An exploratory study examining the impact of job crafting and the factors which influence crafting leading to the *benefits or/and drawbacks to the individual and organisation*

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Abstract

The nature of most work as changed in a way that puts the employee at the centre of job design rather than on the fringes (Petrou et al., 2015). The new power position within the job design process is referred to a job crafting in the literature. Crafting allows the proactive employee reshape task, relationship and cognitive boundaries of their job to best fit their preferences (Demerouti., 2014).

In an ever-changing economic landscape organisations look for ways to add competitive advantage to their brand, job crafting could provide that advantage (Van Wingerden et al., 2017). Crafting allows the crafter to anticipate and in some cases cause change (Grant and Parker., 2009). The organisation will rely on their people's talent to drive the business, crafting will allow innovative employees flourish (Grant and Ashford., 2008). Much of the theory suggest crafting in done on an individual level without organisational approval (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001).

The JD-R model is used by most scholars when discussing job crafting. The model describes job characteristics, which are divided up into job demands and job resources (Petrou et al., 2015). Hindering and challenging demands are also discussed within the model (Tims et al., 2013). All having different affects on the individual dependent on the mix applied at any given time.

Qualitative research was chosen for the primary research carried out by the author. This approach is particularly suited to this topic as it allows patterns to emerge not attempting to have the binary view of dependent and independent variables (Patton, 2015).

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

For decades job design has been used as a metric to gauge how employees experience and interface with work (Berg et al., 2010). The traditional approach has been to design the job around the strategic needs of the company, with senior management guiding the process (Campion & McClelland., 1993). The research on job design has been broadened in recent times to include the influence of the individual. This influence extends to the individual designing roles and role boundaries (Kim et al., 2018). The term applied in the literature to individual redesign is Job Crafting, "*the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work*" (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001, P179).

Crafting is a movement away from the traditional top down job design approach (Tims et al.,2013) and it gives the employees the control to influence (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) the material make-up of what they will be doing. The aim is to use fewer company resources while satisfying the needs of the individuals (Tims, Bakker and Derks, 2013). The Author was particularly interested in how individualised rather than centrally controlled the initiatives could be. Organisations aren't meritocracies, yet job crafting seems to offer power to the employees. A body of research suggests that even the most restrictive role has room for job crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, Berg, Dutton & Wrzesniewski,

2008). Based on this, there should be a degree of crafting in all industries and across all hierarchies.

The authors primary research will be concentrating on how task boundaries are expanded. Job crafting gives an insight into how employees proactively manipulate a role from the bottom up (Grant & Parker, 2009). Job crafting is an important area of academic research on job design because it demonstrates the value employees have to the resign process (Grant & Ashford, 2008).

The above gives a brief introduction into the topic that will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2, where the literature will be discussed. The author will attempt to analyse a wide range of literature in order to understand the topic of job crafting. The review will focus on academic journals, papers and books . There will be an attempt to make the material reviewed as recent and relevant to the topic as possible. The author will critically analysis the body of work available in order to see the level of consistency or divergence among scholars. Chapter 3 address the research question and objectives that underlay the question. Chapter 4 will deal with the methodology. This chapter will explain the rationale behind the choice of qualitative research. Limitations and ethical concerns will also be detailed in this chapter. Chapter 5 will give an overview of the main findings and provides a richness of primary data that demonstrates job crafting to the author. The discussion chapter gives the author the opportunity to fuse the literature and the

findings in order to critically analyse both. Conclusion gives a brief overview noting limitations and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Theoretical framework of Job Crafting

When job redesign is considered, it is usually from the lens of top down interventions (Holman et al., 2010), however with changes to the organisational landscape the concept of job crafting has come to the fore. Job crafting is "*the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work*" (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001, P179). The employee is no longer a passive performer in tasks, they now customise their jobs at an individual level (Tims and Bakker.,2010). The employee has become responsible for setting and achieving their own outcomes (Tims and Bakker.,2010). If the opportunity presents itself, the employee will actively craft their role for a better personal fit (Berg et al., 2010). The individual takes this new proactive role in order to make the job more engaging (Bakker and Demerouti., 2013).Crafting can be an attempt by the crafter to either widen or narrow their job role (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001). From the crafter's perspective, both provide a sense of autonomy and freedom in a work setting (Crawford, et al. 2010).

Crafting can address the shortfalls of the traditional top down approach and deal proactively with the complexity of the modern job. (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001). The crafting must be the employee's own initiative and not guided by the organisation, it is unsupervised change to the make-up of the role (Demerouti, 2014., Tims and Bakker., 2010). The employee seeks no organisational permission to start the tailoring, it is self-initiated (Berg et al., 2010). The organisational environment must be flexible enough to provide for work and personal goals to be achievable within a work context. Job crafting gives employees the opportunity to mould the job, so it is aligned to their skills and motivations (Menachery., 2018). Initiating employee centric perspective to job redesign may be able to meet the personal goals of the employee and use fewer organisational resources (Tims et al., 2013). The bottom up job redesign should be actively supported by the organisation in conjunction with organisational redesign efforts (Demerouti., 2014). Job crafting gives employees the ability to tailor the experience to each work encounter (Kim., 2018), the employees needs not to be held to a rule book, they need to personalise different interactions. Crafting allows the individual to be reactive and proactive to a market that is both in flux and dynamic. Within an organisational change context, the job crafter already changes the meaning of their role (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001), crafting therefore could be a helpful strategy to employ in the change process (Petrou et al., 2012). By widening the repertoire of tasks, the crafter is more equipped for the demands of new situations (Petrou et al., 2015).

The independent proactive approach from the employee in re-shaping the scope of the role is likely to enhance effectiveness in the organisation. Essentially the crafting when implemented successfully improves the fit and motivation of the

individual (Tims et al., 2012). Job crafting can permeate all types of jobs even the most mundane or structured, the research suggests the employee can influence the kernel of the job regardless of characteristics (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001, Berg et al., 2010). Even within the most prescriptive environment that has clear policy and procedure around task, individuals can job craft (Petrou., 2012).

Types of crafting boundaries

The initial types of crafting identified were Task, Relational and Cognitive boundaries (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001). Task boundary can be a complete change in the tasks the individual engages in or seeking new skills. Relationship crafting is pushing the boundaries of who individuals interact with in work, extending their normal sphere of stakeholder management. Cognitive crafting is reframing how the employee sees and attributes value to the tasks they perform (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001). The task remains the same, but the employee's perception shifts to give the task more gravitas. The three methods of job crafting allow the employee to enhance their motivation and engagement (Tims and Bakker., 2010). Relationship and task crafting allow the employee to express the authentic self within the job allowing a more positive sense to be expressed (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001). Job crafting may not be a consistent part of the employee's work, it may only occur during highly demanding periods (Tims and Bakker., 2010). There is a sense from the employee that the company isn't providing enough support so the individual needs to re-shape the context of the job (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001). While most of these proactive behaviours in

changing role boundaries are positive for the organisation, it must be also noted they may not be aligned with organisational strategy (Tims and Bakker.,2010). If the individual crafter is at odds with organisational goals there may be unintentional negative consequences for both the individual and organisation (Tims et al., 2015).

The degree to which crafting can occur is related to the level of interdependence within the role (Berg et al., 2010) and perceived freedom from supervision. The higher the degree of interdependence and supervision, the less the degree of autonomy to craft the role (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001). An alternative viewpoint around supervision has emerged from academic study. Supervision if it's positioned in the right context in terms of being supportive and of a coaching mentality can aid crafting. If the employee is encouraged this may stimulate innovation around the current boundaries of their role (Lenna et al., 2009). The change in any of the boundaries will have a knock-on effect to others that the job crafter collaborates with. The implications may not always be positive and indeed cause friction within the organisation (Tims et al., 2015). This friction will only arise if the level of crafting is significant enough to make a material difference to the role (Lyons., 2008) In roles where task activity is closely monitored and by implication controlled, the perceived ability to craft is lessoned but not totally eradicated. The more autonomous the role, the more flexibility the crafter must demonstrate in displaying proactive behaviours within the job (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001). The scale of crafting will have several factors dependent on the individual such as optimism, assertive personality, self-efficacy, resilience, hope and

ability to problem solve (Bakker et al., 2012) collectively referred to as Personal Resources (Hobfoll et al., 2003).

Job Demand- Resource Model

The Job Demand-Resource model (JD-R) has widened the definition of crafting, bringing equilibrium to an individual's skill set and job demands and resources, so that they don't jar, thus providing a better fit (Tims and Bakker., 2010., Demerouti., 2014). The employee's loyalty and sense of association towards the company will increase if flexibility is applied to accommodate the individuals personal fit (Kim et al.,2018).   While the scholars expect that all working environments are different, there is a consensus that JD-R can be applied to all environments (Bakker and Demerouti., 2007, Tims and Bakker., 2010). The two psychological processes involved in the model are health impairment and motivational (Tims and Bakker., 2010). JD-R refers to the psychological processes as "job resources" which are associated with the factors that motivate the employee, and "job demands" are associated with factors that cause strain (Bakker and Demerouti., 2007). Job demands are the physiological and psychological elements of the job (Bakker et al., 2007), they require continued effort from the employee and are regarded as costs (Tims et al., 2013). Job resources decrease the level of strain the individual has in the role, such as autonomy, feedback, support and organisation of work (Bakker and Demerouti., 2007., Bakker et al., 2007). The

resources can be both intrinsic because they allow the individual to develop and extrinsic because they contribute to achieving work objectives (Tims and Bakker., 2010). In general, job resources and demands have a negative correlation, if an individual is experiencing high job resources this may reduce job demands (Bakker et al., 2007).

JD-R distinguishes job demands into two different categories, challenging and hindering. Challenging demands while adding extra workload to the employee are viewed positively because they provide better career prospects or key learnings (Hakanen et al., 2017., Tims et al., 2013) and improve engagement and performance (Petrou et al., 2012). The individual can voluntarily look for more work that helps to keep them motived and interested in the role (Demerouti., 2014) which is advantageous to the organisation as they have an engaged productive employee. An opposing view of challenging job demands is that the level of engagement and job satisfaction aren't positively affected (Villajos. Et al., 2018). The overwhelming consensus in the research is that challenging job demands have a positive effect on satisfaction and engagement (Crawford, et al. 2010). Hindering demands will detract from the positive impact a job role has for both the organisation and the individual (Crawford, et al. 2010). It therefore make sense for both parties to ensure they are minimised or eliminated. Hindering demands are regarded with negativity because they don't provide any positive return for the efforts inputted by the employee. Employees either try to avoid hindering demands or invest more job resources to lessen the impact (Tims et al., 2013). Limiting the exposure to demand aspects of the role is referred to as "demand reducing" in the

literature. Demand reducing is done to ensure the draining tasks don't affect the sense of self, thereby protecting wellbeing and overall health (Demerouti., 2014).

Job resources can be broken up into structural resources and social resources. Structural is providing professional development, mentoring programmes and autonomy. Social is focused on relationship building, social support, coaching and feedback (Hakanen et al., 2017). The model assumes there is an interaction between resources and demands, the resources can act a buffer to the demands (Bakker and Demerouti., 2007, Tims and Bakker., 2010), strain is alleviated by motivation. JD-R hypothesis the strain felt by those who have high degrees of job resources is weaker than those who have limited access to job resources (Bakker et al.,2007). Different job resources will buffer against job demands in different ways. A strong relationship with an individual's line manager will help put job demands into perspective so the employee can cope (Bakker and Demerouti., 2007). If the resource at play is autonomy this will improve wellbeing as autonomous jobs are associated with giving the employee the ability to deal with stress (Bakker and Demerouti., 2007). Within the model, job resources are at their most valuable in terms of engagement and motivation when job demands/ strains are high (Bakker and Demerouti., 2008).

Positives and drawbacks in employing Job Crafting

There is growing evidence that the financial viability of an organisation is linked to employee wellbeing (Goetzel et al., 2001). "*Wellbeing is the presence of*

optimal psychological functioning" (Slemp and Vella- Brodick., 2013), because our work environment takes so much of our life it has a major part in influencing our identity (Slemp. and Diane., 2013). Wellbeing is made up of factors that influence both levels of engagement and burnout. A rationale to craft for the individual is to create a positive work identity, this underpins a positive self- image (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001) and in turn provides a positive mental state. Task crafting requires a degree of control over tasks, this ability gives a stronger sense of personal control and autonomy. Cognitive crafting gives the task a greater level of importance and bolsters self- esteem. Relationship crafting increases the number and quality of relationships, the sense of being part of a bigger unit fortifies wellbeing (Slemp. and Diane., 2013).

The literature suggests expansive crafting (increase in social/structural resources and challenging demands) will act as a buffer to highly demanding work situations. This contributes to the JD-R model by not only reinforcing the fact that crafting is positive for wellbeing but also demonstrating a buffer against burnout (Hakanen., 2017). Job demands such as poor working conditions and difficult work content were predictors to negative wellbeing such as burnout (Hakanen et al., 2008). Other research suggests that reducing job demands is unrelated to burnout (Petrou., 2015). JD-R focuses on the work environment as factors affecting wellbeing and disregards external home factors (Hakanen et al., 2008), it doesn't cover the entire individual's touch points. The job crafter while improving their wellbeing may dilute the wellbeing of others who are part of the team with or whom they have task interdependence with. The crafter is more likely to disregard hindering tasks, the perception from others may be that the crafter isn't doing their

fair share of work. The dumping of hindering demands on another individual increases that individual's hindering job demands which negatively effects their well- being (Tims et al., 2015).

Engagement is defined as a positive work-related state of mind resulting in vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Vigour provides a high level of energy and a willingness to invest in the role, dedication is a sense of pride and challenge and absorption is being fully present and engrossed in role (Bakker et al., 2007). The above triad of engagement, if positive, would be beneficial to any organisation. The degree to which an individual is engaged in role increases with their ability to mould the demand and resources that best fits their personal needs (Timms et al., 2013). The job crafters are enabled to design the role around their individual preferences pushing up engagement (Bakker et al., 2012). The engaged employee is better able to trigger their own job and personal resources which has a spiralling effect on future engagement (Bakker and Demerouti., 2008). As already noted the more assertive personality employees have, the more likely they are to craft, crafting and engagement are positively related (Bakker et al., 2012) The research suggests a contagion effect from engaged employees to others in the organisation (Bakker and Demerouti., 2008), this effect is of obvious benefit. Job crafting positively impacts on engagement within organisations, there is a level of consistency on this point across several academics (Hakanen et al., 2008). Crafting allows the crafter to have a sense of control over their working day which gives them a sense of power which positively relates to engagement (Petrou, et al., 2012.,Leana et al., 2009).

Job crafting has been positively linked to job satisfaction, engagement and level of organisational commitment (Petrou et al., 2012; Leanna et al., 2018), all tangible reasons why an organisation should support crafting. Job satisfaction is an assessment by the individual around the totality of their role (Lepold et al., 2018). The more satisfied and engaged an employee is the more committed and productive they are (Beer et al., 2016). The more structural and social job resources are available to the crafter, the increased satisfaction they have in role (Villajos, 2018., Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001). In an opposing, view individual crafting was found to have no link with job satisfaction (Lenna., 2009). Employees are taking ownership of their own level of job satisfaction by crafting their roles into a more enjoyable experience (Timms et al., 2013).

In a study where workers could craft, an increase in social and structural resources was found over time. The additional autonomy, feedback and opportunities (a mix of social and structural resources) all contributed to higher engagement, satisfaction and motivation (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Research has consistently demonstrated that when job resources are available to the employee, there is a positive correlation with the level of engagement (Bakker and Demerouti., 2007). Not all job demands are negative, however strain can be compounded in meeting those demands because high level of job resources are required (Bakker et al., 2007). While reducing job demands does help the emotional and mental state of the employee, if challenging demands are reduced this will negatively affect engagement and job satisfaction (Timms et al., 2013). The challenging job demands act as stimulation for the employee to ensure they remain absorbed (Petrou., 2012). The JD-R model postulates high demands and low

resources and therefore the net effect is increased strain. In contrast a blend of high challenging demands and high resources will enhance employee engagement (Van Wingerden et al., 2017). If the individual has the opportunity to increase challenging demands and limit hindering demand, research has shown a positive correlation with job satisfaction (Kooij et al., 2017) Personal resources are key pillars for engagement as they give a sense to the employee that they are in control and offer assistance in dealing with job demands (Van Wingerden et al., 2017). The natural temptation to reduce job demand to increase engagement, must not be taken as it simply won't bear fruit. Job resources both structural and social should be provided in order to motivate and increase engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2009). The provision of job resources to strengthen organisational engagement and commitment was supported by a study on Finnish dentists (Hakanen et al., 2008). Other studies have only found a tentative link between increased resources and improved engagement (Mauno., 2008). Other research has gone further and suggested that job crafting can diminish engagement, add to burnout and negatively affect performance (Demerouti et al., 2015)

Crafting is employed to provide personal benefit for the employee, the aspect of the task they change doesn't intent to be advantageous or negative for the company (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001). Job crafting can then be potentially both negative or positive or degrees in-between for the organisation (Dierdorff and Jensen., 2018). The author has discussed personal resources being employed in order to lessen job demands, a point to note is these resources are of a finite nature (Dierdorff and Jensen., 2018). A key foundation stone to the JD-R model is that resource allocation is essential in the crafting process. If resources are

used to craft jobs that have negative consequences for the organisation, this diminishes performance effectiveness and reduces resources that could have been better deployed (Demerouti., 2014). When crafting becomes extensive enough to be noticed, the initial reaction from peers and management is usually that the individual crafter is not a team player but rather a person who is an outlier in terms of compliance (Lyons., 2008).

The degree of power and autonomy a person has to craft is determined by the position they hold within an organisation hierarchy. An individual's perception around their ability to job craft is correlated to power and degree of discretion within the organisation (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001). Further research differs from the seminal authors and found that more junior members of the organisation find it easier to craft than more senior management. In previous studies the level of crafting was linked to perceived autonomy. This study found that their position in the hierarchy constrained the higher-ranking members from crafting even though they had formalised power. The lower ranking individuals had no psychological constraints and found ways to craft (Berg et al., 2010).

Most of the research applies job crafting to an individual within the organisation (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001., Bakker et al., 2012., Tims et al., 2012). A collaborative crafting approach has been put forward by a minority of academics (Orr, 1996., Orlikowski, 1996 Leanna., 2009), however the research is sparse into collaborative crafting. The collaborative approach involves informal groups deciding to alter their roles to best fit their objectives (Lenna., 2009). The "*Communities of Practice*" (Orlikowski, 1996), are formed by employees who

perform similar tasks, share knowledge and regularly communicate with one another (Leanna., 2009).

The nature of the collaborative crafting is informal, more an implicit work processes that is developed among a team (Orr, 1996). Both types of crafting need to be discreet as they are done without the permission of the company. An important point with the (limited) research on collaborative crafting is both individual and collaborative crafting can occur simultaneously (Leanna., 2009., Orlikowski, 1996). As discussed by the author, the greater degree of interdependence among team member the less likely crafting can occur (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001). This point is reversed when discussing collaborative crafting , interdependence give the crafters great ability to establish their own informal process (Leanna., 2009). Collaborative crafting becomes more prevalent among teams that have developed strong social ties such as length of service and level of contact (Leanna., 2009). The team members start to trust and develop relationships over time giving them the confidence to craft.

There is consensus that job crafting allows the employees build a job that fits their skill set. The fact the employee is doing something they excel at and feel comfortable in gives many positive outcomes for the employee and employer (Tims and Bakker, 2010). The employer needs to understand that high job demands coupled with limited job resources will have negative effects on the employees such as burnout (Bakker and Demerouti., 2007). Ultimately leading to poor performance or loss of good employees, both negatives to the overall performance of the organisation.

Chapter 3 -Research Questions

The proposed topic of research is job crafting. The research question; An exploratory study into the job crafting process and the factors which influence crafting leading to the benefits or/and drawbacks to the individual and organisation. From this overarching question, several sub- questions have arisen

- Does job crafting occur in the organisation and if so, is their organisational approval for the process

- Is the degree of crafting dependent on autonomy and flexibility (external factors) and personal factors such as self-control

- How aligned is crafting to organisational goals and does the craft always benefit the company or just the individual.

- Examine the main model attributed to job crafting to understand its components and how they contribute to crafting

- Is crafting an individual pursuit or can it occur across teams

The above are some of the themes that have emerged from the literature. From continued reading and research the number of questions may increase or evolve over the course of the research.

Chapter 4 – Methodology

Introduction

This chapter attempts to outline the rationale for the type of research chosen by the author. It breaks down each element of the research and gives a reader the narrative around each choice. The starting point for each choice was how best it suited the topic being researched. The research design, strategy and all other elements of the methodology need to align to ensure the participants felt open enough to have a frank and honest exchange.

Research Framework

The methodology employed will help the author present findings in a systematic way (Saunders et al., 2007). This thesis will use both primary data,

collected for the research being undertaken and secondary research, analysing information that has been already collected for some other purpose (Saunders et al., 2016). The framework must ensure the research brings about an increase in the knowledge base of the topic (Saunders et al., 2007). In order to do this, the research should be looked at through the lens of the research onion. The methodology needs to evolve from research question, the former needs to be able to bring to the fore data required for the research (Quinlan, 2011). While it is important to ensure research is philosophically informed, the bigger weighting needs to be around the ability to defend choices against the many alternatives (Saunders et al., 2007).

Within the research there will be every attempt to ensure bias will not influence the findings from the author. However, it must be noted with the level of personal engagement in the process this may make it difficult for the author to remain neutral (Saunders et al., 2016). The choice we make in terms of how we approach the research are shaped by the researcher's value set (Saunders et al., 2016). It needs also to be pointed out that qualitative methodologists argue the need and value of remaining detached (Patton, 2015). The empathy derived from personal encounters enhance insight into human behaviour (Patton, 2015) and provide a richness to the research.

Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is the umbrella term for knowledge development and the nature of that knowledge in the context of research (Saunders et al., 2007). The

research philosophy chosen is grounded to a large degree in the way in which the researcher views the world (Saunders et al., 2007).

0ntology is concerned with social entities, the authors research will sit within this school. The two main hypothesis put forward in Ontology are objectivism and constructionism (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Objectivism focuses on entities as rigid, following a structured process that can be applied in all scenarios (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Objectivism limits the influence of social actors in scenarios (Saunders et al., 2007), the influence of human behaviour has essentially no material influence on outcome or process. Constructionism is where the organisation and its culture is not prescribed. The social order is continually evolving, change is a part of the organisations or societies DNA (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Constructionism, also referred to as subjectivism gives the researcher the flexibility to understand the participant in the research subjective reality. This gives the author the ability to understand in a meaningful way the participants motives and intentions (Saunders et al., 2007). The authors preferred approach would be constructionism, culture needs to be adaptable. Social interactions and environmental factors need to be considered and understood to truly understand culture (Saunders et al., 2007).

Positivism is empirically based and attempts to remove any influence from human belief and reason (Patton, 2015). To employ the Positivism, approach the researcher is comfortable that they can remain detached and independent throughout the research (Wilson, 2010). The assumption is made that *"elements and events that interact in an observable, determined and regular manner"* (Collins,

2010, P38.). Interpretivism is at the other end of the continuum to positivism (Bryman and Bell, 2007). It is shaped in the belief that the study of people and their organisations is fundamentally different to the study of natural science (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Interpretivism insists on understanding how social actors interpret, interact differently and influence the world around them (Saunders et al., 2007). Outcomes are influenced more around social actors' inputs than a codified set of actions when responding to situations. There is consensus in the literature that positivism leans towards quantitative research while Interpretivism favours qualitative (Quinlan, 2011). Due to the fact the author is dealing with human behaviours in the study, the Interpretivism approach has been chosen. The author needs to understand how respondents choose to act towards their role and interact with others in the organisation. The author needs to attempt to be as empathic towards respondents as possible in order to see how they interpret their world (Saunders et al., 2007). Interpretivism provides a deeper understanding of phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

Research Approach

While there is a large body of academic research on the topic of job crafting the area is still new in terms of academia. The fathers of the topic, Wrzesniewski & Dutton, started research in 2001. Several questions remain unanswered in terms of cause and effect and the general implications for both the crafter and the organisation. Taking this into account, the inductive approach will be mainly used.

Inductive research "involves the search for pattern from observation and the development of explanations" (Bernard, 2011, P7). The inductive method places importance on the context of research. The use of a small sample size works better for inductive investigation (Saunders et al., 2016), the author plans to only use a small sample in their research, this method suits best. The author is interested in the context of why certain behaviours occur. Rather than having a ridged research design the inductive approach will allow flexibility to investigate potential unknowns that may arise (Saunders et al., 2007). This approach also leans itself to Interpretivism and qualitative methods (Bryman and Bell, 2007), which will be the bedrock of this project.

Secondary data collection

The author applied critical analysis to several academic journals and books that had already been collected for other purposes (Saunders et al., 2016). In order to get a grounding in the research topic it was beneficial to review existing literature (Bryman and Bell (2007). The review of existing literature allowed the author to see themes that have developed as well as be made aware of current gaps.

The main body of information came from NCIR library and online database. It was important to use peer review articles and books, the credibility of material used needed to have proven providence.

Research design

Research design gives a sense of direction for processes within the research (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Research strategies, research choice and time frames all make up research design (Saunders et al., 2007). Essentially the research design is determined by the amount of existing knowledge available, research questions and objectives and ultimately the amount of time available (Saunders et al.,2016). The research design for this project will be focused on Qualitative research – Mono method.

The author could have chosen qualitative, quantitative or a mixture of both referred to as mixed method. There is a perception that within mixed methods, the research holds epistemological positions and that qualitative and quantitative research methods are independent paradigms (Bryman,2012). The qualitative approach provides an understanding to the meaning individuals or groups place on social problems. This approach allows a richness of data to come from the respondents, however the ability to generalise is minimised (Anderson, 2011). It involves inductive reasoning, reasoning from the particular to the general (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research allows the patterns to emerge and doesn't believe research can simple be broken down into dependent and independent variables (Patton, 2015). Quantitative research by its nature, demands hard data such as statistics and charts (Patton, 2015). The nature of the authors research needs the respondents to feel comfortable and for the author to have the ability to further develop points. Quantitative research limits the ability for the

complexities of human behaviour to be considered (Patton, 2015). How humans behave and feel in relation to actions they or the company take, is the nexus of this study, hence the focus on Interpretivism and qualitative research. Humans interpret the world in the different way and then act based on their perception (Hammersley, 2013). While the author has chosen one strategy in order to investigate the topic, different designs can often work in conjunction with one another (Saunders et al., 2016). Observation may also be a strategy employed but this will be dependent on the level of access the author is allowed outside interview time.

Rationale for Research Design

Qualitative research tells a story, the research gives a sense of experience by allowing the respondents contextualise the perception of the world they inhabit (Patton,2015). Inductivist, Constructionist and Interpretivist research strategies underpin qualitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2007), as discussed above these 3 strategies are important elements of this project. Qualitative research once quite rare have become more common (Patton,2015), it has a focus on understanding and emphasises description (Ghuari, Gronhaug,2005). Within this project there will be a need to understand descriptions and try to get the respondent to develop on their responses.

The use of qualitative methods endures the research can be brought in the direction the respondents are bringing it, rather than being constrained by quantitative formulation (Bryman and Bell, 2007). It provides the ability to explain a myriad of behaviours and attitudes (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). While quantitative research has several instruments to collect data, within the qualitative arena the researchers becomes a key instrument in collection of data. A key characteristic of qualitative research is it is done in a natural setting. This direct contact with people in a space in which they are comfortable, will make them more relaxed and open (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The researcher may come to the study with preconceived ideas on the topic. There must be a consent check back to allow the focus to be on the participants meaning rather than assigning their own meaning (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Semi-structured interviews were chosen from the "family of qualitative interviews" (Rubin and Rubin, 2004). Within the interview there was several predetermined questions (Berg, 2009), which were given to each respondent in advance. It was made clear to each participant that the questions were simply a guide on topics and other questions will naturally flow from their input. This allowed each participant time to reflect on the general focus of the interview. The semi-structured nature of the interview gives the interviewer the opportunity to probe further (Berg, 2009) and explore avenues of interest that may emerge from the interviewee. The fact that the interviewee can input into the interview gives them the space to

bring more of themselves, their own experiences and insight into the process (Creswell, 2007).

Research method

The method used to collect data will be semi-structured interviews. Interviews are the most extensively utilised practice in qualitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The questions will come from several themes that the author considers important aspects of the topic (Saunders et al., 2016). This form of interviews is adjustable to new insights offered by the interview throughout the research process (Saunders et al., 2016). The interviewer can probe an interviewee's thoughts, perceptions, views, feelings and perspectives" (Wellington & Szczerbinski, 2007). The interviewee has the chance to build on and develop their answers (Anderson, 2001), unlike in a survey or questionnaire scenario.

The topic of crafting is based on how individuals make changes to their job role in a clandestine fashion. They must feel comfortable in order to reveal their authentic self; the author feels semi-structured face to face interviews fosters this. A total of eight interviews have been done all completed in mid-July. Four companies across different industries were used to ensure there was a breath in the research. The companies were in the financial, professional, retail and semi state sectors. In each of the companies the author chose one senior manager (on the ex comm or above)

and an entry level employee, the author ensured at the entry level, that the employee had at least two years' experience in current role. Access to each of the companies was granted because of the authors existing relationships to individuals working in the researched companies. Open ended questions were used in order to extract as much information as possible, the respondent felt in a safe enough space to allow their true sentiments to be expressed (Quinlan, 2011).

Standard interviews are extremely structured, the interviewer is required to ask each question as it appears. The assumption here is the question deck is enough to gain all the information required, and they are worded in such a way as to be understood by all participants (Berg, 2009). The unstructured interviews may be too wide and go of topic, providing little useable data (Berg, 2009). The semi-structured interview was chosen because they most align to the overarching philosophy of the research (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The author should be cognisant of their own past experiences, this will ensure that a natural leaning towards certain themes doesn't cloud the research (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Interviews are a time-consuming process that may be difficult to generate information (Anderson, 2011) and as previously cited hard to generalise finding across a sector(s).

Population and Sample Size

The author is responsible for defining what the population is going to consist of (Quinlan, 2011), if it's going to be random, total population or purposive sampling etc. The participants come from varying industries; a total of 8 people will be interviewed across 4 different sectors. Two interviews will be conducted in each company, one from executive level management and the other from a junior grade with the company. Purposive sampling will be used in this research, this technique is non-probability sampling that is based on the judgement of the researcher (Saunders et al., 2016). The author needs to be exact in who is asked to participate in the research. Senior management will give an insight into the organisational view of crafting and the level of autonomy employees have. The junior team members will give an insight into the reality of their own situation. All the senior managers are over the age of 40 with the junior team members all under 30.

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are important terms in accessing the value that is attributed to research. There is some debate among researchers of a qualitative background if validity and reliability attach the same importance in qualitative studies (Bryman and Bell, 2007). External reliability is harder to prove in a qualitative setting (Saunders et al., 2016). This research is grounded in Ontology with the branch of constructionism. The very nature of this means social setting change from organisation to organisation so it's difficult to provide external

reliability. Similar issue will arise when trying to ascertain the level of external validity in qualitative studies (Saunders et al., 2016). Internal validity tends to be a strength for qualitative research, the researcher is aligned with observations and theoretical ideas (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Instead of using reliability and validity as a gauge, some academics have suggested using trustworthiness and authenticity. In the qualitative sphere there is no absolute truths when researching the social world (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The world of human behaviour can't be reduced to codes that apply to all interactions.

Ethical issues

There is a requirement to identify and diminish all ethical concerns with a body of academic research (Johnson, 2014). Ethics is a strict standard of behaviour that assures the rights of all participants in the research to professional conduct (Saunders et al.,2016). The privacy and anonymity of respondents were guaranteed. Participants were made aware that they could withdraw at any time from the research. The author gave each participant enough information and assurance around the project, so that the implications for taking part were clearly known, this insured informed consent (Bryman and Bell, 2007). National College of Irelands code of ethics was used and adhered to in this research. All interviews were recorded on a device that needs a password to access and they will be erased after the project is completed. The participants gave up their time freely and were unaware of the themes within the theory.

Limitations

The small scale of sampling, while suiting the inductive method will decrease the ability to generalise the findings. The researcher within a qualitative piece of research becomes a key instrument for data collection (Creswell and Creswell, 2018), this could lead to unconscious bias. Like any qualitative study, there will be concerns around the reliability and validity of the study, as the rigid control of quantitative research doesn't apply.

The time constraints will also affect the richness of data, the study would if longitudinal in nature provide a greater insight. Time also limited the number of qualitative tools that were used, ideally it would have been useful to employ more qualitative tools to cross check findings and increase the sample size. The researcher's own inexperience in this field will play a part, more seasoned researcher may be able to draw more usable information from participants. Purposive sampling has limited the number of levels the author has interviewed, so the width and breadth of the organisations don't interface with the research. An important limitation is the lack of gender balance, all the interviewee are male, so the research is lacking an important part of the workforce's input. The first junior member interviewed preferred not to be recorded, his opinion was he would be franker without being recorded. I then took this approach with all junior participants; the author may have missed some important points as he was trying to ask questions, listen and write.

Chapter 5 – Findings

Introduction

There has been eight interviews conducted from across four different industries. The question set came from themes that emerged from the literature; they can be seen in the appendix. Some questions were asked as a direct result of what the participant had said, which is one benefit from using the semi-structured interview. One senior and junior grade was interviewed in each organisation. The senior person was recorded and felt they could be as open and honest with the recording because of the assurances made around privacy by the author. The senior interviewees were a part of the authors network, so a degree of trust had been

previously established. The first junior member the author interview expressed concerns around recording the interview. As a result, the author felt the richness of data among junior grade may be affected if a recording device was used. There was an attempt to mirror the questions asked to all participants regardless of position, however some questions will directly relate to their position within the organisation. The reader will be made aware if the question they are reading relates to all participants, or if the question relates to a grade. The author will assign letters to each participant, so the reader is aware of grade and company type. See table below on participants demographics

Particpants Demographics						
Code	Company	Position	Gender	length of service in years	appox number of employees in Ireland	International
A1	Professional Services (consultancy)	CEO	Male	9	550	Yes
A2	Professional Services (consultancy)	Junior consulatnat	Male	2	550	Yes
B1	Finanical services	Director of Operations	Male	18	380	Yes
B2	Finanical services	Fund administrator	Male	4	380	Yes
C1	Retail sector	General manager	Male	12	2000	Yes
C2	Retail sector	Sales assistant	Male	7	2000	Yes
D1	semi- state	Head of change	Male	8	400	No
D2	semi- state	Adminstrator	Male	2	400	No

How job design is viewed by all participants within the organisation

This is an important starting point, it's necessary to get an insight into who the participants feel should have influence on designing the role they do. The question asked was do they feel the top down approach to job design holds merit. The general acceptance among the senior people was that there must be some type of structure in place to allow applicants understand what they are applying for.

There were however varying degrees among the senior participants about how ridged job design needs to be. A1 was of the view "*the organisation needs to have a sense of direction and in order to achieve that the team need to be given that direction. You need to be a team player.* He is also of the view that *"jobs will evolve, expand and develop over time",* this view was also held by B1. " *I believe the same role can change throughout the life cycle of the role; however, the change has to be in line with the strategy of the company not of individuals. Therefore, I would think that objectives become much more important than the description. I think role description is relevant for day one when you're trying to outline the role expectations but then as soon as you're in the role I would think that how it impacts on strategy would become much more relevant and role description becomes somewhat stale".* Among the above two participants there was a clear sense that evolution of role should be done with the knowledge of the company and have management involvement. In C1's case the belief was that "*senior management should not dictate job roles but be able to put their slant on it to ensure alignment with company strategy*" he like A1 and B1 felt the senior management may not be "Intune" with the detail that should be included in certain roles. D1 would be of the view the top down approach to job design still holds merit*," I think it does because at the end of the day you would like to think that senior people are focused on the most important things to make the company successful. They should be the people who are giving overall direction and insuring that people's jobs are focused primarily on the things that are good for the company. They need to be on the same page or not work here".*

A2-C2 felt the company gave little room for them to define or shape their own roles out. B2 said " there is lots of things in place to ensure we perform to the expected standard", he went on to say, " *but there are parts of the job you don't have to do, and you still get the job done*". A2 *" I did do all aspects of my role, I am small clog in a very big wheel, if I miss something out, clients and the companies' reputation will be affected*" In C2 case " *they have us down for areas from when we come in, to when we leave, with very controlling managers, but we just swap between ourselves*". C2 is of the opinion "*customer service is better when the team are doing tasks they enjoy and we do them better".* C2 went on to say he usually gives tasks to others that he doesn't like doing, but most people are happy with that, they get to do what they like doing. "*There may be one or two who give out, but I have the other people behind me, I'm the shop steward so people listen to me*". D2's perceptions varied because he worked in two different areas, their call centre and currently in the complaints department. In his current position he is left to his own devices, he makes "*the call on what complaints to review, how to answer them and who to escalate them too"* his direct line is *"relaxed about how things are done*". With D2 there is limited expectations about senior managers having the most inflexible view around role. C2 has clear expectations but collaborated with others to make the role fit their needs. A2-C2 have set structures in place but they can be ignored with no effect on results.

Merit in frontline people designing role/objectives (Mangers only)

While there was consensus between the senior people that a job evolves over time, from the answers given to the above question there is strong indication that this evolution is on the companies' terms. A1's opinion was this would lead to a sense of "*corporate anarchy*". "*Everyone has elements of a job that they don't like doing. These elements are necessary and have to be done, I can't decide what I want to do. So, I think for somebody to perform competently and do their job to the best of their ability they just have to get on and do those things*". The assumption from A1 is that the less enjoyable elements of the roles will be disregarded if this meritocracy was introduced. B1 was clear in respect of objectives, that he would "*outline the strategy to them and then I would ask them to apply a set of objectives related to their role back to that strategy, they will send me a draught of those objectives and we will discuss*". There is still a sense of control here, but a me you agree approach is more inclusive. C1 was in line with the above, he was concerned that aspects of roles will be left undone " *people will do what they like, and their colleagues will have to pick up the slack, resulting in efficiency issues*". DI is a firm believer in "process", "*people following a prescriptive way of doing things*". While there may be a willingness to allow input there is a clear resistance to allow meaningful crafting. The reader needs to keep in mind that crafting is without the consent of the organisation (Timms et al., 2013). The senior management are of the view that they, or more correctly the organisation need to keep control over role activity. While not directly asking the question, it came up naturally in the course of two interviews with entry grades (D2 and B2). In his current role D2 has a clear job specification. D2 showed the author the specification and its extremely detailed and leaves little room for making the role fit the individual. D2 "*never read it, they*

give lots of rules and ways of doing things but most of us do it the way we think it should be done". B2 has become more knowledgeable around the role and now understands "*what elements of the role are important and what elements don't need attention, they keep pushing things on us, it is very stressful if you couldn't cut bits out*". The author explored this further to discover the element regarded as important are also elements that B2 enjoyed and interested in doing the most. "*when I'm doing job I like, I take pride in getting it done, the whole team are happier this way there is a good vibe in the department*". The clear message from the junior level employees was they excel at the parts of the job they like. They are much more engaged in their day when they are doing "*enjoyable parts of the job*" .

Should jobs be structured or left flexible?

Up to now the senior grouping generally were aligned with the company needs to have an input into the role played by their teams. This question adds a new dimension where freedom and empowerment is positively related to strategy of the company. A1 believes flexibility is positive "*once they stay within the company's culture and behaviour and expectations that's fine*". A1 gave an example of this* *flexibility*, "We might have 20 relationship managers. They're all different and they will all have different work styles. They will all want to do the work in different ways, but they will all achieve the same outcome at the end of it.* B1 is

clear that in order to achieve objectives there needs to be a level of structure around minimum regulatory and operational standards that needs to be achieved. Objectives should be set according to B1 but *"there is a lot of room within the objectives for people to get involved in other initiatives outside the core objective. That might be getting involved in sustainability, so long as they add value. Whatever they may be getting involved in, the core objectives still need to be achieved".* C1 is comfortable with flexibility once the *"job gets done"* and it involves *"expanding their role"* he was limiting who should have the flexibility *" you couldn't give it to the whole store, only section managers and above".* D1 beliefs the company should *"structure their day so they can help make sure that the organisation is successful and to try and get those things as close as possible. I think at a very low-level people who are maybe Call Centre level a lot of those workers are transient. Somebody that is only going to put in a year or two on route to something else. I think at that level you can be very prescriptive. I would just say lads this is your job; this is how you go about it and I would be very prescriptive. I would make no apologies about being prescriptive to those guys. That's just the way it is going to be".* The general theme is its okay to give flexibility once the day job is covered off and the employee, in their crafting is going beyond expectation. D1 was focusing on entry level but the other 3 participants from conversations of tape were focused on senior managers.

The junior members universally held the view that they should be the people who set their own structure. They know the line level detail of their role and therefore are in a better position to design it. A2 said *"There is lots of unnecessary elements of the role, I know how to circumvent don't get me wrong I still perform to*

a high and hardly ever do this". The time that this frees up I build on client relationships, *which isn't a part of my job* ". A2 went on to give an example of having the ability to step into a situation when his boss was off because he had built up a relationship with the client that was outside the scope of his role.   C2 brought a similar perspective but introduced a different angle " *100%, I know what is important on different days and should be allowed to get on with it, but there's some people in here if you let them decided would push all the hard work to the likes of me."* C2 continued " *the duty roster goes out the window at Christmas, we have to do different things depending on where its busiest*" D2 as previously discussed makes the role work for him, in his case he believes that he has the permission of his direct manager to craft his role "*it's only me and her in the department, she knows I get the job done when its busy she always gives me the credit for pushing myself, in my other section you had to log in and out of the computer if you went the toilet and I only had 15 minutes a day for toilet breaks*" "*the job was boring and the managers didn't even talk to you and people left all the time, I would have gone only for I got this new job*" . B2 like A2 avoids certain aspects of the role, the difference is during his free time he " *uses it to catch up on the sports and chat to other people in different sections".*

Does your position effect your ability to craft?

A1 was clear that autonomy should be offered across the board regardless of level, it was more to do with the role and not the level. "*I don't think it's to do with level.   There are parts of your job that you are just going to have to do every*

day. I would move away from this idea of levels. It's more about the type of job. You could have two people at the same level. Let's say that the company has levels from A to H. You have two people at level B. One job could be available to working more flexibly and choosing what they do day to day to get their overall work for a week done. The other job might not be flexible, the person might have to be at their desk for a certain amount of time. So, it's not so much the level it's the role and how much the role allows flexibility". There must be an agile way of doing business according to B1, *"there is the ability within the job specification for all individual to have autonomy"*. B1 said *"from a cultural perspective it's absolutely at every single level in terms of freedom of autonomy. But there's no getting away from the body of work that still needs to be completed. So, yes you need to complete your role, but we would encourage people to think outside of the role"*. D1 is clear that junior roles need to be prescriptive *"If I look at my organisation and I look out to the desks. I expect to see the junior people at their desks. As people get more senior, I trust them because they have established their credibility"*. *"I think that's fine for people who have established their trust"*. B2 would feel the above jars against the reality he faces. *"sure I do things my own way and do some aspects of my colleagues work, people who do the same job as me that I have worked with for years I'm better at then them and they do bit of mine, but the supervisors would hit the roof if they knew"* . B2 had the opinion people are leaving the company to go to other fund management companies because they *" let their people who understand their jobs just get on with it"*. C2 and D2 echoed the assertion that if the roles were more flexible people would stay and have more job satisfaction. In D2 case when he was in the previous role for the same company

(call centre) *"it was like a conveyor belt of new people, no one stayed longer than 6 months, they measured everything – horrible environment, in this job I think the place is great"* . B1 was clear that the company was always interested in new ideas from the frontline so they could be reviewed from a "*risk, conduct and behaviour*" perspective.

Openness to challenging demands

All four senior participants are in absolute agreement on the willingness of their people to step up to new developments, in three of the four cases they site ways in which their company activity encourage involvement in new projects. B1 encourages widening scope of roles because it *"develops their skill set, builds their network improves their engagement their motivation and invariably, they get involved in items that they have a keen interest in". B1 went into further detail around encouraging a contingent workforce.* The employee goes on to an online platform, sees all the projects going on and signs up to the ones they have interest in. A1's company has rotation programs and opportunities to work in different parts of the business or world. C1s company offer their people to act as "buddies to new people or bolster in new stores". D1, while agreeing there is a willingness to get involved, this willingness is from a certain cohort of staff. "*Ambitious people want to come because they understand that a programme delivering change is good for their career.   Typically, on a programme or project you get access to more senior people*".

A2 sees real opportunities in going beyond role boundaries, " *gives me more skills and gets me noticed, need to experience other aspects of the business before I progress as give me a buzz doing different things"*. He already goes beyond expectation in role so it's not surprising he opts into new projects. "*The company have taken some of my normal job away so I can get stuck into a new project, makes work less routine*". D2 would do it if there was any new projects but doesn't know of any to participate in (from talking to D1 there is lots of opportunity). C2 was clear " *they expect you to train new people or become an expert on new systems for nothing ,it adds to your stress".* B2 was open to the idea but had negative experience previously when on a *"side project". "The project manager didn't let me know the end results of the project or let me know if my feedback was useful, no point if you don't get anything back*". All four junior grades did agree that the company would attempt to control behaviours and task during the project.

Job resources and their perceived value

A1's company does all the above and places importance on them because "*It shows that you're investing in them, that you believe in them and that is important".* Ultimately this makes business sense with lower turnover and a more committed workforce. "*Senior people are encouraged and sometimes assigned mentors in the organisation they have a number of days a year to work on*

professional development". This didn't stretch to junior levels, however regular informal catch ups with their line and feedback on their work was there. The entire company had an opportunity to apply for further education grants. In B1's case there was structured feedback sessions with his line reports within each quarter, as well as several informal catch ups when needed. *"We would have a general view when it comes to training and development. Around the concept of 10 20 70, 70% should be on the*

job training, 20% should be outside the job be that training courses internally or externally and then 10% around mentoring and one-on-one conversations to help you on your journey". C1 was very frank " *we have lots of procedures in place for coaching and feedback, but it really only kicks in when we're performance managing people".* D1 understands the importance of feedback and coaching *"it's critical in an organisation that this is done, it lets people know what they're doing right, and helps to improve them in other areas, its only right that we do it".*

A2 was complementary around all the attention he was given during his induction period and this has carried on up to this point. " *the company are excellent at letting me know how I'm doing and are always helping me do better".* B2 and D2 both point to the procedures and polices around coaching, performance review and feedback but, little of it happens *"it's all show, my last formal quarterly meeting lasted 2 minutes"*

Task allocation

Before any member of the team is asked to do anything in" A1's company the people manager *"balances with the existing workload they have and capacity to do it"*. Very similar answers from all the senior people, painting a sense of fairness when assigning task and enough support provided.

A2 felt under pressure at certain times of year but felt support was there, *"they know how busy we are, so they give us more resources"*. B2 said *" there is a lot to get through and if you did it to the letter you wouldn't get it done, I do my best and I have a good team that supports me"*. C2 was more than satisfied with the feedback and support he receives from one of his managers *" she always has my back and tries to give me tips"*. D2 was extremely positive towards the process, throughout the interview he really expressed a positivity towards his line manager. The social aspect of work came out as a way the junior grades felt they could manage their workload. This was in the form of letting off steam with a trusted colleague or going to enjoy themselves at one of the many social event each company held.

Conclusion

There is a commonality of thought among each level, however the areas where both the senior management and junior team members agree is limited. The senior people do believe in input from the people doing the job once the input isn't the deciding factor in shaping job design. There is a clear view taken that strategy needs to be complimented by the activities of the employees. These activities need,

at least in the opinion of the senior participants to be in the control of management.

The junior participants, except for A2 absolutely craft their role to fit them as individuals, and in some incidents craft as a team. A strong theme among this cohort is that management don't understand the role or task and in order to get the job done parts of the process need to be skipped. The absence of the elements of tasks not completed are immaterial to performance. This is where the senior cohort would say the lack of understanding around process from junior members of the team could lead to compliance and untimely reputational damage. One clear observation is crafting occurs and management aren't aware of it.

Chapter 6 -Discussion

Introduction

Job design is an important determinant in the success of the organisation. A well-designed job will attribute to the general wellbeing, motivation and

satisfaction of the employee (Tims and Bakker, 2010). The design of the job gives the structures and parameters in which the employee is expected to comply to and perform in (Grant & Parker, 2009). The design of the role traditionally has been the responsibility of the organisation; a management activity that is to be communicated to the workforce rather than consulted on (Grant & Parker, 2009). Crafting is job design on an individual scale, the employee takes the job under the parameters that are set out and then gradually designs the role to fit with them (Tims and Bakker, 2010). Most scholars who have contributed to research on crafting maintain that the process is individual, occurring within the organisation, but without the consent of the employer (Petrou et al., 2012, Tims et al., 2013 and Demerouti., 2014), the employee is engaging in job redesign in the "shadows" (Lyons, 2008).

Does crafting take place in the companies researched

Job crafting has dual benefit, both for the individual and the organisation (Bakker and Demerouti., 2007 and Petrou et al., 2012). The employee is no longer a passive performer in the organisation (Tims and Bakker, 2010). The employee is responsible for shaping the outcomes of their job (Tims and Bakker, 2010). The

primary research from the author points to a strong sense from the employee participants, that they have the right to shape their roles. The organisation set clear guidelines in C2 and B2 case, but they circumvent these. B2 acknowledges there are many guidelines in place, but he doesn't have to follow them. The research, like the literature, suggests the employee isn't waiting for organisational permission to craft (Berg et al, 2010).

The employee use their own initiative to craft (Demerouti, 2014), there is no rulebook to follow. C2 together with other colleagues dictates their own duties, although there is an attempt from management to control the task boundaries by assigning tasks. This gives some indication into the strength of character both individuals have, C2 is a shop steward in the organisation a form of referent power. The literature references that the more assertive an individual is or resilient the more likely they are to job craft (Bakker et al., 2012). The attributes that make the individual more likely to craft are referred to in the literature as personal resources (Hobfoll et al., 2003). A2 however is more aware around the part they play in the overall organisational performance. The senior participants are mostly very open to the idea of getting input from the employees on how the role should be designed once they maintain over all control of the process. There is a reluctance to relinquish the power of job design as a core function of senior management. The senior people in the research carried out by the author, view organisations needing focus and direction to ensure strategy is achieved. The senior participants stance can be summed up by A1 comment that "the team needs to be given a sense of direction" and B1 who was clear that a change in job description must *"be in line with the strategy of the company not of individuals".* It is clear from the senior

people that they want to have the ultimate say in job design. It is also clear however despite the numerous control measure put in place to eradicate or minimise crafting, the process still occurs. Supporting the literature which suggests the employee will actively craft to provide a better fit for themselves (Berg et al., 2010).

The employee proactively attempts to make their role more engaging (Bakker and Demerouti., 2013). The reference to job redesign in the "shadows" (Lyons, 2008) when referring to job crafting takes on real meaning in this research. One party attempting to control and the other tailoring the control measures to make them work for them as individuals. There is limited acceptance within this research from senior management that job crafting will be advantageous to the organisation as suggested by (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001). D1 is totally at odds with crafting, the senior management ensure jobs are focused on outcomes the company wants from its employees. While much of the research is supportive of crafting, the senior management do have grounds to be dubious in supporting the process. If the crafter isnt on the same strategic path as the company in their actions it can have negatives results for both organisation and crafter (Tims et al., 2015).

Is there an acceptance of Job crafting in the organisations or is the process in the shadows

Senior participants didn't think crafting should take place *(when the author explained what the concept meant)* within the organisation, it would lead to "*anarchy*" . While anarchy may be extreme, the literature is clear that job crafting has the potential to negatively affect the organisation (Dierdorff and Jensen., 2018). Crafting is centred around the individual centred with the aim to provide personal benefit (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001).

One premise of crafting is it is done without the knowledge of the organisation (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001., Tims et al., 2013). The senior managers interviewed were open to input from all stakeholders, but crafting was very much resisted. The companies researched for this thesis would be concerned the employees would disregard important tasks. A1 referred to team players and D1 around the necessity of all the team being on the same page. The literature does refer to the crafter being viewed by management and colleagues as working against the team and being an outsider because they don't comply with organisational roles (Lyons, 2008).

The assumption was that the employee would attempt to minimise their role rather than expanding it. Crafting can be an attempt to widen or narrow the crafters role (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001). In B2's case he pays more attention to elements of the role he enjoys doing. If employees are crafting, they are doing task that they feel comfortable in performing which adds positive value not only for the individual but also for the organisation (Tims and Bakker, 2010). A2 uses his crafting time to build client relationships which helped him solve a potential issue, this is expanding his role *(contradicts himself by saying this, in previous questions he*

maintained he did all aspects of role). B2's perception is everyone is happier on the team. This would support the research that suggests if the employee is engaged this will positively affect other employees (Bakker and Demerouti., 2008). The findings suggest that the senior management would have no issue with crafting if it's expansionary in nature. B1 refers to getting involved in sustainability or CSR, once set objectives are delivered.

While B2's perception is everyone on the team are happier, other team members may have to perform the tasks not focused on. The hindering job demands are those that are usually off loaded by the crafter, this will put colleagues under adverse pressure (Tims et al., 2015). In C2's case he does dump hindering tasks and there are people on the team who are adversely affected. B2 implies that there is a quid pro quo in the relationship between colleagues, he does elements of their role and they do elements of his. This takes crafting from an individual process to a collaborative one.

Is crafting just on an individual level or does it stretch across teams

The prevailing school of thought among scholars in this area is that crafting is an individual process. The seminal authors of crafting have defined crafting as "*the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work*" (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001, P179). Leanna., 2009 builds on Orr, 1996., Orlikowski, 1996 work on crafting extending beyond the individual to groups of people. B2 helps others on his team craft and vice a versa by taking tasks away from each other. C2 also mentions "*swapping tasks" between* team members, where most co-workers are happy with that arrangement because they get to do what they like doing. Again, pushing hindering job demands away in order to do tasks that are more rewarding. Employees either try to avoid hindering demands or invest more job resources to lessen the impact (Tims et al., 2013).

The collaborative element of crafting involves informal groups who communicate regularly and have similar roles and knowledge (Orr, 1996). They distort their roles to fit their own preferences (Leanna., 2009). The "*Communities of Practice*" (Orlikowski, 1996) can be seen with C2 and B2. In B2's case he calls out the fact he only does collaborative crafting with people who are in similar roles and who he has worked with for a period of time. This supports the literature which found collaborative crating occurs in teams that have strong social ties such as length of service (Lenna., 2009). Collaborative like individual crafting happens without the knowledge of the organisation, both can occur simultaneous and are not mutually exclusive (Orlikowski, 1996). In B2's case he was clear that his direct line manager would not be happy if they know the job design was tailored, "supervisor would hit the roof". The level of interdependence between roles has been cited as having a negative relationship with crafting (Berg et al., 2010). We see

in the case of B2 and C2 crafting been carried out, they do mention however the collaborative nature of the crafting.

JD-R model reviewed in relation to organisations researched

When the discussion mentions hindering/challenging or job resources/demands the reader should be aware these are the foundations that make up the JD-R model. The literature suggests while hindering job demands are off loaded there is an acceptance from employees around challenging demands (Bakker et al., 2007). Within the authors research there is a mixed reaction to the acceptance of additional task. Among the management team they all view a real positive acceptance of extra task from the team. One company has a new project portal on their intraweb and gets regular subscribers. The challenging demands are viewed as opportunities not only to develop skillsets but also for career advancement (Hakanen et al., 2017., Tims et al., 2013).

Among the junior members of the team there was a mixed view around adding task. A2 was very much of the mindset that challenging job demands " *gives me more skills and gets me noticed",* aligned to pervious research from Hakanen et al., 2017. B2 was willing but had a reluctance because he didn't get anything from previous experiences. The literature is clear that there is an expectation to get a greater return from volunteering than the effort expended (Tims et al., 2013). B2 got no feedback on his contribution, he remarks "*no point if you don't get anything back*". According to previous research if challenging demands are done correctly, they will improve performance and engagement

(Petrou et al., 2012), in B2's case he saw no advantage in doing them. A2 views the challenging demands as a positive within their role, "*gives me a buzz doing different things*". The key piece here is the company has removed some existing job demands (hindering) from A2 so he can " *get stuck into a new project, makes work less routine*". A2 can increase on challenging demands and limit on hindering demand. Research has shown a positive correlation with job satisfaction (Kooij et al., 2017).C2 has a different perspective on challenging demands, "*gives you nothing only adds to your stress*", a possible indicator that challenging demands aren't accepted willingly by some. In C2's case engagement and job satisfaction seem not to be positively affected like the research carried out by (Villajos. Et al., 2018). In order to establish a clear correlation between challenging demands and satisfaction, the research would have had to do a more in-depth study.

If the company can supply structural and social resources to the employee, the level of satisfaction in role increases (Villajos, 2018., Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001). Structural is providing professional development, mentoring programmes and autonomy. Social is focused on relationship building, social support, coaching and feedback (Hakanen et al., 2017). In A2's case we see the company removing task or adding resource, so his workload is manageable. As a result, he gets a "*buzz out of work*" feels he not in the "*same old routine*" and is generally positive around job role. D2 acknowledges his manager gives him credit when he "*pushes himself*", this supportive relationship (social resources) helps put demanding job demands into perspective (Bakker and Demerouti., 2007). C2 also receives an element of social resource, his manager gives him *"tips"* , this is feedback and coaching in the respondent's language. B2 doesn't acknowledge company support, in fact he

believes the amount of policies and procedures restrict him from performing efficiently. B2 believes the feedback culture and company support network is all for show and his role is "*very stressful*". The JD-R model argues that high demands and low resources as seen in B2s case will cause strain (Van Wingerden et al., 2017). A2 is engaged around role, with the key difference of having a mix between challenging demands and high resources which is found to lead to employee engagement (Van Wingerden et al., 2017). All the junior grades mention the social aspect of work and the ability to be authentic with their colleagues "*blow off steam with trusted colleagues*". One of the benefits of crafting found in previous research was the fact that it did allow employees to be more authentic resulting in a positive self to be expressed (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001).

Previous research has found the more structural and social resources are provided the more the employee is engaged (Schaufeli et al., 2009). This was evident in A2 who clearly enjoyed his role and was ambitious to progress within the organisation. D2 had huge social resources in terms of support from his line manager and was generally positive about his role and organisation. His previous role within in the organisation gave insight into how a lack of structural and social resources negatively affect engagement, turnover was high in this area. C2 is of the belief that when he and his colleagues are doing tasks they like " *they're done better*" and it also "*improves customer service*". B2 said " *when I'm doing jobs I like, I take pride in getting them done, the whole team are happier this way there is a good vibe in the department".* C2 ,B2 and D2's current roles allow the crafter the power and autonomy over their work both positively liked to engagement (Petrou, et al., 2012., Leana et al., 2009). The fact they have taken the initiative to design

the role around what works for them, means their level of engagement increases (Bakker et al., 2012). This can be seen by the "*pride*" B2 takes, and the improved efficiencies of task and customer service from C2.

How autonomous are the employees in relation to task boundaries

The constant theme from the management interviews was the control over job design sat with the organisation. They believed that this control and insistence on compliance still gave room for autonomy. If the senior people allowed autonomous culture wellbeing and ability to deal with stress would improve (Bakker and Demerouti., 2007), leading to improved performance. The other cohort interviewed opinion was on the end of the continuum. Three out of four of the junior grade commented on "*lots of rules*" or "*procedures and polices*".Little opportunity for natural autonomy is created, as a result we see the junior crafters creating their own autonomy. The crafter uses crafting to create a sense of freedom within a work setting like the research carried out by (Crawford, et al. 2010). B2 commented "*sure I do things my own way*" and D2 remarks how controlling managers are but he still changes tasks. Both participants imply a high level of management. The literature suggests supervision gives less autonomy to craft the role (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001). In B2 and C2's they still manage to craft so the author research shows while it's difficult to craft, it's not impossible. D2 felt supported by his line manager and she trusted him to get on with the job and supported him when needed, this enhanced his confidence in crafting. If the

supervision is couched in a coaching manner, it can encourage crafting and the expansion of role boundaries (Lenna et al., 2009).

There was sense from B1, C1 and D1 that senior people should have flexibility around role "*they earned the trust*" and "*senior people are focused on the most important things*". The more senior you are, the greater the degree of autonomy you have in your role to craft (Wrzesniewski and Dutton., 2001). While the authors research seems to line up with Wrzesniewski and Dutton when you read the findings in detail this isnt the case. A1 for example comments "*I can't decide what I want to do*" and that there "*needs to be order*". In B1s case the senior management who report into him *"will send me a draft of those objectives and we will discuss"*. In a study by (Berg et al., 2010) it was found that formalised power restricts the ability to craft and those at lower ranks were able to tailor their roles. The research carried out by the author would be more in line with Berg et al., 2010.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

There are several links between the literature and the author research. This research only lightly touched on some of the themes in the literature. Time and experience limited a deep dive into a more extensive. The benefits to organisation did come through in terms of employees taking pride in their roles or performing them at a higher standard and in one case going the extra mile. A2 was interesting in terms of not engaging in crafting as defined by Wrzesniewski and Dutton. He does however engage in a form of crafting supported by the organisation. A2 doesn't tailor his role in times of pressure, the organisation does by taking elements of his *"normal job away"* (structural resources) or adding extra resources. It was clear from both the findings and literature that the hierarchy didn't want unsanctioned changes in job design. It was equally clear that the employees absolutely engaged in the process and in the moments of crafting felt engaged in the role. The debate around whether challenging demands are pursued and valued by employees is still open. The authors research found in A2's case there was absolutely a want for them, however in C2's case the opinion was they "added to stress".

The traditional or the crafting approach to job design is still very much an open debate. From the author's research no definitive answer can be arrived at, other than to say that senior management remain sceptical towards crafting and junior team members (if without job resources and high job demands) are very much applying crafting.

While the perception from senior people is their people follow process and procedures the reality on the ground is much different. One of the objective was to find out if crafting occurred the answer was yes and done without organisational approval. The level of crafting wasn't dependant on seniority, even though senior participants in the companies studied gave more latitude to people in senior positions to craft. The junior grades create the space to craft, as (Berg et al., 2010) research demonstrated. It was clear crafting allow occurred amongst the team in at least two of the companies studied, limited research into this area, would be interesting to discover the extent of collaborative crafting in organisations. The main model in the theory, JD-R proved to be a good tool to be used to ascertain the detail of crafting in the organisations researched.

Limitations of research

The purposive sampling may have limited the richness of responses, as the management participants were all Executive Committee level or above. They may have been removed from day to day operations. They were all clear that crafting didn't occur, in fact there was processes to stop it from happening. The reality on the front line was that crafting did occur, it would have been beneficial to get the input of a more junior member of management on the topic.

Leading on from the above the sample size was to small to be able to get underneath the surface of some of the topics that came up. If this research from the constraint of time, the author would have done questionnaires, more interviews with different levels and importantly used observation as a tool. If the

author had an opportunity to go back to the senior managers with the findings this may have given more insightful commentary from them.

As no quantitative research methods were used it does limit the research findings in terms of reliability and validity. The ability to generalise across other organisations is limited. The researchers own inexperience in research played a factor, more experienced researchers may have used a different approach.

This area is of interest to the author and as a result several predetermined biases may have been present during the research, no matter how aware the author was of them. All the senior management interviewed were friends of the author. This could have been both an advantage and disadvantage but needs to be referenced as a possible limitation. The participants were all male, the research lacked a gender balance.

Recommendations for further research

Most of the research conducted to date was on what would be classified as non- professional roles such as cleaning and factory works. While the author did review one study of Finnish dentists they operated in silos. Job crafting in this instance wasn't against the organisation rules they were themselves the employer. A study done around crafting for example in the banking sector would be of interest. For example, would the employee still craft enough though their role may involve a degree of regulatory compliance?

There is no gender mention in the literature, it may be of interest to see if crafting occurs or if the level of crafting differs between genders. One of the debates within the research is, if crafting adds or subtracts value both for the individual and organisation. Further research could be carried out comparing organisations that are supportive of crafting to those who are against, so the advantages or otherwise of crafting could be examined. It would be interesting to ascertain if some organisations are more open to crafting than others based on their industry and or corporate culture. Further research is needed on cognitive crafting, the authors research focused primarily on task crafting because there is little secondary research on cognitive crafting to be found in the literature.

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Appendix A

Management Questions

Job design traditionally comes from senior management within an organisation. In the workplace of today do you still think this top down approach of designing a job still holds merit.

Do you see the merit of frontline people designing their own role/objectives

Do you think a job should be structured or left flexible enough for the occupier to feel empowered to do what they want in order to push the company's strategy

Should every level in the organisation be able to choose what elements of their role they focus on within a day or should this autonomy only be available for senior managers

Do you see the benefit of employees furthering their skill set by further education etc, how is your organisation with other support tools (coaching professional development etc)

Within your organisation is there a large degree of interdependence within roles and departments or is there a large degree of independence

In your organisation do you believe there is a willingness from employees to volunteer for new business projects/developments that are outside their existing role (and will add workload).

How do you ensure the level of task associated to each employee is manageable, is there a culture were asking for additional job resources is viewed as positive or a sign of inability to perform at expected level.

Appendix B

Employee Questions

Do you feel the company gives you the space to define your own role or are you restricted to a fixed job specification

Do you think a job should be structured or left flexible enough for the occupier to feel empowered to do what they want in order to push the company's strategy

Are you encouraged to build relationships beyond your current role/team

Do you feel more positive towards yourself and your job when you have autonomy over what tasks you perform (do you organisation give you this autonomy)

Do you volunteer for extra outside your job that you may be interested in doing

Are the tasks/responsibilities of your role manageable, do the company provide you with resources to complete duties

Does your company support you with regular feedback coaching professional development courses, opportunities to go back to college etc

Is it frustrating if member of the team disregard certain tasks which need to be picked up by others in the team.

Do you fell if you had a larger input into designing your job this would lead to being more engaged

ask JCS