Side-hustling and meaningfulness in work (14070)

ABSTRACT

Purpose: In this study we investigated voluntary side-hustling – working more than one job concurrently – and what is its role in creating a meaningful career. The focus of the study was to understand why individuals voluntarily undertake side jobs and how these influence on people's experience of career meaningfulness.

Design/methodology/approach: This is a qualitative study. We collected 22 side-hustling stories from Finnish online media and analyzed them using inductive thematic analysis.

Findings: It can be argued that side-hustling has a positive influence on the experience of career meaningfulness. Side-hustling gives novel content for career, purpose in life, feeling of independency as well as possibilities for development. Additionally, side-hustling strengthened societal level meanings. Combining primary and secondary occupations offer a stage for creativity and self-realization. The experience of meaningfulness brings joy to work and thereby increases well-being at work. Furthermore, primary and secondary occupations can support each other. The main occupation guarantees income when the side job allows self-fulfillment. Side-hustling can also promote future career as entrepreneur.

Originality: This study contributes to career literature by highlighting the connection between side-hustling and meaningfulness. We present the main reasons why some individuals do side-hustling and what meaning this has for them.

Keywords: side-hustling, hybrid career, side job, multiple careers, multiple jobholding, meaningfulness, thematic analysis

Paper type: Research paper

SIDE-HUSTLING AND MEANINGFULNESS IN WORK (14070)

INTRODUCTION

The central topics of this study are side–hustling and meaningfulness. We examine what role side-hustling has in person's life and its relation to experience of meaningfulness. Concepts relating to side-hustling have previously been addressed, such as: multiple careers, multiple job holding, hybrid career, second job holder, plural careerist, moonlighter, portfolio worker and freelancer (Boyd et al., 2016; Campion et al. 2020; Caza et al., 2018; Cohen & Mallon, 1999; Fraser & Gold, 2001; Handy, 1985; Innes et al., 2005; Marucci-Wellman et al., 2016; Raffel and Groff, 1990; Wu et al., 2009).

Traditional careers have typically been characterized in terms of an individual's relationship to an employing organization (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009) where careers are bounded within one organization and career paths and progression opportunities are managed by the employer (Currie, Tempest, & Starkey, 2006). *Protean caree*r orientation enables people to adapt to social, political, technological, and economic changes across multiple career life cycles (Hall et al., 2018). Hall (1996a, 1996b) described the protean careerist as able to repackage his or her knowledge, skills, and abilities to fit the changing work environment in order to remain marketable. Protean careerists are flexible, value freedom, believe in continuous learning, and seek intrinsic rewards from work (Hall, 1996a, 1996b). Protean career can then be one of the key values is increasing meaningfulness to work. Among work life changes and uncertainty, protean careerists take the responsibility for managing their own career (Hall, 2002; Hall & Moss, 1998; Mirvis & Hall, 1996; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Recognizing the decreased stability and increased uncertainty in the work environment as well as changes in employment relationships, including reduced job security, protean careerists have taken responsibility for managing their own career (Hall, 2002; Hall & Moss, 1998; Mirvis & Hall, 1996; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). *Boundaryless career discourse* (Arthur, 1994; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) has

emphasized changes in the employment landscape, where careers take place outside of one organization and that careers do not have boundaries and that individual agency is the most important attribute for career success. McCabe and Savery's (2007) "butterfly career" model could be understood as a developed version of the boundaryless career model where the individual is in charge of their career but "flutters" between sectors in order to build up human capital and to progress in their career. In other words, the individual builds his or her meaningful career using the opportunities presented by hybrid forms of work. LaPointe and Heilmann (2014) identified three kinds of narratives that describe voluntary career transitions: meaning-maker, dreamcatcher, and downshifter. In their study, career transition was often related to the aim of creating a meaningful career. *Hybrid career* contains aspects of both the traditional, protean and boundaryless career concepts (Ribeiro, 2015; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Gander (2018) discovered hybrid careers among university staff. University professionals valuated job security, a career and promotion opportunities (traditional career concept), training for the external job market (boundaryless career concept) and meaningful work and autonomy (protean career concept). Granrose and Baccili (2006) found that most workers in their sample desired the traditional career outcomes of job security and upward mobility but also wanted nontraditional outcomes such as "boundaryless training" (i.e., training that could be used both in and outside the firm) and "protean well-being" (i.e., an open, trusting, and respectful work atmosphere). Hybrid careers can be voluntary or involuntary solutions; however, in this study the focus is on voluntary side-hustling where the individual holds two or more positions concurrently. Working concurrently under two or more employment contracts is an increasing trend in Europe (Eurostat, 2019), and researchers forecast further growth in multiple jobholding as developed economies continue to move toward short-term labor models and online contract platforms across industries (Barley et al., 2017; Kuhn & Maleki, 2017).

The prospects for meaningful work and careers appear uncertain; the working environment has become increasingly complex due to globalization, technological changes, flattening of organizations, and numerous career transitions (Baruch et al., 2015; Yeoman et al., 2019) as well as current Covid-19 pandemic. Despite this, the societal debate on work and careers is increasingly focused on meaningful work and sustainable career solutions (Akkermans & Kubash, 2017). The focus of the study is to understand why individuals build a hybrid career and what is the role of side-hustling in their experience of a meaningful career.

In this study we consider that side-hustling is performed alongside full-time job and it is based on individual endeavors. Such individuals are not forced into side job in order to make living. The person may be employed through different sources: they may have a permanent position and a secondary occupation as an entrepreneur or freelancer. We collected 22 side-hustling stories from Finnish online media before Covid-19 pandemic period and used inductive thematic analysis to examine the data. We contribute to the career research literature by demonstrating how side-hustling influence on meaningfulness in career stories.

Our study contributes to the discussion on the nature of contemporary careers (Boyd et al., 2016; Campion et al., 2020; Caza et al., 2018; Cohen & Mallon, 1999; Fraser & Gold, 2001; Handy, 1985; Innes et al., 2005; Marucci-Wellman, et al., 2016; Raffel & Groff, 1990; Wu et al., 2009), side-hustling (Ashford et al., 2018; Clark, 2018; Nduati Omanga, 2016; Forster-Holt, 2021; Scott, Edwards, & Stanczyk, 2020; Sessions et al., 2021) and meaningfulness in work (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003; Rosso et al., 2010; Yeoman, 2014). The role of individual agency (Arthur, 1994; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) and responsibility for managing one's own career (Hall, 2002; Hall & Moss, 1998; Mirvis & Hall, 1996; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009) are visible in the data of this study. The study extends earlier contributions in boundaryless career and protean career studies (e.g., Arthur, 1994; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Tams & Arthur, 2010) and protean career discussion (Hall, 2002; Hall & Moss, 1998; Mirvis & Hall, 1996; Sullivan & Baruch,

2009). In adult education Eteläpelto et al. (2013) have emphasized the need for more contextualized research on the possibilities for constructing meaningful careers.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Hybrid career and side-hustling

There is some evidence that individuals have created a new type of career concept, the hybrid career, based on their needs and their interaction with the organization and which reflect the more complex employment landscape (Gander, 2021). According to Sullivan and Baruch (2009: 1548) hybrid career can be understood a career that contain aspects of both the traditional and protean or boundaryless career concepts. Hybrid career has previously been examined from perspectives like hybrid career path (Manolopoulos et al. 2011; Neneh, 2020; Tremblay et al., 2002), hybrid career identity (Bresnen al. 2019; Guo et al. 2019) or hybrid career orientation (Kostal & Wiernick, 2017). Tremblay et al. (2002) and Manolopoulos et al. (2011) have classified managerial, technical, project-based, and entrepreneurial career paths. Also, Heilmann (2004) discovered managerial, specialist and project-based paths. Some individuals can combine technical, management or project-based paths without opting for a definitive career path or an irreversible career direction. This means that they follow a hybrid path. Guo et al., (2019) examined the identities of academic scholarly work and entrepreneurship. Individuals with multiple social identities benefit from the behavioral incentives that originate from their multiple identities. Hybrid career orientation focus on individual's career mindset, individual agency, questions remain about the interface between individual aspirations and organizational offerings (Akkermans & Kubasch, 2017; Gander et al., 2019). It seems that hybrid career orientations exist, containing elements of what have been characterized as both 'old' (e.g. job security) and 'new' (e.g. career self-management) career types (Gerber et al., 2009).

In this study, the term *side-hustling* is understood as a multiple career model where a person has two or more positions or contracts at the same time. Side-hustling as a concept comes close to *hybrid entrepreneurship*, which is a combination of wage work and entrepreneurship (Solesvik, 2017, Neneh, 2020). The ability to work with something that you are passionate about was the main motive for parallel employee-entrepreneur careers (hybrid entrepreneurship) (Thorgren et al., 2014). Freelancers can also be considered employee-entrepreneur hybrids (Born & Witteloostuijn, 2012).

According to Barley et al. (2017) and Kuhn and Maleki (2017), multiple jobholding will increase as economies move toward short-term labor models, online contracts, and platform working. While a multiple jobholder can be essentially defined as someone who works more than one job, scholarly definitions range considerably, from the quite liberal "working more than one job at a time" (Allen, 1998: 190) to the somewhat restrictive having "two separate jobs in two separate organizations and work[ing] for two separate supervisors" (Campion et al., 2020, Inness et al., 2005;). Multiple jobholding is more likely to occur if a worker cannot work their preferred number of hours in their first job (Böheim & Taylor, 2004) and meet their regular expenses (Hipple, 2000) or they want to earn extra money (Dickey et al., 2009). Having multiple jobs can increase job satisfaction and the acquisition of new skills (Dickey & Theodossiou, 2006). The portfolio career model emphasizes a series of temporary work arrangements with individualized risk and project-based work. Impermanence is characteristic of portfolio work. The portfolio career concept relates to multiple short-term or part-time jobs enabling freedom, flexibility, and personal fulfillment, and can take the form of portfolio working, freelancing or consulting. The portfolio career is an increasingly prominent model of work in the 21st century (Neely, 2020). Portfolio careers entail individualized risk, self-management, and the continual search for new job opportunities (Gold & Fraser, 2002; McRobbie, 2002). A similar model is the "shamrock career", where the petals of the shamrock

represent different work contracts. The shamrock concept has been used in the organizational context in examining different types of workers (Born & Witteloostuijn, 2012). However, in our case, the side-hustles - people with various jobs - often have a permanent contract but they complement this with another occupation, and a hybrid career is not a temporary solution for them.

The concept *side-hustle* is relatively new in career discussions and *side-hustling* research scant so far, but the interest to has been rising recently (see: Ashford et al., 2018; Clark, 2018; Forster-Holt, 2021; Nduati Omanga, 2016; Scott et al., 2020; Sessions et al., 2021). The concept of side-hustle means income-generating work performed alongside full-time jobs (Sessions et al., 2021). Side-hustling can be understood as a piece of work or a side job that a person gets paid for doing in addition to the main job. It is a job or occupation that brings extra income beyond one's regular job and main source of income. According to Forster-Holt (2021) side-hustling is a small-scale business activity in addition to one's primary job. Side-hustling can be a business that people run while concurrently doing something else. The something else in many cases is a full-time job, so you do side-hustling after working hours and on weekends (Nduati Omanga, 2016) alongside primary job(s) in a variety of hours arrangements (Scott et al., 2020). Side-hustling describes engagement in an activity that earns money in addition to a primary job (Ashford et al., 2018), and often involves a skill, passion or hobby-turned business (Guillebeau, 2019). Side-hustling is quite prevalent in the United States as a type of 'gig' work within an evolving definition of the workplace (Sessions et al., 2021). Side-hustling seem to relate to ambitions for extra income. However, the connection between side-hustling and meaningfulness in work has not been examined yet.

Meaningfulness

Meaning is the output of having made sense of something, or what that thing signifies, such as in an individual interpreting what work means, or the role work plays in the context of his or

her life (for example, work as a paycheck, a higher calling, something to do, or an oppression) (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). Meaning is individually constructed and influenced by the environment or social context (Wrzesniewski, 2003).

Meaningfulness in work refers to the amount of significance people perceive in their work (Rosso et al., 2010). Meaningful work is a fundamental human need, and people strive to find meaning in their careers (Yeoman, 2014). Creating meaningfulness in work can make the work seem more purposeful (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). Cheney et al. (2008: 144) defined meaningful work as 'work that contributes to a personally significant purpose, which can be differentiated from work that simply makes us feel good or work that enables us to hone our talents'. Meaningful work can be described as a 'best fit' between the worker and their work (Michaelson et al., 2014) when the work is particularly significant and holds 'positive meaning for individuals' (Rosso et al., 2010). Both-Nwabuwe et al. (2017) identified four categories of definitions of meaningful work: 1) positive significance or purpose; 2) constituents of meaningful work; 3) fit; and 4) fulfillment. A sense of calling has been shown to predict meaningful work (Duffy et al., 2012). Callings should be regarded as an antecedent to work meaningfulness, because callings provide a person with a sense of meaning and purpose in his or her work (Rosso et al., 2010; Wrzesniewski, 2003) and thus enhance their perception of their work as meaningful. The importance of meaningfulness is present also among career changers' stories in the study of LaPointe and Heilmann (2014). In their study, the narratives of career changers emphasized the meaningfulness of the new career as compared to the old. In sum, meaningfulness can be defined as work that employees perceive as worthwhile, important, or valuable (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003; Steger et al., 2012).

The focus of the study is to understand why individuals build a hybrid career and what is the role of side-hustling in their experience of a meaningful career. The research question is: How do individuals experience the meaningfulness of side-hustling?

RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research is essential for uncovering deeper processes in individuals, teams, and organizations, and understanding how those processes unfold over time. Additionally, qualitative research is critical for gaining an understanding both of what individuals experience and how they interpret their experiences (Bluhm et al., 2011). Aspers and Corte (2019) define qualitative research as an iterative process in which improved understanding to the scientific community is achieved by making new significant distinctions resulting from getting closer to the phenomenon studied. The qualitative research method provides a unique tool for understanding what lies behind a phenomenon (Ritchie et al., 2003). In this study, the construction of career meaningfulness is understood as inherently subjective and relational phenomenon. To understand this phenomenon, we adopted a social constructionist perspective, which has several contributions to further our understandings of careers (Cohen et al. 2004). First, it enables us to transcend dualism in career theory, in this study between traditional and hybrid, old and new, and reveal a more diverse picture. Second, social constructionism facilitates analyses of the relationship between careers and wider social contexts (Cohen et al. 2004). Third, it illuminates issues of power and ideology (Cohen et al. 2004), in this study how the construction of career meaningfulness is mirroring the broader social change. We are aware of that our data, media articles, is created by the journalists not by the individual career actors with the putative hybrid careers. It means that these textual documents are journalists' versions of social reality, scripted according to different conventions and particular purposes (Coffey, 2014). Media has symbolic power – the power to decide what to say, what not say – of the phenomenon (Hodgetts & Chamberlain, 2014).

Data selection

We selected the media articles through electronic sources across a wide range of the national popular press. The data was selected by purposive sampling using the following keywords: portfolio career, hybrid career, multiple careers, dual career, side-hustle, meaning, and meaningfulness. We searched for articles where people talked about their multiple concurrent jobs and added them to our database. As our focus was on articles having multiple concurrent jobs voluntarily, we excluded articles where hybrid career was involuntary and needed only for livelihood. The media texts were selected by both authors. The data was gathered during August 2019 to February 2021 – and ended just before the Covid-19 pandemic started. We decided to end the data gathering process in spring 2021 after no new articles on the topic could be found in the media. During the data gathering we copied the selected media texts from the websites to a Word file. Five media texts were excluded from the database because they contained experiences of an involuntary hybrid career. Our final amount of data was 22 media texts from three national newspapers, one national business magazine, one national trade magazine, one national broadcasting company, one national job search page, one afternoon paper, and two women's magazines (see Table I).

Insert Table 1 about here

Data analysis

In our study we adopted a thematic, inductive approach to data analysis to identify, analyze and report themes within data. This means that the themes are linked to the data themselves (Patton, 1990) and thematic analysis is data-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this study, the research questions evolved through the coding process. In this sense, we have read and re-read the data for any themes related to side-hustling without paying attention to the themes that previous research on this topic has identified.

The six phases of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) were involved for the process of data analysis. First, we started to familiarize ourselves with the data by reading it through several times so that we were familiar with the "depth and breadth of the content" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Concurrently, we started to make notes for coding. Reading and spending time familiarizing ourselves with media articles produced by different journalists was an essential part of the process. The phase two began, when we had read and familiarized ourselves with the data and had generated notes and ideas about the data and what is interesting to the analyst. We separated the interesting data extracts from a Word file and moved them into an Excel file to be able to make initial coding. Thirdly, the entire data was initially coded and collated. We drew up a thematic Excel table, which helped in understanding the relationships between different codes, themes, and sub-themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We used different colors to illustrate different potential themes and sub-themes. We also draw initial thematic map that helped us to understand the relationship between codes and themes (see Figure 1).

Insert Figure 1 about here

Phase four involved the refinement of those themes. When reviewing the coded data extracts, we found that the main theme named as 'fundamental personal reason for creating a side-hustle career' and sub-theme 'work context' were problematic, because they contained a lot of similarities with the sub-theme 'individual'. We decided to merge these three and after that we had only two main themes and nine sub-themes left. Fifthly, we defined and named the final themes and sub-themes according to the essence of what each theme addressed (see Figure 2). At this point we had created final themes and after that we wrote a detailed analysis in relation to research question.

Insert Figure 2 about here

FINDINGS

The inductive thematic analysis resulted two main themes: individual level meanings and meanings of common good. In total, 43 stories were related to the first main theme, which contained six sub-themes (see Figure 2). The second main theme included 16 stories, which contained three sub-themes (see Figure 2).

Steppingstone to entrepreneurship was a typical reason for "side-hustling". For example, Anssi was working in the environmental sector when he seized the opportunity to start own business: "I saw an idea for a potentially successful business." Nowadays he works both as Head of Department and as a part-time entrepreneur. In addition to that, to become a part-time entrepreneur was in some stories a realization of a long-term dream. For example, Marjut and Paula, who are mother and daughter and work as practical nurses, had dreamed for years of a handicraft café, and the daytime work tempted them both. The combination of Paula's shift work, three children and a commuting husband was challenging, but despite that she decided to grab a 'once in a lifetime opportunity' with her mom and they bought a handicraft cafe when the opportunity suddenly opened for it: "You have to work for your dreams, and there will be no such opportunity again." Neither of them wants to leave the care sector totally, and each feel that their heart is now in two places. Thus, side-hustling can be a transition phase or a stepping-stone to a full-time entrepreneurial career path in the future, as Petra and Nina stated, "Our dream is that this will employ us both with a good income." These individuals had either come up with a sudden business idea or the dream of owning a business was born a long time ago with a like-minded co-worker. Personal desires and entrepreneurial spirit gave these individuals the courage to establish a business – either alone or together with a partner. The side-hustling gave them meaningfulness by offering them the possibility to try something completely new

compared to the daytime work. Typically, in side-hustling stories the idea of going full-time as an entrepreneur was strengthened. In contrast, there were no stories of going back to full-time paid work and abandoning the side job.

Some stories revealed that the reason for side-hustling was the opportunity for *self-realization* in working life without resigning from the current day job. For example, Merja had a permanent job as a nurse in a university hospital, but she longed for many years for a change to her steady and safe work life, before she found the solution: "I thought for four years about what else I could do." Today, she has two professions; she works as a nurse and as a wilderness guide as 80% employee and 20% entrepreneur. In Merja's story the underlying cause for side-hustling was the feeling of stagnation in her permanent job. The main benefits of self-realization are opportunities for self-discovery and for realizing one's full potential. For example, Mikko is a journalist and a stand-up comedian: "A platform for self-realization has been found in stand-up. I'd like to do it even more. Stage comedy is such a demanding genre, and a lot needs to be done to develop in it." Side-hustling brings meaningfulness to individuals working life, because it offers an opportunity for self-realization without any limits and brings the experience of moving forward instead of stagnation.

Side-hustling appeared to *develop competencies* at the individual-level. The data included stories of how side-hustling helped to develop tolerance of uncertainty, learn new things, and challenge oneself. For Joonas, his work as a gaming entrepreneur increased his self-confidence in his salaried work as an engineer: "Here [in gaming], I'm pretty good at things I've never done anywhere else. It's brought a kind of self-confidence from there to the day job." In his story, the individual-level benefit spreads from side-hustling to the salaried work context. Through part-time entrepreneurship, side-hustling helped to expand one's own competencies, as it allowed new things to be tried without fear of failure. Side-hustling allowed to gain positive experiences by building your own competencies.

Side-hustling provided an opportunity to gain *concrete results* in working life. Tuire felt that she can gain more meaningfulness in her career when she has a concrete work as a writer to counterbalance her abstract work as a teacher. According to her, the results of her work as a teacher work will appear in the long run, if seen at all, whereas publishing a book was something immediately concrete and visible to her: "I have achieved something, and something will remain after me. It has been meaningful to finish something concrete." Asta works as a social and health director in her day job and, in the evenings, as a lymph therapist entrepreneur providing lymph treatments and healthy living guidance. She believes that her concrete customer-oriented work helps her get immediate feedback of the care system compared her primary work as a health director: "I get feedback from patients and customers about how the care systems operate. My work as a social and health director is more working in the background, sitting in meetings, and making preparations." It can be said that side-hustling increases the meaningfulness of work because it allows you to see the concrete results of your work. Side-hustling gives you opportunity to do concrete work as a counterweight to abstract work.

Side-hustling gave the feeling of *independency and freedom* from the restrictions of salaried work as well as a sense of having more control over the work they do. As Petra and Nina, engineering office workers during the daytime and party planner entrepreneurs in the evenings and weekends, described: "When you have your own business, you want to build it and make it your own. There's no limit." Side job offered individuals flexibility and independence through the possibility to build their own business without any limits.

The last sub-theme at the individual level meanings was *financial rewards*. However, the stories were divided into two categories: some sought financial rewards from the side-hustling, while others stressed that monetary gain was only a secondary outcome for them. For Asta, there had been little economic benefit from part-time entrepreneurship: "I don't even do marketing." In

most stories, the importance of money was not raised at all; instead, the importance of other individual meanings mentioned above, were emphasized.

Common good level meanings

In addition to the individual level meanings, the stories also highlighted wider societal level meanings that side-hustling strengthened. Some stories highlighted a desire to do good to others as a main reason for side-hustling. For example, Maiju works half-time with testaments and estate inventories, while network marketing – selling, recruiting, and counselling new sellers – takes up the other half; "I've always wanted to help people and now I can do so in my both jobs, in different ways." Working 50% as a lawyer and 50% as a health food entrepreneur, she feels that the side-hustling offers the opportunity to *help and serve other people*. The side-hustling gave meaningfulness because it widened the opportunities to do good to other people. Helping and serving others in both work contexts was an important career goal, because the desire to do good to other people was for her a fundamental need.

Secondly, the side-hustling offered an opportunity to *develop social systems*. In her story, Malin describes her work as a developer of the Finnish elderly care system both as a researcher and as an elderly care nurse. Malin works 70% at university studying elderly care and 30% as a practical nurse at a care home, mostly at nights and on weekends. She does two different jobs in the same field because that is how she believes she can best develop the Finnish elderly care system: "The university and the nursing home are two different worlds. The elderly people need me to get them out of bed in the mornings, while at the university I do research work." "Every education [program at the university] I've gone through seemed to take me away from what I care about – old people. Now I'm doing research to do good, even though I'm not as close anymore. This way I can do my best for Finnish elderly care." This story highlights how important it was to make a personal contribution to the larger societal system when you knew

that there are many things that need to be developed. Individuals were not content to do this development work within only one, traditional career path; they wanted to do even more.

Side-hustling enabled individuals to *promote environmental responsibility* and be involved in solving, for example, environmental problems. Richard works as a logistics manager and waste food web entrepreneur; daytimes in the logistics sector, and in the evenings as an entrepreneur. For him, the business idea was clear from the start; decrease food waste by selling low-priced left-over food to consumers instead of disposing of it. He wants to do his part toward solving environmental problems: "My previous ideas also related to how environmental problems can be solved through entrepreneurship. In the logistics field I've seen how much material is left over in different phases of the production chain." Side-hustling offered to Richard the opportunity to have a meaningful purpose in his career in order to solve environmental problems. He had a personally significant purpose to do good for the benefit of the environment, which he could now implement with the help of side-hustling.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study have clearly demonstrated that the way individuals experience the meaningfulness of side-hustling is multi-faceted. This was identified on two levels: the individual and the common good. The major contribution of this study is that meaningfulness has been lacking in previous side-hustle discussion (Ashford et al., 2018; Clark, 2018; Forster-Holt, 2021; Nduati Omanga, 2016; Scott et al., 2020; Sessions et al., 2021). Based on this study, it can be argued that side job has influence on the experience of career meaningfulness. In other words, side job puts meaningfulness at the center of the discussion on the nature of contemporary careers (Boyd et al., 2016; Campion et al., 2020; Caza et al., 2018; Cohen & Mallon, 1999; Fraser & Gold, 2001; Handy, 1985; Innes et al., 2005; Marucci-Wellman, et al., 2016; Raffel & Groff, 1990; Wu et al., 2009). Side-hustling is not just about earning extra income, but it gives you novel content for your career and life as well as possibilities for

development. It is a stage for creativity and self-realization. The experience of meaningfulness brings joy to work and thereby increases well-being at work in the long run. It can so offer the 'best fit' (Michaelson et al., 2014).

The stories contained elements of a new and traditional career discussion at the same time and offered a diverse picture: change and continuity seemed to exist in parallel, as related aspects of the same process (Cohen et al., 2004). In some stories, there was no desire to leave the main job because it provided stability, continuity and, for some, a secure source of income. The main job was still of interest in terms of content, which was complemented and reinforced by the side job. Yet side job was seen the opposite of main work, offering new experiences, independence, a sense of advancement and development in a career that the main job no longer offered. Based on the results, it seems that one does not dare to completely throw oneself into side job, but still wants to keep the main work involved. There were some reflections in the results that Based on the results, it seems that one does not dare to completely throw oneself into side job, but still wants to keep the main work involved

The study contributes also to the discussion on the role of individual agency (Arthur, 1994; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) and responsibility for managing one's own career (Hall, 2002; Hall & Moss, 1998; Mirvis & Hall, 1996; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). The results show that side-hustling is a result of an individual decision-making. It is not a forced solution aimed at generating, for example, additional income. Individuals have taken the career into their own hands and are actively managing it in a more interesting and meaningful direction. Individuals are looking for new career opportunities where they can develop and realize themselves fully. In many cases this took the form of the question "what makes me happy at work?" Individual agency is also reflected in the way individuals evaluate the working life and careers, what is important for them and making decisions based on it. In this study, in the background of career choices was the discussion of personal values. In some cases, meaningfulness was created, for

example, by developing societal systems and valuing environmental responsibility. The side job can be seen as a search for meaningfulness through work that has positive significance or purpose (Both-Nwabuwe et al., 2017; Rosso et al., 2010). The realization of individually meaningful purpose in working life requires the creation of a career outside the boundaries of a single organizational context.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

Regarding the limitations of this study, we recognize, firstly, that we focused only on voluntary side-hustling. Involuntary side-hustling therefore offer an interesting area for future examination. Secondly, as we focused on the individual perspective, it would be interesting to examine in the future what meaning employees' side-hustling have for organizations. Thirdly, we also understand that media texts can include distortion of information. All side-hustling stories were success stories, and thus variations of the classic romantic or heroic storyline (Murray, 1989), where the main character resolves problems and overcomes obstacles. Hence, the side-hustling persons are assigned in the media articles to the position of some sort of a hero who has succeeded in working life. However, combining several jobs concurrently also involves certain challenges, such as organizing different job schedules and taking care of family responsibilities. Fourthly, we also recognize that side-hustling is not possible for everybody. For example, combining different careers concurrently is easier and more practical for single persons than for families with small children. Health problems can also limit possibilities for pursuing multiple career paths. Fifthly, Covid-19 has dramatically changed working life and careers over the past two years. Therefore, it is important to note that the data from this study were produced and selected before the pandemic. If the data were collected from experiences during the pandemic, the results could be different. For this reason, it would be interesting to examine what reflections the pandemic cause to future careers.

CONCLUSION

By investigating why individuals voluntarily undertake side jobs and how these influence on people's experience of career meaningfulness, our study sheds light on the positive meanings of side-hustling. Our study reveals the meaningfulness of side-hustling as multi-faceted experience identified at the individual and common good levels. Our findings offer important theoretical implications for scholars interested in side-hustling and meaningfulness, as well as practical insights for those individuals who struggle to find meaningfulness in work. Our study demonstrates that choosing to work two or more occupations at the same time is often done in an attempt to reshape one's career, to make it more suitable for individuals.

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Table 1 Media articles

	Name	Work 1	Work 2	Source	Genre	Iss./Year
1	Krista	Music educator, freelancer	Around 10 employers	Helsingin Sanomat	National newspaper	3.3.2019
2	Merja	Nurse	Wilderness guide	Helsingin Sanomat	National newspaper	9.6.2019
3	Maiju	Lawyer	Health food entrepreneur	Helsingin Sanomat	National newspaper	4.1.2017
4	Anniina	CEO in recruitment company	Author	Etelä-Saimaa	National newspaper	6.10.2019
5	Marjut	Nurse	Handicrafts entrepreneur	Etelä-Saimaa	National newspaper	12.10.2019
6	Paula	Practial nurse	Handicrafts shop worker	Etelä-Saimaa	National newspaper	12.10.2019
7	Asta	Social and health director	Lymph therapist entrepreneur	Yle Uutiset	Broadcasting company	9.3.2018
8	Richard	Logistics manager	Waste food web entrepreneur	Talouselämä	Business magazine	30.9.2019
9	Anni	HR and information specialist	Brand envoy entrepreneur	Talouselämä	Business magazine	25.8.2019
10	Petra	Engineering office worker	Party planner entrepreneur	Talouselämä	Business magazine	3.8.2019
11	Nina	Engineering office worker	Party planner entrepreneur	Talouselämä	Business magazine	3.8.2019
12	Sari	Television and radio planner	FRC volunteer	Talouselämä	Business magazine	14.4.2019
13	Teemu	Recorder, youtuber	Media educator	Helsingin Sanomat	National newspaper	31.12.2017
14	Patricia	Intensive care nurse	Author	Tehy-lehti	Trade magazine	20.3.2020
15	Riina	Stewardess	Communications entrepreneur	Ilta-Sanomat	Afternoon paper	7.10.2019
16	Anssi	Head of department	Software entrepreneur	Kaleva	National newspaper	25.4.2020
17	Joonas	Engineer	Gaming entrepreneur	Duunitori.fi	Job search pages	3.7.2020
18	Malin	Practial nurse	Researcher	Me Naiset	Women's magazine	12.1.2020
19	Tuire	Teacher	Author	Anna	Women's magazine	9.12.2020
20	Joonas R	Author	Cleaner	Helsingin Sanomat	National newspaper	17.1.2021
21	Mikko	Journalist	Stand-up comedian	Helsingin Sanomat	National newspaper	21.12.2020
22	Jussi	Doctor	Musician	Yle Uutiset	Broadcasting company	1.2.2021

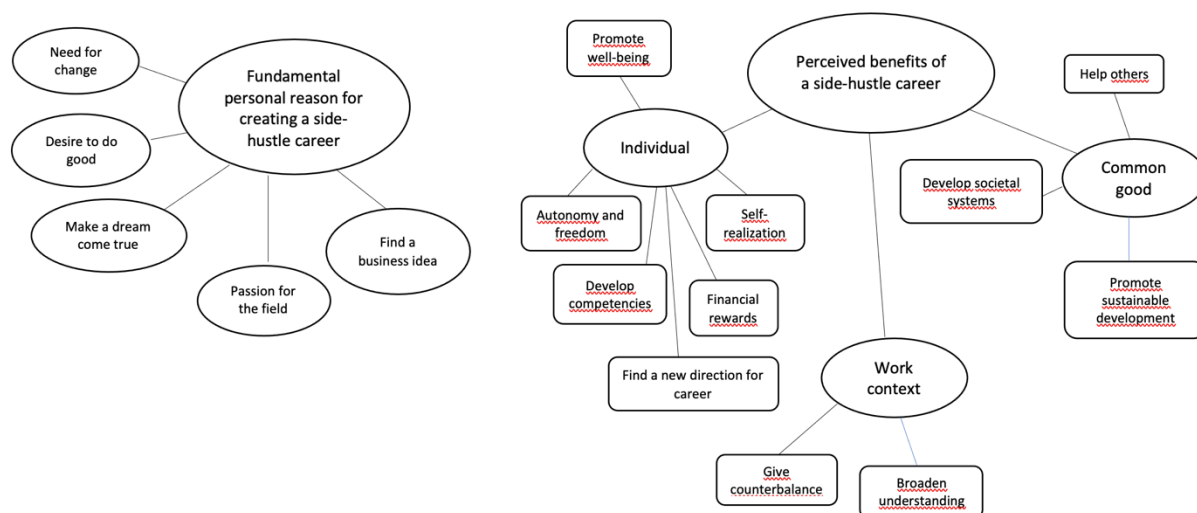Figure 1 Initial thematic map, showing two main themes, eight sub-themes and 11 sub-sub-themes

Figure 2 Final thematic map, showing two main themes and nine sub-themes