

The impact of using freelance caregivers on the quality of work of employed caregivers in nursing homes

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Preface

Dear reader,

The journey of writing a master's thesis is often a formidable challenge, one that requires perseverance, dedication, and the unwavering support of those around us. My own path to completing this thesis has been a long and arduous one, filled with countless hours of research, writing, and revising. Over an extended period, I have had the privilege of delving deeply into my chosen field, refining my skills, and broadening my understanding in ways I could not have anticipated at the outset.

I am deeply indebted to Prof. Dr. K. Lauche, whose guidance has been instrumental throughout this entire process. Her support extended far beyond the expected academic boundaries; she was available to provide feedback, encouragement, and insight, even during her sabbatical and at random moments. The hours of video calls were invaluable, and I cannot thank her enough for her dedication and patience.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my family and friends, who provided unwavering support and encouragement during the many long nights and early mornings dedicated to this project. Their belief in my ability to see this through was a constant source of strength.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the individuals and organization who contributed to my research. Their openness and willingness to share their experiences have enriched my work immeasurably.

I hope that you find this thesis both informative and engaging and that it offers valuable insights into the subject matter.

Thank you for taking the time to read my work.

Sincerely,

Nick Scheffelaar

Arnhem, 16 June 2024

Abstract

This master's thesis investigates the impact of employing self-employed caregivers on the quality of work among employed caregivers in Dutch nursing homes. As these institutions face increased care demands and personnel shortages, understanding the relationship between self-employed and employed caregivers is essential. The study explores this dynamic through Karasek's Job Demand-Control (JDC) model and aspects of Parker's SMART work design model, using an exploratory case study approach. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine participants from various caregiving roles within a nursing home.

The findings reveal that self-employed caregivers present significant challenges for employed caregivers, including increased workload, reduced autonomy, and diminished team cohesion. The frequent turnover and unfamiliarity of self-employed caregivers with the nursing home's procedures contribute to additional stress and administrative burdens for permanent caregivers, resulting in decreased quality of work.

This research provides valuable insights into the underexplored area of self-employed caregivers' impact on employed caregivers. It highlights the need for management strategies to better integrate self-employed caregivers, ensuring high care standards and supporting the well-being of permanent employees. These findings offer potential lessons for other healthcare settings facing similar workforce issues.

Keywords: self-employed caregivers, nursing homes, quality of work (QoW), employed caregivers

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

‘Nursing homes are at their full stretch. For years, the tension and load in Dutch nursing homes have been increased’ (Brons & Bruhenne, 2018). This research examines the influence of self-employed caregivers (freelancers) on the quality of work (QoW) of internally employed caregivers in nursing homes.

In the near future, the ageing population will increasingly need more care, and this will worsen already existing constraints in the care systems. These limitations are already evident, with relatives caring for their parents due to the scarcity of nursing home spots, and healthcare workers also feeling the strain. They are often overwhelmed, struggle with feeling insufficient, and are compelled to make tough decisions, due to a shortage in personnel and the increasing complexity of care. Furthermore, next ten years, about 142,000 of the 470,000 workers in the elderly care sector are anticipated to retire. These issues of elderly care will affect all layers of society at one point (Westerlaken, 2024).

Besides the increasing complexities in care, the Western labour market is seeing more people turn to self-employment, working as freelancers or business owners, fueled by desires for better work-life balance and the influence of neoliberalism. (Best & Chinta, 2021). This trend, notably rising in Europe since 2013, offers self-employed individuals’ greater control over their work schedules and conditions (Clark, 2022). Particularly in the Netherlands, the number of self-employed caregivers in nursing homes has surged from 32,000 in 2009 to 140,000 in 2019, a shift driven by both work-life balance priorities and neoliberal policies (van Wijk, 2020). These policies have reshaped elder care, emphasizing free-market principles and reducing government spending, thereby altering the composition and dynamics of care teams in nursing homes, balancing between freelancers and employed caregivers, and impacting workplace relationships and quality of care (Bloom, 2017).

Motivation and gap

This research will focus on the effects of these trends on employed caregivers, examining how the increasing reliance on freelance workers influences their QoW. This examination is crucial, as I observed these effects firsthand in my previous role as a healthcare manager. When we brought in self-employed caregivers (freelancers), there were noticeable changes in the QoW among our employed caregivers. For instance, one of our long-term employees, consistently receiving excellent performance reviews, started showing signs of disengagement and reduced productivity. This shift not

only affected team dynamics but also had a ripple effect on the overall quality of care provided to our patients. Such experiences underscore the importance of understanding how external caregivers can impact organizational outcomes and the quality of care.

Research in healthcare has extensively examined job satisfaction, performance, and work quality, focusing on various aspects like stress from residents' behaviours, family conflicts, and supervisor relationships (McGilton, et al., 2022). It also highlights the importance of team dynamics and person-centred care (Pol-Grevelink, Jukema, & Smits, 2011). These factors illustrate the complexity of healthcare environments, especially in nursing homes, and underscore the role of team climate and organizational structure in work quality and care (Gittell, Weinberg, Pfefferle, & Bishop, 2008). The QoW has a notable influence on employee satisfaction, which is important to companies because higher satisfaction results in employee retention, less absenteeism and harder working employees (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019). When looking at QoW, Karasek analyzed different types of jobs in relation to the demands and the control an employee experiences in their work. Of these job types, an active job is the category in which employees have a higher QoW which generally results in higher employee satisfaction (Karasek, 1979).

Despite the breadth of research, a notable gap exists in understanding the impact of freelancers on work dynamics (Quality of Work) within nursing homes. With an increase in self-employment rates among caregivers noted by van Wijk (2020), it's imperative to investigate how the interaction between employed caregivers and freelancers affects the QoW for employed caregivers. In this research, I will investigate the hypothesis that employees' QoW is influenced by working closely with freelancers.

Research objective and research question

This research aims to examine the influence of the use of self-employed caregivers on the quality of work of internal employees. This leads to the following research question:

“How does working with self-employed caregivers influence the quality of work for employed caregivers?”

Given that there is no prior research on this specific topic, this study will be exploratory in nature. The influence of self-employed caregivers is yet to be determined. To gain a better understanding of this issue, an exploratory approach must be adopted. Explanatory research, which focuses on linking different ideas to explain why they occur, would be unsuitable for this study (Yin, 2014). Instead, this research aims to investigate a phenomenon that is not clearly defined. It is not yet clear whether self-

employed caregivers (freelancers) have a notable influence on different types of employed caregivers, making exploratory research the most appropriate method (Yin, 2014).

Academic and social contribution

This research advances the field of organizational studies about the impact of using freelancers on employed personnel, particularly in the nursing home sector. By investigating the dynamics between freelancers and their internally employed counterparts, this study fills a notable gap in the existing literature. Prior research has covered various aspects of self-employment, including its advantages and challenges (Lomax, 2017). As well as its effects on individuals and their families who choose this path (Schölin, Broomé, & Ohlsson, 2016). Additionally, the body of literature concerning nursing homes already covers the organizational dimensions (Backhaus, van Rossum, Verbeek, & Halfens, 2017). Person-centered care and job satisfaction of caregivers is also described in literature about nursing homes (Pol-Grevelink, Jukema, & Smits, 2011).

However, the intersection of self-employed and employed personnel within healthcare settings, and its implications for QoW and interpersonal relationships, has remained unexplored. The increase in self-employed caregivers underlines the urgency for research in this area (van Wijk, 2020). By addressing this oversight, the present study not only contributes new insights into the operational dynamics of nursing homes but also enhances understanding of the broader implications of self-employment within traditional employment frameworks, which may carry over to other non-healthcare-related work sectors.

The theoretical contribution of this research is emphasized by its interdisciplinary approach, bridging gaps between self-employment literature and organizational studies in healthcare settings. Focusing on the interactions between self-employed and internally employed caregivers, it provides a comprehensive view of the factors influencing the QoW for employed caregivers in nursing homes. Furthermore, this study contributes to the effects on interpersonal relations, offering novel insights into how these elements interact within the unique context of healthcare provision by a mixed workforce (Lapena-Monux, Cibanal-Juan, Pedraz-Marcos, & Macia-soler, 2014).

This section will discuss the social contribution of this research on macro, institutional, and interpersonal levels. Government healthcare expenses are expected to rise until at least 2060, largely due to an ageing population, which currently accounts for about a third of healthcare costs in some Western societies (Vonk, Hilderink, Plasmans, Kommer, & Polder, 2020). The demand for healthcare personnel will also increase, with projections for the Netherlands indicating that one in four workers will be in healthcare by 2040 (Hamer, 2020). Thus, healthcare remains a crucial topic for debate and

study (CBS1, 2019). This research could help governments refine regulations to improve nursing home efficiency and caregiver satisfaction (Heyne, 2020).

Healthcare workforce shortages are a significant issue, expected to worsen due to factors such as high workload, low salary, limited autonomy, and lack of personal development opportunities, leading to staff outflow (V&VN, 2017). This study may provide insights for managers to adjust organizational designs to better meet the increasing demands in elderly care. Specifically, it can help identify factors affecting the relationship between employed personnel and freelancers, which could enhance job quality and satisfaction for employed caregivers, allowing for beneficial self-adjustments.

Structure

Following the introduction that outlines the context and problem statement, the thesis moves to the theoretical framework. This section explains Karasek's model and briefly introduces Parker's SMART work design model, establishing the basis for the research question and empirical investigation. The methodology chapter details the research design, emphasizing the use of abductive reasoning, suitable for exploring complex phenomena in a case study context. It also highlights the importance of the empirical context and describes the data collection methods, including the development of a codebook through a five-step process to ensure transparency and reproducibility.

The results chapter presents the study's findings, organized around the five components of the SMART work design model, linking them back to the theoretical framework. The final chapter synthesizes these findings, addressing the research question and discussing the theoretical and practical implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research. This structured approach ensures a logical progression from theoretical foundations to practical implications.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

Introduction

The theoretical framework uses relevant background literature to further illustrate the context of the research question. The research context focuses on the dynamics of QoW, expressed in job design and employee well-being. By grounding the study in established theories, it can systematically explore the intricate relationships between job demands, employee autonomy, and social support within the workplace.

One of the foundational models in this domain is Karasek's Job Demand-Control (JDC) model. This model posits that the QoW results from the interaction between job demands and job decisions. Karasek's model primarily focuses on job design elements such as work intensity, decision-making authority, and skill utilization. These components are critical in understanding how job structures impact employee stress and performance and therefore the QoW (Karasek, 1979).

However, this research, particularly through qualitative interviews, has revealed limitations in Karasek's model in addressing the broader scope of the research question. While the JDC model offers substantial insights into job design, it lacks a comprehensive view of the social dimensions within the workplace, which are crucial for understanding employee well-being and the holistic nature of job satisfaction which follows the QoW.

Given these insights, it became evident that a more encompassing framework was necessary to capture the social aspects of job design. Therefore, this study incorporates some elements of the SMART work design model. The SMART model expands on Karasek's framework by integrating social elements and a broader perspective on job characteristics. It encompasses five main characteristics: stimulating, mastery, agency, relational, and tolerable (Parker & Knight, 2023).

Three of these characteristics- stimulating, agency and tolerable characteristics —align closely with Karasek's model and are thus not explored in depth in this study. The remaining two characteristics, mastery and relational characteristics, introduce new dimensions that are pivotal to understanding the social aspects of QoW (Parker & Knight, 2023).

By integrating these additional characteristics from the SMART work design model, this research aims to provide a more holistic understanding of the QoW that includes both structural and social elements. This comprehensive approach allows for a deeper exploration of how job characteristics influence employee well-being, beyond the constraints of traditional models focused solely on job demands and job decisions.

Quality of work: Job Demand-Control model

Quality of work (QoW) can be defined as “the meaningfulness of jobs and (the possibility to deal with) work-related stress” (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019). Work and the organization can influence and mobilize certain motives and develop them. This also means the organizations can reduce or even eradicate types of motivations (Kuipers, van Amelsvoort, & Kramer, 2012).

Karasek (1979) seeks to differentiate types of jobs in relation to the demands and control over decisions an employee has in their job (Karasek, 1979). These are factors that can influence the QoW of an employee. In the figure below, Karasek’s Job Demand-Control (JDC) model features job demands on the horizontal axis and job decisions on the vertical axis. Within the model, four types of jobs can be placed: passive jobs, high-strain jobs, low-strain jobs, and active jobs.

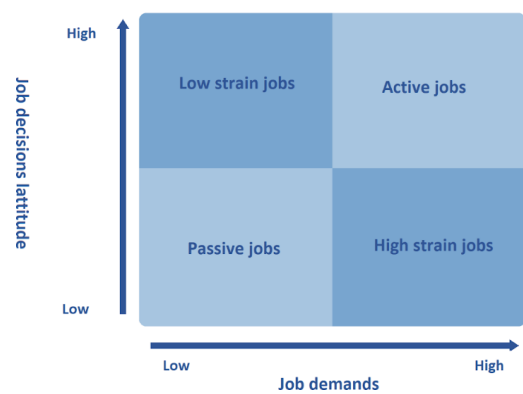


Figure 1: Karasek’s Job demand control model

The job demand dimension (horizontal axis) refers to the pace and diligence with which a worker must execute the task at hand. These demands may have physical and/or psychological impact and are a result of the following characteristics of a job: physical, psychological, social or organizational (Sliter & Yuan, 2015). Time pressure, amount of work, level of concentration required, and interruptions during the work process have an influence on this dimension (Muntaner, & O'Campo, 1993).

Higher job demands are correspondent to higher levels of stress, depending on the position on the job decisions on the vertical axis. This stress can positively or negatively affect the QoW. In high strain jobs (low job decision, high job demands), this high level of stress is closely related with burn-out (García-Sierra, Fernández-Castro, & Martínez-Zaragoza, 2016). “Burn-out is psychological response to constant job stressors in which the person is in a state of exhaustion with three components: emotional exhaustion, cynicism and personal efficacy.” (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1997).

The job decision dimension can be largely divided into two main points: skill & learning and decision authority. Skill & learning represents the degree to which the job involves learning, creativity, diversity of tasks, and development of individual skills. Decision authority is the degree to which an employee

can make decisions on their job, have influence in their department, and/or can influence company policies (Muntaner, & O'Campo, 1993).

The decision authority of an employee can be influenced by individual task discretion, on their influence on departments and by company policies. Gallie proposes in later research that the highest significant impact on QoW for an employee is on the level of individual task discretion (autonomy) which affects the employee's authority as well as their psychological wellbeing (Gallie, 2013). The other two factors, influence on department and company policies, still impact the QoW significantly, but ultimately affect the psychological wellbeing and job satisfaction less than the individual task discretion.

For both organization and employee, the desired outcome is an active job, which allows the employee to regulate their work, and therefore can deal with the job demands and develop themselves (Söderfeldt, Söderfeldt, Muntaner, O'Campo, & Warg, 1996). On the other hand high strain jobs have a high level of job demand with little to no autonomy or control (low job decision). Thus, high strain jobs can lead to high levels of stress, which can turn into burn-out, leading to absenteeism (Lacovides, Fountoulakis, Kaprinis, & Kaprinis, 2002). A low strain job gives the employee autonomy and their own timetable with a low demanding job. This can lead to boredom and high turnover rates (Naz, 2017). The last type of job is the passive job, which exists of simple tasks with little to no autonomy. Examples of these kinds of jobs are assembly line work and production work (van der Doef & Maes, 1990).

The two dimensions of the JDC model, job decision and job demand, can be perceived as and thought to act as two individual units. However, a recent study has concluded that burn-out (related to job demand) and engagement (related to job decision) are not isolated processes. Engagement rather acts as a moderator of burn-out (García-Sierra, Fernández-Castro, & Martínez-Zaragoza, 2016). Therefore, it is important to keep in mind and examine the presence or absence of the relation between the dimensions.

Quality of work: The Smart work design model

As mentioned, in addition to Karasek's JDC model, this study will focus on two aspects of Parker's SMART work design model: "Mastery" and "Relational." These emphasize the social dimension of work quality. The other characteristics (Stimulation, Agency, and Tolerable) overlap with Karasek's model and do not add to the social aspect. Parker & Knight's SMART model provides a framework for enhancing employee well-being and organizational performance, highlighting the growing importance of social factors in work quality (Schepers & van de Berg, 2006).

Mastery, within the context of the SMART work design model, emphasizes the strategic coordination and integration of efforts to enhance overall organizational efficiency. It involves the effective dissemination of information to ensure that tasks and decisions are appropriately delegated and distributed among individuals and teams within an organization. This approach is pivotal in ensuring that each member understands their responsibilities and can anticipate the needs and expectations of others accurately (Parker & Knight, 2023). In practical terms, mastery in work design is facilitated through various communication channels, including both written (such as standards, protocols, and performance indicators) and verbal methods (such as feedback from supervisors and goal-setting discussions). These channels are essential for aligning individual and team efforts with the overarching goals of the organization, ensuring that everyone is working towards a common objective (Phanish, 2014). This category encompasses several key elements such as job feedback, feedback from others, role clarity, and task identity, all of which are integral to fostering a sense of mastery among employees. Feedback from the job itself provides employees with clear information about their task performance, helping them understand how well they are meeting expectations and achieving goals. This feedback allows for self-assessment and performance improvement. Feedback from supervisors and colleagues offers external perspectives, giving valuable insights into goal attainment and areas for improvement. It supports effective coordination and fosters a collaborative environment, aligning employee efforts with those of their peers. Role clarity, understanding one's duties and expectations, is crucial for mastery. It allows employees to perform tasks with confidence and efficiency, enhancing job satisfaction and performance. Task identity, the extent to which a job involves completing a whole piece of work, is fundamental to mastery. It helps employees see the outcomes of their efforts and understand their contributions to the organization, boosting motivation and the connection to the organization's success (Parker & Knight, 2023).

Examining organizational structure and design, work characteristics associated with expertise enhance cohesion by streamlining the flow of information. In contrast, characteristics centred on relationships underscore the social structures that consolidate individual efforts. It highlights that workplace social dynamics encompass the interpersonal interactions and connections shaped by the jobs, roles, and tasks that employees engage in (Grant & Parker, 2009). This emphasizes that employees operate within a network of social interactions rather than in isolation. Relational work focuses on fostering emotional support, connections, and (positive) interactions among employees. Factors influencing these relational characteristics include task significance, perceived beneficiary contact, and perceived social support. Support from supervisors is crucial here, as it includes guidance, feedback, and recognition, which are essential for employee morale and productivity. When supervisors offer clear

direction and appreciate their employees' efforts, it contributes to a positive work environment and enhances job satisfaction (Parker & Knight, 2023). Similarly, support from peers plays a vital role in creating a collaborative atmosphere. This support involves colleagues helping each other through knowledge sharing and emotional support, which strengthens team cohesion and fosters a culture of mutual assistance. The nature of interdependence in tasks, where employees rely on each other to complete their work, also encourages communication and collaboration, building trust and a sense of community within the team. Perceived task significance refers to the belief that one's work has a meaningful impact on others' lives. Another essential relational work characteristic is perceived social support which emphasizes the importance of being able to seek advice and help from colleagues, fostering a supportive work environment. Moreover, regular social contact among employees, characterized by frequent and meaningful interactions, helps build relationships, reduces feelings of isolation, and enhances a sense of belonging within the organization. The connection with end users and beneficiaries further motivates employees by providing a tangible sense of purpose. Understanding and engaging with those directly impacted by their work reinforces the significance of their contributions and deepens their commitment to the organization's objectives.

2.2 Quality of work in Nursing homes

The QoW and care in nursing homes has been a topic of discussion for approximately 30 years. Factors such as teamwork, autonomy, and organizational structure directly impact the quality of care provided. In general, low QoW leads to lower job satisfaction and higher employee turnover (Straker & Atchley, 1999). This higher turnover interferes with the quality of care through five mechanisms. First, it increases the number of inexperienced and unfamiliar employees. Second, it weakens the standards of care. Third, it creates psychological distress for some residents. Fourth, high turnover increases expenses for the organization, which leaves less money for the client. Fifth, it increases the workload for the remaining employed caregivers (Castle, 2005). The lower quality of care can in turn again influence the QoW of the caregivers. The combination of unfamiliar colleagues that need more guidance and information, and the lower ratio of experienced/remaining employed caregivers leading to decreased productivity, results in higher job demands. Ultimately, the high turnover does not only lead to a decrease of money to spend on the client, but it also decreases available funds for learning and development for employee. Employee retention efforts such as salary raises or team-building events are also economized due to this loss of money (Aladwan, 2015).

Firstly, by using Karasek's job demand control model to evaluate and determine where a caregiver working in a nursing home falls on the horizontal and vertical axis (job demand and job decision respectfully), can provide a great visual for where improvements can be made to boost QoW and by extension employee satisfaction (Karasek, 1979).

In general, caregivers experience stress in their work, placing them high on the job demand axis. This has to do with several factors, most notably work environment (Najimi, Goudarzi, & Sharifirad, 2012). 'A work environment refers to the elements that comprise the setting in which employees work and impact workers' (Glassdoor, 2021). These work environments for caregivers have been under pressure for many years (Hasson & Arnetz, 2008). One of the stressful conditions is being created by the role of the manager. Caregivers struggle to deal with the systemic barriers which are in place in nursing homes (Ells & Beagan, 2007). These barriers allow caregivers little to no involvement in the decision-making processes managers control (Bolton, 2004). This issue is in line with the lack of employee involvement. Due to this lack of participation on decisions, the employed caregivers shift down on the vertical axis of the JDC model. A lower score on this job decision latitude may lead to boring or stressful jobs.

To improve QoW, management can facilitate employed caregivers' opportunities for further learning and development. Caregivers have access to these learning opportunities, although they use them only sparingly due to a lack of initiative from the caregivers, as well as a lack of stimulation by management (Sparkey, 2021). One of the major reasons for this missed opportunity is that the healthcare sector is under pressure due to employed caregivers shortages, high turnover, and high absenteeism, forcing the focal point to be staff retention, instead of development and education of personnel (CBS2, 2021). All in all, the caregivers experience high job demands placing them to the right on Karasek's JDC model. Therefore, combined with the low job decision latitude, most caregivers fall under the category 'high-strain jobs' in which they must deal with many factors contributing to workload and stress but have very little agency or control.

Furthermore, the autonomy caregivers experience differs for the function in which they operate. The higher the level at which caregivers' function, the more autonomy they experience. Additionally, on average caregivers experience the most autonomy when working in home-care, whereas employees working in nursing homes score the lowest on autonomy (Maurits, de Veer, Spreeuwenberg, & Francke, 2016).

Secondly, in the dynamic and emotionally charged environment of nursing homes, the characteristics of secondary mastery and relational work characteristics work emerge in unique ways. Healthcare workers in these settings often demonstrate a deep commitment to their roles, working with their hearts and showing immense dedication to the well-being of their patients. This heartfelt approach also creates a distinct professional atmosphere where formal feedback mechanisms are less prevalent. Instead, informal communication methods, such as gossiping and rumour, frequently dominate the landscape of interpersonal interactions among employed caregivers (Bulduk, 2016). Gossip and rumour, as noted by Bulduk, become prevalent modes of communication in such settings. These informal methods, while sometimes seen as damaging, serve various functions within the nursing home context. They can act as a means of social bonding among employed caregivers, helping to create a sense of community and shared understanding. Furthermore, gossip and rumours can function as informal networks for the dissemination of critical information, allowing employees to stay informed about changes, potential issues, or emerging concerns in a more accessible and less intimidating manner. However, reliance on informal communication carries its own set of challenges (Bulduk, 2016). The lack of structured feedback can hinder professional growth and the consistent improvement of care practices. Miscommunication and misunderstandings are more likely to occur, potentially impacting the quality of patient care. Additionally, the informal nature of gossip and rumour can contribute to the spread of inaccurate information, creating an environment of uncertainty and mistrust among employed caregivers (Tan, 2020).

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter explains the chosen methodology including the research approach, data collection, data analysis, methodological quality and research ethics.

Research Approach The goal of the research is to find out how there is an effect on employed caregivers and in which form. Qualitative methodology was chosen because it allows for a clear insight and an in-depth understanding of the situation at hand. Furthermore, qualitative data can be richer in meaning than quantified data when dealing with complex phenomena (Babbie, 2012). Qualitative research also allows the researcher to participate in the actual experience and acquire more detailed insights (Creswell, 1994).

An exploratory research was chosen over explanatory research due to the main aspects being in a new and overlooked area (Babbie, 2012). Exploratory research will give a better understanding of the situation at hand. A prerequisite for explanatory research is a well-defined field, the lack thereof makes explanatory research less valuable (Yin, 2014).

A lot of research on the QoW has already been conducted, but the influence of self-employees on employed caregivers has not yet been researched. Therefore, abductive reasoning was most suitable to accomplish the goal of the research. Abductive reasoning begins with an incomplete observation and results in possible theory(s) of the researched phenomena (Awuzie & Mcdermott, 2017). "Abductive reasoning helps Purpose Qualitative researchers who search for the appropriate approach within which to situate their research" (Awuzie & Mcdermott, 2017). Because abductive reasoning is not limited to existing theories, it increases the possibility of new theoretical insights (Belk & Sobh, 2019).

A case study was selected as the research strategy. A case study is an empirical study that examines a phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2014). The research examined the phenomenon that self-employed caregivers are represented more in nursing homes (van Wijk, 2020). Furthermore, a case study is especially suitable when looking for the 'how' and/or 'why' in relation to research (Tetnowski, 2015). This suits the nature of the research question. From the different types of case studies, a single case study has been selected, which means one organization is researched. The use of a single case study allows for the best insight into a nuanced, empirically rich, holistic account of specific phenomena (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In addition, this study took place at one point in time, making it a cross-sectional study. This also gives the researcher the opportunity and space to collect data from many different individuals (Babbie, 2012).

Empirical context In examining the relationship between internal and external caregivers within Dutch nursing homes, understanding the context is crucial to fully grasp the dynamics at play. Following World War II, the Netherlands embarked on neoliberal reforms. These reforms, characterized by reduced government expenditure, decentralization, and privatization, have left an indelible mark on the Dutch elderly care landscape, especially after the 1994 Long-term Care Act (Welschen, 1994). This crucial law spurred the shift towards more decentralized and specialized healthcare, deeply impacting the way elderly homes function by increasing the responsibilities of employed caregivers and redirecting their attention to caring for higher care complexity clients who require more comprehensive care. However, this increased burden has not been matched by a corresponding improvement in personnel skills, which has aggravated challenges associated with caregiving responsibilities, career development, and stress in the workplace (de Kwant, 2015).

The trend towards self-employment among caregivers emerges as a countermeasure to these challenges. The Dutch work-life balance, celebrated globally, confronts pressures within the nursing home sector, where inflexible collective agreements curtail flexibility (Geurts, Taris, Kompier, & Dijkers, 2005). In pursuit of better work-life balance and autonomy, the number of freelancers has amplified, quadrupling from 2009 to 2019 (van Wijk, 2020). This rise reflects a broader shift towards flexible work arrangements, albeit introducing concerns over the loss of in-house expertise and continuity of care (Curry & Stark, 2000).

Nursing homes in the Netherlands are complex entities catering to an array of needs across rehabilitation, psycho-geriatrics, and somatic care. The demand for more specialized care has escalated, alongside policies encouraging elderly individuals with the capacity to remain living at home for as long as feasible. This policy shift has led to nursing homes increasingly becoming sanctuaries for those requiring more intensive, long-term care, further straining the already stretched resources and personnel (de Kwant, 2015). Within these institutions, caregivers—encompassing home care assistants, healthcare assistant nurses, or nurses—encounter evolving roles. These roles range from providing daily living assistance to executing complex medical tasks, underscoring the multifaceted nature of care provision in contemporary Dutch nursing homes (Grotendorst, 1998). For a detailed explanation of the various healthcare professionals mentioned above refer to Appendix 1. The inclination towards self-employment among caregivers mirrors a broader societal shift towards valuing flexibility and autonomy in the workplace, although raising queries about the sustainability of care quality and accessibility in a rapidly ageing society (de Kwant, 2015).

Data Collection Methods

The following section elaborate on the process of collecting the original data for research purposes.

A single case study was chosen because I, as the researcher, had unique access to the organization, owing to my previous employment there. Although I no longer worked at the organization at the time of the research, my former position provided me with valuable insights and connections that facilitated the study.

Due to the newness and explorative nature of this research, semi-structured interviews were chosen to collect the necessary data. Semi-structured interviews are a verbal interchange in which the interviewer has prepared some questions, while still giving the interviewee/participant enough space and choice to address issues which they deem to be related to the topic (Clifford, Cope, Gillespie, & French, 2016). Furthermore, the interviewer can follow up on the answers given, which makes semi-structured suitable for in-depth conversation (Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). Semi-structured interviews also give the researcher the possibility to adjust the interview to some degree to acquire more relevant results. Find the interview questions mentioned in Appendix 2. The method of selecting the subjects of the interviews was carried out using a non-probability approach. This implies that the samples will be selected, based on the researcher's judgment in which the researcher's expertise and knowledge of the subject is crucial (Schreuder, Gregoire, & Weyer, 2001). Within the different types of non-probability sampling, quota sampling has been selected. This type of sampling is deemed most suitable for this research because of the variety of caregivers working in nursing homes.

This research investigated whether different types of caregivers have different experiences with freelancers by interviewing the three different professions. The three types of caregivers working in nursing homes are home care assistants, healthcare assistant nurses and nurses. To give further insight on work relations and possible influences freelancers may have on employed caregivers, interviewing a manager or team-leader in addition to the three above-mentioned professions is a requisite. Furthermore, the nursing home that is being researched has different departments, somatic and psychogeriatric. The somatic department comprises most elderly people living in nursing homes in the Netherlands (Verbeek-Oudijk & Koper, 2021). To generate the most relevant results, this research will focus solely on the somatic department of nursing homes (Backhaus, van Rossum, Verbeek, & Halfens, 2017). Within the somatic department, two home care assistants, three healthcare assistant nurses, three nurses, and one manager were interviewed, which totals nine interviews. Nine interviews meet the requirements to conduct an analysis on and draw conclusions from (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

Data analysis

The initial phase involved immersion in the dataset to ensure understanding of its content. This began with the transcription of audio recordings into textual format. The first step is to familiarize oneself with the (transcribed) data. I, the researcher, have transcribed all interviews to generate familiarity with the data. Furthermore, it is helpful to listen to the recorded data again before starting any coding (King & Brooks, 2016). The second stage is preliminary coding. In this stage, the researcher highlights “anything that seems to likely be helpful to the contribution of the understanding of the research topic” (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The researcher will also keep in mind a priori themes, which are relevant to the research topic. The analysis is being imposed by a subset of data, which means the researcher first highlights four interviews before continuing. Upon completing the highlighting process, the researcher compiled a list of quotes, and transformed it in a coding list (see Appendix 3), which was subsequently condensed and organized into a codebook (see Appendix 4). A codebook is a textual document used to detail the coding scheme for a dataset, explaining variables and the codes assigned to them. The codebook is structured into columns with the following headers: ‘quotes’, ‘what characterizes working with freelancers from the perspective of a permanent employee?’, ‘what is the impact on the permanent employee’, ‘selective code’, and central themes. The second and third column need to be filled in first, before the selective codes and central themes could be worked out. This approach is chosen due to the fact that working with freelancers needs some extra explanation. The job description of ‘freelancer’ is associated with certain characteristics in a general sense. These characteristics flow over into what the impact of these characteristics have on the permanent employees. This process of defining and refining the codes/interpretations was iterative, involving continuous review and adjustment to enhance the codebook's accuracy and utility. After defining the characterizations of working with freelancers and the impact (2nd and 3rd column of the codebook) the selective codes (4th column) were analysed and identified. Codes were then collated into central themes, representing broader patterns of meaning within the data and referring back to the theoretical framework (5th column). This stage required a critical and creative approach, balancing the need to capture the complexity of the data while maintaining a coherent thematic structure. The number of themes the codebook encompasses is not bound by the quantity of code nor predetermined sequences in which the code should proceed (King & Brooks, 2016). After this stage, the main concepts of the theoretical framework have been incorporated and are presented in the fifth column. Furthermore, the researcher enlisted the help of peers and the supervisor to make sure the coding happens independently. The initial themes identified are then subjected to a rigorous review process. This involved two levels of analysis: at the code level and the dataset level. Each theme is

examined to ensure it accurately reflects the underlying coded data. Additionally, the themes are reviewed in the context of the entire dataset to verify their relevance and representativeness. This review led to the refinement of themes, including the merging, splitting, or discarding of themes to achieve a coherent and comprehensive thematic framework. The supervisor was also enlisted to ensure the independence of the iterative processes of reviewing and redefining themes. When the codebook was finalized, the researcher again moved back to the original data to test the codebook on the entire data set (King & Brooks, 2016). Only when there are no significant changes and/or missing data linking to the codebook, the researcher moved to the sixth step. The sixth step is the researchers' interpretation of the codebook. In this stage, findings were written down while referring to the codebook. The main themes (in Appendix 4) were chosen as the structure for the results (King & Brooks, 2016).

Methodological quality of the study

In qualitative research, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are the criteria of trustworthiness (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Various measures were taken to meet these criteria. Qualitative research is credible when the information drawn from the interviewee represents the original data and is correctly interpreted by the researcher (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The following measures were important to ensure credibility. First, the interviews were recorded to capture the data. This enabled the researcher to fully interpret the responses of the interviewee. The responses were then transcribed and returned to the interviewee to verify whether the interviewee's intentions have been processed correctly. Second, transferability is concerned with the probability of reproducing the study. The more detail is known about the methods, the higher the transferability will be (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To meet this criterion, an extensive description of the research and the corresponding choices are provided.

Third, "dependability is the control/check whether the analysis process is in line with the accepted standards for a particular design" (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To keep this in line, a research diary was kept stating any methodology changes. These changes will be further analysed and elaborated upon in the discussion section of this study. Finally, confirmability is concerned with the aspect of neutrality. The study must indicate the data resources, the collection methods, and the process which leads to the results (Symon & Cassell, 2017). To ensure confirmability, all steps that have been taken in this study are accurately described. A code book is the practical approach to show the original data, which

codes are used, and which are being processed to results. This codebook will be available as an appendage.

Research ethics

It is important to understand the researcher's influence on the study and how it may affect others. Therefore, the most important aspect of research ethics is to treat others the way you want to be treated (Myers, 2013). Furthermore, the Dutch Code of Conduct for Research Integrity was applied to ensure integrity and professionalism, to the standards maintained by academic researchers (Andriessen, Bijleveld, D'Alessandro, Dankelman, & Werkhoven, 2018). When approaching an organization to inform about its willingness to participate, the purpose of the study was explained to the organization (Andriessen, Bijleveld, D'Alessandro, Dankelman, & Werkhoven, 2018). Furthermore, the researcher guaranteed that the collected data is anonymously processed and stored in a secure manner. Moreover, the documents involved in this research were strictly confidential and a non-disclosure agreement was signed by the researcher and supervisor to ensure the information is processed correctly (Andriessen, Bijleveld, D'Alessandro, Dankelman, & Werkhoven, 2018). When the interviews were conducted, the interviewees were aware of the purpose of the research, and they were informed about the topics in advance. The interviewees were also allowed to ask questions about the study to help them decide whether to participate or not. Before the interview, every interviewee gave permission for the interview to be recorded. These recordings had the sole purpose of transcribing the interview and were deleted after this process (Andriessen, Bijleveld, D'Alessandro, Dankelman, & Werkhoven, 2018). Furthermore, the participants were aware and told that at any time during the interview, they could withdraw from the research. When the interviews were transcribed, the interviews were sent back to the participants for confirmation of the data (Andriessen, Bijleveld, D'Alessandro, Dankelman, & Werkhoven, 2018).

Chapter 4: Results

This research studied the following research question: *“How does working with self-employed caregivers influence the quality of work of employed caregivers?”*

The structure of the results section mirrors that of the theoretical framework, ensuring a coherent and systematic presentation of the findings. Initially, the results of job design are articulated throughout Karasek’s model. Subsequently, the focus shifts to the social aspects, which are explained throughout two characteristics of the SMART work design model. This alignment facilitates a cohesive understanding of the study's outcomes in the context of the established theoretical foundation. While the majority of interviewees expressed satisfaction with the support freelancers provide, noting that an extra pair of hands can indeed be beneficial, there are important considerations to take into account. Freelancers can certainly help alleviate workloads and provide much-needed assistance during peak periods. However, it's crucial to question whether the potential downsides might outweigh the benefits.

Job demand

This study reveals that the presence of self-employees introduces significant unpredictability into work schedules and the availability of personnel. Employed caregivers frequently reported not knowing who would be working on a given day, leading to a lack of continuity and increased workload. One employee stated, "We never know who is going to show up, it's always a surprise" (speaker 3). This unpredictability creates stress and a sense of instability among employed caregivers, who must continuously adapt to new colleagues. Additionally, self-employees are often less familiar with the specific procedures and requirements of the work environment, necessitating extra time and effort from employed caregivers to train them. As one respondent noted, "If a freelancer is not familiar with our procedures, it takes extra time for us to onboard them" (speaker 7). The increased workload also stems from the need to take over tasks of the freelancers, which then are performed by permanent employees. These additional tasks arise because freelancers do not always carry the same responsibilities or familiarity with procedures and equipment. This results in greater physical and psychological strain for permanent employees, who often work overtime to manage the workload. One participant explained, "We often have to take over tasks because freelancers don't have the same responsibilities" (speaker 2). Furthermore, this dual role diminishes the potential for professional development and job satisfaction, as permanent employees are burdened with extra work and constantly need to train freelancers. Moreover, they experience heightened responsibility for the

safety of freelancers adding another layer of stress. An employee highlighted this concern: "Sometimes freelancers don't know how to handle our equipment, which can be dangerous" This additional responsibility often requires employed caregivers to manage their tasks while also covering for less experienced freelancers

This cycle of training new freelancers and compensating for their lack of familiarity can be exhausting for employed caregivers. The time and effort spent on onboarding new freelancers could otherwise be used for improving patient care and enhancing team dynamics. Consequently, the frequent introduction of new freelancers disrupts the stability and efficiency of the nursing home, creating challenges in maintaining a consistent and high-quality standard of care.

Job Decision

The second main theme is job decisions. Job decision consists of two main aspects: skill & learning and decision authority. Skill & learning involves the job's potential for learning, creativity, task variety, and skill development. Decision authority refers to an employee's ability to make job-related decisions, influence their department, and affect company policies.

Permanent employees face considerable challenges in terms of skill development and learning opportunities working alongside freelancers. The frequent turnover and temporary nature of freelancers create a learning environment that is often disrupted and diluted. As one employee put it, "If a freelancer isn't familiar with our house, it takes extra time for us to train them" (speaker 8). This constant need to train new freelancers diverts the attention of employed caregivers from their own learning and development opportunities. Instead of advancing their skills or taking on more complex tasks, they find themselves repeatedly performing basic actions. This situation also limits the variety and creativity of tasks that permanent employees can engage in. They are often required to handle routine tasks and provide oversight for freelancers, rather than exploring new challenges or creative problem-solving opportunities. One employee expressed frustration over this, saying, "In many cases, internal employees work at 120%, while freelancers work at 80%. They do not experience the same level of responsibility" (speaker 6). This ongoing responsibility for less experienced colleagues reduces the opportunities for employed caregivers to expand their skill set and engage in diverse work activities, ultimately impacting their professional growth and job satisfaction. Furthermore, one employee expressed that, "It's like we're constantly in transition" (speaker 3). Pointing out that the organisation tends to concentrate primarily on the immediate tasks and events of the day, which often results in a lack of long-term vision.

The presence notably affects the decision-making authority of permanent employees. Many feel that the frequent and unpredictable involvement of freelancers undermines their control over their work environment. As one employee noted, “We have no control over who comes to work, which makes it difficult to form a stable team” (Speaker 6). This lack of control extends to their ability to make effective decisions within their departments, as the composition and dynamics of their teams are constantly changing.

Furthermore, permanent employees often feel that their feedback and concerns regarding the use of freelancers are not taken seriously by management. One participant shared, “It seems like our feedback isn’t taken seriously” (speaker 9). This lack of responsiveness from management can lead to a feeling of disenfranchisement, where employed caregivers believe they have little influence over department or company policies. This diminished sense of agency and influence negatively impacts their engagement and motivation, as they feel their voices are not heard or valued in the organizational decision-making process.

The results now focus on the SMART work design model, focusing only on Mastery and Relational characteristics. Mastery involves the degree of role clarity, feedback, and task identity in a job, fostering deep understanding and competence. Relational characteristics refer to the sense of support, purpose, and social contact in one’s role, highlighting the importance of social connections.

Mastery Characteristics

The interaction between employed caregivers and freelancers necessitates increased reliance on external feedback from supervisors and colleagues to uphold care standards. Permanent employees frequently find themselves guiding freelancers, which adds to their workload. As one employee mentioned, “Freelancers need to be guided by the employed caregivers” (Speaker 8). While this external feedback is crucial for maintaining organizational alignment, it also places an additional burden on employed caregivers to continually oversee and correct freelancers' performance. Role clarity ensures employees understand their responsibilities and expectations. The integration of freelancers often complicates this clarity. employed caregivers report confusion and an increased administrative burden due to the inconsistent presence of freelancers. One employee remarked, “Freelancers come and go. It is very difficult to build a relationship with them because they change so often” (Speaker 8). This highlights the challenges employed caregivers face in maintaining clear roles and responsibilities surrounded by frequent turnover. Moreover, the necessity of repeatedly explaining tasks to new freelancers is a common issue. As one employed caregiver described, “You

develop experience that tells you that a strange name on your schedule for the day is usually not a good sign” (Speaker 7).

The involvement of freelancers often disrupts continuity and the ability to complete tasks from start to finish. A fixed employee stated, “The responsibility falls more on employed caregivers because freelancers leave, and the door closes until the next time” (Speaker 5). This highlights the difficulty employed caregivers face in maintaining job identity when freelancers frequently change, leaving them to complete unfinished tasks. Additionally, the inconsistency in freelancers' work quality hinders employed caregivers from feeling a sense of ownership and completion of their tasks. As one employee noted, “Freelancers show little commitment and do not seem enthusiastic about the work” (Speaker 1).

Relational Characteristics

During the interviews, it was evident that for caregivers, the quality of care and QoW were strongly related, as caregivers express a deep emotional investment in their work. They work for the residents, and when the residents do not receive the care they deserve and is expected, the employed caregivers experience emotional frustration. The task of working with elderly individuals, most of whom are in their palliative phase, brings a significant emotional burden. The relational dynamics within the workplace were adversely affected using freelancers. The high turnover rate hampers the ability of permanent employees to build and maintain relationships with freelancers, who often work only briefly in a department. One employee noted, "It's not like you can chat with freelancers about personal topics; you don't know them" (speaker 2). This lack of social support and team cohesion creates a sense of isolation among employed caregivers, and employed caregivers is therefore unable to ‘get it off their chest’ affecting the overall atmosphere. The inability to establish strong connections with colleagues diminishes the significance of their tasks and the sense of contributing to a meaningful work environment. Another employee commented: “The care quality suffers if freelancers don’t adhere to the same standards, client sometimes don’t get changed those who are incontinent” (speaker 8) indicating that relational disruptions can impact both the QoW and quality of care. Thus, the frequent turnover of freelancers not only affects team dynamics but also has a profound impact on the emotional well-being of caregivers and the quality of care provided to residents.

Chapter 5: Summary of key findings & Discussion

In this concluding chapter, the findings of the study are integrated and critically analysed. Section 5.1 presents the response to the primary research question, providing a comprehensive overview of the key insights. Section 5.2 outlines the study's contributions to existing theoretical frameworks & practical recommendations based on the study's outcomes, suggesting actionable strategies for practitioners. Finally, Section 5.3 discusses the study's limitations and suggests directions for future research.

Summary of key findings

The theoretical framework revealed that the quality of work is significantly influenced by job demands, decision-making autonomy, mastery and relation-work characteristics. These factors were examined through the lens of Karasek's Job Demand-Control (JDC) model and Parker's SMART work design model, highlighting the complex interplay between job design and social support in shaping the work environment for caregivers. In the findings, the majority of the interviewees expressed gratitude for the additional 'helping hand' that freelancers offer. However, the findings indicate that the presence of self-employed caregivers in nursing homes introduces several challenges that adversely affect the quality of work for employed caregivers:

Higher job demands: Employed caregivers face heightened workloads and increased physical and psychological stress due to the frequent need to train and oversee new freelancers. Furthermore, employed caregivers must step up/do more work to compensate for the lack of knowledge and commitment of the freelancers. This added responsibility often leads to a sense of burnout and reduced job satisfaction, which is part of QoW.

Lower job decision-making: The unpredictable and temporary nature of freelancers disrupts the decision-making processes of employed caregivers, limiting their autonomy and control over their work environment. Furthermore, employed caregivers feel they have a lack of control over who is deployed, as well as when and where freelancers are assigned. Due to the unreliability and limited knowledge of freelancers, day-to-day operations are often driven by immediate needs and 'crisis management'. This reactive approach hampers the learning and development of employed caregivers, as there is little room for systematic growth and skill enhancement. This lack of influence contributes to feelings of disenfranchisement and lowers overall QoW.

In summary, the presence of freelancers can push internal employees into high-strain jobs according to Karasek's Job Demand-Control (JDC) model. This occurs due to increased job demands and reduced control, highlighting the need to carefully manage job design when incorporating freelancers.

Lowering Mastery work characteristics: Employed caregivers must continuously provide feedback to these freelancers, which reduces the time available for internal team collaboration. Furthermore, the frequent turnover of freelancers necessitates a constant recalibration of role clarity among employed caregivers and freelancers, disrupting workflow and team cohesion.

Weakened Relational work characteristics: The high turnover rate of freelancers hinders the development of meaningful relationships and social support networks among employed caregivers. This lack of cohesion and continuity negatively impacts team dynamics and the emotional well-being of employed caregivers, leading to a less supportive work environment.

In summary, the presence of freelancers has weakened the social dynamics among employed caregivers. Internal care workers find it harder to open up and share their concerns, as they have not yet built a trustful relationship with the freelancers. This lack of trust and rapport makes it more challenging to provide and receive constructive feedback, but only provide sort-sided feedback. Consequently, internal employees may feel isolated and unsupported in their work environment. The erosion of these social bonds can lead to decreased morale and hindered collaboration within the team.

Theoretical Implications

This research contributes to the existing literature on workforce dynamics in healthcare by exploring the specific impact of freelancers on the QoW for employed caregivers. Previous studies have largely focused on general QoW and performance in healthcare settings without considering the unique challenges posed by the integration of freelancers.

Aforementioned JDC Model by Karasek and the SMART work design model assume a stable workforce comprised of permanently hired staff or personnel. However, this study contributes to the expansion of the JDC Model by highlighting the additional complexity introduced by flexible work arrangements in nursing homes. The findings suggest that job demands, and control must be understood within the context of a mixed workforce, where the presence of freelancers can significantly alter the work environment for employed caregivers (Karasek, 1979). The same also applies when integrating the Social Dimensions of the SMART work design model. The relational part can be expanded by this

research to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how social factors, such as team cohesion, emotional support and relational dynamics influence the QoW of permanent employees in nursing homes (Parker & Knight, 2023). This study shows that the stable workforce assumed in theoretical models does not accurately reflect the modern workforce. Assessing the impact of workforce changes challenges more than structural and social elements. Furthermore, this research sheds light on the specific challenges faced by employed caregivers in nursing homes, including increased workloads, reduced decision-making autonomy, and weakened social support networks. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the unique dynamics of caregiving in a context where freelancers play a significant role.

Practical Implications

To improve the integration of freelancers in nursing homes, management should develop comprehensive strategies that facilitate their assimilation into existing teams. This can be achieved through robust onboarding processes, ongoing training sessions, and initiatives that familiarize these caregivers with the facility's procedures and expectations. Enhancing role clarity and autonomy for both internal and freelancers is also crucial. Clear guidelines and expectations must be established to address issues related to role definition and decision-making authority. Additionally, management would be will advices on increasing the autonomy of employed caregivers by involving them in decision-making processes and recognizing their contributions. Strengthening team cohesion within nursing homes is essential for fostering a supportive and collaborative environment. Regular team-building activities and opportunities for interaction between internal and self-employed caregivers should be organized to build rapport and improve communication and collaboration. Moreover, prioritizing the well-being and professional development of caregivers is vital. Policies and practices should be implemented to support their mental health, provide opportunities for skill development, and enhance job satisfaction, ultimately aiming promote a more stable caregiving workforce.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the impact of freelancers on the QoW for employed caregivers, several limitations should be acknowledged and addressed in future research. This study was conducted in a single nursing home, which limits the generalizability of the findings (Yin, 2014). Future research should consider conducting multiple case studies across different nursing homes and healthcare settings to gain a broader understanding of the impact of freelancers on the

QoW. of employed caregivers. Furthermore, the research was conducted over a relatively short period, which may not fully capture the long-term effects of integrating freelancers. Longitudinal studies are needed to examine the lasting impacts of these workforce changes on the QoW (Yin, 2014). The researcher's familiarity with the organization and its members may have influenced the study, introducing potential bias and impacting the depth and objectivity of the interviews conducted. This familiarity may have limited the scope of inquiry, leading to a more constrained exploration of the issues at hand (Loannidis, 2005). To address this limitation, future studies should engage independent researchers who can offer a more impartial perspective.

While the study primarily concentrated on the QoW for employed caregivers, there remains a need to explore the broader implications of freelancers on patient care and overall organizational outcomes. Future research should delve into how the integration of freelancers can influence aspects such as patient satisfaction, the quality of care provided, and the performance of the organization as a whole. Understanding these broader impacts will provide a more complete view of how different caregiving models contribute to the efficacy and sustainability of healthcare services. Furthermore, it appears that this issue is not only a local problem but has national implications.

The findings of this research are contextually specific to nursing homes, which may not necessarily reflect the dynamics present in other healthcare settings. Future studies need to investigate the role and impact of freelancers across a variety of healthcare environments, including hospitals, home care services, and outpatient clinics. This will help to identify the unique challenges and opportunities that freelancers encounter in different settings, thereby contributing to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the healthcare sector as a whole. By expanding the scope of inquiry to include diverse healthcare contexts, future research can offer insights that are applicable across a broad spectrum of caregiving environments.

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Appendix 1: Different types of Caregivers

Type of Caregivers	Description
1. Home care assistant (<i>helpende</i>)	Whose task is to provide 'activities of daily living' (for example: support with dressing, washing, cleaning, restroom visits, etc.).
Healthcare assistant nurse (<i>verzorgende</i>)	Whose task is also to provide 'activities of daily living'. However, healthcare assistant nurses also develop 'care plans' and are qualified to administer medication.
Nurse (<i>verpleegkundige</i>)	Nurses overview a certain department, in which they coordinate other healthcare providers, develop reports, are the spokesperson of the client and spouses, administer wound care and can insert probes or catheters. Furthermore, nurses are qualified to administrate medication. to people who are on their death bed (Grotendorst, 1998).

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

Intro

- Kunt u aub eerst vertellen wie u bent, hoelang u hier al werkt, welke functie u beoefend etc.?

Algemeen kwaliteit van arbeid (eerst uitleggen wat kwaliteit van de arbeid is)

- Hoe heeft u de afgelopen tijd de kwaliteit van arbeid ervaren?

Zzper's algemeen

- Komt u in aanraking met zzp'ers?
- Zo ja, heeft u een ontwikkeling zien plaatsvinden de afgelopen tijd en heeft dit uw werk veranderd?

Job demands

Pressure of work

- Hoe ervaart u de werkhoeveelheid op uw werk? en heeft een zzp'er hier invloed op?
- Hoe ervaart u de werksnelheid op uw werk? heeft een zzp'er hier invloed op?

Emotional demands

- Is uw baan een emotieel eisend beroep? Heeft een zzp'er hier invloed op?

Job Variety

- Bied uw organisatie de mogelijkheid u zelf te ontwikkelen doormiddel van het aanbieden leermogelijkheden en het aanbieden van doorgroeimogelijkheden? Hoe verhoudt dit zich tegenover een zzp'ers (skills/development/tijd)/kosten)?

Job control

Job autonomy

- Heeft u de vrijheid en mogelijkheden om uw taken op uw eigen manier in te richten (dit kan aan hand van de snelheid waarop een taak gedaan moet worden, de methode en werkvolgorde)? Heeft een zzp'er hier invloed op?

Job Participation

- In hoeverre heeft u de mogelijkheid om deel te nemen in beslissingen voor de organisatie? Heeft een zzp'er hier invloed op?
- in hoeverre heeft u inspraak in de voorgeving van uw werkomgeving? Heeft een zzp'er hier invloed op?

Social support

- Hoe ervaart u de relatie tussen u en een zzp'er en u en een vaste medewerker?
- Hebben zzp'ers invloed op de sfeer/bedrijfscultuur? Zo ja, op welke manier?
- Denkt u dat zzp'ers en u/interne medewerkers gelijk worden behandeld?
- Zorgen zzp'ers, of diens aanwezigheid, voor stress tijdens het uitoefenen van uw beroep? Zo ja, waarom?

Appendix 3: Coding list

Translated codes	What characterizes working with self-employed individuals (freelancers) from the perspective of the permanent caregiver?	What is the influence on the employed caregiver?	Selective coding
Speaker 1: "Yes, that definitely puts pressure on the other colleagues because they actually have to work together, so that the work that needs to be done is done more effectively."	The freelancer is unfamiliar with the routines of the facility.	The presence of freelancers affects the workload of the employed personnel.	Increased workload
Speaker 1: "Some [freelancers], for example, would arrive around ten or eleven, and they would already come in with a lot of groaning and moaning."	Some freelancers show little dedication and don't seem enthusiastic about the work.	Sometimes they fail to adequately perform the required tasks.	Quality of care is compromised.
Speaker 1: "The culture of fear only increased during the COVID-19 pandemic."	The uncertainty about whether freelancers will show up or not.	Employed personnel experience pre-stress about work.	Unpredictability
Speaker 1: "Sometimes freelancers don't know how to handle our equipment, which can be dangerous."	Freelancers often change locations and organizations, and as a result, they are not always familiar with the equipment.	Employed personnel do not trust freelancers with the use of equipment and mistakes happen more easily.	Safety

Speaker 1: "In the end, I asked for their boss's phone number, you know, and also asked, 'Hey, if someone from your agency doesn't show up, can I call you at eleven o'clock?'"	Freelancers have the freedom to choose their assignments. As a result, they are barely or not at all loyal to the organization.	Managing freelancers requires significant administrative effort, especially when arranging replacements for no-shows or coordinating shifts.	Increased workload
Speaker 1: "Some were also quite okay with just showing up, like, 'Well, as long as I do my work here at seven o'clock tomorrow morning, I'll get my money again.'"	Due to the freelance nature, there is little control over the quality of the care provided.	The varying quality of work by freelancers affects the overall quality of care, especially when they skip necessary tasks due to workload or personal unwillingness.	Quality of care Emotional labour
Speaker 1: "Yes, then nine times out of ten you would get, 'No, no, they are there.' We spoke to the care manager, and they couldn't do anything either."	Freelancers move easily through the organization(s).	There is frustration over the lack of organizational support and the inefficiencies in handling the scheduling and integration of freelancers.	Lack of control
Speaker 1: "And yes, that was ultimately my stumbling block. Along with many colleagues, I eventually said, 'No, I'm not going to stay here any longer; I'm going to look for something else.'"	Freelancers bring unpredictability and frustration.	Personal stories reflect a deep emotional connection to the work and the impact of organizational decisions on personal well-being and job satisfaction.	Emotional labour

Speaker 2: "Not all, but many freelancers do very little during the night. It seems like they only smoke and walk around drinking and eating; they don't experience the same level of responsibility."	Freelancers have a relatively free existence, with little oversight of their tasks and a lack of a sense of responsibility.	There is frustration and a lack of understanding among the employed personnel. When they come to work, the working conditions are less than ideal.	Lack of control
Speaker 2: "By the way, on the day itself, there are definitely some girls who are willing, but you have to explain everything to them all the time."	Freelancers are often unfamiliar with the department/location.	Employed personnel spend more time explaining everything.	Increased workload
Speaker 2: "With my colleagues, I only need to give a wink or not even that, and they are already there to help me. Well, I can't expect that from a freelancer."	Freelancers are often unfamiliar to the employed personnel, resulting in little to no relationship between them.	Employed personnel can rely less on the freelancers, leaving them on their own more often (e.g., with difficult residents).	Emotional labour
Speaker 2: "Well, fortunately, we still have the residents as familiar faces, but it does feel different compared to 14 years ago when I started working."	The turnover of freelancers is high.	Employed personnel find it harder to perform tasks based on routine or mutual trust.	Increased workload
Speaker 2: "It's not like you can have a nice chat with freelancers about relationships, children, or being a grandma, because you don't know them. And that does affect the atmosphere, which the residents also feel."	The turnover of freelancers is high. Freelancers often work on a department only a few times.	It is difficult to build a relationship with a freelancer in a short time, and employees do not feel comfortable opening up to them on a social level.	Emotional labour

Speaker 2: "Actually quite a lot, because we know our residents. We are in the psychogeriatric ward, but we are also getting more and more residents with psychiatric issues, which makes our work even harder."	Freelancers do not know the residents, each of whom has their own unique approach and handling needs.	Work becomes harder and less safe.	Safety is compromised Increased workload
Speaker 3: "Not all, but many freelancers do very little during the night. It seems like they only smoke and walk around drinking and eating."	Inconsistency in engagement and commitment during shifts.	Increased workload and frustration due to unequal distribution of work.	Increased workload Lack of control
Speaker 3: "They don't turn the residents over and just leave them lying in their own mess."	Variability in the quality of care, sometimes with insufficient attention to essential care tasks.	Emotional and professional burden increases when the quality of care declines.	Emotional labour Quality of care is at risk.
Speaker 3: "Sometimes they don't ask anything, and then nothing gets done. It makes me wonder: why don't you just ask? Now we are falling behind."	Lack of initiative and independence in following procedures.	Additional time and energy are required for guidance and supervision, leading to delays and added workload.	Increased workload
Speaker 3: "You never know who is going to show up; it's always a surprise."	Freelancers often change locations and departments. It is decided at the last minute who will come.	Employees don't know who will come, and they experience this as stressful since the person might function well or poorly.	Unpredictability

Speaker 3: "You develop more and more sense of responsibility, but on the other hand, safety and team spirit decline."	Experiences of a lack of engagement and professionalism.	A sense of insecurity and higher emotional burden, which sometimes leads to decisions to leave the workplace.	Emotional labour Safety is compromised
Speaker 3: "And sometimes you want to engage with those freelancers again, but they just don't want to. The majority are, if I may say so, immigrants, and they are just there to pocket that 100 euros or whatever they get."	Due to shortages in healthcare, less qualified freelancers are still being hired.	Increasing frustration over the lack of support and effective policies from the organization.	Lack of control
Speaker 3: "It's all just ad hoc and flexible workers; it feels like we are always in transition."	Ad hoc approaches lead to frequent changes in schedules and planning, increasing the administrative load.	Stress and uncertainty due to the constant need to adapt to last-minute schedule changes.	Lack of control
Speaker 3: "Well, I know better than to expect that from a freelancer."	Frequent doubts about the competence and reliability of freelancers in critical situations.	Feelings of insecurity and added pressure to ensure quality of care and client safety.	Safety is compromised
Speaker 4: "We had a lot of freelancers during that time because many of our colleagues were out due to COVID. Some freelancers did a fantastic job, while others either didn't show up or arrived late for their shifts."	Frequent unreliability in the attendance and punctuality of freelancers.	Increased workload and frustration, as gaps created by the absence of freelancers have to be filled.	Increased workload

Speaker 4: "Freelancers don't pick up on those things. So you need to get together and say, 'Alright, everyone, let's put our heads together, figure out how we can redistribute things differently, and help each other out.'"	Some freelancers strictly adhere to predetermined task lists without adapting to the current situation, which conflicts with the needed flexibility in healthcare.	Increased coordination effort and the need for employed personnel to make adjustments due to the rigidity of some freelancers.	Increased workload
Speaker 4: "Of course, but that was largely ignored. We couldn't turn to anyone for help with that."	Poor communication and support from management regarding the integration of freelancers.	Feelings of being unheard and a lack of support in dealing with problems caused by or related to freelancers.	Unheard
Speaker 4: "There were just really sad moments on the ward with employed personnel who had been working there for years. They became frustrated, angry, and sad, leading to colleagues crying in the wards."	The influence of freelancers on the work atmosphere can vary, but negative experiences have a direct impact on the well-being of employed personnel.	Increased emotional stress and frustration arise when freelancers are not effectively integrated or do not function adequately within the team.	Emotional labour
Speaker 4: "Of course, there were freelancers who just kept working, but you also had freelancers who thought everything was fine as it was. You had to help them with the checklist, and they were the ones you'd give the easy tasks to, and even then, they couldn't finish them."	Variability in the quality of work and commitment; some freelancers exhibit a high level of professionalism, while others show minimal effort.	Increased burden on employed personnel to compensate for deficiencies in care, leading to an unequal distribution of work and increased workload.	Increased workload

Speaker 4: "We have always enjoyed working here, for nearly 25 years. But now, well, that just isn't being heard. We even came back from vacations because there were so many sick people during the pandemic."	During times of crisis (such as the pandemic), the institution relied heavily on freelancers, but experiences varied greatly.	Flexibility and adaptability are expected from employed personnel, often leading to additional burdens without the necessary recognition or support.	Unheard
Speaker 4: "I myself have never received a pat on the back like, 'Hey, it's great that you're here.' nor did any of my colleagues"	Recognition and appreciation sometimes seem unevenly distributed between freelancers and employed personnel.	A lack of appreciation and recognition for employed personnel can be demotivating and create a sense of being undervalued within the organization.	Unheard
Speaker 5: "Freelancers often say, 'I don't know that lady well enough, so I'm not going to take any risks,' even though they do have the qualifications."	Freelancers often work a department only a few times and therefore do not know the residents well, making them hesitant to care for more complex residents.	Employed personnel will often attend to the more complex residents.	Increased workload

Speaker 5: "The work becomes less enjoyable because you constantly see new faces, and sometimes the residents don't respond well to that."	Freelancers often work a department only a few times.	Employed personnel often see new faces, making it difficult to build relationships and have relaxed conversations.	Decline in team dynamics
Speaker 5: "We can still laugh and make jokes, despite the stress that a freelancer brings."	Freelancers are unpredictable in their attendance and the quality of work they deliver.	Despite the stress, employed personnel strive to maintain a positive atmosphere and humor, which contributes to the well-being of the team.	Emotional labour
Speaker 5: "The responsibility falls more on the employed personnel because freelancers leave, and the door is closed until the next time."	Freelancers have a limited engagement with the institution and its clients, resulting in reduced continuity of care.	Employed personnel bear the burden of continuous care and responsibilities, increasing their workload and sense of accountability.	Increased workload
Speaker 5: "I've noticed that the atmosphere on the ward changes. Residents are very sensitive to familiar faces, and some simply don't want to see an unfamiliar face."	Frequent changes in freelancers can disrupt the emotional and psychological stability of residents.	Employed personnel have to deal with the direct consequences of these disruptions, making their work more complex and sometimes more emotionally loaded.	Increased workload Emotional labour

Speaker 5: "If you work six days a week and always have the same difficult resident, you're not going to be happy the next day."	Due to the nature of their contractual agreements and their lower level of engagement and experience with specific residents, freelancers are less frequently assigned to heavy, repetitive tasks.	This results in an uneven distribution of heavy tasks among employed personnel, leading to increased physical and emotional fatigue.	Increased workload Emotional labour
Speaker 6: "The employees are overburdened, anxious, and uncertain about whether colleagues will show up or not." This highlights the unsettled situation for staff, influenced by both freelancers and regular colleagues.	Irregular attendance of freelancers.	The constant uncertainty and the need to be flexible in scheduling and tasks cause stress and overburden employed personnel.	Unpredictability
Speaker 6: "There is a larger group of freelancers who do not keep their commitments or arrive late," which leads to stress and extra work for employed personnel.	Unreliability in keeping commitments by some freelancers.	This leads to increased workload and the need for employed personnel to cover the deficiencies, contributing to reduced job satisfaction.	Unpredictability
Speaker 6: "The increase in sick leave, possibly partly caused by overburdening and uncertainty, leads to even more reliance on freelancers and a vicious cycle: 'Sick leave sometimes ranges between 25% and 40%, a combination of overwork and COVID, which we can't seem to break out of.'"	Dependence on freelancers increases due to high sick leave rates among employed personnel.	Increased reliance on freelancers can lead to a vicious cycle of overburdening and sick leave, further increasing the pressure on the remaining staff.	Increased workload

Speaker 6: "In many cases, freelancers are at level two instead of three, which means they cannot perform certain procedures, and you have to rely on the organization to carry out these tasks."	Qualification differences among freelancers can affect the quality of care.	Employed personnel often have to step in to compensate for deficiencies in the quality of care due to insufficiently qualified freelancers.	Quality of care at risk
Speaker 6: "In many cases, employed personnel work at 120%, while freelancers work at 80%. They don't experience the same level of responsibility."	There seems to be an uneven distribution of the workload between freelancers and employed personnel.	Employed personnel experience a higher workload.	Increased workload
Speaker 6: "Autonomy is limited because everything is fixed, and an employee cannot act independently without disrupting the schedule."	Strict and inflexible work processes limit the opportunities for employed personnel to act independently towards freelancers.	Lack of autonomy can lead to frustration and a sense of powerlessness among employed personnel, negatively impacting their work experience.	Lack of control
Speaker 6: The atmosphere is influenced, both positively and negatively. When freelancers collaborate with internal personnel, it can be positive, but unclear expectations can create tension.	The interaction between freelancers and employed personnel can vary depending on the clarity of expectations and communication.	Insufficient clarity in expectations and communication problems can lead to tensions and have a negative impact on the workplace atmosphere.	Emotional labour
Speaker 6: "The employee is not heard enough, and everything is decided from the top down, which reduces the feeling of support in dealing with freelancers."	Decision-making that is top-down, without adequate involvement of employees at the grassroots level for collaboration with freelancers.	Lack of input and listening to employees can lead to feelings of insufficient support and appreciation, especially in dealing with the complexity of working with freelancers.	Lack of control Unheard

Speaker 7: "I really do experience tremendous work pressure."	Freelancers are deployed to address staffing shortages, especially due to illness or absence, which can sometimes lead to inconsistent quality of care.	Employed personnel experience continuous high pressure and often have to take on additional tasks, leading to increased stress and physical strain.	Increased workload
Speaker 7: "In general, they're just like colleagues, people with a caring heart who will simply do their best."	Freelance workers vary in quality and commitment, similar to employed personnel.	Employed personnel frequently have to supervise the care given and tasks performed by freelancers, resulting in increased responsibility and workload.	Increased workload
Speaker 7: "I have a permanent job. That means I also have to work during Christmas and New Year's, and that's just how it's scheduled."	Freelancers often have more control over their schedules, allowing them to avoid unfavorable shifts, such as holidays.	Employed personnel have less flexibility in their schedules, which can result in an unbalanced work-life balance.	Lack of control
Speaker 7: "At times I do feel like I need to pay extra attention, that I need to be extra alert."	By deploying freelancers, who may be less familiar with specific clients or protocols, the continuity of care can vary.	Employed personnel often have to go the extra mile to ensure that all tasks are carried out correctly and according to standards, leading to extra vigilance and workload.	Safety is compromised Increased workload

Speaker 7: If a freelancer is not familiar with our procedures, it takes extra time for us to onboard them.	New or less frequent freelancers often need more support in learning the routines and specific care needs of clients.	Employed personnel bear the burden of onboarding and managing freelancers, which requires extra time and energy.	Increased workload Emotional labour
Speaker 7: "You've definitely built up the experience that seeing an unfamiliar name on the schedule on the day you have to work is just not pleasant."	Persistent concern about the reliability of some freelancers, especially regarding showing up for scheduled shifts.	This uncertainty causes stress and extra administrative burdens for employed personnel, who may need to step in or make alternative arrangements.	Unpredictability Increased workload
Speaker 8: "Freelancers come and go. It's very difficult to build a relationship with them because they change so often."	Frequent turnover and lack of continuity in relationships.	Difficulties for employed personnel to develop long-term relationships and consistency in care.	Unpredictability. Decline in team dynamics
Speaker 8: "Does it happen often? Yes, they come in only a few times and they have no knowledge of the residents."	Lack of continuity and knowledge about residents among freelancers.	Employed personnel take on the heavier and more complex tasks, resulting in an increased workload.	Increased workload

Speaker 8: "It may be the case that out of the four, two or maybe even three are freelancers, and the employed personnel is there alone. Yeah, they feel quite isolated and can't really express themselves."	Lack of emotional support due to fluctuating and impersonal staff.	Increases emotional strain for employed personnel who lack support during stressful situations.	Emotional labour
Speaker 8: "Unfortunately, that happens more often. With freelancers, especially at night, it's very common because then you're mostly anonymous. People who are incontinent aren't always changed. That often doesn't happen."	Concerns about freelancers adhering to care standards, especially during less visible times.	Potential decrease in residents' safety and well-being.	The quality of care is compromised.
Speaker 8: "Feedback is indeed a good point that you bring up, feedback is challenging."	Difficulty in giving and receiving feedback between employed personnel and freelancers.	Employed personnel feel unheard and less involved in achieving improvements with freelancers.	Unheard
Speaker 8: "Yeah, feedback is a bit tricky there. Employed personnel find it challenging to give feedback to freelancers, and vice versa."	Challenges in exerting control over the work environment and care practices.	Limited opportunities for employed personnel to influence the quality of care.	Lack of control
Speaker 8: "But the quality isn't as good then. In addition, freelancers need to be managed by the employed personnel. They often don't know anything about the facility, but the employed personnel might also need the know-how and organizational rules to really be able to do that."	Freelancers bring more administrative tasks with them.	Employed personnel are required to supervise freelancers. However, due to the absence of a hierarchical structure, they find this challenging.	Lack of control

Speaker 8: "The culture is that people only take care of themselves. The culture is that people talk less with each other. The culture is that it becomes a bit less convivial."	Erosion of team spirit and collaboration due to the presence of many freelancers.	Reduction of team dynamics and cohesion, resulting in a less supportive and less cohesive work environment.	Decline in team dynamics
Speaker 9: "And then it's a bit worrying, you think: oh, who might come?"	Frequent turnover among freelancers, leading to uncertainty about who will show up to work.	Increases stress and anxiety among employed personnel due to uncertainty and its impact on continuity of care.	Unpredictability
Speaker 9: "Yes, and I just find that very unfortunate, and I also see that these two [freelancers] don't really value quality."	Inconsistency in the quality and dedication of some freelancers.	Employed personnel feel overwhelmed because they believe they must exert extra effort to compensate for the shortcomings of some freelancers.	Increased workload
Speaker 9: "So then you think, well, to finish the day off or to bring it to a good ending, you pitch in, but it just leads to significant fatigue. Mental fatigue, that's really tough."	High emotional and mental strain from constantly having to adjust and take on extra tasks.	Leads to mental and emotional exhaustion among employed personnel, which reduces their well-being and job satisfaction.	Increased workload
Speaker 9: "But I just feel like nothing is being done about it, because we're also dependent on them again."	A sense of powerlessness towards the management of the freelancers and a lack of action from this management after providing feedback.	Employed personnel feel frustrated and demotivated because their concerns and complaints do not seem to be taken seriously.	Unheard

Speaker 9: "I frequently experience frustrations, also with the management."	Limited influence of employed personnel on decisions that affect their work and interactions with freelancers.	Increased feelings of powerlessness and discouragement among employed personnel.	Lack of control
Speaker 9: "You try to set goals for the quality of care, but the goals set cannot be achieved."	Inconsistencies in the skills and engagement of some freelancers can diminish the quality of care.	Employed personnel experience a conflict between their professional standards and the reality of daily compromises required due to the varying quality of care provided by freelancers.	The quality of care is compromised
Speaker 9: "And you notice that now. So people start rejecting things because it just becomes too much, and I do see indeed with some colleagues in my department, if they've done a few shifts with a freelancer and had to take the lead, they easily call in sick themselves, and I find that very unfortunate because it's not necessary."	The presence of freelancers can lead to imbalance and a sense of inequality within the team, especially if their contribution is perceived as insufficient.	Employed personnel may feel overloaded and undervalued, which can damage team dynamics and overall work ethics.	Decrease in team dynamics

Appendix 4: codebook

Translated codes	What characterizes working with self-employed individuals (freelancers) from the perspective of the permanent caregiver?	What is the influence on the employed caregiver?	Selective coding	Core themes
"We never know who will show up, it's always a surprise." "It's difficult to plan when you're not sure who will be there."	Working with freelancers introduces uncertainty into the work schedule and the availability of personnel. Employed personnel often do not know who will be present.	The constant change and uncertainty cause stress and a sense of instability. Employed personnel must continually adapt to new colleagues, which can be exhausting and frustrating.	Unpredictability of the freelancers	Job decision
"If a freelancer is unfamiliar with our procedures, it takes us extra time to onboard them." "We often have to take on tasks because freelancers do not have the same responsibilities."	Freelancers are not always familiar with the procedures and do not have the same responsibilities.	Employed personnel experience increased workload because they have to perform both their own tasks and those of less experienced freelancers. This can lead to overtime and reduced job satisfaction.	The increase in workload	Job demand

"Sometimes freelancers don't know how to operate our equipment, which can be dangerous." "I sometimes feel responsible for the safety of freelancers." "Actually quite a lot, because we know our residents. We are in the psychogeriatric ward, but we are also getting more and more residents with psychiatric issues, which makes our work even harder."	Freelancers may be unfamiliar with safety protocols and specific work environments.	The responsibility for ensuring safety often falls on the employed personnel, which brings additional pressure and concerns. They must constantly monitor and intervene to prevent accidents.	Less safe work environment	Job demand
"We have no control over who comes to work, which makes it difficult to form a stable team." "It's like we're constantly in a transitional phase."	Constant influx and outflow of (new) freelancers	Employees find it harder to get a grip on the situation and build a team.	Lack of control	Job decision
"It seems like our feedback isn't taken seriously." "We feel like we have no say in how things are being organized."	Concerns and feedback about working with freelancers are not always taken into account in management decisions.	Flexibility and adaptability are expected from employed personnel, which often leads to additional burden without the necessary recognition or support.	Employed personnel feel unheard.	Mastery work characteristic Job decision

"The quality of care suffers when freelancers do not adhere to the same standards." "Patients notice when there are constantly new faces."	There is fluctuating presence of freelancers who may not follow the same standards and procedures as employed personnel.	Employed personnel cannot rely on the quality of care provided by freelancers.	Decrease in the quality of care	Job demand
"It's not like you can have a nice chat with freelancers about relationships, children, or being a grandma, because you don't know them. And that does affect the atmosphere, which the residents also feel." "You feel increasingly responsible, but on the other hand, safety and team spirit are declining."	There is a high turnover of freelancers. Freelancers often work only a few times in a department or ward, leading to a lack of engagement and professionalism.	It is difficult to build a relationship with a freelancer in a short period of time and employed personnel do not feel comfortable socializing with them. As a result, employed personnel feel increasingly isolated in their work.	Reduced capacity for emotional labour	Relational work characteristics