

# Not just surviving, but thriving: Motivation and job crafting techniques of long-term *eikaiwa* teachers

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## ABSTRACT

Despite the widespread view within Japanese ELT (English language teaching) of *eikaiwa* (private English conversation school) teaching as entry-level, the often-disparaging mass media coverage it receives (Crooks, 2010; McCrostie, 2014; McNeill, 2004; McNeil, 2019), and the high turnover of instructors (McNeill, 2004), many teachers have sustained their motivation for the job. Using Braun and Clarke's (2012) framework for deductive thematic analysis and semi-structured interviews with *eikaiwa* teachers who have worked in the industry for more than a decade, this study aims to shed some light on the professional lives of these long-term *eikaiwa* teachers. In particular, the study explores the extent to which the teachers' basic psychological needs as defined within self-determination theory are satisfied or frustrated. This study also explores the methods these teachers use to maintain their motivation by job crafting (Berg, et al., 2007).

## INTRODUCTION

Self-determination theory (SDT) has been an influential framework for assessing motivation across the last few decades (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Pioneered by Deci and Ryan, SDT has been used to analyse people's motivation in various fields of work. SDT posits that humans have basic psychological needs that must be satisfied to achieve fulfilment in any endeavour. SDT has been and can be applied to many contexts, including education and the workplace.

A prevalent context for English education in Japan is *eikaiwa* (private English conversation) schools. *Eikaiwa* is an industry that is often framed as being more concerned with profit than education, and unconcerned with its teachers' well-being or professional development, to the extent that most teachers do not stay in the *eikaiwa* industry long-term (Hashimoto, 2020).

This study examines the motivation of long-term *eikaiwa* teachers through the SDT framework. It explores the techniques that teachers use to maintain their motivation within a context that has been widely disparaged for its perceived stifling of teacher autonomy, relatedness, and competence.

### Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

According to self-determination theory (SDT), humans have three basic psychological needs "that are essential for ongoing psychological growth, integrity, and well-being" (Deci

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& Ryan, 2000, p. 229): autonomy, relatedness, and competence. When these needs are satisfied, we can flourish and our intrinsic motivation increases; when these needs are frustrated, our wellness, including intrinsic motivation, can suffer (Ryan & Deci, 2017). First, autonomy in SDT refers to “the need to self-regulate one’s experiences and actions” by doing things of one’s own volition to a certain extent (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 10). It is possible to be autonomous while still dependent on others. Autonomy can be frustrated when we are required to perform tasks or actions that do not align with what we want to do.

Second, relatedness means “feeling socially connected” and important to social groups such as work (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 11). Relatedness can be frustrated by isolation or a sense of not being valued or listened to. Relatedness can be linked to the concept of communities of practice, which Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) define as “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (p. 1). Communities of practice “are an integral part of our lives” (Wenger, 1998, p. 7). As part of a community of practice, employees “develop or preserve a sense of themselves they can live with, have some fun, and fulfil the requirements of their employers and clients” (Wenger, 1998, p. 6). Within a community of practice, individuals’ identities are linked to the community of which they are members (Wenger, 1998).

Third, competence in SDT is “our basic need to feel effectance and mastery,” i.e. that we are “able to operate effectively” (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 11). In other words, we feel that we can do our job (or other tasks) to a satisfactory standard. Competence can be frustrated by negative feedback or criticism or overly difficult challenges.

In summary, every human needs to feel that their autonomy, relatedness, and competence are being supported. If this is the case, they are able to feel psychologically well, but if their needs are frustrated, their well-being will be negatively affected.

## **Job Crafting**

Job crafting is the process by which workers “utilize opportunities to customize their jobs by actively changing their tasks and interactions with others” (Berg, et al., 2007, p. 1). Engaging in job crafting can help workers who feel their basic psychological needs are being frustrated to find their own ways of satisfying those needs. Berg, et al. (2013) categorise job crafting into three forms: task crafting; relational crafting; and cognitive crafting.

The first form, task crafting, entails taking on additional tasks, altering the way certain tasks are performed, not doing some tasks, or adjusting the amount of time spent on a task. Second, relational crafting is spending more or less time with certain colleagues, and changing interactions with other people. Third, cognitive crafting relates to “employees changing the way they perceive the tasks and relationships that make up their jobs” (Berg, et al., 2013, p. 82). By taking the initiative in these ways, employees can make their work more meaningful to themselves and boost their motivation (Berg, et al., 2013) and increase their attachment to their job (Wang, et al., 2018).

Studies in a variety of fields have shown the benefits to workers and organisations of job crafting. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) give three specific examples of job crafting in different fields. They found that design engineers adjusted the number and type of tasks they performed in order to improve the work flow of a project. Second, hospital cleaners increased their interaction with patients and their families. Finally, they found nurses who gathered and shared more information about patients. In each of these cases, the workers could alter their

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feelings regarding their workplace role positively. Berg, et al. (2010) found numerous ways in which university lecturers crafted their jobs to enable them to make connections with things they were passionate about, such as philanthropic work, music, and translation. Grant, et al. (2007, cited in Berg, et al., 2007) showed that workers in the service industry used job crafting techniques to feel that they were “making a greater and more meaningful impact” (p. 4).

### ***Eikaiwa schools***

*Eikaiwa* schools cater for students of all ages and are found throughout Japan. According to data from the Ministry of Economics, Trade and Industry, in 2019, there were over 4,000 *eikaiwa* schools in Japan employing over 10,000 instructors and catering to more than 5 million students, resulting in over 90 million yen in sales (METI, 2019). The US Commercial Service estimated the *eikaiwa* industry’s value at \$2,772 million (2015). *Eikaiwa* schools typically employ what the industry defines as “native speaker”<sup>2</sup> instructors, and whom the schools often feature prominently in their promotional materials. Within the *eikaiwa* context, “native speaker” usually means the instructor is white and originally from one of a select group of Western countries (Lowe, 2020). By placing such importance on instructors’ origin and race, *eikaiwa* schools perpetuate the situation in which Western “native speakers” are ideal, and everyone else is deficient in comparison (Lowe, 2020).

Despite their ubiquity, however, *eikaiwa* schools endure a negative reputation, which can be seen through academic literature and mass media (Hooper & Hashimoto, 2020). *Eikaiwa* schools can be broadly split into two categories: national chains and independent schools. National chains usually have schools in multiple locations throughout the country, whereas independent schools tend to be smaller, often with just one or a small number of branches. *Eikaiwa* schools, particularly the national chains, often use a set curriculum and teaching materials to ensure uniformity across all instructors. There is a popular perception of *eikaiwa* as “McEnglish,” meaning that standardised curricula and pedagogically unsound methodology makes *eikaiwa* teachers little more than “the pedagogic equivalent of burger flippers” (McNeill, 2004). Prescribed materials can lead instructors to feel that their autonomy is restricted (Taylor, 2017; 2020). Furthermore, interviewees in Taylor (2017; 2020) believed that their employers were infringing on their private time, which also negatively impacted their autonomy.

In terms of relatedness, Taylor (2017; 2020) found that strained relationships with management and other teachers led to negative work experiences. Nuske (2014) and Bossaer (2003) both explain how a mismatch in perceptions and expectations of various aspects of *eikaiwa* teaching between employer and employee can result in negativity. Short-term contracts are cited by teachers in Appleby (2013) and Taylor (2017) as sources of instability. Other issues have been shown to exist between management and teachers that affect relatedness. Bailey’s (2006) analysis of advertisements for *eikaiwa* schools shows the sexualisation of white male teachers, which suggests that teachers’ individuality is not a concern of management. McCrostie (2014) reported that instructors at a national chain were subjected to sexual harassment by students but not supported or protected by their employer, while McNeil (2019) recounted an experience where a student requested he not teach her

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<sup>2</sup> I have used quotation marks for this term to show that “native speaker” status is “a largely socially constructed category applied to speakers on the basis on non-linguistic factors such as race and nationality” (Lowe, 2020, p. 32).

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lessons as she wanted a white teacher. These examples appear to demonstrate a lack of support for teachers, which can negatively affect teachers' need for relatedness. *Eikaiwa* schools are derided by Seargeant as "propagators of stereotype" due to what he sees as the suppression of teachers' individuality (2009, p. 94), which can lead to them feeling their relatedness need is being frustrated.

With regards to competence, interviewees in Taylor (2017; 2020) complained that training provisions were inadequate and that career development opportunities were severely lacking. In the mass media, there is another pervasive perception of *eikaiwa* teachers: "Charisma Man." Crooks (2010) explains that the "Charisma Man" stereotype is not limited to literature, television, and film set in Japan, but is also evident in popular culture from other countries. This stereotype is of a young white male who is seen as unattractive by women in his home country. He works in a fast-food restaurant as a burger flipper, in what is perhaps a reference to the aforementioned view of the *eikaiwa* industry's similarity to the fast food industry. On arrival in Japan, the young white man starts work as an *eikaiwa* teacher, a job he approaches with scant professionalism, and is transformed into "Charisma Man," becoming irresistible to Japanese women, many of whom are his students (Rodney and Garscadden, 2010). The "Charisma Man" stereotype suggests that *eikaiwa* teachers are not concerned with professionalism or professional development and, by extension, competence.

The negative views of the *eikaiwa* industry and *eikaiwa* teachers that have permeated Japanese society and been reported in academic research have led some former *eikaiwa* teachers to feel that past *eikaiwa* experience is a blot on their CV (Hooper, 2017, as cited in Hooper & Hashimoto, 2020). Many *eikaiwa* teachers do not stay in the job long-term (McNeill, 2004); however, there are those who do choose to stay, although it is also possible that some may be forced to stay due to a lack of qualifications which hinders their ability to find other work. I worked for a national chain *eikaiwa* for 1 year, 10 months (2012-2014). I did not – and do not – see my time in *eikaiwa* as a blot on my CV. Nevertheless, I did feel a variety of negative emotions at the end of that time. I felt that my autonomy had been frustrated by the set curriculum and materials that I was required to use; my competence had been thwarted by minimal training and seemingly non-existent opportunities for my career to progress within the *eikaiwa* industry; and my relatedness had been stifled to some extent through a distant and strained relationship with management (Taylor, 2017). During my time in *eikaiwa* I had colleagues who had worked at the company for approximately a decade, and I wondered how and why they had stayed for so long while so many others, like myself, left after a comparatively short time. To my knowledge, there has not yet been a study devoted to investigating what motivates some *eikaiwa* teachers to continue working in the industry long-term.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants**

Three current *eikaiwa* teachers gave their informed consent to participate in this study. I already knew two of the participants, while a third was recommended by a colleague. Each of the participants had been working in *eikaiwa* for more than 10 years at the time of the interviews (May-June, 2020); thus they represented both a convenience and a criterion sample (Dörnyei, 2007, pp. 128-9). The participants' information is listed in Table 1.

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Table 1. Participants

Pseudonym	Nationality	Gender	Years of experience in <i>eikaiwa</i> as of June, 2020
Chris	American	male	17
Rose	Canadian	female	16
Will	Australian	male	14

### Positionality

Boyatzis (1998) asserts that “qualitative research is subjective” (p. 15); thus it is imperative that I address my own subjectivity in relation to this study. As mentioned above, I worked in a national chain *eikaiwa* school for 1 year, 10 months but felt demotivated by the end of that period. Participants in this study were aware of my status as a former *eikaiwa* teacher and it may have made me more relatable to them. My insider knowledge of *eikaiwa* schools may also have helped the participants feel more willing to describe their experiences in greater detail to me as I was likely to understand and may have had similar experiences myself. However, I may also have unconsciously imposed my personal experience onto the interpretation of the data. My prior relationship with two of the participants and the fact that the third participant and I shared a mutual acquaintance may have influenced their answers somehow. Furthermore, the participants and I are all white and classed as “native speakers” of English, and our similarity in those respects may have had an effect on both the production and analysis of interview data

### Instrument

Each participant was interviewed twice. Prior to the interviews, participants wrote their brief language teaching history in the form of a table. Questions were developed based on the information gained from the language teaching histories and the three basic psychological needs in SDT. I consulted with an external colleague during the construction of the interview guide to enhance the trustworthiness of the instrument and thereby of the study (Loh, 2013). Initial interviews took between 45 and 60 minutes, while follow-up interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. I chose interviews because they are “one of the most powerful ways...of understanding others” and they offer scope for delving deeply into subjects (Punch & Oancea, 2014, p. 182). The semi-structured nature of the interview allowed space for the participants to elaborate on their answers. Interview guides can be seen in the Appendices.

### Data Collection and Analysis

This study took a qualitative approach. Interviews were carried out via each participant’s preferred online telecommunication tool (Skype, Facebook Messenger, Zoom), and were recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim. Follow-up interviews were conducted in the same way to clarify and ask further questions about certain topics or explore topics that were not covered in the initial interview. The follow-up interviews were also recorded and transcribed verbatim. Copies of the transcripts of both interviews were sent to the participants for their reference and to verify accuracy. Data were analysed thematically following the phased approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2012). Because the codes and

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themes were predetermined by the three basic psychological needs of SDT (autonomy, relatedness, competence), the data analysis also involved a deductive approach. Initial coding was done by hand, with quotations and passages related to the themes being highlighted and assigned latent, descriptive codes. Following this, the coded data were copied into new, separate documents (one for each theme), which allowed for revision of the selected data, and subsequently, deeper interpretation of the data. Early drafts of the findings and discussion were sent to a colleague who also researches *eikaiwa* and whose feedback constituted a form of peer validation (Loh, 2013). In the following section, I show and discuss the findings of the data collection.

## **FINDINGS & DISCUSSION**

Data were organised thematically according to the three basic psychological needs outlined in SDT: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. In this section I will present data from the interviews relating to each of the three basic psychological needs and show the job crafting techniques used by the interviewees.

### **Autonomy**

As previously discussed, the need for autonomy in SDT is defined as the need to be able to exert a degree of choice and control over the actions or tasks that one performs (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The three participants, Chris, Rose, and Will, described several ways in which they felt their need for autonomy was supported by their employer. Chris appeared to exhibit the most significant level of autonomy satisfaction. Chris explained that he had “extreme flexibility” over his assigned duties at his current job, particularly over his schedule and what he does in the classroom: “I teach however I like.” Similarly, Rose was able to choose “one or two activities” in each lesson at both her previous job at a national chain and her current job at an independent *eikaiwa*. Chris also expressed high levels of autonomy with regard to oversight by management, which he said trusts him with whatever he chooses to do. Chris explained that he was not asked to do many additional tasks, although prior to the interviews he had been asked to help organise meetings, and in the past, he had needed to step in when other teachers were having problems. Will’s autonomy was supported by the fact that he was able to choose which branch to go to or which teacher to conduct training with when his schedule allowed it.

However, the interviewees also described how they felt their autonomy was frustrated by various aspects of their jobs. Rose and Will both taught with prescribed materials in a system where the curriculum was set by the school and the structure of every lesson was designed to be identical. The manager at the independent *eikaiwa* where Rose currently works was very keen on photographing and videoing lessons, whereas Rose was not. Teachers at her current workplace are required to perform a variety of cleaning tasks. When she worked at a national chain, Rose was often asked to help new recruits complete administrative tasks at the immigration office, city hall, and the bank. Additionally, Rose worked one Sunday a month for several years at an extra school in addition to her regular scheduled school. Will explained that as a member of middle management at a national chain, he had a large number of duties in addition to his teaching load, and as such he had less flexibility to pick and choose what he wanted to do.

To satisfy their need for autonomy, the interviewees engaged in job crafting, which

most frequently took the form of task crafting (Berg, et al., 2013). One task crafting technique used by Will was adding tasks of his own choosing, but that still benefitted the company. Two examples that he gave were “creating instructor profiles that are displayed in the branches” to improve student knowledge of the teachers, and sending letters to students explaining what precautions the company was taking during the Coronavirus pandemic. Rose and Will both engaged in emphasising certain tasks, particularly in their lessons. As they both taught within the constraints of a prescribed lesson structure and plan, they looked for gaps in which they could assert their autonomy. In Rose’s case, this was by choosing activities. In Will’s case, it was by changing the method of introducing the target language and adjusting the length of time spent on each section of the lesson. Another method of task crafting is choosing when to perform certain required tasks. Chris explained that he did not have many additional duties and that he was able to refuse politely if he had “a good enough reason,” but that he rarely felt the need to do so. Rose was able to choose which cleaning tasks to perform at the independent school, and at the national chain she was able to choose when to take new recruits to complete administrative tasks. Will had a long list of compulsory additional duties but admitted that he did not necessarily do all of them every day; however, he did not refuse outright to do any tasks even if he did not want to do them. By focusing on the tasks they could control and choosing when or how to do them, the interviewees were able to emphasise what they considered to be meaningful about their jobs (Berg, et al., 2013). Emphasising what was meaningful to them also helped to increase their attachment to their jobs and may have contributed to them staying in their position (Wang, et al., 2018).

## **Relatedness**

Relatedness in SDT refers to the feeling of being connected, valued, and listened to within a social group or community of practice (Ryan & Deci, 2017). All three interviewees felt that their need for relatedness was supported by regular faculty development seminars and on-the-job training. Rose and Will also underwent initial training. These seminars and training sessions helped the interviewees to maintain a connection with colleagues. The participants also felt that their workplaces had a friendly atmosphere. As a member of middle management, Will explained that he received support from his superiors and was comfortable asking for help when he was unable to resolve a problem by himself.

The interviewees expressed numerous ways in which their relatedness need was frustrated. For several years Rose was the only full-time teacher at the independent school, so she felt isolated and not part of a professional community. She also felt that although there was “room to discuss ideas...between some of the teachers,” it was mostly restricted to online chat messages. Will stated that although he felt there was professionalism in his workplace, he was unsure if there was a professional community, due to what he perceived to be “separation” between the Japanese staff and foreign teachers, which he often experienced as the person caught in the middle. In contrast to the current managerial regime, Will explained that under previous management, he was often expected to resolve problems by himself and received very little assistance, which left him feeling isolated. Although in this regard his situation has improved, he said “of course from time to time I’m not happy...and I feel a shitload of stress. Always I feel stressed.”

The interviewees employed various job crafting techniques to satisfy their relatedness need, particularly a mixture of task and relational crafting (Berg, et al., 2013). When asked to facilitate faculty development sessions at his workplace, Chris asked other teachers to lead

sessions based on their own areas of expertise. By redesigning this task in such a way, Chris was able to reduce his own workload and contribute to the continuing professional development of himself and his colleagues by adapting the relationship he had with those colleagues to make it “mutual[ly] empowering” (Fletcher, 1998, cited in Berg, et al., 2013, p. 90). Chris built relationships with a “circle of teacher friends” outside work, in addition to approaching trusted colleagues to discuss teaching on a regular basis, which Rose and Will also did. Another way of building relationships to increase their relatedness need satisfaction was attending seminars at a national professional development organisation for English teachers in Japan (Chris) or joining online professional development groups (Rose). Building relationships is important in avoiding the “major psychological risk” of “depersonalisation” for teachers working outside their country of origin (Falout & Murphey, 2018, p. 227). Relational crafting by building or adapting relationships also contributed to the interviewees’ sense of belonging to a community of practice (or multiple communities of practice), which in turn may have strengthened their identity and led them to improve as teachers (Wenger, 1998). Will employed the cognitive crafting technique of focusing perceptions (Berg, et al., 2013) to help him maintain his relatedness and reduce the stress he felt at work, which involved focusing on his reasons for doing the job, namely the fact that his colleagues and family rely on him to do it.

## **Competence**

The need for competence according to SDT is our need to feel that we are able to perform our job or a task to our own satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2017). In contrast to autonomy and relatedness, the interviewees listed many ways their employers supported their need for competence. As mentioned above, all three interviewees participated in training and faculty development. Chris was asked to lead faculty development sessions at his workplace. Rose explained that the administrative worker at the independent school would attend seminars or conferences and then pass on the knowledge he gained. Part of Will’s role was to receive training on new courses or lessons and then train other teachers. In order to train others to be good at their job, he needed to be good at his job; in this way, his competence need was fulfilled. Chris and Will both felt that their skillset was recognised by others in the workplace. Rose’s competence need was also satisfied by the fact that managers at the national chain she previously worked at had asked her to return on numerous occasions, even many years after she had quit. In terms of class observation, Rose explained that her boss at the independent school regularly attends her lessons and offers verbal and written feedback, often as the lesson is in progress, all of which she appreciates. At the national chain, Rose explained that teachers were observed and evaluated by their manager three times a year, and received a written evaluation report. Additionally, whenever two teachers taught a lesson together, they were required to fill out a short form about their teaching partner. As such, Rose received frequent feedback on her teaching in both workplaces. Will said that teachers at his workplace receive feedback from students at the end of every month, in the form of a numerical score and written comments. Another aspect of his role as a member of middle management is to observe other teachers, which allows him to “pick up new ideas.”

When asked about a time when he felt competent in his job, Chris related a story about a lesson that he felt was “normal” but at which the student’s mother was also in attendance, and at the end of which she was “super satisfied”. In this situation, Chris’s competence need was satisfied by seeing the parent of a student respond positively to a set of

activities he felt was routine, thus validating his skills as a teacher. Answering the same question, Rose told two stories. The first story was an event that took place during her time at the national chain, when she was dispatched to do a trial lesson for a nursery school that was a potential client of the national chain. Having never performed such a task before, Rose was nervous, but the lesson was such a success that the nursery school agreed to join the national chain on the condition that Rose be the teacher. The second story was about an occasion at the independent school when she and her boss went to teach at a nursery but her boss forgot all of the teaching materials. Rose said that they managed to salvage the lessons thanks to their experience, and afterwards her boss told her, “probably the only people [in our school] who could do this are you and me,” a comment which Rose took as recognition of her ability as a teacher. Receiving direct praise from her boss in this way helped to satisfy Rose’s competence need. Will talked more generally about the feeling of satisfaction he gets when he sees a full schedule, or when he compares his schedule or statistics with another teacher and sees that his schedule has more students or his statistics are better. By comparing himself to others, Will was able to feel confident in his ability and experience, and was able to satisfy his competence need.

Despite the support for their competence need, there were also ways in which the need was frustrated. Rose did not feel that her skillset as a teacher was adequately recognised in her current job. She felt that although her boss and the school’s administrative worker recognised her capabilities, the other teachers in the school did not “really know all that I’m capable of” and she did not “really know how to explain that to them.” This lack of recognition of her experience and skills “kind of annoys” Rose, as she often felt her advice to her less experienced colleagues was being ignored. Will’s competence need was frustrated to some extent because nobody observed his lessons, even though he would welcome anyone who requested to do so.

To further satisfy their competence need, the interviewees crafted certain aspects of their jobs. Chris added tasks – actively seeking feedback from students and inviting peers or more experienced colleagues to observe his lessons – to enable him to keep developing as a teacher and simultaneously adapt his relationship with those others. Finally, Will again employed cognitive crafting through focusing perception, in this case by focusing on his view of the teaching side of the job as “not difficult,” “pretty easy,” and “not hard,” thereby boosting his competence need satisfaction.

Overall, the participants expressed varying degrees of satisfaction and frustration of the three basic psychological needs, and employed various job crafting techniques to assert more control over their work, increase their autonomy, relatedness, and competence need satisfaction, and attach more meaningfulness to their job.

## LIMITATIONS

There are limitations to this study. My previous experience of *eikaiwa* and pre-existing relationships with two of the participants, as described in the Positionality section, may have influenced the data collection and analysis. The sample size was small, although the data will be relevant to *eikaiwa* management who want to keep teachers long-term, *eikaiwa* teachers who wish to engage in job crafting and/or those who feel they are experiencing frustration of their basic psychological needs. The participants were all white and classed as “native speakers” of English; therefore, the experiences of long-term *eikaiwa* teachers of other races and/or those who are not classed as “native speakers” of English are

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not represented in this study. Despite these limitations, the data give an insight into the motivation and job crafting techniques of long-term *eikaiwa* teachers.

## CONCLUSION

This qualitative study investigated the motivation and job crafting techniques of three *eikaiwa* teachers, each with more than a decade's experience in the industry. The findings showed that the participants experienced some frustration of their need for autonomy, relatedness, and competence, but their employers also supported those needs to varying extents. The findings also showed that the participants engaged in a variety of task, relational, and cognitive job crafting techniques to overcome their need frustration. The participants' resourcefulness in employing a variety of job crafting techniques enabled them to perceive their jobs as more meaningful and enjoyable, thereby giving them the motivation and impetus to remain in the *eikaiwa* industry for a long time. To my knowledge, this is the first study to use the SDT framework and job crafting to explore the experiences of teachers in the *eikaiwa* industry. Despite its small scale, this study offers insight into why some teachers stay in the *eikaiwa* industry long-term, and how they motivate themselves to overcome difficulties through job crafting. The findings can be valuable to current *eikaiwa* teachers who are experiencing difficulties at work and/or who wish to remain in the industry long term, as they can provide a guide for professional development. The findings can also benefit *eikaiwa* management or owners who want to retain the services of teachers long term. Further research into the motivation and job crafting techniques of long-term *eikaiwa* teachers would be enlightening.

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## Appendix A: Initial interview guide

### **Autonomy:**

Describe your main duties at work.

What are your assigned duties at work?

How flexible are these assigned duties? → Can you change how and/or when you do them?

Do you get any opportunities to choose what tasks you do? (inside and outside the classroom)

Do you do any tasks that are not assigned/compulsory? i.e. that you choose to do in addition

Are there any assigned/compulsory tasks that you choose not to do?

How much oversight do you feel there is in terms of your teaching approach, etc.?

What constraints, if any, do you feel regarding implementing your desired teaching approach?

### **Relatedness:**

Do you feel there is a professional community in your workplace?

Is there anyone you speak to about teaching in your workplace?

Who do you speak to if you have questions or problems at work?

Do you ever feel isolated in your job?

### **Competence:**

Did you receive initial training?

Do you receive ongoing training?

Do you get assessed/observed/evaluated by peers or superiors?

Do you think you could be easily replaced by another teacher?

Do you feel your skillset as a teacher is recognized in your workplace?

Please tell me about one time where you felt competent in your job.

Why do you keep working in *eikaiwa*?

## Appendix B: Follow-up interview guides

**Key:** (A) = autonomy, (C) = competence, (R) = relatedness

**Rose:** (confirm number of years in *eikaiwa*)

Imagine we're meeting for the first time. What would you say if I asked you, "What do you do?" (Follow up: "What kind of \_\_\_\_\_ are you?/How do you see yourself?") (A) (C)

How much of your workday can you devote to tasks of your choice? (A)

What do you do to keep improving and developing as a teacher? (C)

Do you ever attend conferences or seminars? (R) (C)

Are you a member of any professional associations? (R)

Have you ever felt stuck in a rut? If so, how did you get out of it? (C)

**Chris:** (confirm number of years in *eikaiwa*)

How much of your workday can you devote to tasks of your choice? (A)

Imagine we're meeting for the first time. What would you say if I asked you, "What do you do?" (Follow up: "What kind of \_\_\_\_\_ are you?/How do you see yourself?") (A) (C)

What do you get out of attending things like ETJ events and other conferences or seminars? (R) (C)

You told me about observing and giving feedback to others, but do you ever get feedback or get observed yourself? (C)

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Have you ever felt stuck in a rut? If so, how did you get out of it? (C)

**Will:**

How much of your workday can you devote to tasks of your choice? (A)

Imagine we're meeting for the first time. What would you say if I asked you, "What do you do?" (Follow up: "What kind of \_\_\_\_\_ are you? /How do you see yourself?") (A) (C)

What do you do to keep improving and developing as a teacher? (C)

Do you ever attend conferences or seminars? (R) (C)

Are you a member of any professional associations? (R)

Have you ever felt stuck in a rut? If so, how did you get out of it? (C)