

The Impact of Job Crafting on Human Resource Management

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Abstract— *Job crafting describes an employee-initiated job redesign process undertaken to make the role assigned to the employee more attractive. This article outlines how a targeted personnel development approach can influence an employee's job crafting initiatives to improve their job satisfaction, motivation and performance, and prevent dysfunctional consequences of self-initiated job redesign.*

Keywords: *Job crafting, human resource management, personnel development.*

I. SELF-INITIATED JOB CRAFTING BY EMPLOYEES

Since Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) introduced the construct "job crafting," the discussion about implications and possibilities of job crafting has substantially expanded (Tims & Bakker, Job crafting: Towards a new model of individual job redesign, 2010). [2] The focus in the past was on how employers could design jobs, while job crafting focuses on how employees can initiate and craft their own job design.

Traditional discourse emphasizes company-initiated top-down measures regarding job design, whereas job crafting focuses on employee-initiated bottom-up activities: "Individuals have latitude to define and enact the job, acting as 'job crafters'" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, Crafting a job: Revisioning employees as active crafters of their job, 2001, S. 179).[5] It refers to the activities in which employees shape, reformulate, and redefine their assigned tasks.

The goal of job crafting by employees is to design job profiles that better fit their own needs and ideas about how a job should be done while still fitting the job profile into the company's predetermined job framework (Timms, Derks, & Bakker, 2016). [6] Therefore, job crafting is characterized by the fact that it is initiated by the employee (Crant, 2000) [7] and it includes any changes to the job profile that make the job more attractive to the employee (Bruning & Campion, 2018). [8] Job crafters can therefore also be described as "job entrepreneurs" (Wrzesniewski, Berg, & Dutton, 2010, S. 115), [9] although the question remains whether these arbitrary changes are always in the interest of the company. Thus, it can become dysfunctional for companies if important tasks or relationships with key stakeholders are neglected.

Therefore, companies should consider how they can influence employees' job crafting activities in a targeted manner so that both sides can benefit from job crafting while avoiding a dysfunctional outcome. To address this question, the paper first contextualizes job crafting within the field of organizational psychology, then presents job crafting from

the perspective of resource and role theory and finally explains how job crafting can be used in HR development.

II. JOB DESIGN AND JOB CHARACTERISTICS: A TRADITIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Without a doubt, job design is a traditional topic in organizational psychology (Parker, Morgeson, & John, 2017; Oldham & Fried, 2016; Grant & Parker, 2009). [3] Based in particular on the job characteristics model of (Hackman & Oldham, Motivation through the design of work, 1976; Hackman & Oldham, 1980), research has always focused on the extent to which job design influences employee satisfaction, motivation, and job performance (Grant & Parker, 2009). [4]

The potential for performance improvement through job design depends on five dimensions. (1) The tasks assigned should be varied (skill variety), (2) the activity should not be too specialized in terms of division of labor (task identity), (3) the employee should be made aware of the importance of the job in the overall structure (task significance), (4) the employee should have the freedom to decide how they want to perform their work (autonomy) and (5) the employee should be given feedback while performing the task (feedback).

The organization thus is challenged to design job profiles exhibiting the five job characteristics that increase satisfaction, motivation and performance (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback). The implementation of the corresponding job design is primarily regarded as the task of managers (Grant & Parker, 2009), even if Kulik/Oldham/Hackman (1987) [10] have already pointed out that the initiative for a job redesign can also come from the employees themselves.

III. JOB CRAFTING FROM A ROLE AND RESOURCE THEORY PERSPECTIVE

Recent studies on job crafting show that two competing theoretical perspectives have been discussed: The role-based perspective on the one hand and the resource-based

perspective on the other (Bruning & Campion, 2018; Zhang & Parker, 2019).[11]

The role-theoretical perspective (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) [12] conceptualizes job crafting as a change in employee role perception. Since a social role can be understood as the sum of behavioral expectations directed at the holder of a social position, in the context of job crafting employees independently determine which expectations (e.g., from superiors, colleagues, or customers) they meet and to what extent. They develop an individual self-image of the job assigned to them by the company. The role-theoretical approach distinguishes between three types of job crafting (Table. 1): self-initiated changes in the task structure ("task crafting"), the arbitrary shaping of the social relationships associated with the performance of the task ("relational crafting"), and finally the individual interpretation of the meaning of the job ("cognitive crafting").

Table. 1: Role and resource theory perspective on Job Crafting

Role theory	Ressource theory
Task-related change	Increase in resources
Relationship oriented change	Lowering demands
Cognitive change	Increase in challenging demands

Since jobs are always bundles of tasks, employees determine which tasks they perform and with what intensity (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).[14] It would therefore be naïve to assume that employees devote themselves exclusively and completely to the tasks specified in job descriptions. Rather, they may also take on tasks that are not mentioned at all in their job description, or they may completely ignore tasks listed there and continue to interpret tasks mentioned there in an idiosyncratic manner with regard to processing scope and detail. Job crafting can thus lead to an expansion or reduction of the work role (Bruning & Campion, 2018).[15]

The fulfillment of work tasks also involves recurring interactions (e.g. with colleagues, customers or suppliers), resulting in social relationships. Therefore, in the role-theoretical perspective, relationship-oriented job crafting is distinguished from task-oriented job crafting. Accordingly, employees not only idiosyncratically interpret their task area, but also foster or neglect social relationships no less idiosyncratically within the framework of their professional activity (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). [19] Employees maintain relationships in their jobs not only to the extent necessary for the performance of their tasks, but always according to personal preferences as well. Customers who are likeable, for example, are treated differently than customers who are less likeable to him - regardless of the importance for the company's success.

Finally, in the perspective of the role-theoretical approach,

employees engage in cognitive job crafting in addition to task- and relationship-oriented job crafting. Cognitive reshaping takes place when the way of seeing one's job is changed. Cognitive job crafting makes one's job appear in a new light because the perceived importance of one's job changes. In this process, employees develop a positive self-image of their job and attest to the meaningfulness and significance of their work. They reinterpret the purpose of their work and re-evaluate what they achieve through their work. So this third form of job crafting is about the individually undertaken cognitive framing of one's job, resulting in a changed work identity (Buonocore, Russo, & Salvatore, 2020).[1] "Through cognitive crafting, employees can alter the way in which they see their work in order to obtain a more positive work identity deriving an enhanced level of meaning and purpose from their work" (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013, S. 128).[13]

To empirically test the extent to which employees apply the three forms of job crafting distinguished in the role theory, Leana/Applebaum/Shevchuk (2009) and Slemp/Vella-Brodrick (2013) have developed measurement instruments. While the former developed a six-item questionnaire that measures teachers' job crafting (with sample items such as "I try out new teaching methods in class on my own initiative" or "I adapt organizational guidelines that seem unproductive to me in my everyday work"), the fifteen-item Job Crafting Questionnaire (JCQ) developed and validated by Slemp/Vella-Brodrick (2013) can be used in all job descriptions (sample items: "I take initiative to take on new tasks that match my skills and interests," "I think about how my job contributes to the success of the company," "I try to make friends with people I meet at work"). A modified version of the JCQ has been developed and validated by Nielsen/Abildgaard (2012).[16]

An different approach to the phenomenon of job crafting is offered by the resource theory (Tims & Bakker, Job crafting: Towards a new model of individual job redesign, 2010). Based on the work-related resources model developed in stress research, also known as the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, The Job Demands-Resources model: state of the art, 2007), [17] it is assumed that employees are always exposed to physical, mental, and emotional demands at work on the one hand (e.g., due to time and performance pressure, task difficulty, customer demands, or conflicts at the workplace) and are provided with resources on the other (e.g., operating resources, budgets, collegial support, or learning opportunities).

These resources either help them to perform their job or reduce the demands placed on them, or ultimately support the employee's personal development. According to the JD-R model, all working conditions are thus experienced by the employee either as requirements or as resources. Tims/Bakker (2010) [18] derive three possible types of job crafting from this model (Fig. 1):

Employees try (1) to increase the resources available to

them (e.g. through further training or by seeking collegial support), (2) to increase challenging and motivating work requirements (e.g. by taking on additional tasks), and (3) to reduce stressful, and thus obstructive, work requirements (e.g., by avoiding unpleasant customers).

Tims/Bakker/Derks (2012) [21] have developed and validated the most frequently used instrument for measuring the extent to which employees practice the three forms of job crafting distinguished in the resource theory perspective on a daily basis. Modified versions of the survey instrument have been presented by Petrou et al (2012) and Nielsen/Abildgaard (2012).[23]

IV. CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF JOB CRAFTINGS

A variety of reasons are responsible for employees taking the initiative to carry out job redesign. If we cluster them, we can distinguish between individual, social and structural antecedents. Individual causes can be located in the person of the employee, such as his personality, his needs, his attitudes or his intelligence.

Thus, the need for social bonding and belonging can be the cause of relationship-oriented job crafting. The need for meaning in work and a positive self-image can start cognitive job crafting, and the need for control over one's own work causes employees to engage in task-oriented job crafting (Niessen, Weseler, & Kostova, 2016). Other studies explore whether proactive personalities are more likely to engage in job crafting than less proactive ones (Rudolph, Katz, Lavigne, & Zacher, 2017). [25] Also, experienced self-efficacy (Kim, Im, & Qu, 2018), avoidance temperament (Bipp & Demerouti, 2015), intelligence (Lyons, 2008), and the amount of work experience (Niessen, Weseler, & Kostova, 2016) are cited as causes. Social factors that influence the extent of job crafting include the leadership style of the employee's supervisor, in particular the extent of control exercised (Lyons, 2008), and good social interaction among colleagues (Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2015)[28]

Structural factors that influence whether, and to what extent, job crafting is possible are, for example, the autonomy granted by the organization in the performance of work, the extent to which one's own job can be performed independently of collegial input, and the extent to which colleagues are dependent on the results of one's work (task interdependence) (Kim, Im, & Qu, 2018; Niessen, Weseler, & Kostova, 2016; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). [29]

Since employees engage in job crafting to best match the job to their skills and interests (increasing person-job fit), it is not surprising that job crafting increases employees' job satisfaction, well-being, intrinsic motivation, and work engagement (Bakker, Rodriguez-Munoz, & Sanz Vergel, 2016; Lee & Lee, 2018; Mäkikangas, 2018). It also increases the willingness to engage in extra-role behaviors, while decreasing the experience of stress and the propensity to fluctuate (Rudolph, Katz, Lavigne, & Zacher, 2017). [30]

And last but not least, job crafting is a proven means of countering boredom experienced at work (Harju, Hakanen, & Schaufeli, 2016; Opera, Illiescu, & Dumitrache, 2019).[20]

The consequences for colleagues are more ambivalent. Job crafting can lead to a higher workload for colleagues and fuel conflicts in the work group (Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2015). [22] The consequences at the organizational level are equally ambivalent: If employees turn to tasks with greater commitment and their work performance is increased, this is undoubtedly in the interest of the company. But at the same time, job crafting can also lead to important tasks being neglected by employees on their own initiative - especially since job crafting is often not even noticed by superiors. From the company's perspective, job crafting can therefore be both functional and dysfunctional. Job crafting "serves the employee, but is not inherently good or bad for organizations" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, S. 186) - "not all job crafting is beneficial" (Wrzesniewski, Berg, & Dutton, 2010, S. 117).[24]

V. JOB CRAFTING AND HR DEVELOPMENT

If job crafting leads to employees being more satisfied and committed to their work tasks, it would seem obvious to exert a targeted influence on employees' job crafting activities as part of corporate HR development. Employees should learn how to use job crafting to increase their job satisfaction, motivation and performance (Berg, Dutton, Wrzesniewski, & Baker, 2013; Wingerden, Bakker, & Derks, 2017; Demerouti, Peeters, & v. d. Heuvel, 2019) [26] while at the same time dysfunctional job crafting should be prevented.

It could therefore make sense to see job crafting as part of personnel development. This would ensure that managers and colleagues are mutually aware of the planned job crafting activities and can intervene at an early stage if necessary to prevent dysfunctional job crafting.

The following six-step design of the personnel development measure is suitable, following the role-theoretical perspective of job crafting:

(1) A department should find an agreement on which functions and tasks to be achieved they are responsible for. At the same time, the overlap between the tasks of the individual employees within the department should be worked out ("team setting"). (2) In a second step ("job analysis"), the employees are then asked to analyze their own job both in terms of the tasks to be performed (e.g., by ranking the tasks according to time required) and the professional relationships relevant to their own job (e.g., by ranking the interaction partners according to frequency of interaction), as well as in terms of the overarching significance (e.g., by listing the relevance of their own job for others). (3) Employees should highlight their competencies and interests, what drives them and is a source for satisfaction ("profile").

(4) The fourth step ("job crafting plan") is to compare the employee profile with the job profile. This personal job crafting plan is presented to colleagues and the supervisor

before (5) the changes described in the job crafting plan are implemented in everyday work ("Implementation"). And finally, (6), after the job crafting has been implemented for several weeks, the changes made are evaluated ("evaluation") to prevent a dysfunctional job crafting design.

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