Job Crafting in Family Firms

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Abstract

The purpose of the current study is to highlight the importance of job crafting in family firms and explain the need for future research. On this paper, after analyzing the current literature, a gap will be identified, and so further research and more in-depth analysis need to be made. By the end of the literature review, some propositions will be made, so to give the direction for where the future research should focus. In order to give examples and create a starting point for the future researchers, interviews have been conducted with employees who are working in family firms with family managers and in family firms with non-family firms. The interview analysis shows the similarities and the differences of how these employees are experiencing job crafting in their daily routines. After discussing the results of the interviews, the propositions that have been made will be tested to check if they are supported or denied for the companies that have been used as case studies.

Moreover, the current study explains its implications to the literature and analyzes the limitations at that specific point of time. Finally, it makes suggestions and explains the importance of future research and concludes by mentioning the results that can be used as examples when research with more in-depth analysis will be made.

Introduction

Because of the many changes in today's corporate environment, jobs are becoming more uncertain and complex, requiring more interdependence and interpersonal relationships. Organizations, on the other hand, are looking for individuals with greater initiative and creativity (Nelson et al., 2012). In other words, employers are increasingly looking for proactive behaviours from their employees, such as finding possibilities, taking initiative, seeking out challenging situations, construing work roles more widely, and defining roles to include new tasks and goals (Nielsen & Abildgaard, 2012).

The traditional approach to job design was top-down, concentrating on managers' duties as job crafters (Tims & Bakker, 2010). Researchers and managers, on the other hand, have begun to recognize the bottom-up approach, also known as job crafting, which allows employees to take an active role in job redesign (Cheng et al., 2016). The ability of customer-contact employees to engage in proactive behaviour and take initiative is crucial for providing excellent customer service (Parker et al., 2006; Frese & Fay, 2001).

The impact of family ownership on firm value, performance, financing costs, diversity, and board behaviour has been one of the most widely studied topics in corporate finance in the last 20 years. Anderson and Reeb (2003a) discover that family businesses perform better than non-family businesses, while Anderson, Mansi, and Reeb (2003) have showed that family businesses have lower financing costs than comparable non-family businesses. Anderson and Reeb (2003b) focus on the possible wealth expropriation of minority shareholders and find that minority shareholders benefit from the founding family's ownership. A number of theories have been advanced in the literature to explain the positive effects of founding-family ownership. Families, according to Anderson and Reeb (2003a), have lengthy investment horizons and consider their businesses as an asset to be passed on to

their heirs as a going concern. According to Anderson and Reeb (2004), founding families are less likely to have agency conflicts and are more effective at supervising their businesses. As per Wang (2006), founding families may be motivated to provide high-quality earnings in order to protect their reputation and boost the firm's long-term profitability.

As a result, by combining the term of job crafting and the family ownership of the firms, it creates a very interesting subject to study. Therefore, how this job crafting is experienced in family firms, and how it differs based on the manager, if he/she is a family member or not.

Literature Review

Job crafting

Job crafting can be identified as "the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). It has been categorized into three different proactive behaviours: increasing job challenges, increasing job resources and decreasing job demands (Tims et al., 2012). Employees who get involved in job crafting behaviours can make physical changes to their job, cognitive changes, and relational boundary changes. (Tims & Bakker, 2010). Physical changes refer to the number and the form of jobs that the employees undertake. Cognitive changes are related to the way people view their jobs and relational boundary changes refer to how often and with whom people interact in their work.

Job crafting is influenced by both individual and job factors. Individual factors include cognitive ability, proactive personality, self-efficacy, and self-regulation (Lyons, 2008; Tims & Bakker, 2010). Job factors refer to task interdependence, autonomy, supervisor support, and socialities (Leana et al., 2009; Petrou et al., 2012). In addition, job crafting has been

found to be significantly and positively related to the organizational attitude and behavioural outcomes of employees (Petrou et al., 2012; Tims and Bakker, 2010).

Tims et al. (2012) have developed and validated a measure of job crafting behaviours based on the JD-R (Job Demand- Resources) model, including a distinction between hindering and challenging job demands. They have identified four scales of job crafting behaviours, decreasing hindering job demands, increasing social job resources, increasing challenging job demands, and increasing structural job sources (increasing variety, opportunities for development, and autonomy). In the JD–R model, job crafting includes enhancing challenging job demands while decreasing hindering job demands. Increased job demands are intended to encourage employees to take on greater responsibilities without earning or demanding additional money, and to work on new projects voluntarily. Reduced job demands allow employees to avoid challenging decision-making processes and excessive workloads by minimizing contact with co-workers who do not match their personalities. (Rokitowski, 2012)

On the other hand, Leana et al. (2009) have classified job crafting into two categories: individual job crafting and collaborative job crafting. Individual job crafting occurs when a person individually plays an active role in adjusting the boundaries of his/her job and reshaping his/her actual work. In contrast, collaborative job crafting happens when employees make an effort together in order to determine how to change their task boundaries and therefore to achieve their shared work goals (Leana et al., 2009).

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, job crafting will be classified into four dimensions: task job crafting (physical changes), relational job crafting, individual vs collaborative job crafting and cognitive job crafting.

Person – Job Fit

The term of Person – Job fit (P-J fit), relates to how good is the fit between each employee's characteristics and the job characteristics (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). In other words, P-J fit can be achieved through job crafting, by letting each person adjust the job based on his/her own needs, values, abilities and skills (Lyons, 2008; Nielsen & Abildgaard, 2012). It is important to be mentioned since it has been an antecedent of job-related attitudes (Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). Employees who get involved in job crafting, they experience meaning in their jobs, which improves their P-J fit (Bakker et al., 2012). Kira et al. (2010) have found that collaborative job crafting, has a positive effect on employees' sustainable working capabilities. When employees can adjust their own work environment (i.e., individual crafting) or communicate with other colleagues to achieve their common goals (i.e., collaborative crafting), they are more likely to experience meaning in their jobs and a feeling of control over their jobs, which increases the probability that their job will match with personal preferences, styles, and abilities.

Job Engagement

Kahn (1990) was the first to address the concept of job engagement, which refers to "the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's 'preferred self' in task behaviours that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional) and active, full performances" (Kahn, 1990). Engaged employees' performance can be enhanced by being physically, cognitively, and emotionally involved in their jobs (Rich et al., 2010). The antecedents of job engagement have followed two major ways. The first one, focuses on job resource factors, such as, the physical, psychological and organizational aspects of the job (Bakker et al., 2011). Certain job resource can include autonomy, social support, supervisory coaching, performance feedback, and opportunities for

professional development (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). The other one focuses on job demand factors, such as physical, psychological, or organizational factors of the job that require sustained physical and psychological effort or skills, and so, are associated with certain physiological or psychological costs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Certain job demand factors that have been explored include work pressure, an unfavourable physical environment, and emotionally demanding interactions with clients (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Bakker and Bal (2010) showed the significant positive relationship between job engagement and job performance. In addition, Warshawsky et al. (2012) found job engagement to be significantly associated with proactive work behaviour. Hakanen et al. (2008) resulted that, employees who are engaged in higher job levels show greater personal innovation, which is positively related with job crafting. Previous literature has shown the importance of examining job engagement in the organizations, since it is very close related with the P-J fit. For example, Laschinger et al. (2006) found a positive relationship between P-J fit and job engagement. In addition, Shuck et al. (2011) have found similar results regarding the effect of job fit on employee engagement. Therefore, a positive relationship exists between P-J fit, which can be a result of job crafting, and job engagement.

Job Characteristics

Job characteristics can be defined as the specific aspects of a job such as knowledge and skills, mental and physical demands, and working conditions which can be recognized, defined, and be assessed (Naudé, 2010; Schuurman, 2011). More specifically, job characteristics can include the work environment, jobs security, human relationships, required skills, feedback, autonomy, and the opportunity of development. (Tsaur et al., 2011). In addition, a study suggested that job characteristics can affect many organizational outcomes such as increased motivation, increased job satisfaction, improved performance, lower absenteeism, and lower turnover (Coelho & Augusto, 2010). One of the most

recognized models for job design and enhancement approach is the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) developed by Hackman and Oldham (1975). Job characteristics theory suggests that organizations can encourage their employees to show positive work attitudes and increase the work quality by improving their jobs in five aspects such as the skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. (Bacha, 2014). Skill variety is related to which jobs require a variety of activities that involve different skills and talents of the employees. (Kanten, 2014). Task identity refers to which jobs require completion of "whole" and distinguishable piece of work (Lee-Ross, 2005). Task significance refers to which jobs have a significant impact in lives or in the work of others, both in the organization and in the external environment (Suman and Srivastava, 2009). Autonomy refers to which jobs can provide freedom and independence to employees in scheduling their duties in their work roles (Kanten, 2014). Feedback relates to which job activities results in employees receiving direct and clear information about their performance and effectiveness (Krasman, 2013).

Career Competencies and Job Crafting

Similarly to job characteristics that mentioned above, career competencies refer to the knowledge, skills, physical and mental demands that an individual can develop which eventually they will result his/her career development (Akkermans et al, 2013b).

In addition to the term of career competencies, Akkermans et al. (2013b) have developed a career competency framework which is consisted of three dimensions: reflective career competencies, communicative career competencies, and behavioural career competencies. Reflective career competencies include "reflection on motivation" and "reflection on qualities". Reflection motivation relates to, the reflection on values, passions, and motivations regarding the personal career. Reflection on qualities, refers to the reflection of strengths and skills regarding each individual's career. Communicative career competencies

are related to the "networking" and "self-profiling". Networking refers to the knowledge of one's network's presence and professional significance, as well as the ability to develop the individual's network for career objectives. Self-profiling can be defined as the process of presenting and sharing one's personal knowledge, abilities, and skills to the internal and external labour market. Lastly, behavioural career competencies include "work exploration," which entails actively exploring and searching for work-related and career-related opportunities on the internal and external labour markets, as well as "career control," which entails actively influencing learning and work processes related to one's career by setting goals and planning how to achieve them (Akkermans et al. 2013b).

Research has shown that, career competences may influence job creating behaviours, and that having these career competencies may enable people to craft their jobs more purposefully and specifically (Akkermans & Tims, 2017). Individuals who are aware of what they want and what they are capable of can then alter their work-related behaviours to fit those skills. For example, having reflective, communicative, and behavioural career competences may serve as the foundation for constructing one's profession. Indeed, Akkermans et al. (2013a) framed career capabilities as a personal resource (i.e., a positive self-evaluation associated to resiliency and a sense of control over one's surroundings), based on JD-R theory. As a result, Akkermans & Tims (2016), have found that career competencies have a significant positive relationship with job crafting.

Family Firms

Family businesses are typically defined as businesses run by members of the same family as owners or management (Miller et al. 2007). The amount of stock held by family members and/or the percentage of family internal management can be used to quantify this term (Steiger et al. 2015). In this light, family engagement in businesses can be viewed as a key

feature that distinguishes family businesses from other types of businesses. According to

Sharma (2004), many definitions of family firms focus on the amount of family engagement,

which appears to be a major component in many definitions of the term "family business"

(Steiger et al. 2015). Because the level of family involvement in ownership, management,

and other areas differs from paper to paper, in this study, family firms are considered those

with "strong" family involvement. Family involvement in the business can take the shape of

ownership, management, or other types of power.

Managerial procedures and issues tend to rise in number and complexity, as family firms

grow older and larger (Dekker et al. 2013; Songini 2006). Although controlling families may

be able to respond to increased managerial demands to some extent, empirical evidence

shows that family business growth is frequently associated with the hiring of non-family

managers (Dekker et al. 2015), especially when the controlling family is no longer willing or

able to perform all of the firm's managerial tasks (Klein & Bell, 2007). Although non-family

managers (NFMs) can assist close these gaps and professionalize the family business, their

employment comes with its own set of problems. When employing NFMs for the first time,

for example, in the family firm, typical challenges related with the separation of ownership

and control in line with agency theory (Fama & Jensen, 1983) may develop in the business

(Chua et al., 2009).

Non-Family Managers

In family firms, especially larger firms, NFMs are essential (Anderson & Reeb 2003a).

According to Klein and Bell (2007), NFMs are managers who are not related to the owner's

family by blood, marriage, or adoption.

NFM research in family businesses has grown significantly in recent years, similar to family

business research in general (Gedajlovic et al. 2012). The number of study findings on NFMs

in family firms has increased dramatically (Tabor et al., 2018) since the previous review

(Klein & Bell 2007), and that is the reason to focus on them on the current study as well.

The agency and stewardship theories

Both agency theory and stewardship theory are concerned with managers' roles in

accomplishing business objectives (Tosi et al., 2003, Wasserman, 2006). However, because

the theories make quite different assumptions about managers' motivations, they differ in

their predictions about how managers will act in this regard.

Agency theory makes the following assumptions: (a) Owners and managers have competing

objectives goals, (b) managers may try to achieve their own goals even to the loss of owners

(c) owners are not able to observe all the aspects of managers' behaviour and (d) owners have

bounded rationality (Jensen & Meckling, 1976, Williamson, 1981).

The first two assumptions imply that ignoring managers' self-serving actions will cost owners

money. However, if all aspects of managers' behaviour are observable, then contracting can

theoretically prevent self-serving managerial behaviours that are harmful to owners.

Contracts will not solve the agency problem if relevant features of managers' behaviour are

difficult to observe since owners will not be able to distinguish whether managers are

performing as prescribed in the contract. Furthermore, bounded rationality (Williamson,

1981) rules out contracts that totally prescribe managers' behaviour in all future scenarios.

Even if all aspects of managers' conduct were observable, not all aspects of their behaviour in

all future scenarios could be predicted in advance in a contract (Chrisman et al., 2007).

The answers are to track those behaviours that can be prescribed and observed, and to match

managers' and owners' interests as much as possible. When managers' and owners' interests

are aligned, the fact that managerial behaviour isn't always visible doesn't matter as much because, motivated by self-interest, managers will almost always act in the best interests of owners, even when confronted with unanticipated circumstances for which no behaviour has been prescribed. To prevent the costs of ignoring agency problems, incentives must be provided to align managers' interests with those of owners, and actions that can be prescribed and observed must be monitored. These control systems, on the other hand, are expensive and should only be utilized if they provide net benefits. If applying agency cost control mechanisms eliminates at least some of the costs of ignoring agency problems, then the criterion for doing so is if the costs of doing so are less than the costs of ignoring agency problems (Chrisman et al., 2007).

Obviously, owner–manager agency issues occur only when a family business employs at least one family manager who is not the single or primary owner. If family business owners rationally implement agency cost control mechanisms (whenever and only when the benefits exceed the cost), then agency theory has the following implications: (1) owners will impose agency cost control mechanisms on family managers; and (2) imposing agency cost control mechanisms on family managers will improve the economic performance of family firms (Chrisman et al., 2007). The benefits of family firm governance have long been promoted by agency theorists, based on what they believe to be true about the agency benefits of concentrated ownership (Amihud & Lev 1999) and owner-management (Denis & Sarin, 1999). Case and field studies, on the other hand, indicate the opposite. Conflicts among family personnel (Astrachan & Aronoff, 1998), between family and non-family employees and over succession, are all shown to be problems in family businesses, according to several researchers (Cliffe, 1998; Fenn, 1998; Schulze et al., 2002). Others find that approximately two-thirds of family firms fail to transfer to a second generation of family ownership (Handler, 1990), and other findings support the positive association between a family firm's

performance and its willingness to invest in internal governance mechanisms such as monitoring and performance incentives, which agency theorists believe that are necessary only for public firms. (Schulze et al., 2001).

Stewardship theory, in contrast to agency theory's self-serving human, has its roots in theology (Thompson, 1960) and proposes that managers act as stewards devoted to the interests of the owners. This might happen in a variety of ways, according to the theory. Chrisman et al. (2005), for example, establish that stewardship requires just that family company owners and managers regard the interests of the other as much as their own. Outside of the agency framework, researchers point to the importance of non-financial goals, the subordination of self-interests to firm goals, and the form of relational contracts between family business owners and family management as stewardship sources (Davis et al., 1997, Tosi et al., 2003). Because family managers are intrinsically motivated, their personal interests may be sacrificed to firm aims. Family managers may value integrity highly and relate integrity with accomplishing firm goals; they may seek self-actualization in terms of achieving firm goals; or achieving firm goals may be more valuable than achieving individual goals and aspirations (Chrisman et al., 2007). In other words, their motivations go beyond purely economic self-interest. According to Corbetta and Salvato (2004), pursuing non-financial goals in family businesses will drive family managers to prioritize higher-order intrinsic needs. However, in order for this to be relevant, the activities that emerge from addressing the higher order intrinsic wants of family managers must also be in the owners' best interests. Corbetta and Salvatto (2004) further contend that emotion and belief long-term relationship contracts between family firm owners and family managers will inspire family managers to seek the interests of the owners. In summary, stewardship theorists believe that family managers and family business owners' interests will be aligned if family managers are intrinsically motivated to pursue the interests of owners; non-financial goals are similar and

important to both family business owners and family managers; and the relationship between family business owners and family managers is long-term and emotionally charged. If this were true, there would be no agency concerns. The cost of ignoring agency concerns would theoretically be zero, while applying the mechanisms would incur costs and provide no benefit. In fact, according to Corbetta and Salvato (2004), imposing these methods on family managers may "decrease stewards' motivation, negatively influencing their pro-organizational behaviour, both short and long term. As a result, performance may be harmed twice. As a conclusion, stewardship theory in its purest version predicts that: (1) owners will not apply agency cost control measures on family managers; and (2) placing these mechanisms on family managers will decrease performance.

The evidence needed to indicate agency behaviour varies according on how stewardship theory is interpreted. If, as findings show, agency problems in family enterprises are less severe but not zero (Chrisman et al., 2004), family managers in family firms may be viewed as agents or a combination of agents and stewards. As a result, family managers' behaviour may fall anywhere between a pure stewardship theory, in which agency behaviour among family managers is completely absent, and a pure agency cost theory, in which family managers operate wholly in their own economic self-interest (Chrisman at al., 2007). The presence of agency behaviour is seen as supportive of the precepts of agency theory, but not to the extent of completely negating stewardship theory as a representation of family manager behaviour in certain decision situations. Researchers have discovered that family managers' behaviour is influenced not only by their character but also by their relationships with family company leaders, making it more difficult to determine whether they are agents or stewards. According to Davis et al. (1997), if family owners and managers' beliefs about human nature are misaligned, agency issues will arise. Researchers have discovered that family managers' behaviour is influenced not only by their nature but also by their relationships with family

company leaders, making it more difficult to determine whether they are agents or stewards.

Lubatkin et al. (2005), for example, notice that owners can withhold information and operate

under agency relationships, aggravating family managers who are striving to act as stewards

for the company. Stewards may become agents, as a result of this misalignment (Corbetta and

Salvato, 2004, Davis et al., 1997). As previously stated, agency theory has two consequences

for family businesses monitoring and incentive compensation schemes. The first is that

family businesses will keep track of family management and compensate them accordingly.

This is a necessary but insufficient condition, as family businesses may monitor and

compensate family managers for other reasons. For example, incentive compensation may be

used for risk sharing rather than agency cost control (Cadenillas et al., 2004), or agency cost

control mechanisms may be imposed on family managers to mimic large professionally-

managed non-family firms and signal to non-family managers and other stakeholders that, the

family firm is "professionally-managed" and "legitimate," as suggested by neo-institutional

theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Second, it is expensive to monitor and compensate for incentive compensation. If family

managers have agency issues and these agency cost control techniques are economically

efficient (i.e., they produce more benefits than costs), then family company performance

should improve. Even if family members act as agents, family business owners may not

impose agency cost control methods on them, and as a result, company's performance may

suffer (Chrisman et al., 2007). Alternatively, even if family managers have effective control

over agent behaviour, if they impose mechanisms that have larger costs than benefits,

performance will suffer. When using agency theory guidelines, however, it is the presence or

absence of performance improvement that counts. If one accepts the agency theory's position

that performance improvement related with the use of agency cost control mechanisms is

valid evidence that family managers act as agents, then the lack of such performance improvement must be proof that family managers do not act as agents.

Present study

The aim of the current study is to examine the findings of the previous literature, examine which aspects or topics have grown significantly in the recent years and test some aspects that have not been researched so far. The two main aspects that are discussed in the literature review are, the job crafting and the managerial status of family firms (if they have family managers or non-family managers). Taking these into consideration, it was inevitably that the current study would make the separation of family firms, into businesses with family managers and non-family managers. Thus, to take it one step further from the previous literature, the following propositions were formulated to examine these two aspects:

Proposition 1: In family firms with non-family managers, job crafting will be greater than in family firms with family managers

Following the agency and stewardship theories, if Proposition 1 stands, the reason might be that the family ownership is preventing job crafting to maintain the control of the business and the employees. Otherwise, if the competing proposition stands, the reason might be that the family firm wants to maintain the social capital and reputation, and so they promote and encourage job crafting.

In addition, the following propositions are proposed to identify which aspects of job crafting are greater in family firms with family managers and with non-family managers:

Proposition 2: In family firms with family managers collaborative job crafting will be greater than individual job crafting

Proposition 3a: In family firms with family managers, task crafting will be lower than relational or cognitive crafting

Proposition 3b: In family firms with family managers, relational crafting will be the most frequent type of job crafting

Due to the lack of sufficient sample and other limitations, which are mentioned later, the current study makes the above propositions and so it may act as a roadmap for future research, which may examine the above aspects in more details. For the study's purpose, interviews were conducted from two different family firms, one with family managers and one with non-family managers, which will act as case studies and examples to support or deny the propositions that are made.

Methodology

Sample

Interviews were conducted with 4 employees who are working in two different family firms in Cyprus. Company X is in the retail industry, making imports of outdoor furniture from Italy and China, and sells them in the Cypriot market for the last 30 years. The company is consisted of 20 employees. The board is consisted of the owner and 3 family members who are representing 3 departments of the company (Accounting, Sales & Marketing and Operations) and each department has its own manager who are not family members. The interviews were conducted with the manager of the Sales & Marketing Department (Participant 1) and his subordinate in the same department (Participant 2). Participant 1 is a male, 30 years old and has been working as a manager in the company for the last 2 years. He was previously employed as an officer in the Sales & Marketing department for 3 more years. He takes decisions and he is responsible for his team and the department, he just reports to the family member who is the representative of the department, although the family member

does not have any managerial development or take actions in the day-to-day operations of the department and the employees. Participant 2 is a male, 25 years old and has been working as a Marketing officer in the Sales & Marketing department for the last 2 years. He is working together with one more colleague in everyday tasks and reports to his manager, but rarely has any cooperation with the family member-representative of the department.

Company Y is a family firm providing Assurance, Accounting, Tax and Advisory services in Cyprus for over 55 years. The company is consisted of a team of 15 employees, from which one is the owner, and three more managers are family members. Participant 3 is a female, 28 years old, and has been working as a senior officer in the HR & Accounting Department for the last 3 years. She is working with one more, junior colleague and their manager who is a family member. The last participant (Participant 4) is also working in the HR & Accounting Department as a junior officer, for the last one and a half year. Participant 4 is a female, 23 years old.

Materials

The interviews were based on an Interview Guide (see Appendix 1), which included questions that were examining at which extent, the different types of job crafting, are happening. The interview guide is consisted with 26 questions totally. There are two opening questions to welcome the participants, make them feel more comfortable and explain the importance of this procedure, as a main part of this study. There are also 5 questions (questions 3 – 7) which were asked in order to gather general information about the company, the role of the participants in their organizations, the current performance of the employees and if the managers are family members or not. Then there are the main body questions which were asked to examine how frequent the job crafting, and its four dimensions are happening, and so if job crafting is encouraged or not, from family and non-family managers.

The questions no. 9 and 10 relate to the job crafting generally, in order to understand how familiar, the company and the employees with this term are, and if the employees are encouraged to craft their jobs or not. Questions no. 11-14 are related with the other aspect of job crafting, the task crafting. Those questions were used in researches, which were conducting quantitative methods to collect data (questionnaires). Those questionnaires were using a scale from 1 to 6 (1= hardly ever, 6= very often). Therefore, the questions during the interview were adjusted in order to be asked in an interview and let the participant elaborate on his/her answers. Question no.12 has been modified from the questionnaire used in the research of Leana, C., Appelbaum, E. & Shevchuk I. (2009) "*Work Process and Quality of Care in Early Childhood Education: The Role of Job Crafting*". The rest of the questions that are included in the interview guide and are related to job crafting (Questions no. 12-14, 16-17, 19 & 22- 25), have been modified from the questionnaire that was used in the study of Slemp & Vella-Brodrick (2013) "*The Job Crafting Questionnaire: A new scale to measure the extent to which employees engage in job crafting*". Question no. 20 was asked to identify in which way the are the employees crafting their jobs, individually or in collaboration with their colleagues. Questions no. 16-19 are related to cognitive crafting and questions no.21-25 are related with relational crafting. The interview guide ends with a closing question/statement in order to thank the participants for their involvement and remind them once again for the importance of the interview in the current study.

Procedure

As previously mentioned, the reason of choosing the qualitative method as a research method, was due to lack of a sufficient number of sample to use in a quantitative research. Therefore, qualitative research was conducted, and semi-structured interviews were used as a tool to gather as much information as possible, from two different companies, one with managers who were family members, and one with non-family managers. Semi-structured

interviews were the most appropriate type of interviews, to get the information needed. This type of interviews is the most common type (Doody et al. 2013), because it relies on a specific guide that is created in advance, but also gives the flexibility to the researcher to emphasize on specific questions that he/she believes that need to be explored in ore depth, based on the answers of the participants. Semi-structured interviews were chosen between structured and unstructured types, because they combine the benefits of both types. First, since they are based on an interview guide, the participants are asked the same questions, in a slightly different way based on the participant, so the same information will be collected and so the data can be comparable to each other. During structured interviews though, since the questions are asked exactly the same to all the participants and without the flexibility to make adjustments of clarifications, the participants are not feeling much comfortable during the interview, that may result to elaborate less on their answers and so, not to provide all the information needed.

The interviews lasted between an hour and an hour and a half, depending on how much the participants were elaborating on their answers. The participants were informed over the phone about the interview and the purpose of the study, and interviews were arranged at each participant's house. That makes the participant feeling more comfortable and more willing to provide as much information as possible. In addition, prior to the interview, the terms of job crafting, and its fours dimensions were explained. Moreover, the interview started with opening and questions and general questions about the participants and their company, which gives the opportunity to the participants to answer some 'easier' questions and then the researcher can guide the discussion to more demanding questions (Doody et al., 2013).

Interview analysis

The analysis of the interviews has as main objective to examine how consistent are the answers of the participants from the same companies, but especially the focus is to determine the differences between a company with family managers and a company with non-family managers. To make this comparison, job crafting and its four aspects will be compared amongst the participants from the two companies.

Starting from the term of job crafting in general, all of the participants were not very familiar with the term per se, but all of them have mentioned that job crafting is happening daily from the employees of their companies.

Generally, the employees are not exposed the term of job crafting per se, since there have not attended any trainings or seminars about their daily tasks, but they are free to adjust their daily duties based on their preferences, since there are not strict guidelines from the top management team. (Participant 1)

We have not attended any seminars about job crafting, neither we use that term, but we have a lot of freedom in our daily tasks to execute them as we prefer, because what it matters, is the result, and since we complete everything on time, we are not getting any strict guidance about our job in general. (Participant 2)

We are a small company and every day we try to innovate by changing are daily routine and redesign it according to our skills and work schedule. So, I can say that even without knowing the term, the employees are very familiar with the process of job crafting. (Participant 3)

All the employees are trying on daily base to make their routine as efficient and

productive as possible. So, I guess that my colleagues are familiar with job crafting,

but I am not very sure if they know the term. (Participant 4)

Moving on, similarly to the previous question, all the participants agreed that they

prefer to have the freedom to perform their daily tasks the way they like, but also some

guidance should be provided to new employees, or in cases of new projects or new

procedures.

Regarding their daily tasks, they (the employees) want to have the freedom to perform

them as they like and feel more productive. At the cases of new projects or new

procedures they would prefer more guidance at the beginning until they get to know

the new tasks and feel more confident about themselves… (Participant 1)

As far as their daily tasks, I believe they prefer to have that freedom to execute them

the way they prefer. Although, guidance is provided when we have new projects and

new procedures, and it is appreciated because guidance is needed at these cases.

(Participant 2)

They feel free to craft their daily tasks and specifically it makes them feel more

confident and valuable when they perform their tasks in their own way.(Participant 3)

Guidance is important at the beginning, when someone joins the firm. After a while,

we are much more focused on the results and not on how someone is performing

his/her tasks. That's how we do things around here and all the employees seem to

agree with this mentality. (Participant 4)

This freedom to let the employees craft their jobs as they prefer, is a result of the fact that the top management in both companies, is not always giving specific guidance to the employees. Comparing the two companies though, it seems like in Company Y (with family managers), the top management is providing this freedom on purpose and encourages the employees to craft their jobs. On the other hand, in Company X the employees have this freedom because the top management is not very involved and does not interact a lot with the employees, during their day-to-day activities. In addition, the participants from both companies have mentioned that the members of the family, in Company X they are in the board and in Company Y they are managers, are not putting so much effort because they have more job security than the others.

…in general, the top management team prefers not to set strict guidelines to the

employees and similarly the employees seem to prefer this way of management…. I

feel that the top management, except the CEO, is not much engaged due to they have

the job security of being a family member and therefore they do not put much effort on

increasing the performance of their employees… So, the managers have the

responsibility to guide their teams the way the think is more appropriate, without

receiving any specific guidance from above. (Participant 1)

The top management does not provide any specific guidance to be honest, and so our managers are more responsible to guide us they way they find more appropriate… Sometimes I get the feeling that they (the top family members on the board) have found some things be prepared for them, I mean they did not work for them and maybe that is why they do not put much effort to their job. (Participant 2)

They do not set specific rules, but they are encouraging employees to craft their job, in order to minimize the boredom of their daily routine and make them more interested and engaged in their job…. As I am not a part of the family ownership, I feel that the performance of the family members is not the best possible. I mean that, the managers do not try their best to succeed in their position since they feel secured. (Participant 3)

…in the beginning there is of course more guidance and support. At later stages the managers encourage people to find their own way to do their job, but of course they are always willing to support them if it is needed…. I feel that sometimes the managers may be not very productive because they have this extra job security, but since the goals are achieved, I can not blame anyone, maybe it is just in my head. (Participant 4)

The next four questions are related with task crafting. From the participants answers, it is obvious that the employees in both companies, are always trying to make their everyday tasks and generally their routines, as easy and as effective as possible. The first question was about if the employees seek new approaches in order to improve their work, and if yes, how often do they do it.

Yes, especially regarding for tasks that they perform often, they try to perform them in the most effective approaches they can, so they have an easier and more productive daily routine. (Participant 1)

Of course, we try everything to make our job easier and more efficient, especially for daily tasks, even a small change can save us a lot of time throughout the day. (Participant 2)

Yes, everyone is trying to find the best possible way to do their job, either that is in term of time or effectiveness. (Participant 3)

I believe this is something that everyone is doing even subconsciously in their daily routine. I think that everyone is always looking for ways that can improve their work, especially for tasks and procedures that are repeated very often. (Participant 4)

In contrast, the answers in the next question did not agree between the participants from different companies. Concerning the question about, if the employees are willing to get additional tasks, it has been found that the employees in Company X (with non-family managers), are not that willing to get additional tasks. On the other hand, the employees in Company Y, seem to be more willing to get additional tasks and to help their colleagues if they have more workload. At this point, there is some inconsistency between the answers from the employees from Company X, that may be a result from the different point of view that a more senior employee has, compared to a more junior employee.

This phenomenon does not happen very often. Most employees tend to focus on their personal tasks, performing their individual duties as good as they can. As a result, in many occasions some departments got overloaded since some employees were not willing to get additional tasks to help their colleagues. (Participant 1)

Usually, most employees try to finish their own tasks first and barely there is time to get additional tasks. We have small teams, and we are willing to help each other, but even when other departments have more workload, we do not always have the knowledge or the skills to help them. In the same teams, yes, I think that all the employees are trying to help the colleagues who are on the same team and are working together. (Participant 2)

I believe yes, that happens very often since doing the same tasks can become boring and on the other hand, everyone is willing to help his/her colleague by getting additional tasks. (Participant 3)

Yes, since there is this family environment in the company, we are always willing to get additional tasks if we are able, to get things done quicker and to help our colleagues who may be more pressured at some point. (Participant 4)

Furthermore, the next question was about how often the employees introduce new tasks that suit their abilities. Here, the participants answered similarly to a previous question which was asking how often the employees seek new approaches to improve their work. The

participants found the two questions very similar, since as they thought, the employees who

will seek new approaches to improve their work, it is very likely that they will introduce new

tasks that suits their skills and abilities.

>*Generally, as mentioned before, the employees are trying to make their daily routine*
>
>*easier, so they are regularly adjusting their daily tasks in a way that suits their*
>
>*abilities best. (Participant 1)*

>*...when I feel that I am good at something I will suggest to my manager to do it with*
>
>*my way and then if I have new tasks that suit my abilities that will make my daily work*
>
>*easier and more productive. (Participant 2)*

>*This comes in line with the previous question about the new approaches to improve*
>
>*their work. The new tasks that suit their skills and abilities are very likely to improve*
>
>*their work, so I can say that this is a daily process as well. (Participant 3)*

>*This is happening very often. Similarly with above, employees who seek new*
>
>*approaches to improve their work, it is inevitably that they will achieve that by doing*
>
>*tasks that suit their skills and abilities. (Participant 4)*

Following the last question, the participants were asked if they have noticed their

colleagues giving preference to tasks that suit their abilities first. The common answer

between the two companies is that yes, the employees do give preference to the tasks that

they are more capable to execute them first. In Company X though, that resulted to create a

list of pending tasks, which the employees are not much capable to do them, and so that create a delay to other procedures as well, most of the times. As the participants said, that is a result of the not very strict guidance from the top management, therefore the employees can do whatever they prefer.

> *This is happening very often, since there is not much guidance from the top management. As a result, on many occasions, some important procedures were left pending and therefore some departments got overloaded as mentioned before. (Participant 1)*

> *Yes this happens very often too. As mentioned before, we are trying to make our daily routines easier. Since we do not have strict guidance on what to do first and what to do later, most employees prefer to do what is easier for them first and maybe leave some tasks pending for a later stage. That situation though, has led many times to have a lot of pending tasks and therefore some employees would have an increased workload when they were close to their deadlines. (Participant 2)*

> *In general, the employees prefer to do first, the tasks that they are good at, and they enjoy more. Though, this happens only when we have the choice to select which tasks to do first. When some tasks are urgent and need to be done on time, we start from the most urgent ones. (Participant 3)*

> *I think all the employees are starting with the tasks that they are more confident to do. But here comes the role of our manager, to set us to the right track to do the more urgent tasks first and not to wait until the last minute of the deadline. (Participant 4)*

The next part of the interview was focused on the cognitive crafting. The objective here was to examine how important is the job for each participant and how they feel about the importance of their job towards the broader community. To identify those feelings, firstly, the participants were asked how often does the HR department, or the top management, organize meetings or informal discussions with the employees. All the participants answered that meetings are not occurred on a fixed basis (e.g. once per week), but they are organized when there a serious issue arise and need to be discussed. Rather than that, the HR, or the top management, relies more on daily or weekly informal discussions with the employees.

> *Due to the size of the firm, the top management plays the role of the HR. Formal meetings are not occurring very often, however the informal discussions are happening in weekly basis due to the closer relationships that the employees have with their managers. Although, due to this informality, some changes take longer to implement since, some serious actions are not done on time. (Participant 1)*

> *We are a small company, so we do not have an HR department. Any problems we have or anything we want to say we can discuss it with our manager and the head of the department, even with our CEO if he is available. Formal meetings are not happening very often and when they do, is usually between the heads and our managers so we do not participate in those. Our discussions are mostly informal, because we have a closer relationship with our manager and we work together daily. Of course we have daily discussions, as long as for meetings I can say that on weekly basis we would probably have an informal meeting with our manager to be up to date. With the head, we as officers, do not work daily together but of course we talk to*

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each other daily, more or less about our daily routines and not about discussing

formally about our projects and campaigns. (Participant 2)

Every day we have informal discussions with our employees. We know If someone is

facing an issue, so encourage the communication in order to solve it. We are only

conducting formal meetings when very serious issues need to be discussed.

(Participant 3)

We have a daily communication all together and we try to give regular feedback as

frequent as we can, in an informal way. Formal meetings are only occurred once a

year to discuss the goals and when something serious happens, in order to coordinate

all together. (Participant 4)

Following the previous question, the participants were asked how the employees seem

to feel, during those discussions, about the importance of their job for the success of the

company. All the participants agreed that such discussions make them feel more engaged and

part of the company. In addition, it was mentioned that, due to the small size of the firms,

each employee has a bigger part of contribution to the success of the company. Moreover, the

participants from Company X, mentioned that they would prefer to receive more frequent and

more constructive feedback during those meetings.

During our discussions, the employees express that they feel that their job is

important for the company's success, however they would like to receive more

frequent feedback and suggestions on how to improve their performance and their

personal development. (Participant 1)

... it is important to communicate frequently with your manager and personally it

makes me feel that I am part of the company and that my job has some value for the

organization. Since we have a close relationship, there is not much formality in our

discussions and therefore a proper feedback or suggestions on what we can improve

is often neglected. (Participant 2)

We are a small team, so everyone has a bigger part of contribution to the success of

our company, which makes everyone feel engaged and important for the company.

(Participant 3)

I believe it is very good that we are communicating all together very frequently, since

I can see that the employees become more engaged, and they feel that they contribute

to the company. (Participant 4)

Next, the question was about how the employees feel towards the importance of their

job for the broader community. Here, the answers were different between the two companies.

The participants from Company X (with non – family managers), reported that they feel that

their job contribute to the broader community since the company had recently made a

cooperation which was beneficial for the environment. As a result, that made the employees

feel that their job is influencing the broader community as well. In contrast, in Company Y,

they are aware about CSR activities (Corporate Social Responsibility), but they are not

currently implementing any, therefore the participants have not reported any importance for

the broader community, beside the high-quality services that they provide to their clients.

Recently, the company has begun a cooperation with a supplier who is mostly producing furniture from recyclable raw materials. This cooperation was highly accepted from the employees, who felt that they job is now more related for the good of the whole community and the environment in general. (Participant 1)

Very recently we have started to import furniture from a supplier who uses recyclable raw materials to make the furniture. In general, as a company we try to reduce our wastes and the use of paper to become more environmentally friendly. Those small things give the message to the employees that our company and so our job, is not just to make profits but to help the broader community and the environment as well. (Participant 2)

I can say that there is not much importance for the broader community, besides the help we provide to our clients. (Participant 3)

It is something we are currently discussing with the managers. CSR is a hot topic nowadays and I can say that as a company we have not taken this topic very seriously so far. We do not make a negative impact to the society on one hand, but on the other hand we have not design any policy so far to be more socially responsible. So, I think that my colleagues do not have a strong feeling that they contribute to the broader community. (Participant 4)

To examine further the cognitive crafting of the participants, two questions were asked, regarding the work-life balance of the employees and the impact that their job has on their lives. None of the participants has reported any major issues or conflicts on his/her work-life balance. Although, the participants on Company X have mentioned that sometimes they need to work overtime to complete their tasks, and that overtime was not rewarded in any way, that is why the two participants had that complaint. On the other hand, in Company Y, the participants mentioned that there is much more focus and effort towards the work-life balance and wellbeing of the employees, and that, when employees need to work overtime, they get rewarded.

> *We did not have any extremely conflicts or complaints from our employees and in general, the working environment and the relations between them are very good due to the more friendly and informal approach of the managers. The only negative aspect that can be noticed is that, since the family members often work extra hours, it is sometimes needed for some employees to stay overtime as well. (Participant 1)*

> *Only the fact that on some occasions some employees had to stay overtime in order to meet their deadlines, I can mention as something negative. In general, there are not conflicts between the employees, the working environment, and the relations between us are very good and we all are like a big family here. (Participant 2)*

> *We really appreciate the wellbeing of our colleagues. We know each other schedule and so we try to adjust everyone's task so no one will get much more pressured than the others. (Participant 3)*

> *We really appreciate the wellbeing and the work life balance of our employees. We make sure that our working schedule is respected and beside of some extreme occasions, no one is required to work overtime. Even if that happens, we make sure that these hours are rewarded too. We get some offers from hotels and gyms for our employees as well, in order to improve the aspect of the wellbeing, but currently I think that we are at a good point in general. (Participant 4)*

Following that, all the participants agreed that their job has a positive impact on their lives as well.

> *I can say that it has a positive impact on my life. As I mentioned before, we have a friendly environment which makes my every day working routine, less stressful. As a result, all the employees are happier and more relaxed, and this is something that relates positive to their lives outside the workplace as well. (Participant 1)*

> *It has definitely a positive impact on my life. I can compare my current job with previous jobs that I had, and here the environment is very friendly which plays a crucial role in our daily routine. People here are very approachable and less stressed, so this positive vibe transfers to my personal life as well. (Participant 2)*

> *It has a positive impact on their lives, I feel involved in the success of my company, and this reflects in a positive way to my personal life as too. (Participant 3)*

As mentioned above, the employees feel involved in the success of the company. This reflects to their personal life as well, since they feel important and more confident on themselves. (Participant 4)

Moving on to the next part of the interview, which had as objective to examine the relational crafting, and also identify if the job crafting happens individually or collaborative amongst the employees. Firstly, the participants asked to describe the relations between the employees and the working environment in their company. The participants from both companies described the working environment as very friendly and that all people are very approachable despite their level.

As previously mentioned, the working environment is very friendly. We are like a big family, where everyone is very approachable, therefore we are free to express our thoughts and concerns anytime. (Participant 1)

The working environment is very friendly, because we are a small firm and we are working close to each other every day. We have very good, 'informal' relationships between each other and that is great since everyone is very approachable at work. (Participant 2)

Everyone is friendly and approachable, there is very good communication between us, and everyone can express themselves the way they feel. (Participant 3)

It is a family environment. There are not different levels of hierarchies. Everyone is

approachable and everyone communicates with everyone. (Participant 4)

Moreover, the participants answered whether the job crafting in their companies is happening individually, or in a more collaborative way amongst the employees. In Company X, the employees are working more individually and therefore they craft their jobs at individual level, based on their own preferences. In contrast, the work at Company Y requires more teamwork and as a result, the employees are working in teams more frequently. Therefore, job crafting is happening in a more collaborative way rather than individually.

Most employees are performing their tasks on their own way and their own

preferences. There are not many tasks that require teamwork, so most of the time the

employees are working individually. (Participant 1)

The majority of our work is done individually, so most often the employees prefer to

craft their job on their own way. When they need to work in a team, yes, they will

craft their tasks together, but this does not very often, due to the nature of our work.

(Participant 2)

Inevitably, we are working together as a team, since we are a small company. When it

comes to a new project, we all together try to find the best way possible to get the

work done. (Participant 3)

The nature of our job makes us work in teams on daily basis. Since this is our daily routine, we craft our jobs collaborative with our colleagues who are in the same team. (Participant 4)

Continuing with the relational crafting, the participants were asked if all the employees have a close relationship together, or if there are some certain teams of people formulated. The participants from both companies answered that all the employees are having a close relationship all together, and the main reason is the small size of their companies.

Due to the size of the firm and the nature of the daily procedures, is extremely rare to see groups of people formulated. Most often the employees spend their breaks all together and their discussions include mostly all the employees of the company. (Participant 1)

As I said before, we are a small firm and we are all very close together like a family. Of course, employees who are working together on the same department might have a closer relationship, but in general and especially during our breaks we spent our time all together. (Participant 2)

We are all together as a big family. Employees who work more frequent together might have a closer relationship, but in general, everyone has a very good relationship with everyone. (Participant 3)

We are pretty much together as one team. There are some teams of people working

together of course, but during our breaks or outside working hours I can say that we

are like one big family. (Participant 4)

The next two questions relate to how often the top management organizes team activities and special events. Firstly, the participants from Company X answered that team activities are not organized very often, which might be a result of the poor financial resources of the company. On the other hand, the participants from Company Y reported that team activities are being organized every two weeks, as a try to increase the team spirit of the employees.

This does not happen very often, maybe once a year, due to the lack of financial

resources and that the focus of the top management is mainly on the daily operations

and the maximization of profits. (Participant 1)

As long as I am here, we didn't have a team activity yet. I can understand though, that

we do not have much financial resources and the covid conditions surely have

affected us. (Participant 2)

We are trying to have a close relationship outside the working environment as well,

so team activities are organized twice a month. That helps to get to know everyone

better and promote the team spirit. (Participant 3)

Now during the pandemic that doesn't happen very often, but I remember pre-covid

we would try to organize something every two weeks. Currently we are trying to get

this habit back again so yes, the managers are trying to organize team activities very

often. (Participant 4)

Secondly, the participants mentioned how often special events are organized, in order to celebrate anniversaries, co-workers' birthdays or different achievements. Both companies are celebrating all together the special anniversaries or the achievements that they may get throughout the year.

Special events, and especially birthdays, anniversaries such as Christmas and New

Year's Eve are organized by the top management and are every year celebrated

together with the employees. Regarding the firm's objectives, once they are

accomplished, they are always celebrated with all the members of the company and

bonuses, or gifts are shared if possible. (Participant 1)

We usually celebrate our colleagues' birthdays, and the top management tries to

celebrate with us when we achieve the season objectives or when we finish a big

project or when we have done a successful campaign. (Participant 2)

Very often, we celebrate colleagues' birthdays, or when colleagues get married or

give birth to a child, we all celebrate together. (Participant 3)

Special events are organized every time there is a reason to celebrate. We celebrate

the colleagues' birthdays together and we organize events on Christmas and on other

anniversaries. In addition, we have a big party every year when we achieve our yearly

objectives. (Participant 4)

The last question of the interview was about mentoring, if this is applicable to the

participants' companies and if this is a top management decision or if it an initiative that

every individual is taking in order to guide a new employee. In Company X, mentoring is not

a very often phenomenon, due to the fact that everyone is focused on performing their

individual tasks first. Although, in Company Y the top management has decided to use

mentoring in order to welcome the new employees and to help them reach their full potential

as soon as possible.

I can say that mentoring is not happening very often due to the fact that most

employees are focusing on performing their individual tasks first. In cases of new

employees, the most common practice is to be guided be their managers first rather

than having a colleague as a mentor. The practice of mentoring is not promoted by

the top management to be honest, and even if mentoring occurs once a while it is

because of an employee's initiative. (Participant 1)

The top management is not promoting to us the process of mentoring, neither an

employee is assigned as a mentor for a new joiner. Always, each manager takes the

responsibility to guide the new employee during the first days. As a result, we as

employees are focusing on our individual tasks and we do not spend time as mentors.

Personally, I would like to be a mentor for a new employee, but since no one tells me

to do that, I prefer to do my own job and let my manager be the mentor of the new

joiners. On some occasions, some employees had a closer relationship with the new

joiners and they were acting as mentors to them, but that was informally and by the

employees initiative. (Participant 2)

It is a top management decision, but everyone is willing to help the new joiners to get

used to the new working environment as quickly as possible and be able to give

his/her 100%. (Participant 3)

We use the practice of mentoring in our company and it is the management decision

to implement this procedure. All the new employees have a person who will be his/her

mentor for the first weeks to help the new joiner adapt in the new working

environment as fast as possible. Although it is a management decision, the employees

enjoy this process, and they are always willing to help the new joiners. (Participant 4)

Discussion

In this part of the study, the answers of the participants will be analyzed, in order to

compare the two companies, so to discover what happens differently or it is the same, in

family firms with family managers and in family firms with non-family managers. In

addition, the conclusions that will be extracted from the interviews will be supported or

denied from the current literature.

To begin with, it is worth to mention that the answers from the participants working in

the same company were similar at most questions, which makes their answers more valid.

Although, there were some similarities and some differences between the answers of the

participants from different companies. Firstly, commonly in both companies, the employees

are trying to craft their jobs on daily basis, even if they are not familiar with this term or have

not been trained or encouraged to craft their jobs. This can be explained since, job crafting is

influenced and is more likely to happen based on the personality of the employees (Bipp &

Demerouti, 2014). For example, Bakker et al. (2012) and Tims et al. (2012), found that some

personality traits like proactive behavior and personal initiative, were positively correlated

with seeking resources and seeking challenges. So, regarding *Proposition 1,* there is not any

significant difference between the two companies. Job crafting is happening very often in

both management structures, with family managers and non-family managers. Commonly,

job crafting was a result of a non-continuous guidance from the supervisors, which let the

employees the freedom to perform their job based on their preferences. The difference was

that, in Company Y (with family managers), that freedom was given to the employees

intentionally, to make the employees more engaged and more satisfied on their daily routines.

In contrast, in Company X (with non-family managers), that freedom for job crafting was

created because the managers and the top management were not paying so much attention on

the day-to-day activities. An assumption that can be made is that family managers in

Company Y were feeling as a part of the firm and therefore they were giving more attention

on how their employees feel, and so they intentionally provided that freedom. In addition, it

can be assumed that the family managers try to maintain the social capital and the reputation

of the company, and that is the reason why they promote job crafting.

Regarding task crafting, it seems like it is greater in the company with family managers, but with not much difference comparing to the company with non-family managers. Firstly, in both companies, the employees are always trying to find new approaches to improve their work, especially for tasks that they perform more often. Similarly, in both companies the employees tend to introduce new tasks hat suit their abilities. As the participants answered, by doing tasks that suit their abilities, it makes their routine easier and therefore they are more relaxed during the day. Moreover, the participants from both companies reported that most of the employees are giving preference to the tasks that suit their abilities and it is more likely to perform them first. In Company X this has often created an issue with pending tasks that the employees were not performing, because they were not feeling very confident about them. Employees in Company Y tend to give preference to the task that suit their abilities as well, but the participants reported that their managers were guiding them when needed, in order to finish the most urgent tasks first and not create a big list of pending tasks. The major difference though, regarding the questions about task crafting, was that the employees in Company X were not much willing to get additional tasks in their jobs. As they reported, that sometimes lead some departments to be more pressured, while other departments are not willing or not properly trained to help their colleagues. In contrast, the participants from Company Y reported that their colleagues are always willing to get additional tasks and help their co-workers that might be under pressure at some specific point of time. As a result, regarding *Proposition 3a,* it is not supported, since in this case, task crafting is greater at the company with family managers. It can be assumed that may be a result of that, in Company Y the job is done mostly in teams, in comparison with Company X, where the employees are working mostly individually. That made the employees in Company Y to be more willing to get additional tasks and to help their colleagues when they are under pressured.

Regarding the cognitive crafting, the intention of the interview questions was to identify the importance of the job on the employees' life and the broader community, from the participants' point of view. All of the participants reported that, formal meetings are not happening on a fixed basis, and the most common form of communication between the top management and the employees, is informal daily or weekly discussions. Although, the participants mentioned that during the discussions they have with the top management, or the HR, they feel more engaged and that is why they have requested to have more frequent meetings and so to received more frequent feedback. This comes in line with Welch (2011) study, which has found a strong link between internal communication and job engagement. In addition, a previous study (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) has found a positive association between frequent performance feedback and work engagement. Following with the cognitive crafting, the participants from Company X have mentioned that they feel that their job contributes to the broader community as well and they have given an example from a recent cooperation they have achieved, with a supplier who uses more environmentally friendly practices. The participants from Company Y have reported only the quality of services that they provide to their clients, as an important factor that contributes to the broader community. Although, they were aware of the importance of CSR activities, but it is something that it is not implemented by the company at that moment. As far as the work-life balance and the wellbeing factors that were asked, none of the participants have mentioned any serious issue and in general they were able to find the balance between their personal life and their jobs. The difference between the two companies was that, in Company X employees were not paid for their overtime, which created some complaints from the participants, in contrast with Company Y, where overtime was rewarded and in general the top management seems to pay more attention to the wellbeing of the employees. According to the study of Beckers et al. (2008), involuntary overtime work, resulted to higher fatigue employees with lower job

satisfaction. The association between overtime work and job satisfaction was even stronger when the overtime work was not rewarded.

Furthermore, the next part of the interviews was about relational crafting. During this part, it was also examined if the job crafting is occurring individually or in collaboration with the other employees. The answers were totally different between the two companies. In Company X, the participants reported that they are working mostly individually, so they craft their job individually as well. In contrast, the nature of job in Company Y is to be done mostly in teams, therefore, collaborative job crafting is greater than individually job crafting. As a result, regarding *Proposition 2,* it is supported in this case, since the collaborative job crafting in the company with family managers, is greater than the individual job crafting. This can be explained firstly from the nature of their work, since in Company Y the work is mostly done in teams, but in addition, the family managers are working closer to the employees and they promote the teamwork, this is the reason why collaborative job might be greater than individual job crafting. As far as the relational crafting, in both companies there is a very friendly working environment, and all the employees are very close together as a team. As the participants mentioned, the friendly environment is a result of the structure of the family firm, where there is the feeling that everyone belongs to a bigger family, and the close relationships amongst the employees, are a result of the small size of the firm, where all the employees are working close to each other. The difference between the two companies, created in the part of special events, anniversaries and team activities where the participants from Company X reported that their company is organizing less events and team activities, due to the lack of financial resources, in comparison with Company Y. Again, in Company Y the management is intentionally trying to bring people closer together, by investing more in their people to increase their team spirit. Similarly, the process of mentoring is used much more frequently in Company Y rather than in Company X, and it is a top management

decision to welcome the new employees and to help them adapt in the new work environment as quickly as possible. In contrast, Company X has not adapted the practice of monitoring for new employees at all, and even if this happens periodically is by each individual employee initiative who would like to help a newcomer adjust easier to the new working environment.

Summarizing, generally job crafting is happening very frequently, on daily basis, in both family firms, regardless of if they have family managers or not. The difference was that the company with family managers provided freedom to the employees to craft their jobs, intentionally, which can be assumed that the purpose was to maintain their social capital and reputation. Regarding the four aspects of job crafting, task crafting was greater in the company with family managers, and what made the difference was that the employees in Company Y are more willing to get additional tasks in their daily routine, in comparison with Company X. Concerning, cognitive crafting, there is a balance between the two companies, since employees in Company X are feeling that their job is important for the broader community as well, and the employees in Company Y find their job important from the aspect that their company is investing more in them, in the terms of their wellbeing and their work-life balance. Regarding individual and collaborative job crafting, in the company with non-family managers the individual job crafting is much greater than collaborative job crafting, and in the company with family managers, it is exactly the opposite. This is a result of the nature of the work that each company is operating, and that the family managers in Company Y are intentionally trying to promote the teamwork amongst their employees. Lastly, about relational crafting, comparing the two companies, it is greater in the company with family managers, where they seem to invest more in their people and the good relationships between the employees.

Comparing the different aspects of job crafting in each of the two companies, in the company with non-family managers, the task crafting is greater than the others and is mostly happening

individually. In the company with family managers, task crafting and relational crafting are the most used forms of job crafting, and collaborative job crafting is used rather than individual job crafting.

Implications of the study

The purpose of the current study is to act as a roadmap for future research, in order to fill a gap in the literature, which was to identify how job crafting differs between family firms with family managers and family firms with non-family managers. The current study, after studying the current literature, has made some propositions (*Proposition 1, 2 & 3*), which can be tested in future research. Also, during this study, these propositions were tested by using a small sample of participants as example. This has been achieved by using two family firms as case studies, one with family managers and one with non-family managers, and explained their differences regarding the four different aspects of job crafting.

The findings of the current study relate to the specific companies and cannot be generalized for all the family firms with family managers or with non-family managers, but they can give an idea of what can be investigated further in future research. Since no previous research has been done on this specific subject, the current study is important to show a direction where future research should focus, taking into consideration that in many countries in Europe, family firms consist of 50% up to 83% of all businesses (Donckels & Fröhlich, 1991) therefore the importance in researching this type of firms is much greater.

Limitations of the study

The present study has faced some limitations and the most obvious one, is regarding the sample of the participants. The results of the interview analysis are totally subjective to the opinions of the four participants and cannot be representable for all the family firms with the same structure. The sample size was intentionally chosen so to have participants from both companies with family managers and with non-family managers. The study included two participants from each company, to have a more valid and less subjective point of view. This approach was chosen to suffice the purpose of the study, to show the importance of job crafting in family firms and provide a direction for future research. To study the current subject in more depth, some suggestions will be provided in the next part of this study.

In addition, another limitation was the factor of time. The whole study had to be completed in six months period, which included deciding the subject, searching and studying the literature and choosing the most appropriate research method. That did not let much time for deeper analysis and for collecting information from a larger number of participants.

Finally, the last limitation for the study was the current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic. The companies were less approachable to contact them for research and they were less likely to accept someone to access their premises to share questionnaire or to contact their employees for an interview. In addition, many employees were working from home, so it was more difficult to contact them, even after accessing a company premises. Finally, each individual employee, was more skeptical about arranging an interview with a stranger, having in mind the social restrictions that have been created during COVID-19.

Suggestions for future research

As mentioned above, the purpose of the current study is to show the importance of job crafting and family firms and to create a starting point for future research. Future research should focus on gathering data from more participants, to make the results more reliable and more objective. Such research can be carried out, by using a quantitative collection method, which could be less time consuming, and easier to reach out to a larger number of participants. The number of the sample can be calculated based on the population of employees working in family firms, but in general in large populations, a sample of minimum 100 participants should be sufficient (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012). Therefore, for this subject, data should be collected from at least 50 participants who are working in family firms with family managers and from 50 participants who are working in family firms with non-family managers. Furthermore, future research should include family firms from different sectors to have an overall understanding of the subject. Finally, the propositions that were created in the current study, can be tested as hypotheses in future research and examine the correlations between the four aspects of job crafting when the managers in the family firms are family members and when they are not family members.

Conclusions

Concluding, the results of the present study can show how different the job crafting can be in family firms with family managers and with non-family managers. During the interview analysis, some similarities and some differences has been analyzed regarding the four aspects of job crafting. For example, the participants from both companies reported that task crafting is the most frequent aspect of job crafting used, but in contrast in the company

with family managers the collaborative job crafting was greater than the individual, and in the company with non-family managers, it was exactly the opposite. These results are just examples from only two family firms in Cyprus, and since there is not solid literature on this subject yet, the current study highlights the importance of future research on this subject. Some research questions have been proposed (*Proposition 1,2 & 3*) which can be tested in future research and some suggestions have been given for conducting quantitative research using a larger sample. This way the correlations that will be developed between the four aspects of job crafting and the family firms, will be representative for a larger sample and probably for family firms that operating in many different sectors.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Interview Guide

Opening Questions

1. Hello, how are you?

2. First of all, I want to thank you for accepting my invitation to participate in this interview. It is the major part of my thesis, so the role of the interviewee is very important in this research.

General Information

3. So, how long have you been working in your current company?

4. Can you tell me more about your job position and your responsibilities?

5. How many employees are currently employed in your company?

6. Are the managerial positions held by family members or not?

7. How would you describe the overall performance of the employees? (above or below expectations, is the performance at satisfactory levels in comparison with the competitors?)

Main body questions

8. To begin with, how familiar are your employees with the term of job crafting?

9. Do they feel free to craft their daily tasks or prefer to have continues guidance by their supervisors? Why?

10. How does the management manage job crafting? Do they provide – promote the freedom to the employees to craft their job in their own way or it is more preferred to set specific rules and guidelines?

11. During their job crafting, are the employees seeking new approaches in order to improve their work?

12. Are they willing to get additional tasks to their work? How often?

13. How often do the employees introduce new tasks which they believe that they suit their skills and abilities better?

14. Have you noticed employees giving preference to the tasks which suit their abilities better? How often is that happening?

15. How often does the HR (or top management) has meeting or informal discussions with the employees?

16. During those meetings and everyday discussions. How do your employees feel about the importance that their job has for the success of the company?

17. How about the importance of their job for the broader community?

18. How is the wellbeing and the work life balance of your employees?

19. What is the impact that their job has on their lives? (Positive – negative)

20. We move on the relations between the employees. Overall, how would you describe the working environment and the relations between the employees?

21. In which ways do the employees craft their tasks? Is everyone crafting his/her job individually or are they working as a team?

22. Are all the employees having a close relationship together as a team or have noticed any groups of certain people formulated?

23. How often does the top management organizes team activities?

24. How often does the top management organizes special events? (i.e. co- workers birthdays, anniversaries, celebrate a goal that has been achieved)

25. Are the employees willing to mentor new employees? Is mentoring an employee initiative or it is a top management decision?

Closing Questions

26. Thank you very much for your participation. As I said in the beginning the role of the interviewee is vital for my project and your answers will be very helpful for me to analyze my topic.