coping with stressful situations, e.g., stressors, for example, time management, or problem-solving skills. In addition, the work situation itself may have an impact, such as excellent social support or a working environment. Work infrastructure, excellent management, hiring practices, employee training, and work organizing may improve these resources. (Michie 2002.)

How people experience stress depends on the individual. Acute stress responses might be feelings of, for example, depression, anxiety, fatigue, or irritability. It can affect behavior one becoming, for example, aggressive, withdrawn, tearful, or unmotivated. Also, it may cause, for example, difficulties in problem-solving and concentration or even physical symptoms such as headaches and

nausea. Long-lasting stress can lead to physical and mental sicknesses such as depression, anxiety, or heart disease. (Michie 2002.)

Usually, employers blame the victims of stress rather than the cause of stress. However, in recent years, societies have started to recognize that employers' duty in law is to ensure employees do not become sick. It should also be employers' long-term economic goal to prevent stressors. Stress causes reduced performance at work, accidents, diminished client satisfaction, high employee turnover, and a growing number of sickness absences, and may cause early retirement. (Michie 2002.)

Study shows that entrepreneurs may have chosen their stressful occupations and might even enjoy the challenge that certain work stressors pose. That opposes the traditional view that all stressors hinder well-being. Some challenging stressors positively affect to well-being in ways of positive motivation and job satisfaction. These stressors can be, for example, cognitively challenging tasks or positive time pressure. Conversely, harmful stressors, such as hassles, conflicting roles, or role ambiguity, are factors that hinder well-being and increase strain. (Wach, Ute, Weinberger & Wegge 2020.)

2.3.2 Motivations to work

Motivation well describes why one commits an action; motivation is the driving force leading to the actions; what activates goal-oriented behavior. For example, motivation makes one drive for promotion at work; the purpose of motivation is to get one to achieve goals. It has emotional, biological, cognitive, and social forces which enable human behavior. (Cherry 2022.)

Motivation may be a driving force for all behavior. Therefore, understanding the functioning of motivation and the elements impacting motivation can be crucial for multiple reasons. For example, motivation may have an increasing effect on efficiency when working towards goals. Furthermore, it can drive one to take action and embolden one to engage in health-oriented and avoid unhealthy behaviors. In addition, it may help one feel more control over one's life and increase one's happiness and overall well-being. (Cherry 2022.)

Having the desire to accomplish a goal is not usually enough to achieve the goal. In addition, one must be persistent in going through obstacles; have the endurance in order to continue even when facing difficulties. Researchers found three main components of motivation that are needed to get and maintain motivation: activation, persistence, and intensity. Activation means the decision initiating the behavior, for example, enrolling in upcoming courses to earn a degree. Persistence is a continuous effort to achieve a goal, even facing complex obstacles, such as attending class despite being tired from the long night before. Finally, intensity could be described as the focus and

energy that goes into thriving for a goal. For example, one student may be studying with low effort meaning minimal intensity; another may be studying regularly with strong effort meaning greater intensity. (Cherry 2022.)

Money and other rewards have been traditionally used to motivate people and make them work harder. However, some studies have shown that money ranks far behind factors such as challenging work or interesting people as colleagues. (Kohn 1998.) In the article “not just for the money” psychologists claim that the primary behavioral motive comes from within the person: one would be intrinsically motivated to perform a task when one does not receive a reward no other than the activity itself. (Frey 1997.)

Motivation indicates forces that energize behavior and includes two major factors: what people want to do; how strongly they want to do it (Neill 2015). There are two primary forms of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivations refer to internal motivation: work where a person's psychological needs are met. By contrast, extrinsic motivation comes from the outside, for example, salary. (Dunn 2020.)

One key factor that drives people to work is their desire to fulfill their needs; job productivity depends on one's motivation to work. Therefore, companies must notify the needs of the employees, their expectations, what skills and talents they possess, and their future plans to have a motivated and productive workforce. In addition, work motivation has a significant positive impact on job satisfaction. People with a high level of job satisfaction are more likely to be more engaged in their responsibilities and duties, which leads to improved work performance. (Haryono, Pancasila & Sulistyono 2020.)

2.3.3 Lifestyle and self-actualization

A study about Swedish journalist freelancers in the media field says: “*The choice to work as a freelance journalist is connected to lifestyle, and the idea of “life as a project”, as well as entrepreneurialism, in ways that are connected to the societal processes of individualization and “flexibilization”*” (Edström & Landendorf 2012). Another study examining freelance musicians in London stated that the study participants felt the freelancer lifestyle was distinctive, a sense of being unusual or different from the rest of society; some participants described a feeling of disconnection from real life. (Dobson 2010.)

There is a freelancer type called “Lifers”; they see freelancing as a lifelong career, embracing the lifestyle of freelancing. Their main goal is to find creative opportunities leveraging their career in the gig economy. Lifers do not see employment as an employed-unemployed phenomenon but rather as a lifestyle. They have a flowability between professional and private lives. They recognize and

accept the financial uncertainty of freelancing, and they choose jobs opportunistically. Lifers are usually highly skilled, as the most profitable gig jobs demand a skilled trade. (Dunn 2020.)

Self-actualization means the will for self-fulfillment or one's orientation to be actualized in what one is potential. Individuals may see this need very specifically. For example, one might have an increased will to become an ideal parent. Another may desire to be expressed athletically, economically, or maybe academically. For many, it may be expressed creatively, such as with pictures, paintings, or maybe inventions. (Perera 2020.)

Self-actualization and self-realization could be described as the holistic realization of a person's potential, showing in top experiences, involving the full development of one's abilities and valuation for life. Obtaining self-actualization includes full involvement in life and realizing what one can accomplish. To achieve self-actualization, one needs to be in a state of uniformity. Self-actualization appears when one's ideal self, i.e., whom one would like to be, is in line with one's actual behavior, i.e., self-image. (Perera 2020.)

Self-actualization is one's self-realization in a healthy manner on the way to exceeding one's abilities (Kaufman 2018). Self-actualized people can be described as accepting who they are, nevertheless their limitations and faults and their willingness to be creative in every aspect of life. Moreover, while self-actualized people come from all different backgrounds and occupations, they have many common characteristics, such as the talent to cultivate loving and deep relationships with other people. (Perera 2020.) Self-actualized people may have higher levels of stability and more remarkable skills to protect the most important life goals from being violated by interrupting thoughts and impulses. In addition, self-actualization has been connected with many aspects of well-being, such as curiosity, high life satisfaction, positive relationships, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, autonomy, personal growth, and purpose in life. (Kaufman 2018.)

There is also a connection between creativity and work performance; self-actualization leads to higher work performance and satisfaction. In addition, it is linked to more remarkable skill, talent, and creative ability, such as in the fields of arts, sciences, sports, and business. Surprisingly, scientists find that self-actualization may correlate with humor ability, even though the findings were significant but small. (Kaufman 2018.)

2.3.4 Social aspect of well-being

Researchers have found that a person's relationship with their partner and family may be the most critical quality of one's well-being. For example, studies have shown that marriage is connected with happiness, life satisfaction, and positive psychological functioning. However, the marriage's outcome depends on a supportive and secure relationship: when the relationship is stable, well-being increases because of living with the partner. In general, high life satisfaction strongly correlates with social trust; the amount and strength of social connections may be the most significant components of forecasting one's subjective well-being. (Huppert 2013.)

One's social relationships and the quality of the relationships have an impact on one's psychological and physical well-being (Du Bois, Goldman Sher, Manser, Saigal, Santich, Tully & Woodward 2022). Subjective well-being has been connected to multiple important life domains; social relationships have been associated with high levels of well-being; social relationships are a necessity for a holistic life. (Kansky & Diener 2017.) For example, findings in a study suggest that the social aspect of entrepreneurship increases the probability of success in entrepreneurship (Leyden 2014).

Some findings show that those who are romantically partnered have a protective effect on one's health and well-being (Du Bois, Goldman Sher, Manser, Saigal, Santich, Tully & Woodward 2022). In personal life, romantic relationships greatly influence an individual's well-being. A good relationship positively influences well-being, such as increased self-esteem and life satisfaction. On the other hand, a bad relationship negatively impacts well-being, such as symptoms of increased depression and poor physical health. Marital satisfaction trajectories have been connected to well-being changes, such as depressive symptoms and life satisfaction. For example, happily married people have reported fewer depressive symptoms, and those with unhappy marriages have had more significant depressive symptoms. (Lenger, Norona, Olmstead & Robertson 2018.)

Compared to people in long-distance relationships in close relationships, those in long-distance relationships may have better health in some aspects but lower in others: those in long-distance relationships may have higher health overall and lower levels of depression, anxiety, and fatigue but also higher personal and relationship stress. (Du Bois, Goldman Sher, Manser, Saigal, Santich, Tully & Woodward 2022.)

A study has found that people in long-distance relationships have higher relationship stress than people in a close relationships. Relationship stress may expose one to depression, anxiety, sleep disturbance, pain disorder, limited physical functioning, and lower satisfaction with social participation. On the other hand, relationship stress does not significantly affect exercise, diet, medication

adherence, sexual activity, or alcohol and cigarette consumption. An explanation for this may be that people in long-distance relationships might engage in better coping strategies, and that is why they do not expose themselves to unhealthy behaviors as often. (Du Bois, Goldman Sher, Manser, Saigal, Santich, Tully & Woodward 2022.)

People in long-distance relationships are experiencing some advantages from this type of relationship dynamic, such as higher autonomy; this might compensate for the stress in long-distance relationships. However, regardless of the physical distance, people in long-distance relationships might experience interpersonal interconnectedness as closeness and a sense of cohesion. (Du Bois, Goldman Sher, Manser, Saigal, Santich, Tully & Woodward 2022.)

3 Research Methods

The research design in this thesis consists of qualitative interviews. The Focus group is freelancers working in the tv-media field in Finland. All interviewees have been working in film and tv media productions for an average of 9 years. Participants were between the ages of 29-36, all male. These individuals work in filming, photography, script writing, editing, sound recording, sound mixing, sound design, vision mixing, and directing. Because of the topic's sensitivity, the interviewees do not use real names, but they are named Freelancer 1, Freelancer 2, Freelancer 3, and Freelancer 4. The selection of the interviewees was depended on who would speak about this sensitive but important topic. Research results were investigated, and interviews were compared to find similarities and differences; these findings are discussed later in the study.

The author has experience in working for various tv productions; this challenged him to keep subjective experiences from affecting his objectivity in the study. Therefore, the author has been as objective as possible while analyzing the interviews. On the other hand, because of his own experiences, it was easier to find interviewees from tv-media freelancers, and he was able to prepare questions about this field. In addition, because of his knowledge in the field, he was able to have a deep conversation about the topic in the interview process. The research design is demonstrated in the figure below.

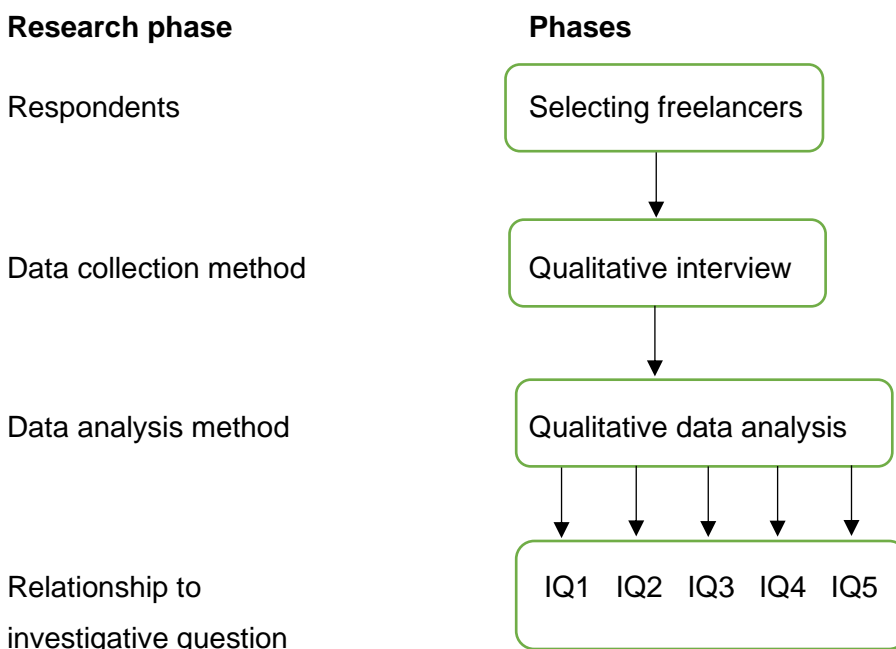


Figure 3. The research design figure explains the procedures, from selecting respondents of freelancers to choosing the data collection method as a qualitative interview to qualitative data analysis leading to answering selected IQs.

4 Results

Through the interview process, it was possible to notice many similarities between answers of the participants, such as about media work hindering romantic relationships and lack of resources causing stress in productions. On the other hand, social relationships and networking were found to be necessary for working in the industry. Participants have similar motivations to work in the media industry:, and they get fulfillment from similar aspects of work, and share the feeling of being free when working as a freelancer.

4.1 IQ1 Reasons and motivations why people work in the media field as freelancers

There are many similarities in freelancers' motivations to work in the media industry. When asked about primary motivators, the first thing that came up in every interview was: the freedom that being a freelancer brings. Freedom to choose when to take a job and what job to take, and when to have a holiday: *"It is definitely freedom. Even though it might be stressful that you don't know what to do next or so, but it gives excellent opportunities to travel, for example"* (Freelancer 3).

Another aspect mentioned, is that it is liberating to go from one production to another; participants found it nice to have a freelancing job instead of working nine-to-five and five days a week, and they also appreciated changing colleagues:

"When I enter a new production, and I find my position in that new environment, every production is entirely different from another since the beginning. Dynamics of the productions, and that variety, that is what I find very interesting" (Freelancer 1).

Secondly, some participants agreed that money had been one key motivator to work, which is not surprising. One mentioned that he has a housing loan to pay, and another said that after an intensive gig, there is more money in the bank account, which allows buying something that increases one's well-being, such as a good bed. Even though money motivated everyone, some other extrinsic motivations were mentioned, such as feedback and recognition of others:

"In this work, two important things meet: self-actualization and money. And also recognition of others. However, if I am not proud of what I do, recognition from others would not matter; I don't know if I would be so motivated. I am ready to suffer for doing this; maybe that is the thing as long as I can do this, with a big heart" (Freelancer 1).

Results show that feeling pride towards own work and recognition from others motivates and pushes one forward. There are some interlacing results in what motivates freelancers to work in the media industry and what brings them job satisfaction affecting their well-being. Factors that have come up in both categories are self-actualization, continuous learning, salary, colleagues and

social relationships from the field, feedback and recognition from others, and the feeling of doing something meaningful. Only one participant did not recall he could realize himself in this field of work; he felt that his hands were tied in most entertainment productions. He said that he has tried to bring some social issues to entertainment programs, but producers or directors have turned down these ideas. He has been demotivated because of it:

"It was close to my heart to get the field and programs much more diverse; we would be able to deal with things deeper than only the surface. That is the original idea why I wanted to work in the field; to be able to offer different perspectives to the masses. And this has not happened in any program where I have worked" (Freelancer 3).

However, opposing this experience, other participants were excited about their work and how much they could enjoy actualizing themselves, and the result of the work motivated them. Freelancers felt proud if they succeeded in challenging tasks in many categories, such as filming, editing, sound recording, storytelling, and communication:

"In all its simplicity, I can make great pictures when shooting. Perhaps the most important thing for me is to get those feelings of success. You take some pictures during the day, and you can say: damn, this looks good." "You get to do creative work and tackle different challenges every day, and in the best case, the result is good too" (Freelancer 4).

Even though motivations to work in the media field and the industry's positive aspects are interlacing, both topics can positively affect one's well-being. Whether it is freedom, recognition of others, success in tasks, or money, freelancers find various motivations to work in the media field: *"Small successes and continuous learning are what motivates, and a salary, of course, which could be much bigger!" (Freelancer 1).*

4.2 IQ2 Aspects increasing freelancers' well-being working in the media field

When discussing the feeling of freedom that freelancing brings to participants, it shows that freedom is one aspect of the lifestyle what some freelancers seek. Freelancers can work in some months more than in others. If one feels that well-being requires more free time to recharge physically or emotionally, one can take less work the next month. Variety of jobs and the freedom of choice in which productions to work and when, and when to have holidays:

"You can develop yourself and self-actualize, and that is precisely the freedom that being a freelancer brings, definitely; I want to hold on that I have these mini-vacations. You can wake up and be happy that you don't have to go to work. Although the salary is not that high, this is a good trade-off" (Freelancer 1).

Even though most participants found that they were living the lifestyle that suited them, some comments opposed this perspective. It was mentioned that the life freelancers in the media field could live is only suitable for 20-30-year-old people living in a city. Another point of view was that sometimes in longer productions, one can decide on when to work, as long as the deadlines are met; for example, in editing, they can work at whatever time suits them best: *"I prefer to do normal working hours. If there are five days reserved for the episode, I can decide when to open and close the computer, as long as the job gets done"* (Freelancer 2).

A topic that participants raised as a positive aspect of working in the field or an aspect of uplifting well-being were succeeding in challenging task and succeeding in making a vision, plan, or idea to life. Based on their answers, a conclusion can be made that they feel good about self-actualization and seeing their craft; they find joy in creating ideas and succeeding in bringing them alive:

"When sound recording happens in a challenging environment, I get a feeling emanating from within that I need to fix this thing and find the solution and get the scene working; I need to do something to get this going. And when it works out, and I succeed in it, that is a better feeling than any payday, that small success" (Freelancer 1).

These successes include, for example, carrying the story beautifully forward in the editing room, selecting a piece of music that fits perfectly in the storytelling, or finding humor in the unexpected scenes. Some freelancers were raising communication as a key factor working in the field, and succeeding in complex communication while working with large crew has brought joy to the interview participants:

"When you know that your idea is good, and you get that idea through, and the idea works well, and it looks visually appealing. When that idea has developed to even better with the help of camera operators and editors" (Freelancer3).

Social relationships are part of the holistic well-being, including friendships or romantic relationships. Most participants have mentioned that they have met interesting people in this field, and colleagues have become friends; that is one significant factor why these freelancers like to work in the media field. It was mentioned that constantly changing projects give richness to one; it allows one to meet new people and create contacts. Many freelancers said that they have found good friends in the media industry. It was described that it brings joy to work on a project when the people in the project were found to be great company:

"The industry has brought me good friends. Even though there are people I don't see in my free time, it's a pleasure, even after two years, to go to a photo shoot and see a familiar face there. So, it is always nice to go. You are like, hey, there are good guys in this project, I have worked with them before, isn't it cool to go to work, no matter what project it is" (Freelancer 4).

4.3 IQ3 Stressors in the media field and freelancer's uncertainties

As interviewees have mentioned, the media field might be a stimulating and exciting environment to work in. However, the industry has its downsides with many uncertainties, and it might be challenging to handle the stress it causes. This chapter will examine some of the stressors freelancers are facing in the media field.

Even though participants have discussed that being a freelancer gives the freedom and liberty to choose when to work, many jobs are short and temporary because of the nature of the film and tv projects. Freelancers might face long unwanted gaps between the productions, and sometimes it might be challenging to find the next job: *"It would be nice if I would always have something going, so there would not be three-week breaks, etc."* (Freelancer 1). *"You do not have certainty about the future; you might be able to predict only a few months from now, half a year at best. It always makes me wonder, what if there is no work after this next job"* (Freelancer 2).

The industry creates uncertainty because of its periodic nature. Long gaps between production cause stress in different ways. It might create an aftermath for freelancers when the gap extends between the productions; some are told to be thinking that if they have done something so badly or that they have said something wrong to someone that they are no longer wanted to work in productions. Furthermore, this might lead to overthinking and doubt of their skills, which has been described to be one of the stressors.

The uncertainty about jobs seems even more challenging at the beginning of their careers. Freelancers need to work hard to find a job and get to know the right people in the industry. The beginning of the career has been described as constant job hunting, and one needs to spend much time sending applications and contacting people:

"When I got out of school, I had to search for half a year before I got my first job. As an inexperienced media assistant, so... My first job came through a Facebook group of freelancers in the media industry" (Freelancer 2).

At some point in their careers, freelancers described that the situation turns around. Freelancers' get most of their work by being contacted from the production companies and asked to come to work on a certain project or task. At the beginning of their careers, it seemed that freelancers were forced to spend time finding jobs, which was described to be anxious:

"At the beginning of my career, I needed to hustle gigs to myself, all the time. People did not call to me to come to work; I needed to call around asking for work. That uncertainty was anxious" (Freelancer 1).

Even though finding gigs would be more challenging at the beginning of their careers, problems in that area seem to continue further in their careers. In addition, it was mentioned that the amount of time spent searching for jobs and networking affects their life as a whole:

"The life of a freelancer is not only about the job search, but it is also about the fact that everything constantly revolves around work. Sometimes you don't know where the next job will come from, and then there are situations where you would have a million at the same time; life has to be planned around productions and finding a job" (Freelancer 3).

As these freelancers discussed the positive side of meeting people in the industry, meeting people and networking are almost necessary to survive in the field. *"If you do not know anyone, and you do have no one to recommend you, it is difficult to get ahead in this field" (Freelancer 1).*

Some people find it stressful to be constantly social. Since some productions might last for months, and often the work is social, it requires constant communication. Another stressor that freelancers have experienced is the beginning of new projects when people are seeking their role in the new environment, and that stressor is connected to socializing:

"After a gig, I have been fed up with the volume of socializing. After one gig, I had a break for 2,5 months, which from I was recovering for a month, resetting from the overwhelming socialization" (Freelancer 1).

"I'm stressed about a new project; in a new group of people, a new format; it seems difficult at first to figure out what we are doing here. And when starting to work, figuring out whether this is the right direction for what I am doing" (Freelancer 2).

The nature of the work has some aspects that negatively affect the freelancer's personal life. From the interviews came up some downsides within the productions, which freelancers feel affecting negatively on their well-being. One aspect which came up in every interview was the lack of resources. In most cases, the lacking resource was described to be time, which has had a stressful effect on freelancers. Whether it is time, money, equipment, food, or people, this phenomenon has a broad, holistic effect on freelancers' well-being:

"Some projects are busy, and there is too little time. It is different if you know the gig has a tight schedule in advance, you can adjust to it. There has been one gig that was reasonably scheduled, and I was able to spend a few days off in between. Scheduling challenges are the most upsetting" (Freelancer 2).

When discussing about the resources, freelancers mentioned that sometimes there needs to be more communication between the crew and the producers or directors. Furthermore, because there have been communication issues, everyone does not understand what resources are required to complete the production:

"Producers, directors and screenwriters, in many productions, are not in touch with what is needed to get this program done." "Resources, i.e., time and money, have not been budgeted." "And the crew and higher authorities do not often talk about these things, especially sober and during working hours. And these things cannot be solved in a bar; that is each one's own time." (Freelancer 1).

Another issue that came up is that productions will use double roles on freelancers to save money, which causes an unnecessarily heavy workload that is unsustainable in the long run, causing the crew to wear out. When there are double or even triple roles, and there is too little time budgeted for the production, it has a negative impact on one's well-being; usually, it shows up as stress. Stress can accumulate in work and long productions, leading to other unwanted well-being issues:

"It is that constant time pressure and feeling of urgency during production; the lack of resources is what greatly lowers well-being at work, especially for myself. It also causes a bad work atmosphere, in my opinion, in the sense that the crew may use drugs quite a lot when people start to lose sleep and the stress increases; people cannot be nice anymore. It has been the problem of many productions" (Freelancer 3).

Freelancers discussed production-related issues in interviews, and the topic repeating was long working hours and high workload. Working days stretch for too long and affect one's focus, strength, and well-being. Freelancers reported about productions that have had too long working hours violating labor agreements:

"I had to do 20-hour days, although it was compensated with days off so I could rest. But when you have been doing work for twenty hours, and it always takes until the last minute to finish things, it does take a while before I can sleep when I'm so overwhelmed. You are left thinking that things could have been done better, and it is a shame that there wasn't time. I could wake up at night and have work on my mind, and it was hard to get back to sleep" (Freelancer 2).

Understandably, freelancers feel frustrated if working hours are long and the workload keeps piling up because of interlacing tasks. Sleep is vital for having the strength to work and focus properly, but if this basic need is not fulfilled, it might dramatically decrease one's well-being. Freelancers think this issue is caused by improper budgeting and they blame producers who have messed up the budgeting, leading to more than twelve-hour working days:

"Why do I have to give up my health and my life for minimal compensation? This is a problem in the industry, and people leave. People have burned out more than five times, so soon there will be no workers anymore." (Freelancer 3).

Extended hours also affect social relationships, whether it is one's romantic relationship, family, or friends. Even though the production would be filmed in the freelancer's hometown, working hours might be extended, hindering the relationships. *"I would not want to be a TV freelancer if I had children because that uncertainty would certainly spill over to the children in that regard" (Freelancer*

3). *"Let's say that there are a couple of long days in a row until very late; you will sleep until noon, it will take a toll on the quality time from everyday life"* (Freelancer 2).

Salary and compensation for work is one aspect of well-being. Interviewees had different thoughts about the level of salaries in the industry. Freelancers were thinking; when considering the responsibility of the work and reflecting that to the salary, payment has seen to be too small. Freelancers also felt that negotiations are also seen as a stressor. In some cases, the negotiation situation has felt like a scam; some relevant information has not been communicated, such as actual payment of the daily allowance or travel days compensation. Even though salary depends on the task and the project, some freelancers feel that they are in a good situation financially:

"I feel that I am in the situation I deserve, salary could be a little higher, though. If I were about to demand a significantly higher salary than the average, it would bring a new kind of stress; I would also have to give more than the average" (Freelancer 2).

In addition, freelancers have different experiences with how salaries are paid in general: some felt that overtime compensations and Sundays were not paid as they should. If one needs to worry about salaries, it has an effect on one's well-being. *"Sometimes the salaries were late, and you had to beg for them"* (Freelancer 2).

Some participants mentioned that there had been a quibble with daily allowances in some of the productions, and freelancers felt that workers' rights had been trampled on; payments were not what it should have been. In addition, there are many interlacing roles in various productions, which has not been shown in salaries; many jobs and tasks have piled into one person. *"I was in one production where holidays were not paid, and overtime was paid willy-nilly. So it was an illegal employment contract that was signed."* (Freelancer 3).

An interesting angle was raised in one of the interviews: the lack of mental health support in long-lasting productions, such as reality shows. People might work for a long time in an environment where a lot of drama is involved, and this might, for example, trigger some bad memories for some of the crew; they are witnessing some dramatic events. There is psychologist for tv show participants and actors, but there is no support for the crew:

"Everything that happens there, we are witnessing it, and no one asks us if we accept this, if this is ok, and how we feel about it. How does it feel for a journalist to ask a question that will trigger the actor and make them cry surely." *"In reality-productions, they have psychologists for the contestants, but support is missing from the working crew"* (Freelancer 3).

In conclusion, what freelancers find as significant stressors are uncertainty of work in the media industry, scheduling issues because of poor management of the productions, unfair and opaque

payment of work, interlacing roles, heavy workload, long working hours, and missing support in long productions.

4.4 IQ4 International productions effect on well-being

This industry requires traveling, not only in the freelancer's home country, but some of the productions are arranged abroad. Often these productions are organized by a company from their home country, but sometimes freelancers go to work for international production companies too. Traveling was mentioned to be affecting their social relationships. Because of the nature of international productions, these might last for a long time, which is a positive aspect for individuals keen on traveling and experiencing different countries and cultures. On the other hand, for some, it might be challenging, for example, because of their social relationships. Some were forced to be in a long-distance relationship.

When the production is abroad or in other cities far from home, it might be challenging to keep up their friendships and other relationships. Longer productions, especially abroad, inevitably affect romantic relationships; it requires active communication from the parties. Gig work is heavy in terms of social relationships; it might be challenging to explain to someone that freelancers' work requires a lot of traveling and one might be absent for long periods of time, and it is not always possible to be in contact because of the heavy workload and time differences:

"It is difficult for people outside the industry to understand that I am not available for even two months because I am just working and cannot do anything after work, or the production is abroad, so I'm not even in the country" (Freelancer 3).

Only some people seem to be bothered by international productions and traveling. It is quite the opposite for some; it may be one of the reasons to work in the media field, and traveling has been seen as something which gives value to the freelancer:

"I get to spend those quiet moments in the hotel, and I get to see new landscapes, whether it's in Spain or Portugal or Rovaniemi; it has been something that gives me strength. Sometimes I go on adventures by myself or go out with my colleagues and sit in a local pub or restaurant to have a drink. It has been an asset to me in a certain way" (Freelancer 4).

4.5 IQ5 Freelancers coping mechanisms

The field where these freelancers are operating in brings some challenges, and being a freelancer is one challenge in itself; they must cope with the challenges somehow. This section will examine what kind of coping mechanisms freelancers have in use.

Some freelancers are afraid of the long unemployment episodes, but for the same reason, they also have a fear of launching their own businesses; they work as employees with an income-tax card to keep themselves under societal protection. They work as freelancers without a company of their own, and sometimes they use billing services such as ukko.fi, or OP kevytyrittäjä (light entrepreneur) services, which allow one to bill from one's work and the billing company will pay the salary for the one. Some are not willing to take the financial risks to become full-time entrepreneurs:

"I have worked almost every time with an income-tax card to be able to use earnings-related daily allowance. Because if there had not been an opportunity for earnings-related daily allowance, I probably would not even be in the industry. It is essential that financial well-being is secured" (Freelancer 3).

It is not only for the earnings-related daily allowance why some freelancers do not want to work as full-time entrepreneurs; some also believe that in this way, they are better protected by unions too. Even though, now days, there are some unions and unemployment funds for entrepreneurs as well:

"Because I have a mortgage, it would be nice to have that steady income. However, since I belong to the union and the unemployment fund, that brings a little security. So some money will come even if there would be no work" (Freelancer 2).

Previously this paper discussed that stress and a tight schedule in productions might lead to stress, which could lead one to using drugs or drinking. Some might get intoxicated to relax and unwind between productions, even though not all the freelancers go with this path. The question was raised; is it the field that makes people play with drugs, or is it that the industry attracts the people who like to do drugs?

"The worst, but also the most effective way for me to cope and recover from stressful situations is decadence in its various forms." "Do I want to get wasted because the work in the field is so stressful, or did I drift to the field because here you can get wasted and justify it with the stressfulness of the work" (Freelancer 1)?

One way of solving things is talking with people, which most freelancers seem to do. Peer support of colleagues and discussion with co-workers helps to find solutions to issues. For example, if one is somehow stuck or something seems unfair—the support and people to have conversations with come often from within the industry:

"Usually swearing together in a workgroup after a couple of beers in a good spirit helps more than anything I could say to, for example, my spouse. Ordinary people do not understand" (Freelancer 1).

Exercise is a well-known way of lifting the mood and increasing the physical and mental state; this is what most freelancers do. Some have active sports as hobbies, and some might teach sports as a side job. In addition, freelancers mentioned walking in nature as one of the best ways to unwind.

Even though freelancers work in a creative environment, participants said creative tasks and hobbies are the best ways of relieving stress and helping to get thoughts away from work. One mentioned that the music hobby, in its many forms, has been an excellent activity to spend time. Other activities mentioned were board and console games and role plays. As discussed, these freelancers are working on creative things and more or less with moving images, but still, watching beautiful movies were raised as one most relaxing activity. One told doing photography in his own time in addition to work:

"If I do some not-so-creative projects where, for example, you mindlessly follow some people, then I like to do some of my own art projects: photography stuff or video projects. Those are cool, even if they are related to the work in a way, but they are still separate from it, and you can release your own creativity. I can do my own passion projects; they give me such good energy in the meantime" (Freelancer 4).

Freelancers, between productions, try to live as ordinary life as possible: meet friends, play sports, play games, and travel: *"Between shootings, there is more time when you exercise more and see friends, and everything; ordinary things like that"* (Freelancer 4).

5 Discussion

The topic of freelancers' well-being in the media field is an exciting and vast area to research. By researching the topic, fresh perspectives came up on what it is like to work in the media field, what motivates freelancers to work in it, and what they find to be increasing and decreasing their well-being.

Key findings of the thesis can be concluded that freelancers enjoy the freedom that comes from freelancing. The freelancers are passionate about working in the media field, they look for constant development, and are motivated by doing challenging creative tasks and succeeding in them. One key motivator is the work itself, even though money is an essential factor that motivates working in the field. There are similarities in motivations to work and aspects increasing their well-being: the feeling of freedom, self-actualization, continuous learning, salary, colleagues and social relationships from the field, feedback and recognition from others, and the feeling of doing something meaningful. As significant stressors, the freelancers raised uncertainty of work in the media industry, scheduling problems from lousy management of the productions, unfair and opaque payment of work, interlacing roles, and long hours and heavy workload. International productions are challenging for social relationships, but traveling is also seen as a driving force to work in the media industry. Because of the uncertainty of their jobs, some freelancers are coping with this phenomenon by not launching their own businesses; instead, they work with income-tax cards; belonging to a union and unemployment fund gives some protection. Freelancers are overcoming stress by doing sports and spending time in nature, having beers and chatting with their colleagues, doing their creative projects, and doing ordinary things such as meeting friends.

Recommendations to the industry are given based on the research, as well as the interviewees direct recommendations to the production design and the industry in general. The first recommendation concerns salary negotiations and payment: clarity to payment negotiations and salary fairness. If there are some exceptions in payment conditions of the production, it must be clearly communicated beforehand to freelancers so one can meditate if this project is suitable for the one. Secondly, the productions must be budgeted rationally, especially timewise; a too-tight schedule causes multiple issues hindering the well-being of freelancers. Thirdly, productions must be designed so that there are reasonable working hours per day and no interlacing jobs which cause a too heavy workload hurting freelancers' well-being. In addition, it would be recommended to consider how freelancers' mental well-being would be guaranteed in long productions locally and abroad. A psychologist for the crew would be recommended.

For freelancers, the main recommendation is to analyze their lifestyle choices that would affect their well-being; habits can support or hinder their well-being. From the author's own experience, the author can recommend meditation and mindfulness for handling stress since he has used this method for years, twice daily, once in the morning and once at night. In addition, cold showers have helped the author calm the nervous system, which helps fight against stress and anxiety.

Validity and reliability risks are in the data collection. The thesis results are based on four interviews, which may be too few and might affect validity. In addition, all the participants are male, which might be one aspect affecting the content's validity. Even though the author's own experience shows that most people working in the industry are men, this has affected the participant selection. Finally, the thesis could have been completed without interviews in case people were unwilling to answer the interview questions; the research method would have been a quantitative survey instead of qualitative interviews.

A suggestion for Further Research is to find out how the media industry is regulated in Finland and how freelancers could be protected from exploitation when they are working as entrepreneurs. In addition, it would be recommended to have a wider study about freelancers' well-being and examine different age groups and gender differences, and differences between various fields inside the film and tv industry, such as reality, sports, news, comedy, and drama productions. Another suggestion for future research would be freelancer habits; is the media industry attracting people who like to get intoxicated, or is it the media field causing abusive behaviour?

Reflection of learning process: the thesis process has been demanding but rewarding. From the beginning, the process forced the author to do some serious reflecting, for example, by choosing the topic. It was essential to select a topic that was so interesting that it would keep the interest and focus up along the process. It was a more positive problem that there were many ideas to choose from, and the challenge was to decide on the most interesting one and the one with the most societal value. Even though the media field is small and the topic touches a small part of society, the topic is important and has not been studied enough. The well-being of every individual is the key to the welfare state; keeping Finland as one, it is crucial to investigate all the possible occupations and groups that might need attention.

Through the writing process, the author has learned a lot about well-being; he realized where he stands career-wise and what kind of a journey he has done in the media field since the beginning around the year 2010. In addition, the author has learned much about research: how to interview and build a framework for the study. Finally, the author has learned to enjoy academic writing even though he previously focused primarily on storytelling. However, it has been beneficial in this project to have skills like that too.

Even though the author has been in international productions and a long time away from home, and he has had challenges in relationships because of that, it was still surprising how most freelancers had experienced significant difficulties because of traveling. That is an aspect worth meditating on when thinking about life in the future. Well-being is essential for the author, and he puts much effort into maintaining and increasing it; it has been refreshing for him to hear how people are experiencing challenges and how they overcome them. Especially one interview had such a positive angle which touched him deeply; it gave him a lot to think about how to look at things. A positive perspective and attitude can help further in life and bring joy; increase well-being.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. The interview questions

Interview questions are presented below; additional questions are in brackets in case there has been a need to interview more about the topic:

- You are a freelancer in the media field. Tell me about your work, what kind of work do you do?
- (What kind of productions are you working on?)
- Tell me what made you start working in this field?
- What is it like to be a freelancer?
- What makes you stay in the field?
- (What motivates you in your work?)
- What makes you satisfied with your work?
- (What impacts positively on your well-being?)
- What kind of negative aspects are there in your field?
- What kind of stressors are there in your work?
- How would you describe your work affects your well-being?
- (What is the role of social relationships)
- (What is the role of Money)
- (What is the role of Self-actualization)
- (What is the role of Lifestyle)
- How do you cope with the stressors in the freelancing?
- How do you cope with the stressors in the media field?
- Do you want to tell something else that affects your well-being?
- Do you want to add something else?
- You can contact me at any time if there is something you want to add. Can I contact you with follow up questions if needed?