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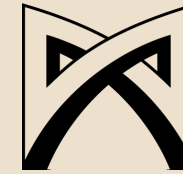
JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

Team leaders' communication in shift work: A qualitative analysis of the intersection between technology use and wellbeing in the workplace

REHNA SOTTO

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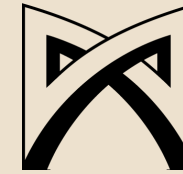


Why study shift work?

- **Most of the research on working life is heavily concentrated on office work and white-collar jobs (knowledge work) – (Chertkovskaya et al., 2020; Fayard, 2021; Thompson et al., 2001)**

Answers the call to expand research into:

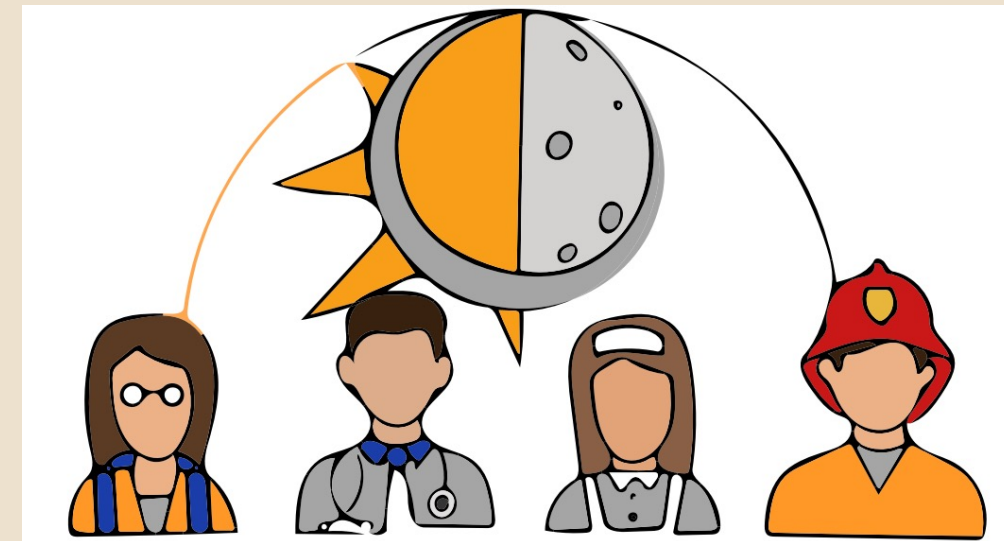
- **non-office kinds of work in different industries** (Rennstam & Ashcraft, 2013)
- **working life consciousness** (Perez-Ahumada, 2017)
- **and discourses on meaningful work** (Lips-Wiersma et al., 2016; Astakhova et al., 2024)



Why team leaders in shift work?

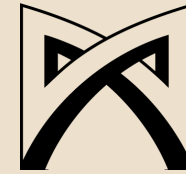
→ Multi-faceted role of team leaders

- LINK (management and team members)
- coach
- represent the employer
- goal-setter
- decision maker
- conflict mediator
- innovator



Graphic: Dora Wang

Sources: de Jong et al., 1999; Mathieu et al., 2017;
McDonnell et al., 2013



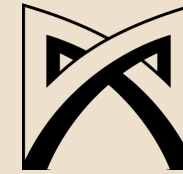
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Research question:

“How does WhatsApp interaction between team leaders in shift work impact workplace well-being?”

Reason: WhatsApp is widely used in shift work (*Armstrong, 2024; De Benedictis et al., 2019*)



Data

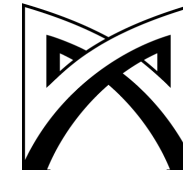
- **WhatsApp conversation (1 year)**
 - Team leaders group in WhatsApp (diverse, multicultural team)
 - One branch unit of a leading Finnish food group
 - Type of work (restaurant work in a high volume fast-paced environment)

Data analysis

- **Content analysis** (*Lindgren, 2020*)



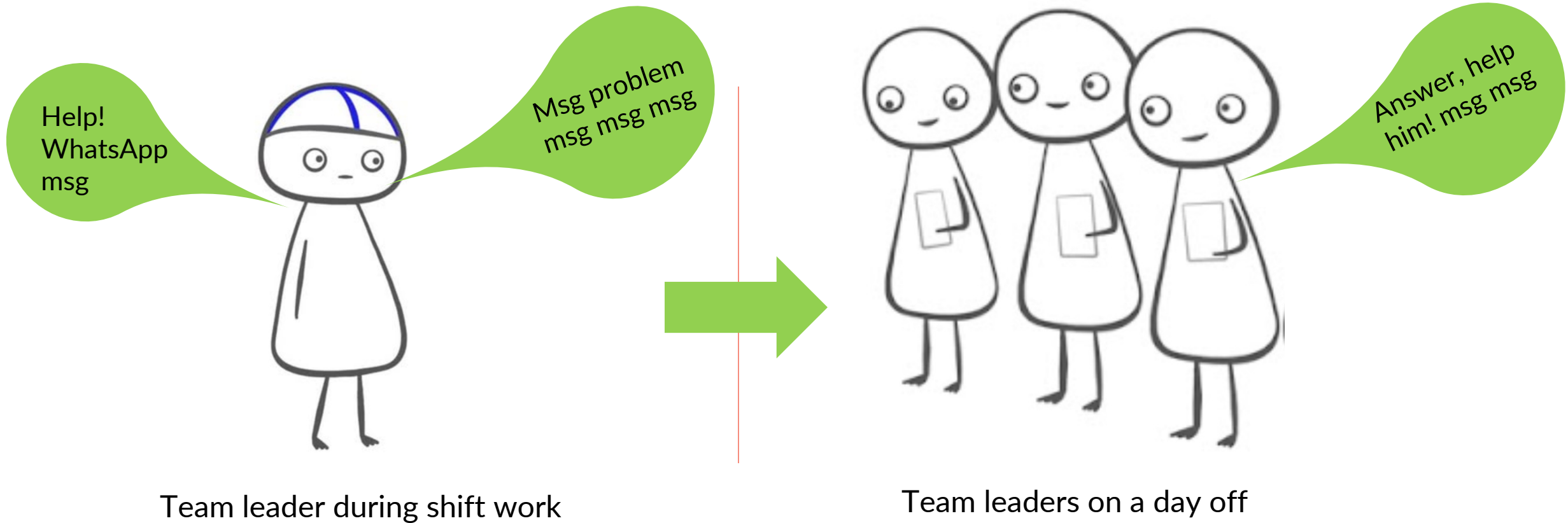
Findings



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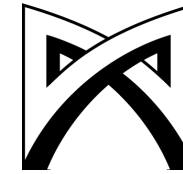


- The use of technology (WhatsApp) reinforced the shift work culture on "unstructured handovers."



Cartoon credit: Finnish Problem

When does unstructured handover occur?



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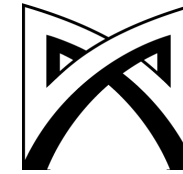


- Incomplete information from the previous shift
(i.e., instructions for team members or a particular job to do)
- Unfinished job that needs clarification
- Problems from the previous shift (financial matters, technical issues, and any other problem that arise during shifts)
- New information or instructions from the management
- Instruction for the next shift

*****WhatsApp use became the affordance for...**
information-sharing,
communication during and
off-hour duties,
handover matters,
solving problems at any time
of the day.

***With WhatsApp use...
Shift work culture on
unstructured handover
became the norm***

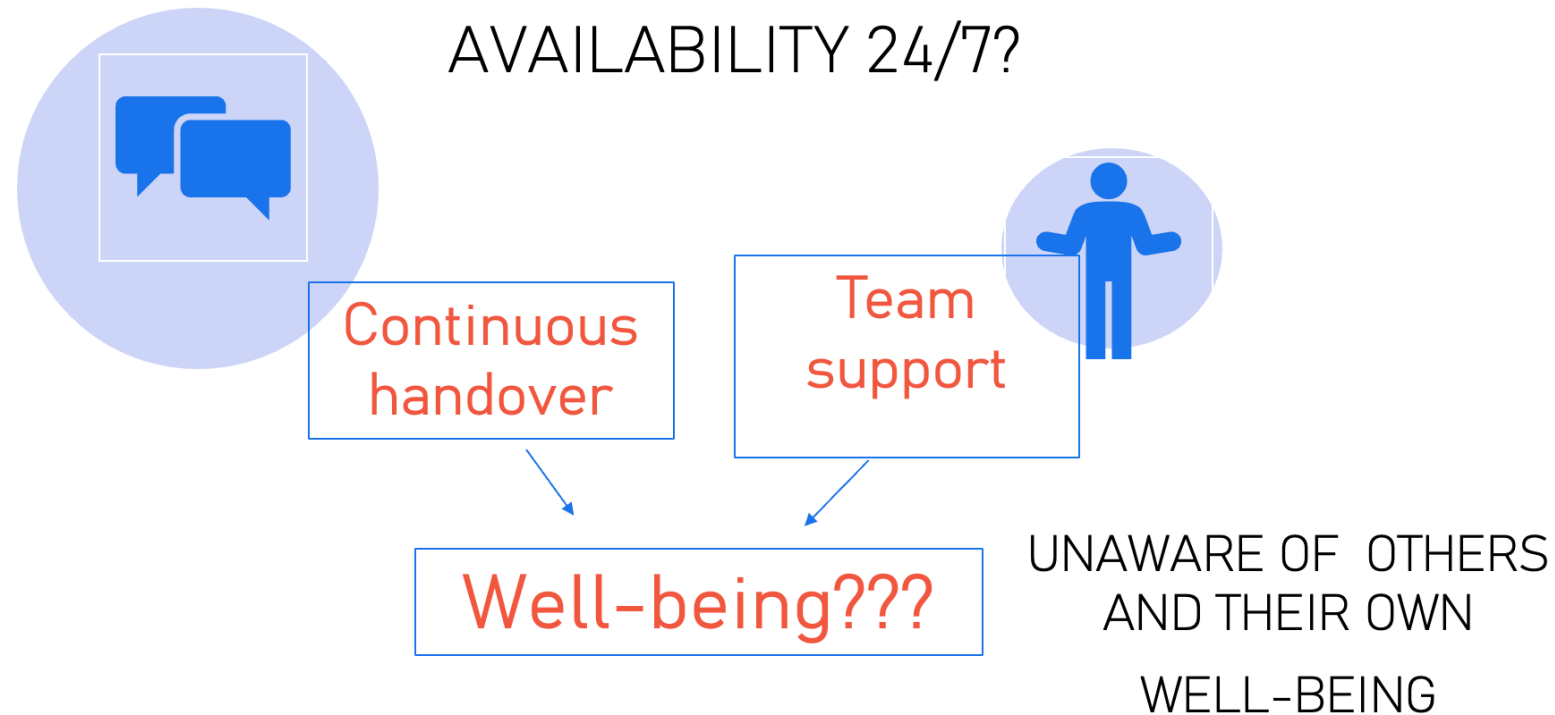
Findings



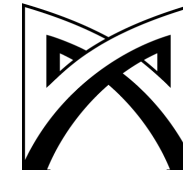
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- The use of WhatsApp reinforced teamwork, team support, and team spirit.
However...it blinded self-care, personal life, and work-life balance during day offs.



Findings



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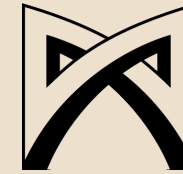


- Technology use breaks the wall between private life and work life duties.



Wall Photo credit:
ChrisGorgio

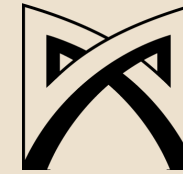
But... what happens when no one is answering on WhatsApp during off-duty hours?



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- The team leader on duty will...
 - potentially be in high-level stress
 - need to strategically solve the problem alone
 - need to have high critical and innovative thinking skills and decision-making skills
 - take the risks on the decisions made
 - take the responsibility of the team and operations with confidence
 - be more than ready to make mistakes

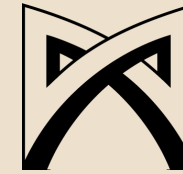


Technology use in shift work may impact well-being at the workplace; however, it also develops the individual's transversal skills

- **Critical and innovative thinking** (in solving problems in shift work)
- **Inter-personal skills** (teamwork in the digital space)
- **Intra-personal skills** (self-motivation, perseverance)
- **Citizenship** (tolerance, openness, intercultural understanding in the digital space)
- **Media and literacy information**
(analyzing available digital information in solving shift work-related problems)

Source for transversal skills:

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245064/PDF/245064eng.pdf.multi>



Reflective questions for discussion...

- How to improve and promote the workplace well-being if technological use is the norm?
- What kind of work policy could be implemented? (without eliminating the use of WhatsApp or other applications)
- How can occupational safety officers be utilized in the implementation of good health, well-being, and decent work?



UN Sustainable Development Goals

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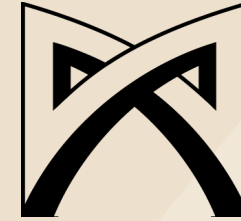


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Thank you!

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