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Job Crafting and its Outcomes: A Review

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Abstract:

Employees do not just react to organizational factors but they actively adjust and alter their work atmosphere in accordance to their own passion, interest, strength and preferences. A recent development in work design / re-design theories is the introduction of employee-initiated job redesigns approach known as “job crafting”. The proactive behavior where the employees alter their work boundaries to enhance their work identity and meaningfulness is regarded as job crafting. It is associated with a number of positive outcomes, both at employee as well as at the organizational level. The present study aims to highlight the concept of job crafting along with its significant outcomes for both individual and the organization. It highlights new insights of association between employee job crating and their work place and concludes that it is in the interest of both organizations and practitioners to encourage favorable form of job crafting given its benefits.

Keywords: Job crafting, proactive behavior, Organizational Citizenship behavior (OCB), burnout, work Engagement, Job Performance, Person- Job fit, meaningfulness.

1. Introduction:

In the field of job design or re-design, much of the research has concentrated on the role of organization and management to design the job for the employees to increase their productivity and motivation. Little attention is given on the role of employees to alter and make modifications in the plan of their jobs themselves. Identifying the significance of employee’s proactively, “Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) presented and introduced the concept of Job Crafting” as “the changes employees make to shape, mould and redefine their jobs”.

Today in a dynamic working environment it’s somewhat difficult for the managers to design the jobs for employees that fit their unique needs and demands of workplace. In such situation it is

relevant to design flexible jobs and give autonomy to employees to make alterations to make it fit with their own needs, preferences, passion. Job crafting is proactive, active and self-initiated behavior of employees which results in both individual and organizational benefits (Demerouti, 2014).

“Job crafting has been correlated with many positive work outcomes like- work engagement (Bakker et al. 2012), Job performance (Tims et al., 2015), meaning of work (Dan et al. 2020), Job satisfaction (Rudolph et al. 2017)”, Organizational citizenship behavior (Gong et al. 2018), Person-job fit (Niessen et al. 2016), reduction in burnout (Tims et al., 2013), reduction in turnover intentions (Esteves and Lopes, 2017) etc”. Job crafting contributes to the enrichment of the employee-job relationship, resulting in enhanced employee happiness and beneficial organizational outcomes “such as increased work engagement, workplace dedication, and productivity”. The current study is undertaken to study the potential outcomes of job crafting which are essential for both organizational and employee well being and enhancement.

2. Objectives of the study:

- 1) To provide an overview of Job crafting.
- 2) To highlight the possible outcomes of job crafting behavior of employees.

3.1 Job Crafting:

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) established the proactive role employees play in enhancing significance and identity in work. “They defined job crafting as the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relationship boundaries of their work”. The above definition also incorporates its three forms - task crafting, relational crafting and cognitive crafting. “Task crafting occurs when individual change the task characteristics of the job for e.g. by taking more task or by delegating some task etc. Relational crafting occurs when an individual change nature of integration at workplace” for e.g. reducing interactions with co-workers you dislike.

While, cognitive crafting involve changing one’s perceptions about the job for e.g. a restaurant cook views his job as a way to reflect his creativity than just a cook. “In extending the work of Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), “Leana et al. (2009) studied job crafting at the team level and differentiated between individual and collaborative job crafting”.

Tims et al. (2012) framed an alternative conceptualization of job crafting. “They used Job-demand resource model and defined job crafting as- the changes that employees may make to balance their job demands and resources with their personal abilities and needs”. “In their study, Tims et al. (2012) identified four dimensions of job-crafting construct i.e. increasing structural job resources, increasing social job resources, increasing challenging job demands and reducing hindering job demands”.

The dominant conceptualization of job crafting differs in many ways. Firstly, they vary with

respect to the motive behind crafting “Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) described job crafting as a means to increase work meaning and work identity while, Tims et al. (2012) described job crafting as a way to improve person-job fit”. Secondly, “Tims et al. (2012) fails to consider cognitive crafting as a part of crafting efforts as originally conceptualized by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001). Petrou et al. reframed the four dimensional structure of job crafting by Tims et al. (2012) and created a three-dimensional structure that involves looking for resources, identifying challenges and reducing demands”.

Lichtenthaler and Fischbach (2019) using regulatory focus theory tried to integrate two diverse conceptualization of job crafting i.e. role-base crafting and resources-based crafting (2012). “Authors differentiated between promotion-focused job crafting from prevention-focused job crafting. Promotion-focused job crafting includes increasing job resources and challenging job demands, expanding task, relational and cognitive crafting while, prevention-focused job crafting includes decreasing hindering job demands and contraction – oriented task, relational and cognitive crafting”.

3.2 Outcomes of Job Crafting:

Numerous studies show that proactive job construction, which involves matching available workplace demands and resources, results in a range of favorable consequences at the individual, job, and organizational levels.

3.2.1 Job crafting and Organizational Citizenship behavior (OCB):

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is a developing concept in Positive organizational behavior that investigates how and why people contribute constructively to their businesses outside of their regular work responsibilities; it's a concept that is rapidly expanding in recent years. In the early 1980s, the term "organizational citizenship" was used to describe employee behavior inside various organizations' social systems. “Because of the growing importance of autonomous and team-based work over strict, traditional hierarchies, it has grown into an important topic of study since then (LePine et al., 2002)”. Understanding organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is becoming increasingly important for the long-term sustainability of the organizations’ social structures and employee responsibilities. A lot of current studies have established a substantial positive association between job crafting and OCB, which leads to increased employee performance. “Organizational productivity, efficiency, and employee performance assessments and promotions are all facilitated by OCB”.

A number of researches indicate “job crafting enhances the employee-job relationship, resulting in higher employee contentment and positive organizational outcomes such as enhanced work engagement, workplace commitment, and OCB (Shusha, 2014; Shin and Hur, 2019; Gong et al., 2018; Ding et al., 2020; Nonnis et al., 2020)”. “Work participation is a strong positive predictor

of job crafting, and there is a positive and significant association between work involvement and organizational citizenship behavior”.

In an elaborate study (Shusha, 2014) conducted on nurses and physician supervisors in Egypt Medical centers on the relationship of job crafting & employee engagement in OCB, established that the task and relational crafting were projected factors for OCB. As a result, “individuals with high levels of task crafting are more likely to engage in conscientiousness activities including adhering to organizational roles and conserving organizational resources”.

Shin and Hur (2019) linking 50 Korean air line attendants job crafting & OCB from the JD-R viewpoint also indicated “OCB was positively connected to daily task, relational, and cognitive crafting through the mediating process of increasing job resources and challenging job demands”. “Employees are empowered by job crafting because it allows them to adjust the job and relational limitations of their occupations, which motivates them to be more engaged at work and leads to a higher level of OCB across dimensions.(Bakker et al., 2007; Tims et al., 2012”).

3.2.2 Job crafting and Burnout:

Burnout is a work-related hazard that continues to garner a lot of attention due to its considerable overheads for employees and organizations (Bakker et al., 2014, Schaufeli et al., 2009). It is a negative affective condition characterized by exhaustion of an individual's energy coping capabilities as a result of recurring suffering. “Employees with high levels of burnout have insufficient resources to adequately deal with their job obligations”. Taking the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory into consideration, “individuals accumulating resources will reduce the experience of burnout and they empower themselves to safeguard themselves from any demands and negative threat (Hobfoll, 2002). Research studies in this effect indicate that resourcefulness of job crafting will decrease burnout work demands and resources as a coping mechanism. “The same is advocated by the JD-R model for averting the effect of burnout and experiencing the positive outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Taris, 2006)”. Employees that are creative and proactive are more likely to avoid or lessen burnout, as well as to maintain or improve their performance levels. Job crafting, according to several research “(Demerouti et al., 2015; Petrou et al., 2015), will be critical in boosting job performance by proactively coping with burnout. Employee performance improves as a result of job designing, and burnout is reduced”.

Tims et al. (2015) in their study illustrated the effect of “job crafting at the collegial level, finding that individual job crafting increased role conflict and overload for coworkers. As a result, job crafting reduces role stress for individuals on a personal level”. Furthermore, “role stress is likely to reduce employees' psychological availability, underlining the importance of supporting proactive measures through job crafting to manage stressful work setting”. Similar studies of “Tims et al. (2013) and Petrou et al. (2015) reveal that job crafting considerably decreases exhaustion levels of

employees”.

In their study of 268 IT employees, Singh and Singh (2018) found that “job crafting has a coping effect in reducing stress and burnout, boosting psychological well-being, and having numerous effects on performance at the individual, job, and organizational levels”. Job crafting was discovered to be a proactive coping method that increased individual resourcefulness.

It's plausible to believe that fostering job crafting minimizes burnout by allowing employees to manage their stress levels proactively. In contrast to a previous study (Chen et al., 2014), including “psychological conditions or resources as a proximal outcome of job crafting could help to explain the link between job crafting and other work outcomes (such as job satisfaction, commitment, engagement)”.

3.2.3 Job Crafting and Work engagement:

Another positive behavior at work resulting in positive work related outcome is ‘Work Engagement’. “It is defined as -positive, work-related state of mind in employees characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002;)”. “Work engagement is a notion that has just lately gained traction in the literature on organizational psychology, human resource development, and business management, and has been connected to organisational outcomes in a number of studies”. Studies have identified that positive behavior “broadens attention, cognition and action, which, in turn, leads to an increase in resources (Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson and Branigan, 2005)”. “Job crafting is a dimension of proactive behavior and longitudinal research studies reflect that job crafting is a mediator in the process of increasing work engagement and person-environment fit. (Bakker et al., 2007). Thus, proactive actions by an individual that mobilizes (and increases) job resources, decreases hindering job demands, and increases challenging aspects of a job, leads to work engagement”

Numerous studies have also identified that task crafting extensively impacts work engagement (Kim & Lee, 2016; Sakuraya et al., 2016). “According to Tims et al. (2014) high level of work engagement as the result of task crafting as employees are allowed to shape their job requirements and job resources in line with their interests and their own demands”. Employees modify their job behavior as a result of job demand shapes, minimizing superfluous demands, encouraging them to attain better performance, vigor, devotion, and zeal (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

“The Influence of Relational Crafting on Work Engagement as investigated by Kim and Lee (2016) and Sakuraya et al. (2016) proved the practical consequences of relational crafting in job crafting having a positive impact on employee engagement”. Improved social ties at work, according to Ibarra (1993), will boost information access, which is required to fulfil tasks. Employees will be able to meet employment objectives more rapidly, resulting in improved motivation at work.

Beer and Beer (2016) in their cross sectional study investigated “job crafting and its relationship

with work engagement and job satisfaction in mining and manufacturing industries of South Africa and the regression results revealed that increasing structural job resources with challenging job demands, and increasing social job resources were significant predictors of work engagement”. “Furthermore, increasing social job resources was a strong predictor of job happiness, demonstrating the relevance of job crafting in businesses for work engagement and job satisfaction”.

3.2.4 Job Crafting and Job performance:

Job performance is one of the most relevant dependent variables of interest for researchers, practitioners and organizations. Performance has been conceptualized in multiple ways. Rotundo (2000) provided a review on body of literature that has defined job performance and stated that focus is more on the behavior of employees on the job rather than the outcome of such behavior. Behavioral aspect focuses on what and how the employees actually do at work e.g., teacher taking class of students. While outcome aspect focuses on result of such behavior for e.g., marks obtained by students. Carlos and Rodrigues (2016) characterized job performance as “dynamic, multidimensional, behavioral, episodic and evaluative concept” (pp.2). The distinction between task and contextual performance is made at the most fundamental level. (Borman and Motowidlo, 1993). In the literature, there is an increasing evidence that job crafting results into better performance of employees (“Petrou et al., 2015; Tims et al., 2013; Tims et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2018; Esmaceli et al., 2019; Berdicchia and Masino, 2019; Bakker et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2021; Garg et al., 2021 etc.”). Zhang et al. (2021) from among 653 knowledge workers in China found that when employees craft their strengths that results in higher task performance.

Similarly, “Garg et al. (2021) found that work engagement partially mediated the favourable connection between job crafting and employee performance in a study of 369 software developers in India”. In contrast, Bakker et al. (2020) from among a sample of 2310 employees in Norway through their elaborate study confirmed a negative correlation to job performance when the job demands hindrances were reduced. This also leads to the significance of Eustress and its relevance to job performance (a part of positive organizational psychology). Review shows that crafting behavior of employees that results in increasing resources and challenges has mainly been found to be positively correlated to performance while, crafting behavior of diminishing job demands has detrimental or negative impact on performance.

3.2.5 Job Crafting and Person-job fit:

Person-job fit refers to “the fit or match between employees personal characteristics and job characteristics. Edward (1991) made a distinction between types of Person-Job fit i.e. demands-abilities fit and needs-supplies fit”. “Demands-abilities fit refer to the congruence between employee’s knowledge, skills and abilities and the requirements of the job whereas, needs- supplies fit refer to the alignment between the job employees perform and employee’s needs, wants or

preferences”. As job crafting refers to altering one’s knowledge, skills, perceptions or social relationships at work it might be able to enhance employee’s person-job fit

Lu et al. (2013) “revealed a positive and substantial association between physical and relational craftsmanship and both types of person-job fit, i.e. needs-supplies fit and demands-abilities fit, in a study of 246 information technology professionals in China. Job crafting treatments, according to Kooij et al. (2017), resulted in increased strength crafting, which led to an increase in person-job fit”.

Chin et al. (2014) in his study among hotel employees in Taiwan and found that “person-job fit fully mediates the relationship between individual and collaborative job crafting and job engagement”. Similarly, in a longitudinal study (2015) found that “increasing job resource, increasing challenging job demands and reducing hindering job demands results in enhancing person-job fit which further increases work meaning”.

Wong and Tetrick (2017) highlighted that cognitive crafting where employees reframe the meaning of their job is predominantly important for older employees to maintain a fit with their job and thereby, to enhance positive work identity.

3.2.6 Job crafting and Meaningfulness:

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) argued that when employees alter the job to fit their perceptions of what job should be, they experience meaningfulness. “Steger et al. (2012) suggested three dimensions of meaningfulness i.e. psychological meaningfulness which includes experience of work as important, valuable and significant, meaning making through work which implies making life as more meaningful as a result of meaningful work and greater good motivations which implies the positive impact of work on others”. Many studies support the idea that work meaning is not only the result of work environment or job distinctiveness but also the proactive behavior of employees. “Berg et al., 2013; Berg et al., 2010. Tims et al. (2016) - linked job crafting to person-job fit, which in turn, increased meaningfulness in work. Peral and Geldenhuys (2016) conducted the study among high school teachers in South Africa and found that job crafting in terms of increasing structural resources and challenging job demands leads to psychological meaningfulness which in turn, leads to work engagement of teachers”.

In another study, Nagy et al. (2019) conducted a survey among older employees and found that job crafting was a predominant factor for work meaningfulness. Hulshof et al. (2020) found that “meaningful work act as a significant mediator between the relationship of job crafting and service recovery performance”.

“Work meaningfulness entirely moderated the favorable connection between job crafting and work engagement, according to Haffer et al. (2020). In a longitudinal study, Geldenhuys et al. (2020) discovered that all types of crafting, such as task crafting, relational crafting, and cognitive crafting,

are indirectly associated to peer-reviewed job performance via meaningfulness”.

Dan et al. (2020) by using “motivational process of JD-R model suggested that job crafting impacts work meaning which in turn, leads to increase in work engagement and thereby, job performance”. In a research of Chinese employees, Chang et al. (2021) revealed that when spiritual leadership is strong, “job crafting somewhat mediates the relationship between feeling of calling and meaningfulness”.

3.2.7 Dysfunctional consequences of Job crafting:

Dysfunctional consequences of job crafting have been largely unexamined in the literature. Research studies have suggested that it is important to promote beneficial crafting activities and monitor detrimental crafting efforts by employees. Using regulatory focus theory, Lichtenthaler and Fischbach (2019) found that “prevention-focused job crafting, such as reducing hindering job demands, contraction-oriented task, and relational crafting, had an indirect negative relationship with performance via increased burnout and decreased work engagement”.

“Tims et al. (2015) examined whether job crafting efforts of employee’s have any impact on colleagues job characteristics and well-being. They found that decreasing hindering job demands was positively related to workplace conflict and increased workload of colleagues. Similarly, Demerouti et al. (2015) found that reducing demands have detrimental impact on job performance as reducing workload lead to reduction in engagement”. Lichtenthaler and Fischbach (2019) used regulatory focus theory to show that “prevention-oriented job crafting, such as reducing hindering job demands, contraction-oriented task, and relational crafting, had an indirect negative relationship with performance via increased burnout and decreased work engagement”.

4 Conclusions:

The present study concerned the relevance of new form of job re-design i.e. job crafting by pointing its relevant consequences. Both positive and negative consequences of job crafting have been highlighted. Positive outcomes of job crafting includes better performance, organizational citizenship behavior, increased engagement, person-job fit, experience of meaningfulness and increased job satisfaction. In addition to positive outcomes, dysfunctional consequences of performance have also been highlighted.

According to the findings, reducing the job crafting's limiting job demands component has negative implications for both the individual employee and the company. We suggest that for organizations as well as practitioners it is imperative to encourage the favorable form of job crafting for the benefit of both employees as well as organizations. Although job crafting is completely voluntary and self-directed conduct of employees but, organizations could play a significant role in stimulating conditions that promote crafting behavior in the organizations. Job crafting treatments such as job crafting training or workshops may benefit employees as they will be able to seek out

additional resources and more rigorous demands, hence improving their own well-being.

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