

Working conditions in the craft sector

Desired occupation involving high demands and less praise

43 baua: Facts

There are around one million craft businesses in Germany, providing work for around 5.6 million people - that's 13 percent of the total workforce. These people work in the carpentry, metal, and automotive trades or in bakeries, butcher stores, hair salons, and many other trades. The analysis of the BIBB/BAuA-Employment Survey 2018 reveals that the physical requirements in craft jobs are particularly relevant.

Introduction

The results presented below come from the BIBB/BAuA Employment Survey 2018. In the analysis, persons working in crafts jobs (n = 1,501) and persons working in non-craft jobs (n = 18,511) were compared in terms of selected workplace characteristics. The allocation of workers to the "crafts" group was based on two criteria. First, those occupational classes were selected using the Classification of Occupations (KldB 2010) that belong to crafts occupations. Respondents who work in craft businesses as skilled craftworkers or master craftspeople were also included. The evaluation showed, among other things, that slightly more craftspeople work in their preferred occupations (83 % vs. 78 %).

High physical demands and health complaints

Five physical demands were considered: working while standing, lifting and carrying heavy loads, working in noisy conditions, in forced postures, and in cold, heat, wet, damp or draughty conditions (see Fig. 1).

All five physical demands apply more often to craft workers. For example, 85 percent of respondents from the crafts sector stated that they often worked standing up. In non-manual occupations, that figure was only 51 percent. 54 percent of craft-sector respondents said they often lifted and carried heavy loads, versus 20 percent in the non-craft occupations. The situation was similar when working in noisy conditions (51 % vs. 23 %), in forced postures (47 % vs. 14 %) and in cold, heat, wet, damp or draughty conditions (44 % vs. 18 %).

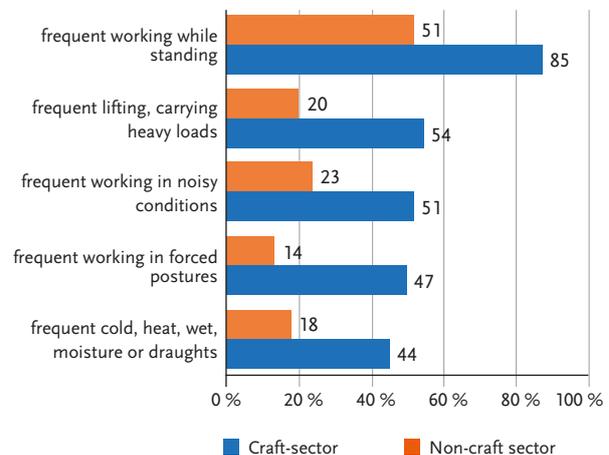


Fig. 1 Frequent physical demands in comparison (in %)

The IKK Classic health report¹ shows that people working in the crafts sector were sick more often than other occupational groups in 2020. The main cause was musculoskeletal disorders.

Working time organisation

In addition to physical demands, four characteristics of working time organisation were analysed. In craft occupations, 24 percent of respondents reported working more than 48 hours a week on average. In non-manual occupations, this proportion was lower, at 16 percent. However, 87 percent of respondents in craft occupations said their working hours are usually between 7 am and 7 pm. In

non-manual occupations, the share was only 76 percent. With regard to balancing work and private life, slightly fewer employees from the crafts sector stated that they often succeed in taking family and private interests into account when planning their working time (58 % vs. 62 %).

Psychological demands

In addition, selected psychological demands were compared. A higher proportion of respondents in the crafts sector stated that they often work under strong deadline or performance pressure (55 % vs. 47 %). At the same time, the proportion of respondents who frequently have to handle different tasks at the same time (49 % vs. 62 %) or who are frequently disturbed or interrupted at work (38 % vs. 45%) is lower in craft jobs.

Decision latitude and social support

Decision latitude and social support are resources at work that are conducive to health.² Fig. 2 shows that craftspeople are less likely than non-craftspeople to have the opportunity to plan and schedule their own work themselves (54 % vs. 66 %).

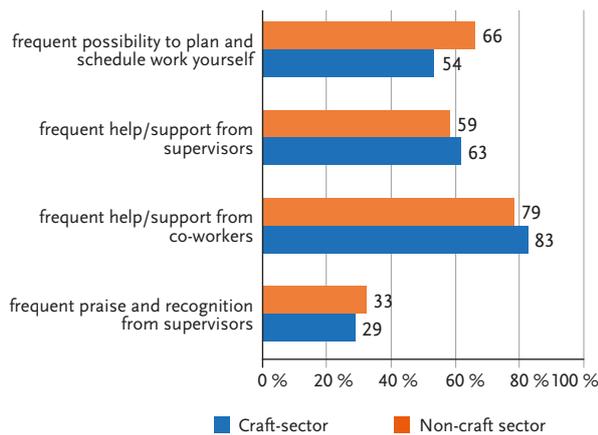


Fig. 2 Decision latitude and social support in comparison (in %)

Help and support from the direct supervisor is somewhat higher in the crafts than in the non-crafts sector (63 % vs. 59 %). The situation is similar for help and support from colleagues (83 % vs. 79 %). The proportion of peo-

ple who frequently receive praise and recognition from their supervisors is somewhat lower in the crafts sector (29 % vs. 33 %).

Conclusion

High physical demands, strong deadline or performance pressure, and excessive working hours are especially likely to occur more frequently in the crafts sector than in the non-crafts sector. To prevent people working in the crafts sector from getting sick, working conditions should be designed to be safe and healthy on the basis of the legally required risk assessment. The GDA-ORGcheck³ can be used as the first step towards this goal.

The use of exoskeletons adapted to the respective craft activities, the introduction of fixed break times and job rotation, where possible, can also have a health-promoting effect.

By giving praise and recognition, direct supervisors increase their employee’s health and work satisfaction. At the same time, they make their company more attractive, thereby helping to keep employees in the company and in the crafts sector for a longer period of time.

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Further information

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- 2 Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin, 2020. Stressreport Deutschland 2019. Psychische Anforderungen, Ressourcen und Befinden. 1st ed. Dortmund: BAuA. DOI: 10.21934/baua:bericht20191007
- 3 Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales. GDA-ORGcheck – Arbeitsschutz mit Methode zahlt sich aus. Berlin: BMAS. Last access 27/04/22 <https://inqa.de/DE/handeln/inqa-checks/gda-orgcheck-arbeitsschutz-mit-methode.html>

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