

Juggling, Shifting, and Flexing: A Qualitative Study of Resource Crafting in Hybrid Work

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Background of the study

- In the post-pandemic era, hybrid work has become the next normal of contemporary work life
 - combines remote, onsite and virtual working practices
- Hybrid work is characterized by flexibility, and it is blurring the temporal and spatial boundaries of work
 - However, while hybrid work is often associated with flexibility and autonomy, less is known about how individuals actively navigate this structure to manage their well-being and work demands.

Background of the study

- We wanted to find out how employees proactively respond to these blurred boundaries through spatial-temporal job crafting, adjusting when and where they work, to strategically manage their resources.
 - Drawing on Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, this study explores how employees engage in time-spatial job crafting to form and maintain resource caravans, i.e., bundles of interrelated resources such as autonomy, energy, and social support.

Theoretical framework

- COR theory
 - COR theory understands people as striving to gain, maintain, and protect things they value, such as time, autonomy, emotional energy, and social support, while recognizing that resource loss is a key driver of strain and burnout (Hobfoll, 1989)
 - These resources are conceptualized as travelling in bundles, or caravans, which are facilitated or hindered by environmental passageways (Halbesleben et al., 2014)
 - we approach hybrid work not as a neutral backdrop, but as a resource passageway: a structure that enables or constrains the acquisition, protection, and integration of valuable resources across domains

Theoretical framework

- Time-spatial job crafting (Wessels et al., 2019; Demerouti, 2025)
 - Crafting the when and where of work
 - Job crafting is defined as “physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work” (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p. 179)
 - In contrast to structural flexibility, crafting emphasizes the intentional choices and adjustments individuals make to align their work with their values, needs, and resource goals (Tims et al., 2012; Zhang & Parker, 2019).

Data

- Semi-structured interviews with 57 professionals working in the private sector in Finland
 - People were utilizing hybrid work as a possibility of gain as many as possible resources from different domains
 - Active role of individuals
 - Hybrid work enabling
- Collected as a part of a hybrid work project: Miksi tulla toimistolle? (Why come to the office?)
 - Funded by the Finnish Work Environment Fund
- Qualitative methodology; Template analysis

Results

- The findings reveal how employees construct resource caravans through a four-level process of managing resources in hybrid work
 - Strategic actions (time-spatial crafting) -> Driven by resource goals (e.g., gaining control over time) -> enactment of the goals through tactical implementations (aligning tasks with own rhythms) -> Resource outcomes emerge
 - Example of resource caravans
 - Temporal autonomy caravan
 - Focus and cognitive energy caravan

Discussion

- The results reveal interesting information about the role of individuals as active participants in their hybrid work practices
- There were many resource caravans identified, which were linked to active and strategic decisions of individuals
- In addition to temporal and spatial crafting, also modal crafting was identified
 - Crafting the mode of participation
- It is important to understand the nature of hybrid work as a possibility to gain important, individual level resources, and the agency of individuals should be supported in arranging the hybrid work to suit their personal preferences
- Moreover, organizations should identify structures and possibilities to support social and innovative part of work and make onsite participation valuable

Get inspired.



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