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Crafting One's Life and its Relationship with Psychological Needs: A Scoping Review

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Abstract

Crafting is the intentional and proactive behavioural or cognitive changes people make to satisfy their psychological needs. This can take place across life domains, including at work, at home, and in broader life goals, though little research exists comprehensively integrating the different crafting types. Psychological needs are one way that these various crafting types are related. Therefore, we conducted a scoping review of the literature on crafting and the satisfaction of autonomy, competence, relatedness, and meaning in life to better understand how these psychological needs relate to or impact the crafting process. We systematically searched four databases and found 134 papers that met the inclusion criteria. We found that autonomy and meaning in life were two psychological needs that were frequently related to the process of crafting and that competence and relatedness were important but less researched. The satisfaction of psychological needs were often an outcome of crafting, though only job crafting consistently measured psychological needs as the antecedent to crafting. We conclude with recommendations for future research and questions to be addressed. This review may be useful for future basic and applied crafting research by better understanding how specific psychological needs relate to the process of crafting and how individuals may proactively shape their needs.

Keywords Crafting · Self-determination · Psychological needs · Meaning in life · Scoping review

Crafting is a concept that has been studied in psychology and organisational behaviour for more than two decades (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). As a concept,

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crafting broadly refers to intentional, self-targeted behavioural or cognitive changes one makes to satisfy one's psychological needs (de Bloom et al., 2020). Crafting is, therefore, distinguished from behaviours such as coping or unconscious responses, which are engaged in less proactively and with less forethought. In addition, crafting is seen as different to personality types, such as proactive personality or personal initiative, which are broader and more rigid structures. In this sense, crafting often entails small changes people make across varying personality types and across various contexts (Tims & Bakker, 2010; van Zyl et al., 2023; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). A clear characteristic of crafting is its proactive and intentional nature, whereby individuals act to make positive changes to help satisfy psychological needs before a problem arises rather than reacting when things go wrong (de Bloom et al., 2020). Crafting may involve approach-oriented behaviour (such as seeking to master new skills), and it can involve avoidance-oriented behaviours (such as seeking to reduce stressors; Bindl et al., 2019; Bruning & Campion, 2018; de Bloom et al., 2020; Lazazzara et al., 2020; Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019; Zhang & Parker, 2019).

The first type of crafting that was introduced, and one that has remained prominent in the literature, is *job crafting*. Based on qualitative studies of various workers, job crafting highlighted the proactive and bottom-up changes employees made to their jobs to give them more meaning and align them better with their values, desires, and needs (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). In service of these positive outcomes, employees changed the types of tasks they engaged in, the types of people they engaged with, or the way they thought about their roles. Importantly, these changes were often performed without direction from managers, highlighting the importance of crafting as a proactive act. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) originally conceptualised job crafting as taking place due to certain psychological needs, such as the need for control, the need for a positive self-image, and the need for close relationships (elaborated on later).

While job crafting has been the primary focus of most scholarly work, recently, the concept of crafting has been expanded past a singular focus on the job domain into other areas of life. Berg et al. (2010) and Petrou and Bakker (2016) proposed the concept of *leisure crafting*, which detailed the ways individuals shaped or changed their leisure activities to help fulfil their needs when not working. In a similar manner, *home crafting* (Demerouti et al., 2020) was also introduced with a greater focus on the way employees changed their home environments to better balance demands and resources with their needs. Additionally, *needs-based off-job crafting* (Kujanpää et al., 2022) has recently been suggested as the proactive changes workers make to their off-job lives to satisfy their psychological needs. In the most direct connection between psychological needs and crafting, *needs crafting* (Laporte et al., 2021a, 2021b) explores the way in which individuals proactively take actions across various life domains to satisfy their basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. While need crafting began to explore crafting across life domains, life crafting has been introduced as a more generalised proactive act that people engage in to explore their values, seek challenges, and find more meaning in their lives to satisfy their needs (Schippers & Ziegler, 2019; van Zyl et al., 2023).

As this expansion has taken place, very few papers have integrated these findings in a cohesive way, leading to a lack of theoretical underpinning across various crafting processes. One exception to this is de Bloom et al. (2020), who proposed the Integrative Needs Model of Crafting (INMC). The INMC argues that the different kinds of crafting share important characteristics: crafting is proactive, intentional, self-initiated, and self-targeted, with substantial behavioural or cognitive changes made. Importantly, the INMC explicitly places psychological needs at the forefront of any decision to craft. The authors argue that people craft within and across various life domains (e.g., work, home, school) to satisfy a deficit in psychological needs and that when crafting takes place, individuals experience need satisfaction. That is, psychological needs are proposed as both antecedents (or motivators) and outcomes of the crafting process. Crafting can take place across life domains and identities, such that one individual may be more likely to craft their work identity if needs within that domain are perceived as lacking (e.g., a job is experienced as lacking autonomy), whereas another person may focus their crafting efforts on their home life. When psychological needs are satisfied in a domain, the person is more likely to experience well-being and optimal functioning within that domain (Milyavskaya & Koestner, 2011; Ryan et al., 2010).

The INMC does not focus on any specific psychological need model or theory. Rather, it focuses on broader approach needs (crafting to pursue growth and positive states) and avoidance needs (crafting to avoid negative states and decrease effort). This broader focus is useful when establishing an integrative model, though an emphasis on specific needs in crafting may help to move the literature forward by focusing attention on the targeted ways in which crafting can positively impact well-being and quality of life via need satisfaction. What is classified as a psychological need and how these relate to the crafting process has been debated within psychology.

Psychological Needs and Crafting

As this brief review of crafting and the INMC shows, psychological needs are paramount to the process of crafting. A person may start crafting within a life domain because they perceive that their needs are not being met, while the outcome of successful crafting can lead to the satisfaction of psychological needs. Psychologists have proposed various psychological needs over the decades (Maslow, 1943; McClelland, 1985; Murray, 1938; Sheldon et al., 2001; Tay & Diener, 2011; see Ryan & Deci, 2017 for a historical overview). Psychological needs are often defined as aspects of a person's environment that, when met, facilitate growth, wellness, and optimal functioning, whereas when the environment deprives these needs, the person experiences psychological harm and ill-being. Therefore, they remain closely tied to the concept of well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001). There has been frequent debate as to which variables should be considered a psychological need (e.g., Sheldon et al., 2001). For example, Greenberg et al. (1986) have argued that self-esteem is a need that people have in order to view themselves as good and avoid existential anxiety. Other psychologists

have argued that self-esteem is only salient when lacking and that increased self-esteem is not important for growth or motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). While this debate continues, four psychological needs frequently arise as important to well-being and the crafting process: the three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, relatedness, as well as a sense of meaning in life. We elaborate on these various needs below.

Self-determination theory (SDT) is one of the most empirically-based theories of psychological needs to date (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT posits that all humans have three basic psychological needs: *autonomy* – the need to endorse one’s own actions, values, and beliefs and to have choice and volition over how to express them; *competence* – the need to feel a sense of efficacy and mastery over the environment and be able to achieve challenging personal goals; and *relatedness* – the need for social connection and belonging (Ryan & Deci, 2017). A large amount of empirical research over the previous four decades has shown that the satisfaction of these needs is crucial for well-being and satisfaction with life across cultures (Chen et al., 2015a, 2015b; Church et al., 2013) and across multiple life domains (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Milyavskaya & Koestner, 2011), whereas their frustration is conducive to ill-being and poorer quality of life (Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013). When people experience a specific context as supporting their need for autonomy, competence, or relatedness, they are more likely to thrive: functioning in a way that expresses their full capacities, becoming fully aware of their true values and motivations, and experiencing positive affect and vitality (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryan et al., 2008; Ryff, 1989). This type of flourishing is often referred to as eudaimonic well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Moreover, research in quality of life has found that loving and supportive relationships, group participation, expanding personal capabilities, and developing personal insight (Flanagan, 1978), along with the autonomy to live based on personal preferences and values (Felce & Perry, 1995) are all important elements that constitute a good quality of life. Clearly, many of these aspects reflect the satisfaction of basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. As the importance of psychological needs for well-being and quality of life becomes more apparent, psychologists are beginning to explore ways in which individuals might proactively take control of the satisfaction of these psychological needs rather than being passive recipients of their environment (e.g., Laporte et al., 2021a, 2021b). Crafting is one such practice.

As we outline below, these three basic psychological needs have consistently been shown to be important antecedents to or outcomes of the crafting process (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2019; Bindl et al., 2019; Biron et al., 2022; Petrou & Bakker, 2016; Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2014; van Wingerden et al., 2017b). That is, when people feel that they have a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, they are more likely to make proactive efforts to positively change their situation (Bindl et al., 2019). For example, a worker who has a high amount of autonomy in their job may choose to learn a new skill to expand their abilities. Additionally, once crafting has taken place, they are more likely to report feeling increased autonomy, competence, or relatedness. For example, a worker might craft their job to purposefully enhance one of their skills, leading to an increased sense of competence afterwards (van Wingerden et al., 2017a).

In addition to these three basic psychological needs, psychologists have frequently suggested that a sense that life is meaningful is a psychological need (Andersen et al., 2000; Baumeister, 1991; Frankl, 1959; Heine et al., 2006; Sheldon et al., 2001). Experiencing meaning is often closely related to the satisfaction of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Martela et al., 2018) and is strongly related to experiences of hedonic well-being (Zika & Chamberlain, 1992). Meaning in life can be experienced as a sense of purpose—that life has direction and one's goals are centred around core values; coherence—that life makes sense and is comprehensible; and significance—that life and the actions taken have inherent value (Martela & Steger, 2016). A wealth of research has investigated the sense of meaning in life as an important part of the crafting process (Berg et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2022; Petrou et al., 2017a, 2017b; Schippers & Ziegler, 2019; van Zyl et al., 2023; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). Crafting within various domains (e.g., work, home, family, leisure time) may increase a sense of meaning by giving people purpose in their actions, highlighting personally significant projects that they may wish to pursue, helping them to develop deeper connections with other people, or to help them make sense of their current situation by aligning it with their values and interests (Berg et al., 2013; Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). Therefore, four of the most commonly cited psychological needs are clearly related to the process of crafting. Exploring how these needs relate to crafting across life domains in more detail should illuminate ways in which future crafting research and interventions might be designed.

The Present Research

While the INMC has established an important framework for crafting across domains, focusing attention on specific psychological needs within the crafting process will be important as the literature on crafting continues to expand. If psychological needs are, in fact, essential to the crafting process, better understanding how these needs specifically relate to crafting will strengthen our understanding of the process. Additionally, as the INMC highlights, psychological needs can act as both the antecedent to craft and the outcome of successful crafting (de Bloom et al., 2020). Therefore, this paper also aims to identify whether the specific needs have been investigated as either antecedent, outcome, or both. This focus on where psychological needs occur within the process of crafting will allow researchers to better understand areas within the literature that require additional attention. Finally, life crafting, the way in which people proactively pursue valued goals, seek challenges, and foster relationships across life domains, has recently been proposed. Three separate conceptualisations have been proposed for what life crafting entails (Chen et al., 2022; Schippers & Ziegler, 2019; van Zyl et al., 2023). Reviewing the ways need satisfaction has been proposed within other crafting models may help to highlight important characteristics of crafting that consistently occur across life domains, therefore contributing to the theoretical conceptualisation of this new construct. By understanding these factors, researchers might better understand how crafting and psychological needs have been studied,

how crafting may affect an individual's quality of life, and target domains that require further attention. To that end, this study aims to methodically review the broad crafting literature and understand how each crafting type has been defined and how they relate to the four psychological needs. We also highlight the specific ways that psychological needs affect the crafting process, acting as either an antecedent to it, an outcome of it, or both.

Scoping Reviews

The present research involves a scoping review of the literature to summarise the characteristics of the research on crafting and need satisfaction. A scoping review is a way for researchers to summarise the extent, range, or nature of the literature on a broad topic and across varying methodologies (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010; Tricco et al., 2018), as opposed to answering specific and direct questions, traditionally the realm of a systematic review. A scoping review is appropriate for our aims, as we seek to identify themes across a broad range of literature in crafting and need satisfaction, as well as identifying characteristics of the studies.

Arksey and O'Malley (2005) introduced the first comprehensive framework for conducting a scoping review, involving an iterative, five-stage process, and later authors expanded on or clarified these stages (Levac, et al., 2010). The five stages are: (1) identifying the research question, (2) identifying relevant studies, (3) study selection, (4) charting the data, and (5) collating, summarising, and reporting the results. Additionally, Tricco et al. (2018) have extended the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) to include scoping reviews. This framework (PRISMA-ScR) adds an additional layer of reporting transparency to scoping reviews, including clear reporting of the rationale, eligibility criteria, search terms and process, summary of results, and limitations. This scoping review will use the framework of Arksey and O'Malley (2005) along with the reporting standards of the PRISMA-ScR.

Method

Research Questions

The first stage in Arksey and O'Malley's framework is to establish research questions that will guide the search and charting of the data. The framework suggests that these questions can be broad and evolve as the review takes place, though Levac et al. (2010) recommend that they align with the purpose of the study. To that end, we had two main research questions:

1. How is crafting defined across different life domains, and how does this definition relate to psychological needs?
2. How do psychological needs relate to the crafting process, and have they been investigated as antecedents, outcomes, or both?

Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria for this review were as follows: (1) Published in or after the year 2001, which is the year of the first crafting paper (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001); (2) available in English; (3) articles focused on crafting as defined by the INMC; that is, some form of proactive, intentional, self-targeted medium- to long-term behavioural or cognitive changes that one makes to satisfy their psychological needs; (4) articles where the central focus of crafting is on autonomy, competence, relatedness, or meaning in life (the variety of terminology used in the literature is discussed further below). To capture the largest amount of research, peer review was not an inclusion criterion. This meant that “grey literature”, such as Masters and Doctoral theses, were included. This is in line with the recommendation for scoping reviews to include as much literature as possible (Levac et al., 2010). We also included papers that did not report any data, such as the seminal job crafting paper by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), if they furthered theory or models of crafting.

Identifying Relevant Studies and Study Selection

The initial database search took place in November of 2022. The databases searched were Scopus, Web of Science, PsycINFO, and ProQuest dissertations (which was used to capture unpublished literature such as doctoral dissertations and Masters theses), with a time range from 2001 to the present. Search terms used were: ("job crafting" OR "life crafting" OR "home crafting" OR "leisure crafting") AND ("basic psychological need" OR "need satisfaction" OR "basic needs" OR "self-determination theory" OR "self-determination" OR autonomy OR competence OR relatedness OR meaning OR "meaning in life").

During this search, a new term was found in the literature: off-job crafting, which we included in a second search on the 23rd of November, 2022 on the same databases using this term. Two new papers were found (both unpublished Masters theses); all other results were captured in the original search. An additional 12 papers were found through other avenues: four were known to the lead author already, six were found from reading the reference lists of key papers in the crafting literature, one was published during the search process, and one through correspondence with a researcher in the field of crafting.

Several of our search terms are often discussed using synonymous words (e.g., mastery or self-efficacy instead of competence, social support or affiliation instead of relatedness, purpose instead of meaning). Therefore, we retained and reviewed papers that included these terms as well, treating them as if they were the same construct. As we continued the search process, it became obvious that several texts used these terms exclusively (especially the term self-efficacy), and some papers may have been missed. Consequently, in February 2023, another search was conducted with the following search terms: ("job crafting" OR "life crafting" OR "home crafting" OR "leisure crafting" OR "off-job crafting") AND (self-efficacy OR mastery OR "social support" OR affiliation). The term ‘purpose’ was not included in any

search as it resulted in an overwhelming number of unrelated hits. For the same reason, we also did not include the terms ‘needs’ or ‘crafting’ on their own.

In total, 572 records were obtained from these various searches. After duplicates were removed and titles and abstracts were read, 222 full-text papers were screened. Many abstracts used the terms autonomy or job crafting, but upon reading the full texts, the terms were only hypothetical explanations for findings rather than central constructs in the study, so these were excluded. See the PRISMA diagram in Fig. 1 for the full list of exclusions at this stage. The final number of studies included in the review was 134.

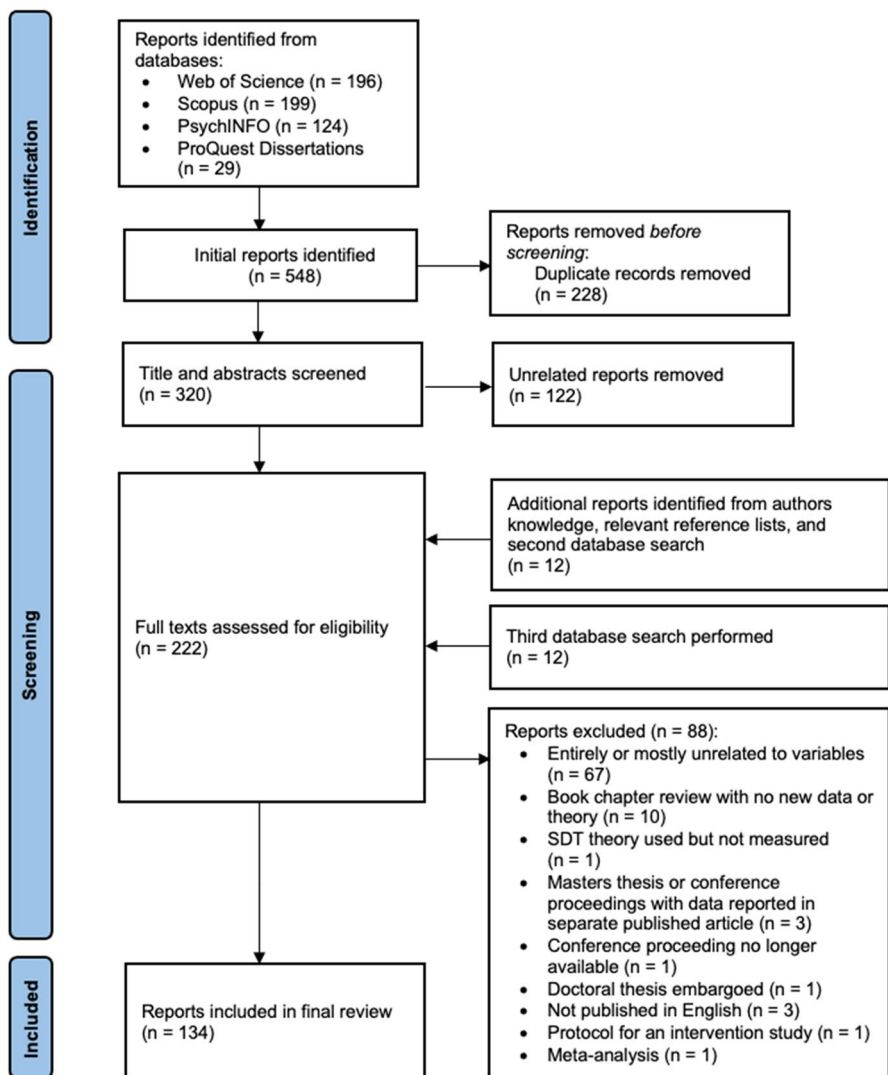


Fig. 1 PRISMA Flowchart of the Literature Search

Charting the Data

The next step in the scoping review process was to chart and code the data (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Coding was done on an Excel spreadsheet using an iterative approach. Variables that were extracted included the type of crafting discussed, the type of need discussed, the country, occupation, and age group of participants, and the methodology used in the study. As the review continued, themes and concepts became more apparent, and the original studies were reviewed again to see how they fit within these themes. This iterative approach, whereby the focus or scope of the review may change as the review takes place, is a common practice within scoping reviews (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). As there is no consistent term used to discuss the type of crafting used outside of the workplace, we use the collective term of *non-work crafting* to capture the leisure, home, off-job, and need crafting literature. Thus, this created three clear crafting themes: job crafting (crafting at work), non-work crafting (crafting outside of the work domain), and life crafting (crafting across all life domains).

The final stage is to collate and summarise the data. It is a frequent challenge within scoping reviews to balance the need for breadth with the need to present the reader with a coherent and clear overview (Levac et al., 2010). This is where the iterative approach is also beneficial. We moved back and forward between the spreadsheet summaries, the original studies, and this paper, grouping concepts or studies together as relevant themes became clearer. This was most relevant for the job crafting literature, which constituted the majority of papers in this review and presented a challenge for how best to summarise the data without simply presenting an overview of every study (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). To achieve a coherent and useful summary, we answer our two research questions and use tables to give a broad overview of the main findings.

Results

Characteristics of Included Studies

Before addressing the two main research questions, we briefly discuss some demographics of the included studies. We discuss these characteristics further in the discussion and highlight some areas for future research to address. The most common form of crafting in this review was overwhelmingly job crafting. Of the papers reviewed 89% (119 out of 134) focused on job crafting either exclusively or alongside another type of crafting. Only 20 (15%) discussed needs in relation to crafting that took place outside of the workplace (and several of these still included aspects of job crafting). Finally, life crafting, one of the newest concepts to be proposed in the crafting literature, has only six papers (4%) directly relating to it, four of which are purely theoretical.

Across the 134 papers, 136 countries from a variety of different cultures were included. The top five countries were China (16.2%), The Netherlands (11%), The United States (9.6%), South Korea (6.6%), and Finland (5.9%). While age and

occupation were not reported in all studies, the average age across those that reported mean age was 37.5 (SD = 8.5), with groups ranging from adolescents (Laporte et al., 2021a, 2021b) to older adults (Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2016). A wide variety of professions were represented across the job and non-work crafting literature, with the top five being education (12%; primary, secondary, and university teachers, school principals, academic services), finance (9.9%; banking, accounting), health-care (9.5%; nurses, doctors, health practitioners), government (6.7%), and information and communication technologies (6.7%).

Regarding the methods used, in total, 137 studies were reported across the 134 papers reviewed. Almost half (47.4%) were cross-sectional studies, measuring constructs at one time point. The next most common design was longitudinal (35%). Here, we define longitudinal as any study where measurements were taken across more than one time point. While several studies took measures across months or years, many used a “shortitudinal” or daily diary study design, where participants were followed over the course of a few days or a week. After this, theory papers made up 8%, qualitative designs made up 6.6%, and experimental or quasi-experimental made up 3.6%.

Research Question 1: How is crafting defined across different life domains, and how does this definition relate to psychological needs?

To begin with, we explore definitions of the various crafting constructs and how these definitions incorporate psychological needs. See Table 1 for an overview of definitions, core concepts, and psychological needs.

Job Crafting

Crafting has been defined in multiple ways across various domains, though all definitions include crafting as a way to affect some form of psychological need (de Bloom et al., 2020). Job crafting has been defined as the proactive, bottom-up actions that “employees take to shape, mould, and redefine their jobs” (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p. 180). The authors suggested that employees can engage in three types of crafting at work: *task crafting*, which involves changing the number, scope, or type of job tasks done at work; *relational crafting*, which involves changing the quality and/or amount of interaction with other people in the workplace; and finally *cognitive crafting*, which is the only non-behavioural type and involves employees changing how they see their jobs rather than any tangible aspects. Wrzesniewski and Dutton suggested that people engage in these crafting practices to satisfy three different needs. First, people craft their jobs because of a need for control over their workplaces. This sense of control can relate to both autonomy as a sense of control over choices made and competence as a sense of control over the environment, sometimes called environmental mastery (Ryff, 1989). Second, people may craft because they need to create a positive self-image in their minds or the minds of others. Among other reasons, this strategy can bring more meaning to their jobs if they see themselves (or are seen by others) in a different light (Berg et al., 2013).

Table 1 Definitions, Components, and Psychological Needs Across Crafting Types

Crafting Type	Definition	Core component	Psychological needs
Job Crafting			
Wrzesniewski & Dutton (2001)	"The actions employees take to shape, mold, and redefine their jobs" (p. 180).	Task crafting Cognitive crafting Relational crafting	Autonomy and Competence: Need for control. Meaning: Identifying a personally important purpose of the job to experience value and worth. Relatedness: Need for human connection. Need for a positive self-image.
Bindl et al. (2019)	"individual needs provide employees with the motivation to engage in distinct job-crafting strategies—task, relationship, skill, and cognitive crafting—and that work-related regulatory focus will be associated with promotion- or prevention-oriented forms of these strategies." (p. 605)	Promotion-oriented task, relationship, skill, and cognitive crafting Prevention-oriented task, relationship, skill, and cognitive crafting	Autonomy: Exercising agency over work tasks by changing the focus of tasks or completing different tasks. Competence: Experiencing mastery by learning, developing new skills, and pursuing self-development. Relatedness: Making new work-based connections and fostering relationships.
Tims & Bakker (2010)	When employees "change their levels of job demands and job resources in order to align them with their own abilities and preferences" (p. 4).	Increasing structural resources Increasing social resources Increasing challenging demands Decreasing hindering demands	Autonomy: Greater perceived freedom and choice over work-based decisions (job resource). Meaning: A sense of meaningfulness at work through greater purpose or ascribing greater significance. Competence: Higher self-efficacy leads to more job crafting. Job crafting fosters environmental mastery. Relatedness: A sense of social support (job resource).
Leisure Crafting			
Berg et al. (2010)	"exercising initiative, agency, and proactivity to create opportunities for experiencing states of enjoyment and meaning that they associate with pursuing their unanswered callings as formal occupations." (p. 982).	Vicarious experiencing Hobby participation	Meaning: Engaging in leisure activities that are based in personal values or foster close connections with other.

Table 1 (continued)

Crafting Type	Definition	Core component	Psychological needs
Petrou & Bakker (2016)	“the proactive pursuit of leisure activities targeted at goal setting, human connection, learning, and personal development” (p 508).	Level of home demands Level of job demands Level of job autonomy	Autonomy: Free choice and internal locus of causality in leisure activities. Competence: Experiencing challenges to sustain motivation, and develop self-efficacy, achievement, and mastery. Relatedness: Sustaining meaningful relationships and secure emotional support.
Xue et al. (2022)	“A proactive act whereby individuals balance their leisure resources and demands by utilizing their personal abilities and needs” (p.274).	Seeking structural leisure resources Seeking social leisure resources Seeking leisure challenges Reducing hindering leisure demands.	Autonomy: Proactive and intentional choice of leisure activities. Meaning: The satisfaction of psychological needs and intrinsic motivation during leisure activities. Competence: Seeking new challenges, learning new skills, and developing a sense of mastery. Relatedness: Gaining emotional support and care from friends and family.
Home crafting Demerouti et al. (2020)	“the changes that employees make to balance their home demands and home resources with their personal abilities and needs, in order to experience meaning and create or restore their person–environment fit” (p. 1013).	Seeking resources Seeking challenges Reducing demands	Autonomy: A resource that allows workers to enact change and experience control over their environment. Meaning: Creating a better person–environment fit by balancing needs and abilities with resources.

Table 1 (continued)

Crafting Type	Definition	Core component	Psychological needs
Off-Job Crafting			
Kujanpää et al. (2022)	“workers’ proactive and self-initiated changes to their off-job lives which target psychological need satisfaction” (p. 2).	Need for: Detachment Relaxation Autonomy Mastery Meaning Affiliation	Autonomy: Arranging out of work activities that foster a sense of control and reflect personal interests. Meaning: Arranging out of job activities that foster a sense of purpose and align with core values. Competence (mastery): Arranging out of job activities to expand knowledge, build skills, and foster a sense of mastery. Relatedness (Affiliation): Arranging out of job activities to foster loving connections and a sense of belonging.
Need Crafting			
Laporte, Soenens, Brenning et al. (2021)	“individuals’ attempts to create optimal conditions for psychological need satisfaction to occur” (p. 68)	Awareness of and tendency to act upon the need for: Autonomy Competence Relatedness	Autonomy: Understanding and engaging in activities that reflect personal values, interests, and preferences. Competence: Making choices that are conducive to skill development and experiencing a sense of mastery. Relatedness: Everyday choices better guarantee the development of genuine, reciprocal, and loving relationships.
Life Crafting			
Schippers & Ziegler (2019)	“a process in which people actively reflect on their present and future life, set goals for important areas of life—social, career, and leisure time—and, if required, make concrete plans and undertake actions to change these areas in a way that is more congruent with their values and wishes”. (p. 3)	Exploring: Values and passions Competencies and habits Present and future social life Possible future career Ideal vs less ideal future Goal attainment plans Public commitment to goal	Autonomy: Setting and pursuing self-concordant goals based on personal values and abilities. Meaning: Using values to pursue life goals that foster a sense of purpose. Competence: Using goal-attainment plans to experience a sense of achievement and mastery of life goals. Relatedness: Exploration of important and energising relationships in one’s life, how to manage draining relationships.

Table 1 (continued)

Crafting Type	Definition	Core component	Psychological needs
Chen et al. (2022)	“the conscious effort individuals exert to create meaning in their lives through (a) cognitively (re-)framing how they view life, (b) by seeking social support systems to manage life challenges, and (c) to actively seeking challenges to facilitate personal growth” (p. 13).	Cognitive crafting Seeking social support Seeking challenges	Autonomy: Reframing events to be more personally meaningful and aligned with one's values. Meaning: Connecting current life tasks to broader purposeful goals and a sense of belonging to something larger than themselves. Competence: Learning new skills and abilities to challenge current capabilities. Relatedness: Seeking out and establishing meaningful and loving relationships.
Van Zyl et al. (2023)	“a holistic, continuous process of proactive meaning-making by intentionally balancing life demands with available resources and altering life's cognitive, environmental, interest, relational, skill, and task-related aspects to promote personal growth and wellbeing.”	Cognitive crafting Environmental crafting Interest crafting Relational crafting Resource-demands crafting Skill crafting Task crafting	Autonomy: Reflecting on personal interests, values, and motivations; managing life boundaries to establish a sense of control; forming a strong identity across life domains. Meaning: Using the seven core strategies to promote growth and well-being, through aligning life tasks with personal strengths and values. Competence: Building self-efficacy through strengths use by skill-building and engaging in interesting hobbies. Relatedness: Fostering and strengthening loving relationships. Managing draining relationships.

Finally, people may engage in crafting to fulfil their need for human connection and foster positive relationships (relatedness). These efforts can then lead to a heightened sense of meaning at work by changing what their job signifies to them and increasing the sense of purpose or significance (value) it contributes (Berg et al., 2013; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). Bindl et al. (2019) suggest that employees craft their work to connect with their colleagues (relatedness), master new skills and work-related knowledge (competence), and feel a sense of agency in engaging with tasks that are suited to their values and interests (autonomy). The authors include a fourth type of crafting, *skill crafting* which represents employees efforts to change their skills to better carry out their jobs. Bakker and Oerlemans (2019) echo this view, showing that the satisfaction of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are important job resources when crafting, leading to greater work engagement.

Tims and Bakker (2010) introduced a revised version of job crafting based on the job demands resource model of work (JD-R; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) and defined job crafting as employees initiating changes to their job demands (e.g., stressors or workload) and job resources (e.g., autonomy or social support) to better suit their needs and abilities. Tims et al. (2012) found support for a four-factor model of job crafting: increasing structural resources, increasing social resources, increasing challenging demands (three types of “approach crafting”), and decreasing hindering demands (a type of “avoidance crafting”). Tims and Bakker suggest that a principal work resource is autonomy, where employees feel that they have a choice in their work tasks and decision-making. This sense of volition is suggested to be a precondition (or antecedent) to job crafting by allowing the employee to experience opportunities to enact change in their daily work activities (reviewed more below). The authors also suggest that social resources are an important factor when crafting a job, as colleagues and peers offer support to be able to deal with job demands. Self-efficacy is suggested to be an important individual difference in employees’ belief in their ability to craft. Those who feel that they can ‘take charge’ or make changes to their work environment will more likely engage in crafting behaviours. Finally, enhanced work-based meaning is seen as an important outcome of crafting by allowing employees to experience purpose, value, and greater person-job fit within their workplace.

Non-work Crafting

Recently, researchers have begun to expand their focus to ways in which people proactively craft areas of their lives not directly related to their paid employment. One such approach, leisure crafting, has begun to look at how people balance the demands and resources of work and leisure activities (Berg et al., 2010; Petrou et al., 2017a, 2017b; Petrou & Bakker, 2016). Berg et al. (2010) originally conceptualised leisure crafting as a distinct activity that workers engaged in to rectify discrepancies with their “unanswered callings” in the workplace. Defining leisure crafting as “exercising initiative, agency, and proactivity to create opportunities for experiencing states of enjoyment and meaning that they associate with pursuing their unanswered callings as formal occupations.” (p. 982), Berg et al. (2010) discussed

two types of activities that employees took: vicarious experiencing—experiencing other people’s fulfilment of certain unanswered callings—and hobby participation—engaging in hobbies and volunteer activities that were unmet in the paid employment. As a result, the workers experienced greater meaning in their lives that they may have been lacking at work.

Petrou and Bakker (2016) further refined leisure crafting, defining it as “the proactive pursuit of leisure activities targeted at goal setting, human connection, learning, and personal development” (p. 508). The authors suggest that leisure crafting satisfies the three basic psychological needs by allowing people to proactively choose leisure activities that lead to personal development (autonomy), experience feelings of mastery and growth by learning new hobbies or knowledge (competence), and foster meaningful relationships during these activities (relatedness). The authors found that weekly leisure crafting was related to autonomy and relatedness but not competence, suggesting that competence may take longer to experience once people begin crafting for mastery and skill development. Xue et al. (2022) recently conceptualised leisure crafting using the JD-R model. The authors defined leisure crafting as “a proactive act whereby individuals balance their leisure resources and demands by utilizing their personal abilities and needs” (p.274). The authors showed that the satisfaction of basic psychological needs mediated the relationship between leisure crafting and meaningfulness, especially by seeking social resources and seeking challenges in their leisure time. Both work and non-work time can be proactively designed to foster psychological needs, especially those related to competence (through seeking challenging projects or learning new skills) and relatedness (through fostering important, caring relationships). Also adopting the JD-R model, home crafting has been suggested as “the changes that employees make to balance their home demands and home resources with their personal abilities and needs, in order to experience meaning and create or restore their person–environment fit” (Demerouti et al., 2020, p. 1013). Specifically, the balance between home and job resources (especially how much autonomy is experienced within the home domain) is key to how people craft their lives and create a sense of meaning.

Recently, Kujanpää et al. (2022) conceptualised off-job crafting as “workers’ proactive and self-initiated changes to their off-job lives which target psychological need satisfaction” (p. 2). Supported by the INMC, this model of crafting suggests that people have six needs based on the DRAMMA model by Newman et al. (2014): detachment from stressors, relaxation, autonomy, mastery (competence), meaning, and affiliation (relatedness), and that people craft various aspects of their work and non-work lives to specifically satisfy one or more of these needs. For example, a worker might organise out-of-work activities based on personal interests (off-job crafting for autonomy), or they might engage in a hobby to stretch and challenge their abilities (off-job crafting for mastery). The most direct relationship between a type of crafting and need satisfaction was proposed by Laporte et al., (2021a, 2021b), who suggested the concept of need crafting. Based on SDT, this type of crafting is defined as the “individuals’ attempts to create optimal conditions for psychological need satisfaction to occur” (p. 68). This concept entails both an awareness of situations and resources that may satisfy autonomy, competence, and relatedness (e.g., contexts that are more conducive to experiencing freedom and autonomy), as

well as proactive action toward fostering these environmental conditions. One study found that on days when adolescents crafted to satisfy their needs, they experienced more positive affect and less negative affect (Laporte et al. (2021).

Life Crafting

Finally, the concept of crafting has recently been expanded to encapsulate the entirety of life via *life crafting* (Chen et al., 2022; Schippers & Ziegler, 2019; van Zyl et al., 2023). There currently exist three separate conceptualisations of life crafting, all of which vary in their focus on psychological needs. Schippers and Ziegler (2019) define life crafting as “a process in which people actively reflect on their present and future life, set goals for important areas of life—social, career, and leisure time—and, if required, make concrete plans and undertake actions to change these areas in a way that is more congruent with their values and wishes” (p. 3). Life crafting focuses on exploring personal values and setting self-concordant goals. That is, goals that are personally valued and in line with their authentic self. This focus on self-concordant goals is consistent with SDT’s stance on need satisfaction, as goals that are more self-concordant are ones that have been more internalised (that is, more autonomously chosen; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999) and lead to a greater sense of meaning in life. Chen et al. (2022) conceptualised life crafting as having three important components: cognitively reframing aspects of life to be more meaningful, seeking social support, and seeking challenges. These three aspects map quite closely with the basic psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence (respectively). Finally, van Zyl et al. (2023) proposed a “holistic life crafting” model that involved 22 distinct strategies across seven themes: cognitive crafting (altering the meaning attached to various aspects of one’s life), environmental crafting (physical changes to work, home, or life environments), interest crafting (engaging in activities one finds interesting), relational crafting (changing whom one interacts with and how), resources-demands crafting (optimising life resources and managing life demands), skill crafting (developing a wide range of skills across life domains), and task crafting (altering the type, number, and scope of life tasks one engages in). Various needs are apparent within this model, including building important relationships (relatedness), reflecting on personal motivations and values that foster a strong identity (autonomy), and using strengths to build skills and foster personal growth (competence). All three conceptualisations of life crafting place meaning at the centre, positing that through these practices, people can live more meaningful lives.

Research Question Two: How do psychological needs relate to the crafting process, and have they been investigated as antecedents, outcomes, or both?

Below, we outline the specific ways crafting across domains is associated with psychological needs and whether needs are considered antecedents or outcomes of crafting. See Table 2 for an overview of these processes.

Table 2 Psychological Needs as Either Antecedent, Outcome, or Both Across Crafting Types

Crafting Type	Autonomy	Meaning	Competence	Relatedness
Job Crafting	Antecedent: Greater perceived freedom, choice, or control over the workplace leads to more crafting	Outcome: Crafting a workspace that is based on personal values and skills and fosters meaningful relationships leads to greater meaning and work engagement. This can impact both what the job means (coherence) and the meaningfulness of the job (purpose or significance)	Antecedent: Workers who feel greater mastery over their skills and tasks (have high work self-efficacy) are more likely to take additional actions to craft their workplace	Antecedent: Those who feel secure and perceive social support are more likely to relationally craft at work
	Outcome: Crafting at work allows employees to create more value-congruent environments and person-job fit	Cognitive crafting allows employees to reframe how they see their job to give it more personal significance	Outcome: Crafting at work (especially task crafting) can foster a sense of control and mastery over the work environment	Outcome: Relational crafting can lead to a greater number or deeper level of meaningful relationships at work. This can involve collaboration and helping colleagues
Non-Work Crafting (Leisure, home, off-job, and need crafting)	Antecedent: High autonomy at home allows for more crafting behaviours outside of work time	Outcome: Fostering non-work activities that are aligned with personal values or give a sense of purpose fosters a sense of meaning	Outcome: Crafting non-work activities to challenge oneself by developing or learning new skills fosters a sense of competence over time	Outcome: Crafting out-of-work activities that foster close connections or a sense of belonging to a group can increase relatedness needs
Life Crafting	Outcome: Crafting leads to greater awareness, a stronger identity, and a life more aligned with one's core values and interests. Crafting boundaries between domains (e.g., work and home) can lead to a sense of control over life demands	Outcome: Aligning values with life goals, fostering loving relationships, and connecting to something larger than the self (i.e., a purpose) can all foster meaning in life Cognitive crafting leads people to reframe their life experiences to be more congruent with their values and identity	Outcome: Seeking challenges, using strengths, participating in hobbies, and setting goal-attainment plans for broader life goals can foster competence across life domains	Outcome: Seeking social support or reflecting on which relationships are important can lead to a sense of relatedness and meaning in life. This may involve managing or removing draining relationships

Autonomy

Job Crafting Within the literature, autonomy is the most frequently cited need that is related to job crafting. Job crafting and autonomy have been linked ever since Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) first presented the idea. They suggested that the need for control over one's job (autonomy) is crucial for employees to craft their jobs, and when employees perceive opportunities to make small changes, they will likely engage in these changes. The JD-R model of job crafting expanded on this by suggesting that one of the main ways employees can craft their jobs is through increasing structural job resources, whereby autonomy is cited as a type of structural resource that employees can affect (Tims et al., 2012). When employees proactively seek more flexibility, variety, or control over their job, they perceive themselves as the causal agent in their work, which may lead to a greater sense of autonomy (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2019; Biron et al., 2022). Bindl et al. (2019) found that employees' need for autonomy positively predicted approach-oriented job crafting but not the avoidance-oriented type.

In research spanning many different study designs, autonomy has frequently been shown to be an antecedent of job crafting behaviours. That is, when employees perceive more freedom and choice in their work, they are more likely to craft their jobs by designing and shaping the work they do, whom they interact with, and how they view their job (Albert & Highhouse, 2021; Bakker & Oerlemans, 2019; Bizzi, 2017; Chang et al., 2020; Debus et al., 2019; Demerouti et al., 2015; Liao, 2022; Chang et al., 2021a, 2021b; Ghazzawi et al., 2021; Jindal et al., 2022; Petrou et al., 2012; Pimenta de Devotto et al., 2022; Slemp et al., 2015; Toyama et al., 2022; Vanbelle et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2022; Xie, 2022; Zhao et al., 2022; Zito et al., 2019).

One source of job autonomy is the leadership style of managers. Jiang et al. (2021) found that when supervisors gave their employees more empowerment (autonomy), the workers felt more engaged and took part in more job crafting. This effect was stronger for those lower in proactive personality. Slemp et al. (2021) found that leader autonomy support—when leaders give more choice, agency, and input to their employees—and job crafting together both predicted passion at work, which in turn predicted work engagement.

The level of autonomy within an organisation is also important. Minda and Mudło-Głagolska (2019) found that managers crafted their jobs more than those in non-managerial roles, presumably because they experienced more autonomy. Autonomy mediated the relationship between organisational rank and task crafting as well as relational crafting, but not cognitive crafting. This suggests that cognitive crafting is a strategy that can be used by anyone, no matter their resources or position within a hierarchy. Using the JD-R model of job crafting, Roczniowska and Puchalska-Kamińska (2017) found a similar relationship, with managers taking part in approach-oriented crafting behaviours and all three types of approach crafting were mediated by how much autonomy they experienced. In a two-week longitudinal study, Niessen et al. (2016) found that while autonomy and job crafting were related cross-sectionally, autonomy did not predict increased job crafting over time. This may suggest that changes to autonomy may take longer than two weeks to affect crafting behaviours.

Autonomy has also been explored as an outcome of job crafting. Job crafting is often theorised to have a positive impact on person-job fit, allowing the employees to create a space that is more aligned with their needs and desires (Tims & Bakker, 2010). Tims et al. (2016) found that job crafting at time one positively impacted need-supply fit (a component of person-job fit that explores how much a job allows workers to satisfy their psychological needs) at time two. This suggests that job crafting can have a positive impact on well-being by allowing employees to design their jobs based on their personal values and interests (a core component of autonomy; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Non-Work Crafting Aspects of the workplace can also affect crafting outside of it. For example, Petrou and Bakker (2016) found that when workers had high job demands, low job autonomy, and high home autonomy, they were more likely to proactively craft their leisure time. Leisure crafting was related to weekly autonomy, suggesting that when individuals experience more freedom to express themselves at home (and less freedom at work), they will be more proactive in engaging in meaningful leisure activities. This finding was supported by Demerouti et al. (2020), investigating home crafting. The authors found that workers who crafted by seeking resources at work were more likely to seek resources for crafting at home, but only when they experienced high autonomy at home. Zhao et al. (2022) also found a connection between job and non-work crafting. The authors found a relationship between job autonomy and leisure satisfaction, with leisure crafting mediating this relationship. This suggests that when employees experience autonomy at work, they are more likely to proactively craft, and subsequently enjoy, their leisure time. Autonomy as an outcome of non-work crafting, such as experiencing a more value-congruent environment, has not been explored.

Life Crafting Autonomy within life crafting has been explored more indirectly. Most clearly, life crafting has been related to meaning-making via the process of exploring values and pursuing self-concordant goals (Schipper & Ziegler, 2019). That is, by understanding what one finds valuable and interesting in life and crafting broader goals around these facets, life crafting is theorised to lead to more autonomous functioning and subsequent well-being. In this sense, autonomy has been predominantly explored as an outcome of the life crafting process. Life crafting can also lead to experiencing greater autonomy when a person feels as though they have taken control of their situations, especially when managing boundaries between life domains (such as work and home life). For example, if someone manages the boundaries between life domains such as work and home time to better prioritise their values, they are more likely to experience a sense of control (van Zyl et al., 2023).

Meaning

Job Crafting If autonomy is a common antecedent to job crafting, then a sense of meaning is a common outcome (Berg et al., 2013; Wrzesniewski et al., 2013).

From the beginning, job crafting theorised that the two main outcomes of job crafting are that employees will experience their jobs as more meaningful and that they can shape their work identity (Melo & Dourado, 2018; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Wrzesniewski et al. (2013) distinguish between the meaning of work – what the job means to the employee (a sense of coherence), and the meaningfulness of work – how much purpose or significance the person derives from their job. They suggest that job crafting impacts both types: *what* the work means and *how much* it means to the person. Employees might focus on tasks that bring more significance or help them express their identity, personal values, and beliefs (Jarden et al., 2020), leading to a better person-job fit (Tims et al., 2016). In addition, employees might foster deep and meaningful social connections with their colleagues or clients (Castiello-Gutierrez et al., 2021). Cognitive crafting is an important aspect of job crafting related to the meaningfulness of work (Berg et al., 2013). This strategy—the only non-behavioural type of crafting—is used by workers to alter how they perceive their work tasks, relationships, or jobs as a whole, which instils in them a greater sense of purpose and value for the work. For example, tour guides might see themselves as enablers of knowledge and culture-sharing rather than simply guides (Meged, 2017). Together, these types of crafting may give employees a sense that their job is a calling rather than simply a paycheck (Berg et al., 2010; Chang et al., 2021a, 2021b).

As can be seen, cognitive crafting links to the behavioural or physical types of crafting by giving them meaning. Melo et al. (2020) view cognitive crafting as a form of sense-making whereby people make behavioural changes after they make sense of them cognitively (by focusing on the significance or purpose of these changes). Therefore, cognitive crafting becomes integral to the crafting process, particularly as an initial step. Using network analysis, Pimenta de Devotto et al. (2022) found that cognitive crafting had the strongest connection to meaningful work and that task and relational crafting both led to meaningful work via cognitive crafting. Autonomy was another close connection, indicating that people with more autonomy in their jobs may be freer to find meaningful expression in their work. A variety of quantitative and qualitative studies have found support for this claim that cognitive crafting is an important, if not essential, component of experiencing meaningful work (Melo & Dourado, 2018; Dhanpat, 2019 [Study 2]; Geldenhuys et al., 2021; Harbridge et al., 2018; Hornung, 2019; Jindal & Boxall, 2021; Lee et al., 2021; Letona-Ibañez et al., 2021; Morales-Solis et al., 2022; Riasnugrahani & Riantoputra, 2017; Robertson, 2013).

One of the strongest findings in job crafting research is the relationship between job crafting and work engagement (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2019; Rudolph et al., 2017). A common theme in this review is that meaning often mediates the relationship between crafting and work engagement. That is, when people craft their jobs, they experience them as more meaningful, and hence they are more likely to focus and engage in the work required rather than becoming absent or disengaged (Dan et al., 2020; Dhanpat, 2019; Guo & Hou, 2022; Haffer et al., 2021; Letona-Ibañez et al., 2021; Li & Yang, 2018; Peral & Geldenhuys, 2016; Shang, 2022; Vermooten et al., 2019). This is likely because crafting leads employees to find more personal

value and significance in their work, leading to more internalised and intrinsic motivation (Moon et al., 2020; Shin & Jung, 2021).

Non-Work Crafting Outside of the workplace, crafting leisure time has also been found to lead to increased feelings of meaning in life (Petrout et al., 2017a, 2017b). Weekly leisure crafting was found to be positively related to weekly meaning-making, and this relationship was stronger when participants' opportunities to craft at work were low, suggesting that people may compensate for a lack of need satisfaction in one domain by proactively crafting in another domain. Interestingly, Lim et al. (2022) found that gratitude may play an important role in explaining the relationship between leisure crafting and experiencing meaning by encouraging cognitive reappraisal of the activities in which people engage. Multiple studies across cultures found an association between crafting for meaning by, for example, realigning activities to be more purposeful or aligned with their values, and positive outcomes, such as vitality, mental health, and optimal functioning (Kosenkranius et al., 2023; Kujanpää et al., 2021, 2022; Toropainen, 2020).

Life Crafting In a similar fashion to non-work crafting, life crafting has been suggested to bring people more meaning by aligning their personal values with their broader life goals, giving them a sense of direction (de Jong et al., 2020; Schippers & Ziegler, 2019) or by fostering personal growth by challenging their skills and building meaningful relationships (Chen et al., 2022; van Zyl et al., 2023). Chen et al. (2022) found a very strong relationship between their life crafting scale and the meaning in life scale. The authors hypothesise that life crafting relates to meaning in life by encouraging people to view themselves as a part of something larger than themselves, fostering meaningful connections and a sense of belonging, guiding their broader life goals, and closing the gap between their current and desired selves. van Zyl et al. (2023) suggest that by continuously and proactively balancing personal resources with life demands and altering cognitive, environmental, relational, and physical aspects of life, a person can experience an increase in meaning.

Competence

Job Crafting Competence is related to job crafting in a variety of ways, including supervisor feedback, work engagement, strengths use, self-efficacy beliefs, and problem-solving (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2019; Bizzi, 2017; Bruning & Campion, 2022; Chang et al., 2020; Chu et al., 2022; Ghani et al., 2019; Kujanpää et al., 2022; Roczniewska et al., 2020; Shin et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2021). Competence has been explored as both an antecedent (employees with higher job self-efficacy will feel more able to make changes) and an outcome (crafting changes to a job can lead employees to experience greater environmental mastery) of job crafting (Tims & Bakker, 2010).

Feelings of competence or job self-efficacy may act as an antecedent to crafting by empowering workers to feel more in control of their work and thus proactively make additional changes (e.g., Ingusci et al., 2019; Pelit et al., 2022). Bindl et al.

(2019) found that employee's need for competence predicted their skill crafting at work. Miraglia et al. (2017) found that job crafting mediated the relationship between work self-efficacy and performance, suggesting that job crafting may represent the actual behaviours that self-efficacy (competence) produces. Multiple studies found a positive relationship between feelings of self-efficacy and how much people crafted their job (Huang, Mäkikangas et al., 2017; Niessen et al., 2016; Rošková & Faragová, 2020; Tims et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2022).

Competence has also been found to be an outcome of job crafting (Sundar & Brucker, 2021; Tresi & Mihelic, 2018; van Wingerden et al., 2017a). Task and skill crafting is the type of crafting that is most often associated with experiencing competence, in that employees can change the physical aspects of their work to learn new skills, abilities, and knowledge or master current aspects of their work (Bindl et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2018; Meged, 2017;). Some research found that cognitive crafting can also impact feelings of competence and self-efficacy (Hornung, 2019; Niessen et al., 2016), though others did not (Hommelhoff et al., 2021). Bakker and Oerlemans (2019) found that competence was related to the crafting of structural job resources (such as learning a new skill) but not to crafting social resources or decreasing hindering demands. Two aspects specifically shown to relate to competence satisfaction were engaging in core work tasks and engaging with clients. When tested experimentally, a job crafting intervention found that participants' self-efficacy increased after a 4-week period of applying job crafting strategies compared with the control group. However, no differences in weekly self-efficacy were found on weeks when participants job crafted (van den Heuvel et al., 2015). van Wingerden et al. (2017a) found that, compared with a control group, self-efficacy increased after a job crafting intervention and remained higher even after a year. Together, these suggest that competence feelings may accumulate over longer periods of crafting.

Often however, competence was collapsed with other basic needs into a composite, making specific recommendations difficult (e.g., Bakker & Oerlemans, 2019; de Carvalho Chinellato et al., 2020; Huang, Sun, & Wang, 2022; Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2014; Toyama et al., 2022; van Wingerden et al., 2017b; Wu et al., 2022).

Non-Work Crafting Outside of the workplace, competence has not been the focus of much crafting research. One finding is that seeking challenges in leisure time (such as learning new skills or adopting new hobbies) is a clear type of crafting for competence (Demerouti et al., 2020; Xue et al., 2022). However, as with the job crafting interventions above, feelings of competence may take longer to affect than other psychological needs once crafting is initiated (Kujanpää et al., 2022; Petrou & Bakker, 2016). Toropainen (2020) found that participants crafting for mastery (organising off-job time to expand or test their skills, knowledge, and abilities) was positively associated with vitality. Kosenkranius et al. (2021) found that when people focused on opportunities at their work, they were more likely to craft both at work and outside of it, and this relationship was mediated by the need for mastery (as well as the need for meaning and affiliation). Kosenkranius et al. (2023) found that on days when people crafted more than their average, they had higher energy levels, though people crafted more for mastery in the workplace than in non-work contexts. Many of these studies are cross-sectional, suggesting a relationship between non-work crafting and

mastery, though without experimental or longitudinal designs, teasing apart the difference between competence as an antecedent or outcome remains difficult.

Life Crafting Very little work within the life crafting literature has explored competence directly. Some indirect evidence exists. Chen et al. (2022) found that a core component of their life crafting model was people seeking activities that challenge their skills and abilities. Similarly, van Zyl et al. (2023) found that skill and strengths use, participating in hobbies, and increasing challenging demands were all important life crafting strategies that would foster competence. In Schippers and Ziegler's (2019) model of life crafting, developing goal-attainment plans is a central element of the life crafting intervention allowing people to see how their broader life goals might be achieved. As with non-work crafting, further research is required to ascertain the exact relationship between crafting across life domains and experiencing a sense of competence.

Relatedness

Job Crafting Relatedness, too, is an under-researched aspect of the crafting process and often is collapsed into a composite of all three needs together. This is interesting given that relational crafting and increasing social job resources are two fundamental aspects of job crafting theory (Tims et al., 2012; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Crafting for relatedness can be divided into two broad types: approach-type crafting, where people add to or expand their network of colleagues and clients (Meged, 2017; Wellman & Spreitzer, 2011), and avoidance-type crafting, where people focus on only a few relationships or avoid harmful ones (Bindl et al., 2019). Approach-type relational crafting was found to be positively related to work engagement, while avoidance-type relational crafting was negatively related to it (Rofcanin et al., 2019). Bindl et al. (2019) found that workers with higher relatedness needs were more likely to engage in relational crafting. Contrary to most work, Li et al. (2022) found that in addition to positive outcomes, relational crafting had a negative impact on work well-being due to the extra workload that this entailed (see also Bakker & Oerlemans, 2019 for the negative impacts of crafting due to energy depletion). Crafting collaboratively with other employees and prosocial job crafting—where employees change their tasks to help their colleagues—are other ways in which workers might craft for relatedness, increasing their job satisfaction and performance (Leanna et al., 2009; Viragos, 2018).

These studies suggest that relatedness is clearly an outcome of relational crafting. Less research exists to show whether higher relatedness at work leads to more crafting. Some studies found support for the idea that employees crafted more when they felt secure in their workplaces, perceived more social support, and had workspaces that facilitated social interactions (Breevaart & Tims, 2019; Jarden et al., 2020; Ko, 2011).

Non-Work Crafting As with competence, relatedness has seldom been studied outside of job crafting. Two studies by Kujanpää et al., (2021, 2022) found that crafting for affiliation (e.g., by structuring off-job time to foster important relationships

and experience a sense of belonging) was related to vitality and well-being, while Petrou and Bakker (2016) showed that on weeks that people leisure crafted, they were more likely to satisfy the relatedness need by proactively engaging with friends and family.

Life Crafting All three models on life crafting have included a proactive awareness of and action taken toward fostering relationships as a core component within their theories. Seeking out social support and advice from loved ones, as well as changing when and with whom one spends time, is an important aspect of life crafting that can foster a sense of meaning (Chen et al., 2022; van Zyl et al., 2023). Additionally, the life crafting intervention has proposed that reflecting on which relationships are energising or draining is also an important aspect of crafting across life domains (Schippers & Ziegler, 2019). These conceptualisations all posit relatedness as an outcome of life crafting.

Discussion

This review has sought to comprehensively examine the literature on crafting and psychological needs, investigating how crafting has been defined across domains in relation to need satisfaction and the ways in which crafting across or within domains of life is related to the satisfaction of autonomy, competence, relatedness, and meaning in life. Additionally, the review has explored where psychological needs sit within the crafting process, as either the motivator to begin crafting (antecedent) or the result of successful crafting (outcome). In doing so, this review has shown how need satisfaction is an important part of the crafting process and should be factored into emerging theories or models of crafting. In the following sections, we summarise the key points emerging from this literature review and make suggestions for future research.

Theoretical Implications

To begin with, as predicted by the INMC, we found that all types of crafting included psychological needs either directly or indirectly in their conceptualisation. Autonomy was most salient in job crafting concepts as a sense of agency: taking control of tasks and the work environment to experience choice and freedom rather than pressure (Biron et al., 2022; Slemp et al., 2021; Tims et al., 2016). In non-work and life crafting, agency remained important, though values and interests were also consistently mentioned. That is, an important facet of crafting outside of the workplace appears to involve pursuing activities that reflect who someone truly is (e.g., their personal values and interests; Laporte et al., 2021a, 2021b; van Zyl et al., 2023; Xue et al., 2022) which in turn can increase their well-being. In part, this might be due to work involving more structure and pressure to perform certain tasks, therefore agency becomes most salient by making small changes to thoughts and actions (Sheldon et al., 1996). Outside

of work, with less pressure to perform specific actions, people may be allowed more freedom to investigate and act upon broader values and interests (Ryan et al., 2010).

Meaning was also frequently a part of crafting conceptualisations. For job crafters, meaning often arose from making changes to the work that allowed them to make sense of what they did (coherence) or to bring a greater sense of purpose or significance (such as feelings of worth) to their work (Berg et al., 2013; Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). Small changes, especially cognitive changes, whereby one thinks differently about the job rather than making any physical changes, can have a significant impact on how meaningful a workplace is (Pimenta de Devotto et al., 2022; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). As with autonomy, meaning was also more aligned with values when looking at non-work and life crafting. Crafting outside of work was often associated with experiencing meaning through activities that were aligned with personal values and interests (Berg et al., 2010), intrinsic motivation (Xue et al., 2022), person-environment fit (Demerouti et al., 2020), or purposeful goals (Schippers & Ziegler, 2019). Two of the three life crafting strategies also included cognitive crafting as an important facet, again showing the importance of changing how one thinks about one's life to proactively foster meaning (Chen et al., 2022; Van Zyl et al., 2023).

While less researched, competence was the most consistently discussed psychological need, frequently associated with a sense of mastery and self-development (Tims & Bakker, 2010). In all types of crafting, competence involves setting and achieving challenging goals (Schippers & Ziegler, 2019), changing tasks to challenge current abilities (Bindl et al., 2019; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), expanding abilities by learning new skills (Chen et al., 2022; Kujanpää et al., 2022; Laporte et al., 2021a, 2021b; Xue et al., 2022), or using strengths to experience self-efficacy (van Zyl et al., 2023). This consistency suggests that a core element of all crafting is the proactive satisfaction of competence and a sense of mastery. This is in line with eudaimonic theories of well-being, which suggest that a core component of flourishing individuals is their ability to "choose or create environments suitable to personal needs and values" (Ryff, 2013, p. 12). This is also in line with research in quality of life that suggests an important part of this construct is experiencing fulfilment through personal understanding, intellectual development, and creative expression (Burckhardt & Anderson, 2003). Crafting, whether at work, at home, or in broader life goals, therefore, should involve a sense that one's capabilities are being stretched and challenged within the scope of one's current abilities and based on one's core value system. This, in turn, can lead individuals to proactively foster greater well-being and improved quality of life.

Finally, relatedness was also consistently defined across crafting types. Every type of crafting discussed some form of relational crafting, whereby individuals fostered connections and support at work (Bindl et al., 2019; Rofcanin et al., 2019), gained social support from friends and family (Petrou & Bakker, 2016), arranged out of work activities that fostered deeper relationships and time spent with others (Kujanpää et al., 2022; Laporte et al., 2021a, 2021b), or explored current relationships to prioritise the energising ones and manage the draining

ones (Schipper & Ziegler, 2019; van Zyl et al., 2023). This commonality also aligns with eudaimonic theories that emphasise warm, loving connections with other people and a sense of belonging as essential to well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Mertika et al., 2020; Ryff, 1989) and improved quality of life (Burckhardt & Anderson, 2003). This review has shown that crafting might reflect the proactive ways that individuals foster these essential nutrients of a life well-lived.

As for the position of psychological needs within the crafting process, this review also illuminated some nuances. To begin with, psychological needs were almost always found to be outcomes of the different types of crafting, especially a sense of meaningfulness. This makes sense, as crafting has, from the start, hypothesised that people craft to satisfy their inherent psychological needs (de Bloom et al., 2020; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Research within job crafting has been far more rigorous in investigating antecedents of crafting. We found that feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness could all act as motivators to craft at work (e.g., Jarden et al., 2020; Jiang et al., 2021; van Wingerden et al., 2017b), with autonomy being the most researched. In contrast, few studies have investigated autonomy as an antecedent to non-work crafting (viewing it as a moderator between job crafting and non-work crafting; Demerouti et al., 2020; Petrou & Bakker, 2016). All other non-work and life crafting studies have investigated psychological needs as the outcomes of crafting only.

Future Direction

We hope that this review helps to show the specific ways in which autonomy, competence, relatedness, and meaning are related to crafting across life domains, which may guide researchers in designing crafting interventions or future studies. For example, by understanding the importance of autonomy in job crafting, future interventions might build this in as an important antecedent or measure it as a potential outcome. Importantly, each psychological need should be analysed independently rather than folded into a composite 'need satisfaction' measure, which will give the field greater clarity as to how each psychological need relates to the crafting process (e.g., van Wingerden et al., 2017b).

In addition, this review has highlighted areas within crafting that have been under-researched. As we reviewed above, job crafting has consistently understood the various antecedents and outcomes of crafting (Rudolph et al., 2017). On the other hand, research in non-work crafting and life crafting has focused predominantly on the beneficial outcomes, with far less attention given to the characteristics that motivate people to craft. The growing field of crafting would benefit from a better understanding of the antecedents to crafting outside of the workplace. For example, are those with a clearer idea of their values and interests more likely to engage in life crafting? Are certain Big 5 personality types (e.g., extroverts) more likely to craft non-work activities?

In order to achieve this, crafting scholars need to consistently agree upon definitions and measures for these constructs. For example, Chen et al. (2022)

created the life crafting scale, but van Zyl et al. (2023) have raised issues with it, proposing a broader life crafting model. Kujanpää et al. (2022) found that their off-job crafting for mastery subscale was highly correlated with Petrou and Bakker's (2016) leisure crafting measure, suggesting conceptual overlap. Once clearer definitions of non-work and life crafting are agreed upon, scholars can consistently measure these constructs and explore how they relate to other variables. We propose that autonomy, competence, relatedness, and meaning are core building blocks with which to develop clearer crafting definitions. Scholars might also investigate how psychological needs are defined across domains. For example, we found that autonomy was mostly operationalised as control, agency, and choice in job crafting research, whereas non-work and life crafting included more discussion of personal values. Future job crafting research might explore whether job crafting leads to greater value fulfilment at work or if value fulfilment moderates the relationship between job crafting and well-being.

Crafting psychological needs across domains is also an important area of future research. For example, do certain domains, such as work, allow for crafting behaviours that satisfy competence more than other domains, such as engaging in hobbies? Research both in job and non-work crafting suggests that feelings of competence may take longer to arise than other needs when someone begins crafting (Kujanpää et al., 2022; Petrou & Bakker, 2016; van den Heuvel et al., 2015). Therefore, future longitudinal research might investigate how long it might take for competence to change when crafting has been initiated.

In addition to our main research questions, some interesting findings arose from the demographics of studies. We found that crafting and psychological needs have been studied widely across various cultures, including from multiple non-Western countries. This lends support to the tenet within SDT that autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs are universally important (Chen, Vansteenkiste, et al., 2015). What is less known are the specific ways in which crafting, both at work and outside of it, is enacted in different cultures. For example, the need for competence is universally important, but the way in which crafting impacts competence may look significantly different between collectivist and individualist cultures. More in-depth qualitative studies might prove fruitful in elucidating the specific ways people engage in crafting behaviours, a call that has been made for well-being science more broadly (Lomas et al., 2021). We also found that while many studies used longitudinal methods, the majority were cross-sectional, less than 7% used qualitative analysis, and less than 4% were experimental. As crafting literature expands into non-work domains, it will be important to use different research designs that allow researchers to distinguish if psychological needs are acting as the motivator to craft or the outcome of successful crafting (de Bloom et al., 2020). For example, a greater focus on experimental designs and qualitative interviews may help to elucidate these nuances. Once more is known about the crucial ingredients of crafting in relation to psychological needs, crafting programs could be developed to help individuals improve their quality of life by actively shaping their work and non-work time to satisfy their psychological needs (Dekker et al., 2020).

Limitations

While comprehensive, this review is not without its limitations. It is possible that, while we attempted to capture and include as many papers as possible, including grey literature, we may have missed some important studies that used synonymous terms. We attempted to capture this with multiple searches, though given the broad nature of some of the terms being used, such as crafting and needs, we excluded these terms by themselves (using them instead as a part of phrases such as “job crafting”). Therefore, it is possible that we missed some relevant studies. Additionally, we only included four psychological needs in our review, as they are the most consistently researched needs, although others may play an important role. For example, self-esteem and security may be an important part of crafting that we missed in this review (Sheldon et al., 2001). In contrast to self-efficacy, which is more closely related to motivation, self-esteem is considered an affective state (Chen et al., 2004). Successful crafting may lead to people experiencing increased self-esteem, as they feel more worthy when their values and environment are more closely aligned. Therefore, self-esteem may act as an outcome of crafting (experiencing positive affect after successfully crafting in a life domain). Additionally, a sense of psychological safety may also be a need (Chen, van Assche et al., 2015; Maslow, 1943). People may experience safety at work, for example, when they craft an environment better suited to their other needs or when surrounded by secure relationships. Neither need has been investigated widely in the crafting literature, though it is possible that by excluding these needs, we have missed important antecedents or outcomes of the crafting process.

Conclusion

Psychological needs are important throughout the entire process of crafting. Whether making changes at work to experience more agency, challenging oneself and expanding skills in leisure time, or developing purposeful goals to increase meaning throughout multiple domains, crafting is a process whereby individuals can proactively take control of their psychological needs and improve their overall quality of life.

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Data Availability A file of the studies included in this review and the extracted variables is available from the lead author upon request.

Declarations

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