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Job crafting- a self-management tool for professional wellbeing in sales



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In the modern workplace, especially after COVID-19, digitalization and hybrid work have become the new norm. In today's work environment, strong self-management skills and the right tools are crucial for coping in a fast-paced setting and maintaining overall well-being at work. Job crafting is a self-management tool that allows individuals to modify and tailor their work tasks to better align with their needs and values, serving as a motivator and supporting long-term work endurance.

This thesis was written for the Global Gateway research group at Turku University of Applied Sciences and is partially supported by the Erasmus+ SWEPPP project (Sustainable Well-being - Education for Personal, Professional, and Planetary Well-being). The aim of this study is to answer the question: "How do salespeople utilize and benefit from job crafting, and how does it impact their overall well-being?".

For this study, a qualitative research method was chosen, and it was conducted using thematic semi-structured interviews with three sales professionals. The findings revealed that all participants used the job crafting tool daily, and it had a significant impact on their work well-being and overall endurance. The focus for the future is to promote the further use of job crafting among sales professionals to ensure their work well-being and motivation.

Keywords:

Job crafting, self-management, professional well-being, digitalization, hybrid and remote work, time management, stress management.

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Työn muotoilu- itsejohtamisen työkalu myynnin ammattilaisten hyvinvointiin

Nykyisessä työelämässä, erityisesti COVID-19:n jälkeen, digitalisaatio ja hybridityö ovat tulleet uusiksi normeiksi. Nykyisessä työympäristössä vahvat itsehallintataidot ja oikeat työkalut ovat elintärkeitä selviytymiselle nopeassa työympäristössä sekä työhyvinvoinnin ylläpitämiselle. Job crafting on itsehallintatyökalu, joka mahdollistaa yksilöille omien työtehtäviensä muokkaamisen ja räätälöimisen siten, että ne vastaavat paremmin heidän tarpeitaan ja arvojaan, toimien samalla motivoijana ja tukien pitkän aikavälin työssä jaksamista.

Tämä opinnäytetyö on kirjoitettu Turun ammattikorkeakoulun Global Gateway - tutkimusryhmälle ja sitä tukee osittain Erasmus+ SWEPPP-hanke (Kestävä hyvinvointi - Koulutus henkilökohtaiselle, ammatilliselle ja planeetan hyvinvoinnille). Tämän tutkimuksen tavoite on vastata kysymykseen: "Miten myyjät hyödyntävät job crafting -työkalua, ja miten se vaikuttaa heidän kokonaistyöhyvinvointiinsa?". Tässä tutkimuksessa valittiin laadullinen tutkimusmenetelmä, ja se toteutettiin teemahaastattelemalla kolmen myyntialan ammattilaista. Tutkimustulokset paljastivat, että kaikki osallistujat käyttivät job crafting -työkalua päivittäin, ja sillä oli merkittävä vaikutus heidän työhyvinvointiinsa ja kokonaistyökykyynsä. Tulevaisuudessa keskiössä on edistää job craftingin laajempaa käyttöä myyntialan ammattilaisille työhyvinvoinnin ja motivaation turvaamiseksi.

Asiasanat:

Job crafting, itsensä johtaminen, stressin hallinta, digitalisoituminen, hybridi ja etätyö, ajanhallinta.

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List of abbreviations (or) symbols

AI Artificial intelligence

B2B Business to business

B2C Business to customer

CRM Customer relationship management

DICT Digital information and communication technology

DJD Digital job demands

DJR Digital job resources

EI Emotional intelligence

ICT Information communication technology

KM Knowledge management

KS Knowledge sharing

OBSE Organizational-based self-esteem

OKM Organizational knowledge management

P-E fit Person-environment fit

PERT Program evaluation review technique

PKM Personal knowledge management

STD Self-determination theory

SW Smart working

TPB Theory of planned behavior

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the thesis

As hybrid work, digitalization and AI have changed the work life after COVID-19, there is a tangible need for better work-life balance practice for employees. Company's need employees to be sufficient, effective and have great self-management skills, as many of them are working remotely and are solely responsible for their own results. As work-life balance and wellbeing embark as crucial subjects, the tool of job crafting has emerged where individuals can craft their work to better suite their needs and capabilities and to better cope with their daily work.

This thesis is written for Turku University of Applied Sciences Global Gateway-research group. This work was supported in part by the Erasmus+ SWEPPP-project (Sustainable Well-being - Education for Personal, Professional and Planetary Well-being), project no. 2023-1-PL01-KA220-HED-000156944. SWEPPP project is based on the idea that achieving sustainable well-being requires a holistic approach, aligning personal, professional, and planetary welfare. It aims to foster wellness across these three dimensions by empowering individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to enact meaningful action (SWEPPP, 2024). This master's thesis focuses on professional well-being and especially job crafting.

Technologies have created a workplace that challenges the traditional separation of work and nonwork time by allowing highly skilled knowledge workers to function more freely. The current employment and professional climate are marked by increased volatility, demands for productivity, flexibility, and adaptation, fear of losing one's job, and difficulty obtaining a new or suitable one (Korunka, 2021, p.41; Maggiori et al., 2013). The importance of this thesis is to give the tools for daily job crafting, for sales employee or employer in a modern and hectic corporate work environment. The self-created modifications that workers make to the inherent aspects of their employment to

better suit their own requirements, preferences, and skills are known as "job crafting." Therefore, it is possible to view job crafting as a proactive, self-regulating behavior that can assist employees in creating a better person-environment, which in turn leads to a number of positive outcomes like improved performance, career success, and well-being (Handke et al., 2024).

1.2 Aim of the study and research methods

Aim of this thesis is to observe and research topic of job crafting as a modern tool of self-management in sales field. As the concept is new, the approach of this thesis is to find out how it can be used daily. The aim of the study is to define the methods, changes and ways sales employees craft their daily tasks to better suit their needs in work life. This studys menaing was to support the thesis and idea of job crafting use as a enabler for better work well-being. The main theme questions asked in interviiw were:

- How salespeople craft their job?
- How job crafting impacts salespeople professional well-being?
- What kind of impact does job crafting have on salespeople job performance?

The research method chosen for this study was semi-structured interview. Three sales professionals from different backgrounds, industys and professions were chosen for interview. Interview was executed with three main questions regarding the subject of job crafting. All interviewees have operated in sales industry for over ten years, and have extensive work experience in both, global and domestic companies, both in B2B and B2C. Two of three interviewees have several years of managerial experience, and are well aware of leadership related stress and work load.

2 Definition of job crafting

2.1 Concept of job crafting

The requirement for workers to remain in the workforce longer than previously while maintaining high levels of productivity and well-being has increased due to demographic and economic developments. Meanwhile, the present workforce must contend with work-related obligations such as a heavy workload and a blurring of work-life boundaries. Workplace stressors, such as excessive demands, might eventually result in major health consequences including fatigue. Negative effects on the organizational level, including higher absenteeism rates, may follow from this. According to academics, bottom-up approaches to well-being may be beneficial for workers who are juggling demanding work schedules. Job crafting is one of these strategies, which is the process of deliberately modifying one's degree of job demands and available resources at work (Konsenranius et al., 2020). Proactive work behavior known as "job crafting" occurs when employees intentionally alter the aspects of their jobs. This includes actions meant to make their jobs more challenging and less limiting, as well as actions meant to increase the necessary resources available to them. A tailored, bottom-up, and proactive approach to work re-design, job crafting differs from top-down and "one-size-fits-all" approaches that are initiated by the business, because it is started by the people themselves (Rudolph et al., 2017).

By participating in job crafting, employees can proactively change workplace demands and employment resources to accomplish desired personal outcomes and realize professional ambitions, according to a growing body of literature (Handke et al., 2024). Job crafting differs from traditional work design techniques, which presume that external job factors impact employee work experiences (e.g., motivation) (Wang et al., 2017). The phrase "job crafting" describes self-initiated adjustments made by an employee to the tasks in order to better fit their work self and values. Occupations can be crafted in three

different ways, according to this definition: by altering tasks, social interactions associated to their jobs, or by altering their own opinions about their work, which is known as cognitive crafting. In task crafting worker modifies the nature, scope, or volume of work tasks. In real life, this could entail adding new, difficult, or fascinating responsibilities to the job description. Making adjustments to the frequency and quality of contacts and interpersonal relationships at work is known as relational crafting, or "crafting social relationships." The term "cognitive crafting" describes modifications to one's own perspective on a work or its aspects. Significance of employees own work, whether for its own well-being, the well-being of others for whom the job is done, or the organization, is an example of cognitive construction (Mäkikangas et al., 2021).

2.2 Job crafting practices

Job crafting is perceived as proactive employee conduct to improve person-environment fit in the proactivity field. Workers create their work in a variety of methods for a variety of purposes. They might minimize demands to lessen excessive job strain, or they might expand the job for personal growth by looking for challenges and resources (Wang et al., 2017). Employees taking on more work, altering the manner tasks are completed, and narrowing the scope of their jobs are all examples of job crafting. Apart from modifying job duties, workers can also modify the relational boundaries of their work by adjusting the quantity and caliber of contacts they have with coworkers. Lastly, people can use cognitive craftsmanship to change the way they think about work (Tims et al., 2015). Employees who participate in job crafting might come up with ways to give their work new purpose by altering tasks or establishing opportunities for social interaction. People's thoughts about their jobs, the social aspects of their jobs, and the activities they accomplish at work can all be impacted by these changes (Tims et al., 2015).

Creating more demanding job requirements might help employees better match their skills or preferences with the position when they want to use their existing abilities or develop new ones. However, if a person is overburdened by job

demands because they lack the necessary knowledge, skills, or capacities to carry out these particular responsibilities, the demands might be proactively reduced. In this manner, the equilibrium between the requires of the job and the person's capabilities can be reestablished. These crafting exercises could lead to a better fit between the needs of the job and the person's knowledge, skills, and talents (Tims et al., 2015). Job crafting could be a viable substitute for conventional job re-design techniques during periods of rapid organizational change. Researchers contend that workers can alter their job needs and resources, even in permanent work contexts and jobs with little autonomy. Job crafting is a crucial link between the development of professional and personal resources that improve person-job fit and work motivation (Rudolph et al., 2017).

Workers who possess proactive dispositions, such as high levels of proactive personality and career competencies like personal initiative, are more likely to see opportunities for personal growth and to make the necessary adjustments to improve P-E fit (person-environment fit), or job craft (Handke et al., 2024). Work satisfaction, performance, absence, and turnover have all been taken into account as outcomes in work design research, in accordance with the job characteristics model. However, the majority of researchers who have used models have concentrated on forecasting job satisfaction as well as other useful reaction factors like commitment and job pressure. There has been comparatively little attention paid to how work design affects performance, absenteeism, and turnover (Parker & Wall, 1998, p.40).

2.3 Job crafting impact on employees work engagement

One of the earliest to speculate on the topic of work engagement was Kahn (1990). He talked about motivated workers who devote all their mental, emotional, and physical resources to achieving role-related objectives (Lu et al., 2014). The positive features of organizational behavior, like proactive work behavior, positive work relationships, and positive affective states and well-being, have garnered more attention in recent years. High levels of energy, a

strong sense of job identification, and flow-like states are all characteristics of engaged workers. Based on studies on burnout, this three-part model reflects the positive opposites of the burnout aspects of inefficacy, depersonalization, and tiredness. It is proposed that both personal and professional resources influence the growth of work engagement. According to one definition, resources are both personal and environmental elements that help an individual in the workforce effectively manage the demands of their job, reach their objectives, and advance personally (Weigl et al., 2010).

Job resources can be externally motivating by providing special information or aid assistance for reach targets, as well as naturally drive by promoting learning or self-growth. As a result, they motivate workers to achieve their objectives. Because they find fulfillment in their work, employees may consequently become more dedicated and involved in it. Employees under different leadership styles may have varying degrees of autonomy, access to resources, or justifications for job crafting. The motivation of employees to act proactively has been proven to be significantly influenced by their leaders (Xanthopoulou et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2017). Because work can give people access to resources for survival, relationships, and a sense of control over their lives, how work is organized has a significant impact on people's lives and psychological well-being. These days, workers must exercise agency in shaping their job characteristics due to changes in the organization and execution of work. In general, proactive person-environment fit activities could be essential for helping individual employees match their skills and needs with the opportunities and expectations of the workplace (Tims et al., 2015).

Job crafting can encourage different kinds of learning and development, which can lead to improved performance. The most tangible proof of such a system can be found in the evolution of knowledge. According to recent research, greater autonomy can encourage knowledge acquisition and application, or "work smarter," which enhances system performance (Parker & Wall, 1998, p.40). Research indicates that job satisfaction and commitment are closely linked to Organizational-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE), which is the extent to

which employees of a corporation feel that they may fulfill their needs by taking on positions within the company (Xanthopoulou et al., 2008). Positive results will come from job enrichment, especially for those with high growth-need strengths. As moderators, other individual-level factors have also been taken into account, such as work ideals like the Protestant work ethic, the desire for autonomy, the need for achievement, and self-esteem. Self-efficacy, change orientation, tolerance of role ambiguity, and performance for group work are examples of individual difference variables that have not gotten much attention yet are probably significant moderators of job design (Parker & Wall, 1998, p.42).

By selecting salespeople with high emotional intelligence (EI) skills, providing training and mentoring, and working to create job responsibilities that salespeople find relevant, sales managers can develop and set an example of emotional intelligence. Salespeople may discuss areas of their role that they find important or not as part of performance appraisals. Roles can be modified to better suit their preferences and strong points. Sales managers may facilitate flow by designing spaces that optimize immersion and fulfillment. This could be unbroken work periods or flexible work arrangements (Mallin et al., 2025).

3 Work well-being and work life balance

3.1 Work and non-work balance

Increased instability and expectations on productivity, flexibility, and adaptability, as well as fear of losing one's job and trouble finding a new or suitable one, are characteristics of today's career and professional environment. Both job insecurity and the number of transitions during the working life have increased as a result of greater organizational restructuring, downsizing, or mergers. People may experience more job stress and are more required to create and oversee their own career trajectories (Maggiori et al., 2013). The general subjective well-being of employees is greatly influenced by their level of job satisfaction, and job discontent can result in lower motivation, higher turnover rates, and less economic innovation (Chuang et al., 2025). If a job is inspiring, people could devote more time and effort to it at the expense of their relationships with others. However, if employment is made simpler, people may become less satisfied with facets of their lives outside of work (Parker & Wall, 1998, p.36).

Work-life balance has lately been examined as a tool for improving employee well-being at work and, consequently, as a key component in increasing employee productivity. It is becoming more and more important to reconsider conventional production and work organization techniques in a sustainable manner that prioritizes the worker and their demands as a result of technological advancement, economic globalization, and demographic shifts. The viewpoint is that of sustainable work, which may be defined as an effective system of work that produces economic and productive outcomes while simultaneously encouraging and safeguarding the growth of employees' abilities, competencies, and uniqueness (Addabbo et al., 2017, p. 222). It should come as no surprise that the majority of job design research has concentrated on work outcomes. But it's also critical to look into how the nature of work "spills over" and influences non-work-related activities. Some studies

show that employees' non-work-related lives, including their health, may be impacted by their job experience (Parker & Wall, 1998, p.35).

Various employment resources and job demands can be seen as influencing employee well-being. Employment resources can be seen as a source of positive motivation while mitigating the negative consequences of job demands. The results indicate that searching for difficulties in particular might be a good way to keep workers from getting bored at work and to increase their level of engagement. Seeking challenges can also serve as a springboard for more crafting endeavors, which provide workers with additional tools for their work (Harju et al., 2016).

The idea of "job crafting" emphasizes how workers can actively influence the status quo at work. This idea also applies to workers' capacity to actively manage their work-life balance. Behaviors that people employ to mold their own work-nonwork balance are referred to as work-nonwork balance crafting behavior. Employees employ formal, standard organizational rules like teleworking, flexible work schedules, and part-time work to help create this balance. Unofficial strategies used by employees to manage their work-nonwork balance include time management strategies to prevent overtime, workload reduction, working from home occasionally, and leveraging mobile technologies to work remotely. Work-nonwork balance crafting has been divided into three categories: physical, cognitive, and relational. Physical crafting entails controlling the amount of time spent at work, the sort of job, the job location, and the commute time. Determining and establishing ideas about what work-nonwork balance means and comprises is known as cognitive crafting. Three distinct approaches can be distinguished:

- defining work-nonwork balance on an individual basis
- prioritizing work over nonwork life
- making compromises, i.e., sacrificing short-term work-nonwork balance in favor of long-term benefits

To establish and perpetuate the type of work-nonwork balance that a person desires, relational crafting entails controlling and utilizing relationships both at work and at home.

Relational crafting takes two forms: managing relationships at work (to cut down on workload and pointless interactions) and managing relationships outside of work (i.e., interacting with others who operate within similar hours and share same understanding of work-nonwork balance; this helps one believe that their own idea of work-nonwork balance is common) (Korunka, 2021, pp. 44-45).

Due to its associations with other psychological hazards in people as well as its multiple effects on national economies and the operations and functions of businesses, work-related stress has emerged as a prime research issue. Work intensification, defined as increased stress during work hours and activities, is recognized as a major source of stress and a cause for concern, particularly when combined with a lack of personal autonomy and control over one's work. An overall increase in life speed is linked to increased mental health risks as well as a rise in anxiety, depression, and other psychological problems, which impacts working life overall (Addabbo et al., 2017, p.256). Employees may experience stress and cognitive strain from constant analysis and adaptability to a changing environment. Psychological separation from work may be hampered by the cognitive strain posed by flexible work arrangements. Being mentally detached from one's work during non-work hours is referred to as psychological detachment. The activation linked to the cognitive demands of flexible work is even more probable to influence employees' attitudes and conduct outside of work since it blurs the lines between work and personal life. Meddling thoughts considering work may increase during nonwork time as work and leisure hours and locations become less clearly defined. Thus, the cognitive strain brought on by flexible work arrangements may result in employee tiredness. A reluctance to exerting effort and feelings of weariness or exhaustion are characteristics of the mental condition known as fatigue. Weariness may build up and raise overall weariness levels if high effort is worked for an extended length of time (Korunka, 2021, p. 27).

Understanding the impact of work redesign on wellbeing is crucial. The correlation between job stress and autonomy, for instance, is well-established, but the underlying process has not received much attention. Individuals have a need for autonomy, and satisfying this need will increase wellbeing. Because autonomy lessens the effects of stressful components of employment, it can directly reduce strain. Although there may still be stressful elements, autonomy can lessen their detrimental effects. As an alternative, people might lessen the negative effects of stressful work components since they are aware that they can leave the situation if it becomes too terrible (Parker & Wall, 1998, p.41). Cognitive flexibility is the ability of people to adjust to changing circumstances, consider and incorporate other people's viewpoints, and solve issues in a flexible manner. Numerous opportunities for employees to practice these skills and competences are provided by the cognitive demands of flexible employment. Employees' likelihood of using these abilities in other spheres of their lives increases with their level of learning and consolidation. Additionally, acquiring new abilities and competencies at work ought to have a powerful motivating impact. New abilities and competencies could boost intrinsic motivation by meeting employees' competitive needs (Korunka, 2021, p. 28).

The physical surroundings must meet the doer's needs or expectations. The physical surroundings may not be conducive to the doer's development in their quest for achievement; as a result, they may get irritated and disgusted. When the external physical world deviates from the individual's expectations, it can occasionally be demotivating. The following are a few typical irritants found in the physical environment:

1. The distance between work and home - Physical aspects such as the distance between home and the place of employment are concerning. Longer commutes result from a distance between home and work. Commuting exhaustion lowers a person's energy level and occasionally prevents them from finishing the task as intended. For the doer, the result is stress.
2. Inconsistency in work-home schedules - One could persuade the doer to labor in morning, evening, and night shifts. A certain amount of flexibility is

acceptable in the doer's personal life, but beyond that, there can be some tension between the demands on their time from their family and their job.

3. Coordinates of the workplace - The doer would favor a position that gives them more significance than that of their peers and subordinates. The site and location of their workplace should make it clear that they are unique.

4. Inappropriate timing of leisure - The doer would anticipate using their free time to the fullest. The doer has a plan for how they want to spend their free time. Many people in the literary community believe that leisure is a nice balance between pleasure and relaxation. When that is not

the case, the person doing it doesn't enjoy it, which leads to work-related stress.

5. Insufficient provisions - For any activity to be completed successfully, the necessary tools must be available. To carry out and discharge obligations, the doer must have the required resources.

6. Unfavourability in comparison - Favors at work are a major source of motivation for employees. Negative workplace attitudes are quite taxing. Stressful situations can arise from an unfavorable position at work. A doer typically doesn't ask for favors. The issue arises when someone wins the approval of the boss.

7. Time-sensitive goals - There will inevitably be time constraints on jobs in a competitive market and in organizations. Two kinds of anxiety plague time-pressed jobs: the worry about completing the task on schedule and the worry about maintaining the output's intended quality. While the company and the worker are both satisfied when a project is completed on time, failure to do so results in several issues, such as increased employment costs and worse career prospects for the worker.

8. Unusual growth objectives - Unusual growth goals suggest that they are impossible to achieve. Many organizations experience imbalances as a result of abnormal growth targets. Junior and middle-level executives are given

unreasonable growth targets under some management styles. This makes the workplace stressful. This has the effect of preventing someone from reaching the goal and/or denying the organization its expected profit share. Aggressive sales are the goal of many sales groups. Only cash cow firms may be able to meet abnormal expectations in the growth sector. Not being able to meet the goal makes the doer despondent.

9. A plethora of work - The amount of additional work that employees must do within the company is known as work abundance. It is expected of the doer to exert more effort and perform more. The doer has work-related stress and struggles to complete the extra tasks. Naturally, tension is the outcome (Banerjee, 2022, pp.111-115).

3.2 Remote work and ICT

Millions of people worldwide have switched from working in offices to working from home in recent years, which has led to an increase in inquiries concerning well-being, health habits, and productivity when working from home. Designing future workspaces that maximize the advantages of both locations requires an understanding of the potential effects of environmental elements at home and at work (Srivastava et al., 2024). Technologies developed a work environment that enables highly competent knowledge workers to operate more independently, challenging the conventional division between work and nonwork time. These advances have two sides: on the one hand, ICT has enabled work to be tailored to people's requirements; on the other hand, new demands, such the desire for longer workdays, have surfaced. Working time has become less standardized as a result of flexibility, new time structures have been developed, and daily work life has generally accelerated (Korunka, 2021, p.41).

There is a growing call for greater flexibility in working circumstances (namely, regarding time and location) so that employees can directly manage them in accordance with their own requirements and preferences (Addabbo et al., 2017, p. 238). Organizations have been compelled to embrace a more flexible work

structure in recent decades due to a variety of technical advancements as well as fierce and dynamic competition. Consequently, a number of trends in the redesign of contemporary workplaces are discernible. According to recent statistics, over 26% of EU workers either choose their own working hours or are at least able to do so within predetermined bounds. According to Eurofound (2017), 17% of workers in the EU can work from home regularly or have the option of doing so occasionally or frequently (Korunka, 2021, pp.19-20). Adding to the theoretical framework of social determinants of health, the environment and workplace location have an impact on workers condition and well-being. According to research, commutes have an impact on one's general quality of life, productivity, time spent with friends and family, and physical and mental health (Srivastava et al., 2024).

The advent of new flexible work schedules that, in certain regions, took the place of the traditional nine to five workdays accelerated the shift towards greater workplace flexibility a few decades ago. All these changes have created opportunities as well as new demands for the impacted employees. Numerous empirical investigations have confirmed a wide range of negative consequences on the quality of work life, despite the numerous descriptions of the benefits of flexible employment. The COVID-19 pandemic has expedited these changes (Korunka, 2021, p.5). A strategic instrument for sustainable work might be organizational models that acknowledge and incorporate the vital requirement to balance work and personal life with those of workplace well-being. Improving working conditions over the course of a worker's career and dynamically adapting employment to meet their demands are necessary to make work sustainable. According to some recent comparative studies, one of the potentially significant levers to promote the harmony of work, family, and private life from the standpoint of sustainable work is flexible working hours (Addabbo et al., 2017, p. 222).

The growing adoption of flexible workplace practices—where people work remotely from a variety of locations, such as their homes, while traveling, or while visiting clients—is a result of information and communication

technologies. With the advent of activity-based flexible workplaces, there is now more spatial dispersion within office buildings. Employees no longer have a permanent workstation, instead they select a new working station daily or even at different points during the day, depending on the task at hand. Because of this flexibility, workers must frequently pick between different workplaces that may differ in terms of how well they can perform specific jobs, the resources they have access to, and the ergonomics of their layout (Korunka, 2021, p.22). Two main categories of job enrichment exist. Increasing employee accountability for decisions that are typically made by a supervisor, including work scheduling and task distribution, is the first step. In the second, occupations are upgraded to incorporate more specialized duties that aren't always part of supervisory employment. Regarding the actual work redesign process, different "design criteria," or concepts, can be applied to improve work (Parker & Wall, 1998, p.20).

These days, virtual labor has been emphasized as a significant corporate trend. Employee well-being is at risk in a virtual setting due to technostress brought on by information and communication technologies. Significant benefits have been shown by the adoption of various virtual work arrangements, such as lower administrative and real estate expenses, more productivity, more flexibility in the workplace, less need for travel, and better time efficiency. Despite the benefits, research has demonstrated that working remotely can alter the nature of an employee's job and have both beneficial and detrimental effects on their wellbeing (Alkhayyal & Bajaba, 2024).

Building trust, offering appropriate support to prevent overworking, rearranging work, and creating positive connections between leaders and subordinates in virtual teams are some of the unique problems faced by remote team managers that have a direct influence on remote workers. Related concerns have been identified in the literature as contemporary challenges that organizations must address to guarantee improved performance and the well-being of remote workers. These concerns include cybersecurity, team cohesion, organizational trust, and striking the correct balance between utilizing increasingly

sophisticated computer-mediated surveillance to control remote workers and protecting their privacy (Ribeiro et al., 2024).

A manager used to make sure that people followed the rules on where, when, and how to work. In addition to having a variety of people-related duties, such as assigning work, coaching, and giving performance reviews, these conventional managers typically possessed functional knowledge, such as in finance or sales. In remote work, we all take on the role of manager, at least in terms of our surroundings and workflow. A new degree of independence and skill is needed for remote work (Greene et al., 2023, p.5). Project work has become more and more common, requiring workers to independently organize their activities and collaborate with others. Under flexible work regimes, employees' daily responsibilities include deciding time, location, structure, and coordination of their work. This creates extra cognitive requirements since employees must plan, organize, and coordinate their work in addition to their main responsibilities. Employees are not entirely free to make these choices since they typically must take into account responsibilities in both their personal and professional lives (Korunka, 2021, p. 20). In a virtual setting, one will establish connections with several people and develop a strong sense of connection rather than relying on a single management for all work-related demands. When working remotely, managerial skills are ultimately scrutinized. More deliberate action needs to be taken. (Greene et al., 2023, pp.6-7).

The purpose of artificial intelligence (AI), a sophisticated type of information and communication technology (ICT), is to enhance, complete, or supplement tasks that are typically carried out by humans (Chuang et al., 2025). Workplaces have been significantly altered by digitization in various ways, and as new digital technologies are developed, the transformational process keeps changing. Organizational technological changes are happening more quickly and with more consequence. Today's organizations must improve their working designs and tactics while taking into account how they affect employee engagement, performance, health, and well-being. Digitization in the workplace refers to the incorporation of Digital Information and Communication Technologies (DICT)

into work procedures, which has a variety of impacts on the working circumstances of employees (Scholze & Hacker, 2024).

Laptops, text or data processing software, data sharing platforms, and videoconferencing software are examples of ICTs, which are any electronic equipment or technology that enable employees to collect, store, process, or send information. Coworkers who operate remotely from various places might collaborate by using videoconferencing software, such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom, as an example of business-related ICT use. ICTs have the potential to improve job demands and job resources by enhancing information access, decreasing processing time and errors, and providing flexibility by releasing workers from fixed, centralized workplaces. In turn, these work-related traits have been connected to employees' job satisfaction and performance as well as career-related outcomes like employability (Handke et al., 2024). Understanding how digitization impacts employee well-being and developing long-term, health-focused workplaces are becoming increasingly important (Scholze & Hacker, 2024).

As employment becomes more flexible, people have new difficulties balancing their personal and professional lives, which are made worse by the opportunities presented by emerging information and communication technologies (ICT). Without ICT's assistance, workplace flexibility would not be possible. ICT not only serves as a vital catalyst for workplace flexibility but also independently influences its effects, both positive and negative, on working life quality. Particularly crucial elements of working life in flexible work environments are psychological separation and rehabilitation. Excellent ICT support is especially necessary to address the challenges that come flexible work. The technological foundation for work at different work sites is mobile devices. This "ICT-enabled work extension" enables employees to communicate about their jobs and share work-related materials (Korunka, 2021, pp. 7-8). As ICTs become more common, academics are becoming more interested in how ICT use impacts work design, particularly how much it raises or lowers job demands and job resources. For example, ICT use at work can change job demands like

workload and work-to-home conflict, as well as employment resources like autonomy and flexibility (Handke et al., 2024).

The "bright side" of digitization must also be taken into account in order to fully comprehend the relationship between it and psychological stress. According to the "bright side," technology can be used to improve communication.

Organizations have a number of reasons to support their view of digitization as a resource. There are many unresolved concerns and different ways for methodical research and future development in the socio-technical phenomenon of digitization and the continuous digital transformation in companies (Scholze & Hacker, 2024). Because digital work is fast-paced and always changing, people may experience high levels of stress and anxiety as a result of feeling under pressure to stay up to date with new developments in technology and maintain their competitiveness in their industries. Using technology in virtual environments has been connected to technostress, which is frequently regarded as a drawback of technology use. Burnout, emotional weariness, and decreased customer satisfaction are just a few of the detrimental effects that such technostress can have on workers' well-being (Alkhayyal & Bajaba, 2024; Scholze & Hacker, 2024). People experience technostress as a result of their attempts to adapt to new technology and their shifting social and cognitive requirements (Chuang et al., 2025).

ICTs may influence how people craft their work as well as if they do so. The notion that employees can use ICTs in a self-regulatory way is supported by preliminary data. For example, employees may choose to use ICTs to work from home in order to increase scheduling autonomy and decrease time pressure, which will help them meet work role expectations and accomplish career goals while juggling other responsibilities (Handke et al., 2024). The term "smart working" (SW) has recently surfaced as a new style to set up what is thought to be an innovative approach to organizing work, challenging the traditional conventions and managerial style that concentrates on maintaining the conventional policies of work and re-design. The SW concept is mostly utilized to offer a viewpoint for innovative, technologically driven methods of

working. Fundamentally based on more discretion in work activities and a greater responsibility for the results that employees are expected to produce, SW is successful in changing traditional work circumstances and their natural environment while seeking for various, not entirely unique, alternatives. Any argument regarding SW would be completely absent without the recent technological advancements and environmental technological context that allow the dissemination of technological instruments (Addabbo et al., 2017, p. 236).

Based on Action-Regulation Theory, employees can consciously choose to use ICTs to design their occupations when their workplace indicates that a better fit with their individual needs and skills is achievable. For instance, workers can incorporate the usage of ICTs into their plan of action to direct subsequent behaviors at the planning phase when they are thinking how they will accomplish their goals (Handke et al., 2024).

By theoretically organizing DJD and DJR, it is possible to analyze digitalization in the workplace in a methodical manner and capture features of the future using cutting-edge technology. Scholze and Hecker's (2023) qualitative study used a mix of literature research and expert interviews to determine which three DJDs (Digital job demands) and DJRs (digital job resources) have the most significant effects on white-collar workers' work environments, as seen on the table 1. (Scholze & Hacker, 2024).

Table 1. Digital job demands (DJD) and digital job resources (DJR) overview on white-collar work (modified from Scholze & Hacker, 2024).

Digital job demands (DJD)	Definition	Digital job resources (DJR)	Definition
Availability	Continuous accessibility and permanently responsive through DICT	Collaboration	Teamwork, communication, and collaborative efforts of individuals or groups improved by DICT
Work intensification	DICT leads to increased volume or pace of work activities and heightened expectations for productivity.	Efficiency	Using DICT to achieve higher productivity, lower resource consumption, and better results.
Technology dependence	Reliance in DICT to complete tasks, manage operations, communicate, and make informed decisions.	Autonomy	Ability to operate and make decisions independently using DICT

3.3 Stress-management

Stress is an everyday occurrence in both social and corporate life. This techno-commercial-managerial era's fast industrialization has led to an increase in stress as a phenomenon. The strain on the mind and psyche grows as mechanization relieves people of the orgy of human labor. The typical causes of stress have an effect on the human psyche through external factors. Stress is a type of felt pressure that typically involves workload, both in terms of quantity and quality, in an organizational setting. However, stress can also come from other areas of interactions, such the family, society, and the environment, in the individual context (Banerjee, 2022, pp.25-26). The quick integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into organizational processes has sparked two arguments: supporters claim that AI boosts output and reduces workloads, while detractors

claim that it causes technostress and degrades worker wellbeing (Chuang et al., 2025).

In addition to a rise in workload and time pressure, work is becoming more intense, faster, and denser. For instance, as a result of information overload and the volume of emails that need to be answered each day. Additionally, workers in today's workplace have greater freedom and control over many areas of their workday. The capacity to exert some level of control over the nature, timing, place, and execution of activities is known as autonomy. Workers are increasingly required to use a variety of resources to determine how they can help meet the demands of their work performance. However, greater autonomy can lead to long work hours and eventually a loss of control because work requirements are prioritized over employees' personal interests and criteria for defining their lives. This could be the result of employees having a great deal of freedom to carry out activities (Korunka, 2021, p. 41).

The JD-R model is a theory of work design that incorporates different viewpoints on motivation and job stress. Two essential components of this theoretical framework—job demands and resources—explain how the workplace affects workers' physical and emotional well-being. Job demands, which can result in exhaustion and health problems, are the ongoing physical, mental, or emotional exertions needed at work. Job resources are elements that encourage the accomplishment of objectives, individual development, and growth while offering constructive motivation (Chuang et al., 2025). The JD-R model was first presented approximately fifteen years ago in order to comprehend burnout, which is a persistent psychological stressor associated to the workplace that is typified by mental detachment, diminished personal efficacy, and weariness (Schaufeli, 2017).

Although the external world may be the source of stress, how a person reacts to it depends on their level of inner autonomy or personality traits. Stress management entails a comprehensive approach to the individual and goes beyond simply eliminating stresses from daily situations. A calm and collected personality that has distanced themselves from the prevalent patterns of quick

exteriorization is more equipped to handle stressful events than a chaotic or exteriorized personality. The main effects of stress in an organizational setting are linked to productivity, corporate objectives, and the decline of constructive behavior. Since stress is a primary factor in reducing an organization's effectiveness, its effects can be seen in a variety of ways, depending on the type and size of the company, organizational culture, and management policies pertaining to ethics and values (Banerjee, 2022, pp.27-29).

By using the JD-R model in the framework of remote work, it becomes clear that digital leadership skills and the ability to learn new things are crucial job resources. It shows that these elements can have a favorable impact on workers' well-being in a virtual workplace when combined with technostress.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the suggested theoretical framework.

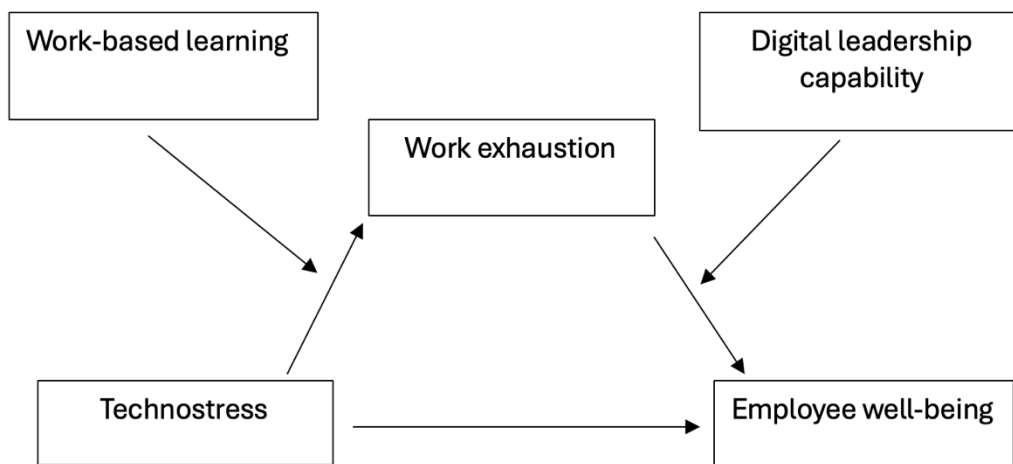


Figure 1. Figure of hypothesized model (modifies from Alkhayyal & Bajaba, 2024).

People like having a lot of power and responsibility. Such circumstances are both demanding and giving. When there is a mix of imbalances, stress conditions arise. A greater level of stress is bred by low authority and high responsibility. This results in a situation where the person is extremely stressed over the location of high obligations, which are challenging to fulfill without

corresponding power. A person with more responsibility is held to a higher standard. Without deprivation, a person may have an energy drain that causes them to feel physically and mentally burdened (Banerjee, 2022, pp.88-90). Selling is a stressful profession. To lessen the tension, selling should be done in a systematic manner. We must develop coping mechanisms. The process of adapting to change, known as stress, has an impact on our bodies and minds. It is a method of handling difficulties and change. Chronic stress causes physical symptoms such as headaches, exhaustion, loss of appetite, and elevated blood pressure. Anxiety, melancholy, a diminished interest in social interactions, and irritability are psychological signs of stress. A salesperson is disqualified if they have less interest in building relationships. To maintain the pace of work, some stress is necessary, but too much stress can be detrimental if left unchecked. Knowledge workers are experiencing tension as a result of the explosion of information. It has an impact on interpersonal connections and job satisfaction. Stress management strategies must be used to deal with the stress, even though it cannot be completely eradicated (Chunawalla, 2008, p.92).

Because of the minimal degrees of both authority and responsibility, it is evident that the person's attachment to their work is so relaxed at the lower levels that their ego does not grow. Merely having less power and accountability is not as inspiring. Workers rarely have their full energy and initiative when they begin with little authority and responsibilities. A person with high power and little responsibility might enjoy a sort of dominance over others, making them a suitable candidate to be the system's natural leader. A leader who has no responsibilities is likely to experience stress since they feel like they do not have enough weight in the system as a whole. One crucial factor is job title or affiliation with the position. Stress begins to arise when an individual appears to be lacking in identity. In many situations, authority loses its significance when there is no obligation to carry out responsibilities. Once more, control plays a crucial role in the whole spectrum of work-life stress (Banerjee, 2022, pp. 88-90).

3.4 Time management

Organizations strive to elevate productivity in a very competitive business climate. Nonetheless, those that put in more hours a day are not more productive. Actually, the actual findings indicate that, for practically every industry, using overtime hours reduces average productivity, which is expressed as production per worker-hour. The amount of work that an employee can accomplish in one hour is crucial factor, and time management is seen as a tool of optimize worker productivity (Vaga, 2010, p.1). Success or failure as an executive will be determined by one's own ability to manage their time, more than any other practice. Effective time management is actually effective life management. Fortunately, time management is a business skill, and all business abilities can be learned (Tracy, 2014, p.1). When it comes to completing particular activities, initiatives, and objectives, time management encompasses a variety of capacity, assets, and practices. This comprises arranging, assigning, goal setting, delegating, analyzing time spent, observing, sorting, programming, and prioritizing, among many other activities. Essential components include the capacity to organize daily chores, establish boundaries, prioritize tasks, and manage unforeseen tasks (Vaga, 2010, p.8). Every effective time manager is a skilled planner. To achieve all of their goals, whether big and small, they create lists and sub lists (Tracy, 2014, p.25). Effective time management is a critical skill in the workplace. Individuals often encounter deadlines that are associated by a specified amount of work that should have been accomplished in that period. Ineffective time management can lead to a number of unpleasant or undesirable consequences, including lower income, stress, and job loss (Vaga, 2010, p.7).

Since time management is truly life management, assessing own values is the first step towards increasing one's own productivity. Effective time management is impossible without a clear understanding of one's values (Tracy, 2014, p.10). The ability to calculate the amount of time is needed for a task is a prerequisite for efficient time management. A person can only become efficient with their time when they have a clear understanding of what they need to do, what they

want to do, and by what date. It is necessary for people to develop greater time management skills by honoring their set priorities and avoiding interruptions from other people and circumstances that could cause them to take precedence over their priorities (Stoilov, 2012, p.5). Having complete clarity about own objectives and how one plans to achieve them is crucial for time management. List the sequential, logical steps that must be taken to move from current location to desired destination. The program evaluation review technique, or PERT, lays out in graphic form all the actions must be taken and when they must be completed in order to reach the end goal. There can be seen multiple approaches to doing the task more efficiently with a PERT chart (Tracy, 2014, p.30).

3.5 Self-management

It is entirely up to one's ability to allocate time, plan, organize, and handle disruptions. To assist in making the greatest choices for company, there are the four corners of productivity both explained with bullet points and is also shown in figure 2.

1. Recognize where you're spending time.
2. Make a plan the day before.
3. Give high-payoff products priority.
4. Assign tasks based on outcomes rather than procedure.

(Papp, 2012, p.109).

Time	Plan
Focus	Delegate

Figure 2. Four corners of productivity (modified from Papp, 2012, p.109).

Motives are the reasons behind actions. They stimulate and sustain activity and establish the overall course of an individual's behavior. Essentially, the primary drivers of action are needs or motives. A need or motive is something that drives a person to take action. A person's desires and objectives are always evolving and changing as a result of their experiences. Objectives are external to a person. They are sometimes called the "hoped for" benefits that drive motivation (Chunawalla, 2008, pp.218-219). It's human nature to dwell on the things we haven't finished and to feel overburdened and anxious after working. Setting unattainable goals for oneself is one of the quickest ways to burn out at work (Papp, 2012, p. 113).

According to Vroom's expectancy hypothesis, people's expectations for success determine how motivated they are to work hard. Three ideas served as the foundation for Vroom's theory: valence, instrumentality, and expectation.

1. Expectation. This speaks to the degree to which an individual thinks that greater effort will result in better achievement, or the perceived relationship between effort and performance.

2. The use of instruments. This shows how someone views the connection between performance and reward; for instance, it shows how much they think that better performance will result in a promotion.

3. Valence. This indicates how much a person values a specific prize. Some people could place a high value on promotion, while others would not (Lancaster et al., 2015, p.394).

We ought to be aware of our goals. These must be documented. It gets us mentally ready. Coordination gets simpler. It is possible to rate these activities according to their significance. These endeavors ought to align with our established objectives. The most important task ought to be finished first. The unpleasant tasks shouldn't be done last. Making a "to do" list ought to become second nature. Organizing everyday tasks is a wise investment (Chunawalla,

2008, p.92). By exercising patience and self-control, self-discipline teaches people how to make wise business judgments. People who make snap decisions in the hopes of short-term gains rather than exercising the patience and self-discipline necessary for long-term success are partly to blame for the difficult times that companies face. Recognize that everyone experiences failure at some stage in their success. Sometimes, even well-planned and carefully made decisions do not work out. Periodic setbacks and challenges are inevitably encountered. Life happens, but with the exercise of self-control, progress can be made. Consistency is developed through the practice of self-discipline, and from consistency, trust is cultivated. A company that demonstrates self-control and engages consistently with clients comes to be trusted. (Papp, 2012, pp. 170-173).

3.6 Sales management

Building and sustaining a motivated sales force is a difficult undertaking. The inevitable rejections that salespeople experience from customers as part of their daily tasks erode their confidence and motivation. Since a salesperson and their supervisor are typically geographically separated, unless management pays close attention to motivational techniques that consider their requirements, the salesperson may feel alone or even forgotten. A thorough grasp of salespeople as individuals, their characters, and their values are necessary for successful motivation. Sales managers, in a way, do not inspire their employees. They do this by creating the conditions necessary for salespeople to inspire themselves (Lancaster et al., 2015, p.391).

Despite having a significant impact on performance and organizational success, salespeople's well-being is frequently disregarded in the fast-paced, cutthroat world of sales. Although the psychological literature has demonstrated a connection between subjective well-being and productivity as well as turnover intention, this relationship has not been confirmed in the selling setting or demonstrated to influence behavior. Even though subjective well-being has been extensively studied in other situations, little is known about these

problems in a marketing context (Mallin et al., 2025). Continuous personal development is essential for a successful seller. Hard work alone, without direction and purpose, is not sufficient. Salespeople do not have time to spend. Thus, time management is the primary requirement for success in the sales position. There are numerous claims on a salesperson's time, including travel, customer visits, sales reports, talks, and follow-ups in-person sales. To determine whether too much or too little time is spent on each activity, all of these activities need to be properly timed. A person has several objectives in life, including career, personal, and life goals. A person cannot begin to manage their time effectively until they have a clear understanding of their objectives. The actions conducted will be aimless if this is not done. A person's values should be reflected in their goals as well. Salespeople believe that their objectives have psychological importance. They serve as inspiration. Goals help us form new routines (Chunawalla, 2008, p.91).

A sales target or quota must be seen as reasonable and achievable while still providing a challenge to the salesperson in order to effectively motivate them. It usually makes sense to let the salesperson participate in quota setting since they should view the quota as fair. The sales quota has the benefit of being flexible enough to encourage salespeople to meet predetermined targets. Sales quotas, for instance, may be determined by sales of specific product kinds, sales to new clients, or overall sales targets. When a sales objective is met, the salesperson typically receives additional compensation. (Lancaster et al., 2015, p.399) Salespeople who view their work as meaningful not only respect their professions and consider their careers as a significant source of fulfillment in their life, but they also believe that their jobs are valuable and contribute to both their personal and societal improvement. The subjective well-being of these salespeople may be higher for those with higher self-EI than for those with lower levels. Mallin, Hancock, Pullins & Johnson (2025) propose following conceptual model about salespersons well-being as shown in figure 3. (Mallin et al., 2025).

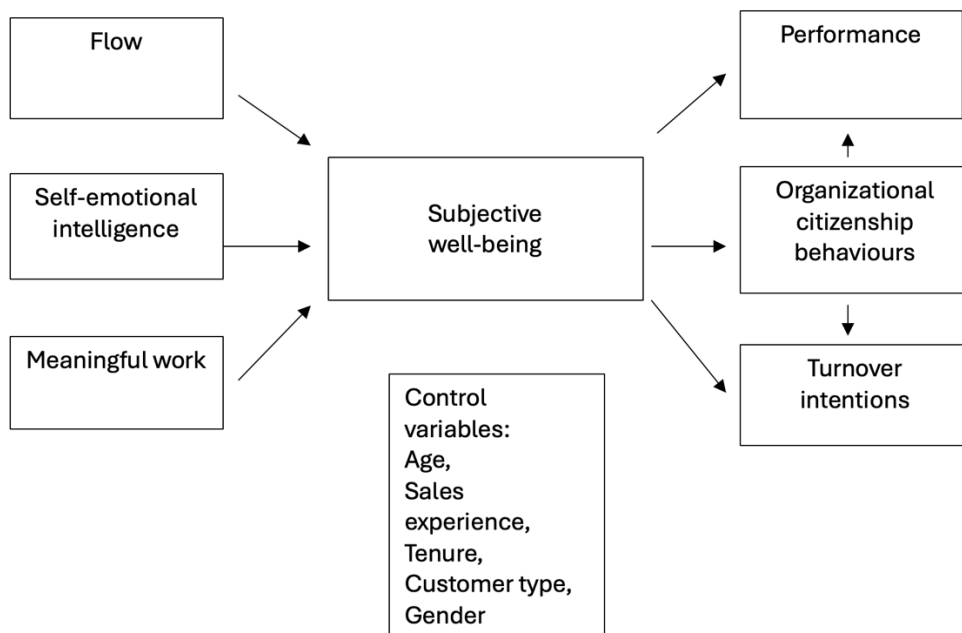


Figure 3. Salespersons well-being model (modified from Mallin, Hancock, Pullins & Johnson 2025).

Salespeople who experience professional well-being are able to investigate new solutions to customer problems and expand their problem-solving techniques. Subjective well-being will help salespeople solve problems, engage with consumers, and make decisions that will benefit their work. Positive emotions enable salespeople to maximize their performance and sales success while also demonstrating more cognitive flexibility and customer problem-solving skills (Mallin et al., 2025).

Teamwork is essential in today's industry and society for two reasons: heightened competition and scarce resources. We no longer merely compete with one another. Three factors contribute to team failure in the workplace:

1. The idea of team building is absent. Rather, we discover a group of five to seven people who have been thrown together and instructed, "We want you to accomplish (the stated goal); you all work together." Because they never got to know one another, developed a bond, or gained trust, the group rarely forms, and it becomes extremely

challenging to accomplish a shared objective. Teamwork and team building are not prioritized or taught.

2. The objectives are not defined. People sometimes bring their personal agendas and aims into the team goal, which dilutes the team and makes the main purpose extremely challenging to accomplish. This leads to unclear goals.
3. Management support is lacking. They lack the power to make decisions that are essential to the team's success if they do not have backing (Papp, 2012. pp. 63-64).

Understanding how wants, desires, and objectives relate to one another is essential to understanding motivation. Needs initiate drives to achieve goals. This is the fundamental process. Gaining more motivation is crucial for sales success because studies have shown that motivated people are:

- more creative
- work smarter
- adopt a more flexible selling style
- work harder
- employ win-win negotiation strategies more frequently
- have higher self-esteem
- have a more easy-going attitude and a less negative emotional attitude
- and have good relationships (Lancaster et al., 2015, p.392).

One interpersonal and intrapersonal quality or skill that is essential for effective salespeople is emotional intelligence (EI). Salespeople that possess emotional intelligence (EI) possess better understanding and control both their individual and others' emotions, which results in more fruitful interactions and a more fulfilling workplace. Even though emotional intelligence (EI) is acknowledged as a crucial social competency skill in business-to-business (B2B) sales, further research is necessary (Mallin et al., 2025).

4 Knowledge sharing and knowledge management

4.1 Knowledge management, a tool for value creation

Knowledge management, or KM, is the study of how to best use knowledge both internally and externally to foster creativity, foster a sense of community, protect the institutional knowledge base, and advance organizational success both internally and outside (Liebowitz & Frank, 2010, p.3). By making existing information available, the conventional view of knowledge management aims to increase the effectiveness of the business. The goal of knowledge management (KM) research has been to extract knowledge from people, either explicitly and by entering it into an information system or, perhaps more practically, by encouraging employees to share their expertise in professional and social contexts (Pauleen & Gorman, 2011, p.4). These days, the majority of individuals concur that an organization's knowledge is its most valuable tactical asset and an essential source of value creation and competitive lead. Since many of the more experienced, practical information has been found to be difficult to preserve, successful knowledge transfer calls for gathering individuals together. If the company wants to make money, people have to be willing to share what they know. Knowledge sharing has therefore been acknowledged as an irreplaceable employee activity in companies that heavily depend on knowledge (Stenius, 2016, pp.15-16).

The acquisition of true knowledge has always been costly. Consider how much time one has invested in honing the abilities and skills they currently possess. Limited resources will be needed, primarily time and frequently money, to maintain, update, and manage ones' own knowledge assets. There is not a technical solution or shortcut to accomplish this. To ensure proper management of one's own knowledge, opportunities must consistently be sought and seized, both within and beyond the profession, on a daily and even moment-to-moment basis. Employers need to think about how to help their staff members enrich their knowledge that encourages dedication and loyalty. Many employees have

unique personal knowledge that might be of immeasurable worth. To put it briefly, knowledge differs from information and is more costly to create, maintain, assign, and keep up to date. Although knowledge offers each of us unique benefits in various industries and situations, effectively managing our knowledge requires time, money, and effort (Pauleen & Gorman, 2011, p.111).

Since a growing number of businesses depend on knowledge to succeed, it is today seen as an essential source of value creation and generally the most important strategic assets in work organizations. These resources can only be utilized if workers share their knowledge with others. Knowledge sharing (KS) is recognized as a critical employee behavior in knowledge-based businesses (Stenius, 2016, p.3). The learning potential that exists in the workplace is known as work-based learning, and it includes how individuals see and participate in work-related activities and interactions in order to acquire or increase their knowledge, skills, and competences. This type of learning happens through task-related learning, which is accomplished through experimentation and reflection, as well as interactional learning, which include conversations with coworkers and supervisors (Alkhayyal & Bajaba, 2024). The sharing of information between individuals is knowledge exchange, and it should result in the expanding of pertinent information. In essence, individual behavior determines how well knowledge management systems work. Effective knowledge trading can lead to various positive organizational results, including grown performance, creativity, and productivity, as evidenced by a growing body of empirical research. It has also been shown to enhance individual productivity (Stenius, 2016, pp.21-22).

4.2 Personal knowledge management

Organizational knowledge management (OKM) initiatives have treated personal knowledge management (PKM) as a secondary concern. It is becoming increasingly clear in the burgeoning digital age that PKM may aid in the development of the necessary digital abilities (Mittelmann, 2016, pp.117-124). Organizations are under increasing pressure to be more flexible and have a

wider range of skills. As a result, people are under increased pressure to compete, and more varied and uncertain professional options are becoming more prevalent. The individual is now more in charge of their own lifelong learning and self-improvement, and they have more influence over the course of their career and future. For people to have any hope of gaining a competitive edge in the labor market, they must now maintain, develop, and sell their abilities in the environment of the current knowledge worker. In the end, the effectiveness of organizational knowledge management (KM) initiatives depends on how well businesses respect and support each worker's pursuit of knowledge, self-worth, and even self-realization (Pauleen & Gorman, 2011, pp.3-4). The foundation of the theory of planned behavior (TPB) is the notion that there is a close relationship within behavioral intent and factual manner. Approach, personal norms, and recognized behavioral restraint over the action are the three elements that predict intents to behave. Important elements of TPB include individual standards, perceived behavioral control, and the ideas that underpin attitudes. TPB has been one of the most popular hypotheses in the research of personal information exchange. The self-determination theory (SDT) delivers a universal explanation for person motivation. According to SDT, people are naturally active, willing to grow cooperative, as far as their essential psychological necessity of network, expertise, and self-rule are satisfied (Stenius, 2016, p.30).

PKM (personal knowledge management) aims to improve people's effectiveness in social, professional, and personal contexts. The material now in publication makes it abundantly evident that PKM can boost individual effectiveness in teams, community, and the knowledge organization at large. The fundamental focus of PKM is "personal scout"—the search for, connection with, learning, and exploration—although the orthodox approach of knowledge management (KM) concentrates on foster organizational knowledge, together with the information that employees possess, using a combination of technique and managerial processes (Pauleen & Gorman, 2011, p.1).

5 Research method

5.1 Introduction and aim of the study

This thesis was written for Turku University of Applied Sciences Global Gateway- research group. This thesis was supported in part by the Erasmus+ SWEPPP-project. SWEPPP project is based on the idea that achieving sustainable well-being requires a holistic approach, aligning personal, professional, and planetary well-being (SWEPPP, 2024). The aim of this thesis and a study was to uncover and understand how salespeople use job crafting as a tool to better cope with their daily work.

Study's aim was also to support and verify the thesis theory with the findings from the interview. The research was carried out with qualitative research method. The study chosen in this thesis was semi-structured interview, as it gives best outcome to better understand and gain insight about the subject of job crafting usage, straight from the source. With semi-structured interview dialog between interviewer and interviewee revolves around the themes of the theory's included in this thesis.

The aim of the study was to answer questions such as:

- How do salespeople use and benefit from job crafting?
- What kinds of digital tools do they use to support their job crafting efforts?
- How do they optimize their work and apply time management skills?
- What causes stress, and how do they cope with it through job crafting?
- How important are self-management skills and the development of professional competence for the future?

5.2 Qualitative research method and thematic semi-structured interview

For this thesis qualitative research was chosen, since it is a contemplative, interpretative, descriptive, and usually reflective undertaking that seeks to understand and describe real-life instances of human behavior and experience from the perspective of those who are going through a particular situation (Fischer, 2005, p.16). After selecting the research method and defining the study, the next important step was formulating the research questions to ensure I could obtain the information I was seeking from the results. An essential component of any research effort is selecting a study topic such as this one and developing it into research questions. Understanding the main benefits and potential drawbacks of various approaches was necessary to select the best methodology for each research subject (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p.10).

The aim of choosing qualitative research method was to break down and define phenomena into quantifiable or shared categories that can be used for all the topics or more general and comparable circumstances. A naturalistic methodology, in which I as a researcher made no effort to control the phenomena of interest, was used in this qualitative research to try to understand phenomena in context-specific settings (Golafshani, 2003, p. 600).

It was important and hard to decide what were the most important topics and themes from theoretical point of view. In qualitative research, both theoretical and practical factors are considered when deciding what should be included and what should be excluded. Accordingly, some of the methods have a solid theoretical foundation, while others do not (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p.10).

For this thesis I decided to incorporate and use semi-structured interview as a research method, for it is the most crucial interviewing method for case study research. Well done; it has the potential to be the most comprehensive data repository available. Semi-structured interviews are a very fruitful research method because of their flexibility, and their "naturalness" is based on a well-defined format that has been meticulously created and practiced (Gillham, 2000, p.65). The semi structured interview was done by thematic interview,

where three sales professionals from different sales fields were interviewed. Interview questions were divided into themes such as job crafting, stress management, work-wellbeing, self-management and hybrid work.

5.3 Data collection and thematic analysis

The sales professionals selected for this study were all experts with a comprehensive, in-depth approach to sales, and all had extensive work experience. One of the interviewees was from the B2C sector, while the other two were from the B2B sales field. This was a deliberate choice to collect diverse and varied responses from two different sales fields. Two out of the three interviewees have sales manager competencies, which could also serve as a differentiating factor in their answers.

All three interviewees received invitation to the study accompanied by the privacy statement for scientific research by EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) by an email. One of the three interviews was held on April 22, 2025, and the other two on April 27, 2025. Each interview lasted 35-45 minutes, and all three were recorded for transcription purposes.

The aim of the semi-structured interview was to strike a conversation and get insight of the topics and themes that were important and vital to this thesis. The importance of an interview was to gather the relevant and needed information about the subject of job crafting in sales field by salespeople. Typically, interviews are audio recorded and subsequently transcribed, as was done in this case. Only one transcript was made for every interview. Research participants' transcripts were collected to create the data set, "as the transcripts themselves constitute the written form of data" (Jowsey et al., 2021).

The participants were interviewed via meetings set up using the Teams application. They responded to open-ended questions related to job crafting through themes such as work well-being, digitalization, time management, and stress management. As all interviews were recorded and transcribed, based on the transcripts, valuable insights were gathered on the themes and the topic of

job crafting, complimenting the theoretical framework presented in the thesis. Finding important, substantial points and classifying them were the two main components of the analysis. The initial step of neatly presenting the variety of information gleaned from the interviews (Gillham, 2000, pp.59-60). Due to its broad applicability to perioperative issues, theme analysis is an excellent starting point for those who are new to qualitative research (Jowsey et al., 2021).

First, I examined the transcripts to get to know them and make notes on any repeating themes or ideas. To compile the codes into potential themes, I then went through the codes to find links between them. Following the identification of these potential topics, all pertinent information was gathered under each subject. The next step was to determine how well the themes relate to the entire collection of data. The researchers produce a thematic "map" of the analysis as the last stage of this phase. The report should provide a summary of the topics and use compelling or vivid data extracts to support them (Jowsey et al., 2021).

There is a figure in the findings section of this thesis that was created to incorporate the interview results into a single, coherent fishbone diagram. While it is not a formal method of analysis, it facilitates the structure of research findings and supports the interpretation and illustration of the result obtained from the interviews. Ishikawa (1982) created the fishbone diagram tool, which is frequently used to qualitatively ascertain cause and effect linkages, where every potential source of a given issue is investigated, and the query "why?" is continued until the fundamental reason is identified (Kelley, 1999, p.108).

5.4 Findings

Interviewees answers varied depending on the themes discussed. In this thesis, the subject of job crafting and the related themes are examined as whole, without focusing on a specific sales sector.

All respondents in the study experienced that, in their current jobs, they are able to modify their jobs to better suit their beliefs, needs and work well-being. Job

crafting was identified as a tool that is implemented daily in salespeople's work. Two out of three interviewees work in B2B sales, so remote and hybrid work emerged as an important tool for work well-being and time management. Remote and hybrid work were perceived as opportunities to work effectively without interruptions and improve self-management skills. With this arrangement, one could save time and avoid the trouble of commuting to the office. This is especially important for employees with families and young children, where time is an essential and needs to be utilized optimally. One participant stated that *"As a mother, remote work enables and adds time to the day. From the perspective of saving time."* Another participant said, *"I get a lot more done working from home, without the distractions"*.

Respondents who regularly used remote and hybrid work experienced that they work in a company that trusts its employees with this responsibility. As long as the results are achieved, employees are trusted to manage their work as they see fit. In remote work, the ability to plan and structure one's workday, including all the breaks, was seen essential for coping. However, there was also a downside to remote work, as two out of three respondents felt that it disrupts the balance between work and non-work time and makes it harder to establish a work community. Thus, in return, has a direct effect on employee's well-being and motivation. Despite some drawbacks, remote work was generally viewed more as an opportunity than a liability, as one participant stated, *"I don't see it as a negative thing, but more of an opportunity and possibility"*. The office workstation was seen as a necessary for better work environment, particularly regarding amenities, such as larger screens and better technical facilities. One participant commented on this subject following way, *"If I need to build a larger campaign, I definitely go to the office that day, where I have bigger screens and a height-adjustable desk."*

When it comes to digitalization and digital tools, Teams and CRM were most essential and frequently used tools among all the participants. Teams was seen as a tool for maintaining relationships with co-workers and participating in sales and other important meeting with stakeholders and customers. Both tools were

considered equally important in both B2B and B2C sales. Additionally, Teams was viewed as a cost-effective tool, as it eliminates the need to travel to attend meetings, saving both time and benefiting the environment. One out of three respondents mentioned the company's own artificial intelligence (AI) tool as an important part of their daily work. One respondent said, *"CRM is essential tool for my work, because it enables me to follow the project flow. Teams is an important tool for my work as well, as it makes virtual meetings possible and is time and cost efficient, but it does not compare to face-to face interaction with customers."* Two other respondents stated that, *"Especially Teams is important to have meetings within work community"*, *"I use company's own AI every day in my work, as well as Teams to have meetings"*.

Time management skills were considered essential by all three participants. Planning, anticipating, and adapting to changes in schedules, as well as creating to-do lists, stood out as important time management tools in their daily work. Two respondents stated that, *"planning the whole day or week in advance helps to visualize the tasks that need to be completed and to allocate the necessary time for each"* and another said, *"creating to-do list and crossing off completed tasks is a stress reliever."* Since all participants had experience with project-based work, effective time usage and time management skills were seen as crucial for coping with the demands of such work and achieving the desired results. One out of three respondents experienced that, even if an employee can optimize their own time management skills as best as they can, for example in retail work, their back-office tasks are always interrupted by walk-in customers. These interruptions make it hard to concentrate and finish the tasks within the estimated timeframe, which, in turn, leads to the development of stress. To relieve and manage stress, two out of three respondents tried to modify their approach to task execution. They reduced the number of tasks and focused to completing one task at a time. Multitasking was identified as a significant issue effecting both work well-being and stress levels.

The topic of stress management was raised by all respondents. Two out of three participants highlighted the lack of resources as a significant contributor to

increasing work-related stress. Lack of resources includes both time and staff, which ultimately leads to a higher workload for individual employees. One responder stated directly, *“lack of resources causes is stressful”*, and other said, *“I must learn to think one day at a time and one task at a time. Multitasking is stressful.”* One of three respondents identified deadlines as another contributing factor to work-related work. The same respondent also mentioned that a small amount of stress in their work served as a motivator to perform better. Two out of three respondents acknowledge that they have made significant changes in their way of thinking to stop stressing about the things that are beyond their control as it leads to potential burnout.

All participants identified their work community and the company they work for as key motivators in their work. All respondents consider their employers to be fair and accommodating to their needs. One out of three companies provided employees with opportunities to develop their knowledge by offering unlimited access to education resources, such as various training courses. This respondent stated that *“not all employers offer such extensive training opportunities.”* Although all respondents agreed that they enjoy working for their employers, two out of three felt that the role of a salesperson, did not align with their values on regarding excessive consumption of goods and its impact on the environment. One respondent concluded that, *“Looking at the consumer sector more broadly, it conflicts with my personal values, because although the job involves selling products, I would prefer that people in general consumed less.”* As the work pace increases due to a lack of resources, the importance of self-management, motivation, and solution-oriented mindset becomes crucial. All three participants acknowledged that co-workers, shared organizational goals, and diverse job tasks help maintain the motivation needed to perform effectively. One out of three respondents emphasized the importance of delegating in managerial work, both to reduce overall workload and to develop personal routines for handling tasks. All participants agreed on importance of developing and setting clear boundaries - for example, ensuring that work ends when the workday ends, avoiding overtime outside regular hours. However, all participants felt that it can be challenging to draw clear line between work and

non-work time, as it often is in employees' hands. One respondent stated on this matter that, *"I feel like If the company compensates employees generously, it is ok to work over your office hours, though it is employees own decision to do so"*. Following fishbone diagram incorporates all findings that were found in subject research that aligned with theoretical framework of the theory. Figure 4 demonstrates how various factors contribute to and form the thematic structures of different working methods.

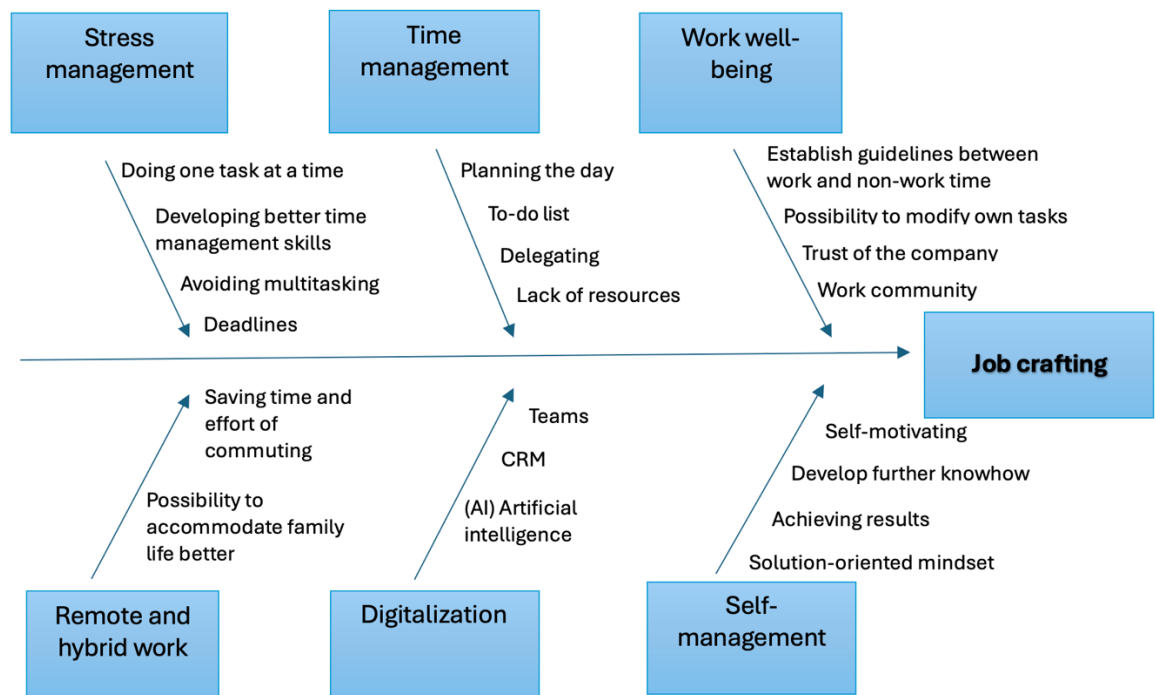


Figure 4. Fishbone diagram of the findings from the study research.

These factors have clearly emerged from the responses in the thematic interviews and from the analyzed answers, as can be observed in the findings and respondents' quotes.

5.5 Reliability, limitations and ethical considerations

Reviewing the results of this study, it is evident that reliability and ethical considerations are an important factor to this study. Kelly (1999) described reliability followingly, "Reliability is the degree to which an instrument is consistent in its measurement". This study was executed with semi-structured thematic interview and is based on three sales professionals' perspectives and experiences. Based on interrater reliability, this study demonstrated high interrater reliability, as all participants identified with nearly all of interview topics discussed. The drawback is that I alone collected the data and conducted the analysis, thus there is only one viewpoint. The scope of the study and consistency was limited to three individual interviews. This indicates that just a particular set of persons was used to obtain the data. Data may also recognize how these restrictions could affect the findings' generalizability or reliability.

Open-ended questions and a qualitative approach were used to conduct the study. The data analysis or study design may be constrained by the methodology. With several years of professional experience in one or more firms, the interviewees were selected due to their considerable knowledge of both sales positions and sales management. All of them have experience working for both domestic and foreign businesses and have worked in sales industries, offering goods and services to both B2B and B2C sectors. Each participant had prior experience with job crafting and its implementation. Most of them were familiar with the interview's themes and had used job crafting in one form or another as a self-management technique.

As some participants work in B2C and others in B2B sales sectors, there are differences in their tasks and, consequently, in how job crafting is adopted. This diversity also presents a limitation to the study, as the subject of job crafting is examined as a whole, without detailed specifications or distinctions between different contexts.

Considering the participants' risks from an ethical perspective, all participants operated in different companies and held different positions. This ensured high

level of anonymity. Each participant received a personal invitation to the interview, along with the privacy statement, sent to the email address they had provided. All interviews were conducted one-on-one between the interviewer and the interviewee, without the presence of any third parties.

Participants were informed, that no personal data, job titles, or other identifying information would be used in the data analysis. The interviews were recorded solely the purpose of data collection and were destroyed immediately afterwards. Participants were aware that participation in the interview was entirely voluntary and could have been withdrawn at any time. At the same time, participation was considered as giving consent for data collection and its use in the study. "Informed consent" is specifically mentioned in codes and consent. This implies that research participants have the right to be aware that they are being studied, to be told about the purpose of the study, and to withdraw at any moment (Seale et al., 2004, p.219).

The main ethical consideration is that all participants were personally known to the researcher. This ethical conundrum in data collecting is best shown by the connection between informed permission and covert research (Seale et al., 2004, p.219). Although participants were previously acquainted, this factor did not play a part in research analysis and findings.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion background

In a fast-paced world of sales, salespeople constantly search and try to discover new and efficient ways to work faster and better. Increasing of a job tasks and digitalization has affected on employee's well-being. Along with increased workload and time constraints, work is become denser, quicker, and more intense. Additionally, employees now have more autonomy and influence over a large portion of their job. Employees must increasingly use a range of resources to figure out how they can contribute to meeting the expectations of their job performance (Korunka, 2021, p. 41).

The study focuses on job crafting as a tool for Sales management for salespeople. The term "job crafting" refers to proactive work behavior when people purposefully change features of their occupations (Rudolph et al., 2017). The findings from the empirical data and the theoretical framework aligned in several ways across different thematic areas. Majority of salespeople use job crafting daily, by modifying their tasks to better suit their needs at the time, but the method of job crafting is not known for many. Although many regularly plan, delegate, and prioritize their tasks, these daily adjustments and transitions are often not recognized as job crafting, as they are considered part of the routine workflow.

6.2 Benefiting from job crafting

The consistency and alignment between the research findings and the theoretical framework emerged to the use and application of job crafting. All interview participants had engaged in job crafting to some extent and had made clear modifications to their tasks in order to improve their work well-being. As definition in the theoretical background of this thesis, job crafting is a broadly beneficial and necessary tool for self-leadership and occupational well-being. In

the proactive industry, job crafting is seen as proactive employee behavior to enhance person-environment fit. Employees use a range of techniques to produce their job for a range of objectives. Examples of job crafting include employees taking on extra work, changing how duties are accomplished, and limiting the scope of their responsibilities. By changing responsibilities or creating possibilities for social contact, workers who engage in job crafting may find methods to give their work a new purpose (Wang et al., 2017; Tims et al., 2015).

In the study, the interview participants explained how job crafting helps and motivates them to work and assists them in performing their tasks more efficiently. The use of job crafting in managing their own work enables a more autonomous approach, freedom of choice, and the optimization of their working hours. Through task modification or the creation of social interaction opportunities, workers who engage in job crafting may find methods to infuse their work with fresh meaning. Employees that feel satisfaction in their job may subsequently become more committed and invested in it. They therefore inspire employees to accomplish their goals (Tims et al., 2015; Weigl et al., 2010).

6.3 Digitalization, remote work and job crafting

All the study participants were familiar with digital tools such as Teams, CRM and artificial intelligence (AI). Study shows that use of digital tools helps employees complete their tasks more efficiently and quickly on a daily basis, but it also creates certain level of technostress and the allusion of always being available. Digital tool such as Teams has been defined as fast, cost- effective, and environmentally friendly way to have meetings and stay updated. Digital tools also make remote work possible as ICT (Information and communication technology) and AI enable working from home. Remote work stood out in the study as one of the most motivating factors in daily work, as it adds additional value to employees. Remote work was seen as an enabler of work-life balance, while ICT was viewed as a facilitator of task management, efficiency, and tool for personal growth.

One example of ICT use in business is the use of videoconferencing software, such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom, to collaborate with colleagues who work remotely from different locations. Because ICTs increase information availability, reduce processing time and mistakes, and free workers from permanent, centralized workplaces, they can improve job needs and job resources. It is becoming more and more crucial to comprehend how digitalization affects worker well-being and create long-term, health-focused workplaces. ICT use at work, for instance, might alter employment resources like autonomy and flexibility as well as job demands like workload and work-to-home friction (Handke et al., 2024; Scholze & Hacker, 2024).

6.4 Time and stress-management

The study indicated that stress and time management skills are interconnected. The interviewees perceived that a lack of resources leads to a lack of time, which in turn causes stress. Addressing these challenges requires employees to apply their own knowledge and skills to allocate time optimally in order to prevent stress from escalating. Stress tolerance and its management were found to be highly individual in nature. Some participants felt they had little control over the accumulation of stress and their response to it, while others had consciously decided not to stress over certain types of problematic situations and had a clearer understanding of their personal stress triggers. Common sources of stress impact the human psyche through external influences. In organizational environments, stress is often experienced as a pressure related to both quantity and quality of workload. Managing stress requires a holistic approach that addresses the individual as a whole, rather than merely removing stressors from daily life. Elevated stress levels are particularly associated with situations where individuals bear high responsibility but have little authority (Banerjee, 2022, pp.25-29).

Time management skills were highlighted as an important competency for salespeople. As workdays are busy and tasks continuously accumulate, it is essential to be able to delegate, when possible, prioritize tasks, and structure

the day effectively- for example, by using to-do lists. In reality, good time management is good life management. More than any other activity, ability to manage time will decide whether one succeeds or fails as an executive. Time management includes a range of capabilities, resources, and methods for accomplishing certain tasks, projects, and goals. This includes, among many other things, organizing, allocating, defining goals, assigning, delegating, evaluating time spent, observing, classifying, programming, and determining priorities. The ability to prioritize activities, set limits, manage unplanned duties, and plan daily chores are all crucial (Tracy, 2014, p.1; Vaga, 2010, p.7).

6.5 Importance of self-management skills

The research findings indicate that self-management skills play a crucial role; without them, it would be difficult to manage one's own work, make effective use of working hours, and achieve desired outcomes. The success of remote work is largely based on the employer's trust in employees' ability to manage their tasks independently. Without self-management, work progress would be hindered, and employees would struggle to perform at their best of leverage their strengths effectively. Developing one's own knowledge and skills was seen as an essential part of self-management, although whether every employer supports this, such as through opportunities for further training, remains uncertain. The ability to manage one's own work and use time efficiently was strongly linked to self-management competence. How one manages disturbances, plan, organize, and divide up their time is totally up them. It's a smart investment to organize routine duties. Motives are the causes of behavior. They create an individual's general behavioral trajectory and encourage and maintain activity (Papp, 2012, p.109; Chunawalla, 2008, p.92).

6.6 Further research conclusions

In the future, individual employee needs, work quality, workplace community, and access to effective tools to support high-quality work are likely to become even more important topics. In following, SWOT- analysis will reflect the conclusions about usage of job crafting, based on the study findings.

Table 2. SWOT- analysis of conclusion.

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control over ones' working hours • Set own work priorities • Design and modify tasks in a way that feels meaningful and motivating 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much freedom of choice • Insufficient individual resources and limited capacity for shaping one's own work • The blurred line between work and non-work time
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better work well-being • Higher motivation to own work • Opportunities for personal and professional growth 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible decline in work quality • The quality of the output does not align with organization's internal standards • An overwhelming level of autonomy

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The invitation to the study

I am a master level sales management student at Turku University of Applied Sciences. I am conducting a thesis on job crafting and its effect on professional well-being in sales. The title of my research and thesis is “Job crafting- a self-management tool for professional wellbeing in sales.”

You are invited to participate in this research. Participation is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time. Participating is considered as consenting to use the information conducted and gathered via this research.

The interview is conducted via Teams virtually, or face to face, which is more desirable for the participant. Interview is approximately 45 minutes long. The themes included in the interview are job crafting, professional well-being, stress management and remote and hybrid work. Interview is recorded for transcriptional purposes. Participants personal information or job titles will not be documented or mentioned in the research. Recordings will be deleted after gathering and writing the transcript about the interview.

Attached you will find the privacy statement.

Thank you for participation.

Best regards,

Nana Paananen

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