



JOB CRAFTING: A NEW PATH TOWARDS ENHANCED PERFORMANCE

Surbhi Dulara* Dr.Chandrani Sen**

**Research Scholar, The IIS University, Jaipur.*

***Head, Dept. of Psychology, The IIS University, Jaipur.*

Abstract

Job crafting being amongst the latest variables is a proactive behaviour defined as the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) which has not yet been explored much. Up till now studies on job crafting have been conducted with variables like proactive personality, work engagement, performance, well-being, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour, etc. Although a considerable amount of studies have been conducted on job crafting since 2012 with the development of its first scale and a handful of studies have been conducted in India, it is still in its pioneering stage as an empirical construct. Therefore, this paper is an attempt to understand the importance of job crafting in various arenas of jobs wherein it can be considered as a pathway to enhanced performance.

Keywords: Job Crafting, Performance, Work Engagement, Well-being.

Introduction

The most important criteria for any job to function without any hassle is a well defined job design. It can be defined as “jobs, tasks and roles that are structured, enacted and modified and the impact of these structures, enactments and modifications on the individual, groups and organizational outcomes” (Grant & Parker, 2009). However, a new alternate perspective has come into light in the recent times which is job redesigning at an individual level. This new approach to job redesigning is job crafting. As opposed to job design which is a top-down process job crafting is a bottom-up approach to redesign a job to customize it to individual preferences, abilities and needs of an employee, was first introduced by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) as “the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work”. Job crafting is identified as a proactive behaviour where employees themselves take initiative to alter, modify or change certain aspects of their job to match their own preferences and abilities. By doing so the employees are better able to relate with their job. These changes made by the employees are probably not even noticed by the managers and so this approach is considered as an individual level approach towards job redesigning. Job crafting has been further taken up into types naming task crafting, relational crafting and cognitive crafting wherein task crafting is “job crafting through changing tasks”, the employees attempt to change their formal job responsibilities, they attempt to change the order of tasks or eliminate or add a task. Relational crafting is “job crafting through changing relationships” where the employee reconsiders when, how and with whom to interact at work. It’s about maintaining the beneficial relationships at work and avoiding the ones which are less favourable. Cognitive crafting is “job crafting through changing perceptions” where by changing the perceptions employee change the meaning and significance of a job for them. These are the three ways by which employees may craft their job depending on the nature of the job or time to time requirements of a job. The employees who are most likely to engage in job crafting are those who have high levels of autonomy and task independence and when it comes to personality, individuals with proactive behaviour and those high in self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to be the crafters of their own job.

Review of literature

Empirical investigation of job crafting began with the development of its first scale in 2012 by Tims, Bakker and Derks followed by another scale in 2013 (Slemp and Vella-Brodrick). Both these scales explore the construct of job crafting from different perspectives. While the one developed by Tims, Bakker and Derks assess job crafting from the viewpoint of Job Demands-Resources perspective, the one developed by Slemp and Vella-Brodrick examine it in a more objective way by assessing the three types of job crafting behaviours identified so far.

In this paper job crafting has been reviewed to see how it contributes to better performance. In present scenario, performance is a widely examined outcome variable. There are many variables that have been seen to enhance performance. Many such variables have also been explored to examine their relationship with job crafting and these examinations have shown that presence of these variables along with job crafting further improve the performance of employees.

However, an interesting finding is that job crafting does not directly lead to performance. It is with the presence of other variables like work engagement, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour, well-being, job satisfaction etc. which enhances the performance of employees.



Researchers so far have explored task performance and contextual performance to find out the role of job crafting on performance. A positive and significant relationship has been seen between job crafting and contextual performance through work engagement which endorses that job crafting contributes to contextual performance when the employees are engaged in their work (Demerouti, Bakker & Gevers, 2015). Similar trend was noticed in the relationship between job crafting and task performance. Job crafting leads to improved task performance with the presence of work engagement (Bakker, Tims & Derks, 2012).

The antecedent variables of job crafting explored so far are proactive personality, autonomy support and job characteristics. Proactive personality is seen to have a positive relationship with job crafting (Bakker, Tims & Derks, 2012). Now this positive relationship between proactive personality and job crafting is witnessed as leading to in-role performance (task performance). Next, employees who showed high levels of autonomy support and involved in job crafting behaviour reported higher well-being at work (Slemp, Kern & Vella-Brodrick, 2015). Lastly, job characteristics is seen to partially influence job crafting. Among the factors of job characteristics, it was seen that skill variety and feedback have no influence on job crafting, whereas task identity, task significance and autonomy have positive influence on job crafting (Kim & Lee, 2016). The various outcome variables of job crafting are well-being, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour and job satisfaction. As discussed above job crafting leads to well-being at work with high autonomy support. Employees who engage in job crafting also showed high levels of positive affect and low levels of negative affect, contributing to employee well-being (Slemp, Kern & Vella-Brodrick, 2015). Job crafting also leads to organizational commitment and job satisfaction when examined as a mediating variable and with job characteristics as a predictor variable. A positive relationship is seen between job crafting and organizational commitment, and also between job crafting and job satisfaction (Kim & Lee, 2016). Next, the effect of job crafting was examined on all the five dimensions of organizational citizenship behaviour, namely altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, civic nature and sportsmanship. A positive impact of job crafting on all the five dimensions of organizational citizenship behaviour was established (Shusha, 2014).

Therefore, it can be inferred that job crafting leads to enhanced performance, but in an indirect way with the presence of other variables that are already been proved to enrich the performance of employees.

Conclusion

The presence of job crafting behaviour depends on various organizational situations and individual traits. If a person perceives a misfit between job requirements and his/her abilities or if there is a perceived misfit between the demands of a particular job and organizational resources available, there are very high chances that in such circumstances the individual might engage in job crafting behaviour to perform to desirable standards by altering certain aspects of the job. By making such alterations in the job to make it more suitable to individual preferences, needs and abilities, the result is a job which is meaningful for the individual and a meaningful job leads to many positive outcomes. So, indirectly it can be said that job crafting has various positive outcomes by way of making a job more meaningful and those positive outcomes contribute towards an upgraded performance.

Various jobs where job crafting behaviour is most likely to be practised are hospitality jobs where employees have to cater to different guests as per their different demands, healthcare practices where different patients are dealt with in different manner according to their problems, public relations which as the name suggests itself is very crucial to make positive impressions and it constantly requires a use of different strategies as the situation changes, sales and marketing is another important area where job crafting can be very effectively used to influence customers and create a brand value of any product or service by catering to the changing demands of the customers and meeting their expectations. However for technical and mechanical jobs there is a very limited scope of job crafting but job crafting can be used in any type of job if the situation arises.

Although job crafting is a short duration phenomena, it is not a onetime event. Employees constantly engage in job crafting behaviour to improve one or another aspect of the job to get that job done more easily and effectively in time.

Various positive outcomes of job crafting witnessed so far in the studies conducted till now are of great importance for organizations as well as for their employees. All these positive outcomes may contribute towards thriving of employees and organizations yielding better results at work. So, it can be perceived that job crafting behaviour at an individual level is a beneficial construct for organizational functioning as well as individual thriving by way of enriching performance.

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