
Themed editorial: Job crafting – relevance to human resource management

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1953

Over the past years, an increasing number of papers on the topic of job crafting have been submitted to *Personnel Review*. In this themed issue we have brought together seven papers that focus on different aspects of job crafting. We provide some context to the job crafting literature, introduce the papers and identify key features emerging in the literature. Building on the papers in this special themed issue we explore some potential future areas of research in this important topic.

Papers on job crafting can often be traced to Wrzesniewski and Dutton's seminal paper in 2001 in the *Academy of Management Review*. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) drew a distinction between job design, which is carried out largely by managers on passive employees, and job crafting in which individual employees exercise agency over their work. They define job crafting as the physical and cognitive changes that individuals make in the tasks or relational boundaries of their work. They argue that job tasks are the building blocks of jobs and changing the key elements of the job in this way changes the design of key aspects of the job. However, reshaping tasks is only one element of job crafting, equally important is the manner in which employees form interactions and relationships that compose the social environment of work. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) identified three main elements of the job crafting process, first the individual motivations of workers, second, the opportunities that workers have for job crafting and third, the individual and organisational effects of job crafting. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) considered job crafting to be a creative process which can also have an impact on the meaning of work and the work identity of the individual.

Their seminal paper also identified some important areas for future research, for example when is job crafting a positive or negative activity for the organisation? What are the antecedents of job crafting? What is the process of job crafting? Is job crafting an individual level activity? Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) also suggested that future research could focus on collective and negotiated forms of job crafting.

Many scholars have taken up these challenges, including the authors in this themed issue. One important development has been the work of [Tims et al. \(2012\)](#) who widened the definition of job crafting by framing it in the Job Demands-Resources (JDR) Model. Job demands refer to the aspects of the job that require sustained effort or skills. Job resources “refer to those aspects of the job that are either/or functional in achieving work goals, reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs, and stimulate personal growth, learning, and development”. [Tims et al. \(2012\)](#), p. 174). They describe job crafting as “the changes that employees may make to balance their job demands and job resources with their personal abilities and needs” ([Tims et al., 2012](#), p. 174). The authors also developed a job crafting scale based around this framework and found positive correlations between job crafting and work engagement, employability and job performance. [Lazazzaraa et al. \(2020\)](#) argue that studies on job crafting that use the JDR model as an analytical tool are largely quantitative. They recognise that earlier job crafting studies developed from the work of Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) utilised qualitative methods to explore the process of job crafting and underlying motivations of the employee. [Lazazzaraa et al. \(2020\)](#) review a number of interventionist studies and found that key motivations are control over the job and the importance of the environment. Against this background we now turn to the papers in this themed issue.



Personnel Review
Vol. 52 No. 8, 2023
pp. 1953-1956
© Emerald Publishing Limited
0048-3486
DOI 10.1108/PR-11-2023-919

Chen and Du extend on Job Demands Job Resources (JD-JR) Theory and explore job crafting in the context of role overload and draw on construal level theory to help explain why some employees are more likely to engage in job crafting than others. Based on survey data from a range of industries in China they argue that identifying the underlying psychological and personality factors that influence individual action can help explain why role overload might lead to an increase in job crafting for some employees and a decrease in job crafting in others. They explore the mechanisms and boundary conditions of the relationship between role overload and job crafting.

Tisu and Virga, drawing on survey data from Romania, also utilise JD-JR theory and identify psychological capital (what can I do) as a personal resource and explore the relationship between psychological capital, job crafting (what I do) and work home enrichment. They define work home enrichment as the extent to which skills and experiences in one role can improve the quality of life in another. Drawing on Conservation of Resources Theory they argue that two specific job crafting dimensions which are increasing social job resources and increasing challenging job demands – fully mediate the link between psychological capital and work home enrichment.

Urbanaviciute and Lazauski-Zabielske also explore quality of working life. They utilise latent profile analysis and explore job crafting in the context of quality of working life from a person-centred perspective linking job crafting, types of work environment and work engagement. They focus on different types of work environments and the impact of avoidance and approach attitudes to job crafting which casts light on how job demands and resources combine.

Jindal, Boxall, Cheng and Hutchinson also explore the impact and outcomes of job crafting. They survey the white-collar employees of an Indian manufacturer. They focus on the interactive effects of work engagement and work autonomy in enhancing job crafting behaviours and performance. The authors argue that the level of job crafting is greatest when the levels of both work engagement and autonomy are high. In an enabling environment, highly engaged employees can deliver higher performance and they argue that job crafting is a mechanism through which this takes place.

Irfan, Abdullah, Qadeer and Safraz also build on JD-JR theory through a survey of knowledge workers in Pakistan. They note that much job crafting research focuses on individuals crafting their jobs. Irfan *et al.* argue that little is written about the importance of managerial and human resource management support for job crafting. They argue that managerial and human resources support that facilitates job crafting can also increase an employee's motivation and lead to sustainable employability.

Luu focuses on collective job crafting on team performance, employees and managers in sales departments of four companies in Vietnam. Drawing on survey data, Luu explores the role of charismatic leaders in team job crafting arguing that charismatic leadership can both inspire team members with high goals and foster change-oriented and collective values.

Mousa and Chaouali study gig workers attached to three crowdsourcing platforms in France and the EU. They explore job crafting, meaningfulness and affective commitment of gig workers towards these platforms. They argue that proactive behaviour embedded in both individual and collaborative job crafting can lead to a sense of meaningfulness and consequently develop affective commitment to the platform.

In reviewing these papers, they all draw on survey data and were carried out in a range of countries, both developed and developing nations with both individualistic and collective identities as well as a range of industries. Some papers focus on the antecedents of job crafting, reinforcing the work of Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) on motivation, opportunity and environment. While others focus on the outcomes of job crafting and links to work engagement, performance, work home enrichment and commitment to organisations. Most of

the papers draw on JD-JR as a theoretical lens through which to understand job crafting. All the papers identify future areas of research.

As editors we see three areas of possible future work. The first is the importance of in-depth qualitative case studies that can unpick the process elements of job crafting in the context of power and control. Tweedle and Holley (2016) study on school cleaners in Australia examines how job crafting can be an attempt to resist and subvert managerial control. It also enables us to better understand identity work and the meaning of work through the lens of employees. Similarly, qualitative studies might be able to uncover the dark side of job crafting – if workers are redesigning and reprioritising their tasks this might not be in the interests of the organisation and is likely to be challenging to uncover through survey data. Second, it might be valuable to utilise different theoretical frameworks for example, labour process theory which focuses on the dialectics of control and resistance (Tweedle and Holley, 2016) or the quality of working life literature underpinned by a socio technical approach which contextualises the nature of work and understands the importance of focussing on process and not just outcomes (Guest *et al.*, 2022). A critical aspect of job crafting is to assist diverse employees in navigating the changing nature of work and organisations and enabling them to positively influence the work they perform. Finally, we revisit the original paper by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) in their identification of collective and negotiated forms of job crafting as a potential research focus. We believe that the role of trade unions and professional associations in the job crafting process could be a fruitful research area. Guest *et al.* (2022) argue that trade unions are not always interested in shop floor initiatives and might not be interested in the bottom-up approach of job crafting. However, if unions are concerned with listening to the voice of their membership and are keen to be seen to be acting on behalf of their members, a focus on job crafting could be a good place to start.

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