



Exploring antecedents and consequences of job crafting

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to assess the effects of different types of predictors—factors related to organizations, tasks, and individuals—on the three facets of job crafting and to evaluate the impact of job crafting on customer-contact employees' job satisfaction. A paper and pencil survey was conducted targeting customer-contact employees working in five-star hotels located in Seoul, South Korea. A total of 327 responses were collected and analyzed using structural equation modeling. The results indicated that autonomy and creative self-efficacy positively influence each of the three facets of job crafting whereas perceived organizational support only impacts cognitive crafting. Moreover, task crafting is not associated with job satisfaction while the other two facets of job crafting are. The theoretical and managerial implications are discussed further in the study.

1. Introduction

The concept of job crafting is a promising area of research in the hotel industry since customers' needs and expectations have become highly diverse and are rapidly changing (Raub and Liao, 2012). The traditional job design took a top-bottom approach, focusing on managers' roles as job crafters (Tims and Bakker, 2010). Managers' efforts to improve employees' job conditions through job design became a fundamental focus in the hospitality industry (Chen et al., 2014). Researchers and managers, however, have begun to acknowledge the bottom-up approach, known as *job crafting*, which permits employees' proactive roles in redesigning their jobs (e.g., Cheng et al., 2016). Customer-contact employees' abilities to engage in proactive behavior and take initiative are critical for providing quality service experiences to customers (Parker et al., 2006; Frese and Fay, 2001).

Job crafting refers to the ways in which employees play active roles in initiating changes in their jobs. It involves making changes to the physical, social, or cognitive boundaries of their jobs (Slemp and Vella-Brodrick, 2013) and thus is categorized into three types: task, relationship, and cognition (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). Job crafting research dominantly discussed the concept as a single construct by focusing on the task and social boundaries of a job (e.g., Bakker et al., 2012) or by focusing on only the task crafting facet (e.g., Leana et al., 2009). However, it is necessary to address the cognitive component of job crafting (Niessen et al., 2016; Slemp and Vella-Brodrick, 2013) since crafting thoughts about work is a critical way in which employees are

able to shape their work experiences (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). Therefore, an examination of all three facets of job crafting is necessary since it offers useful implications for both researchers and practitioners regarding how employees craft their jobs not only in terms of task but also in terms of their interpersonal relationships in the workplace and in the meaning of work in association with their lives.

Furthermore, there is a call for research that reveals the predictors of employees' job crafting behavior (Kooij et al., 2017; Niessen et al., 2016). Previous studies focused on revealing the consequences of job crafting. Thus, so far, only a few predictors have been found such as proactive personality, career orientation, job challenges, and autonomy (Bakker et al., 2012; Leana et al., 2009; Berg et al., 2010; Petrou et al., 2012). The effect of employees' creative self-efficacy on job crafting has not been investigated in the previous studies regardless of its significance in employees' creative performance at work. Employees with a high level of confidence in their creative capabilities can mobilize cognitive resources and courses of action needed to meet situational demands (Michael et al., 2011). Thus, they are more willing to engage in personal initiative behaviors and proactive performance (Tierney and Farmer, 2002).

Moreover, the examination of the relative magnitude of predictors is necessary to better understand the nature of the different facets of job crafting since each predictor is expected to influence each type of job crafting in a different way (Griffeth et al., 2000; Niessen et al., 2016). In addition to individual-related antecedent—creative self-efficacy, the current study employed autonomy and perceived organizational

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support as task- and organizational-related antecedents of job crafting. Autonomy in the workplace has been suggested as a precondition for promoting job crafting (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001) as a fundamental job resource fulfilling employees' basic needs in a job situation (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). Perceived organizational support has also been considered as a critical factor increasing employees' self-initiated and positive work behaviors (Chiang and Hsieh, 2012). Since employees are expected to craft their jobs under existing circumstances, the organizational context could affect their crafting behavior (Berg et al., 2013).

Employees' individual job crafting is expected to bring positive outcomes since it changes the meaning of their jobs (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). However, the literature on the relationship between individual job crafting and job satisfaction has been inconclusive (Cheng et al., 2016). Some research found a negative relationship between job crafting and job satisfaction (e.g., Leana et al., 2009), whereas others presented a positive relationship (e.g., Tims et al., 2013) by approaching job crafting differently. Therefore, this study investigated the effects of each facet of job crafting on job satisfaction.

Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to identify the effect of creative self-efficacy as a significant predictor of job crafting, simultaneously investigate the effects of the different types of antecedents on customer-contact employees' job crafting, and examine the outcomes. The specific objectives of the study are (a) to measure the effects of an organizational-related factor (i.e., perceived organizational support), a task-related factor (i.e., autonomy), and an individual-related factor (i.e., creative self-efficacy) on the three facets of job crafting (i.e., task, relational, and cognitive crafting) and (b) to investigate the effects of these three facets of job crafting on job satisfaction.

The findings of the study are expected to provide useful implications for both researchers and practitioners in the hotel industry. In particular, the relative magnitude among the effects of each predictor on each facet of job crafting helps managers to better understand how employees craft their jobs and how to facilitate job crafting at work.

2. Literature review

2.1. Job crafting

The concept of job crafting is defined as the process of an employee's proactive behaviors to change the boundaries of his or her job (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). *Task crafting* occurs when employees change the form, scope, or number of tasks they do for example, by undertaking more tasks or changing how they are performing their tasks (Wrzesniewski et al., 2010). Moreover, they may change with whom and how often they interact in the workplace, which was conceptualized as *relational crafting*. A senior employee, for example, can create mentoring relationships with new and young employees as a way to teach and connect with them (Wrzesniewski et al., 2010). In addition, employees are able to change how they view their jobs, which is called *cognitive crafting* (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). They can reframe the purpose of certain aspects of their jobs in relationship to the job as a whole (Wrzesniewski et al., 2010). Even though employees engage in shaping their jobs along these three facets, empirical research either measured the concept as individual job crafting as a whole (e.g., Cheng et al., 2016) or focused only on task crafting (e.g., Leana et al., 2009).

Several predictors of employees' job crafting were suggested (e.g., Van Wingerden et al., 2015). As individual-related predictors, employees who score high in proactive personality, self-efficacy, self-regulation, and cognitive ability tend to engage more in job crafting in the workplace (e.g., Bakker et al., 2012; Tims and Bakker, 2010). Moreover, those who perceive more autonomy and task interdependence in performing their jobs are more likely to demonstrate job crafting behavior (Bakker et al., 2012; Petrou et al., 2012). In addition to individual- and task-related factors, the organizational context of the

workplace is expected to affect employees' job crafting (Berg et al., 2013) since it significantly influences employees' perceptions of their work and behaviors in the workplace (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). Employees' job crafting has been found to be positively associated with their attitudes and behaviors toward their jobs and companies (e.g., Tims et al., 2016). To be specific, employees who are involved in job crafting tend to perceive a better fit with their jobs, be satisfied with their jobs, commit to their organizations, and show better performance (Bakker et al., 2012; Leana et al., 2009; Tims et al., 2016). Job crafting research in the hospitality and tourism field found consistent outcomes of job crafting behavior. Hotel employees and tour leaders who engage in job crafting behavior demonstrate a more favorable work attitude and better performance (Chen et al., 2014; Cheng et al., 2016). However, not much research has been done to identify the triggers of job crafting behavior in the field (Kanten, 2014) since most of the studies predominantly focused on examining the outcomes of job crafting behavior (e.g., Cheng et al., 2016).

2.2. Organizational-related influencer on job crafting: perceived organizational support

Perceived organizational support refers to "employees' beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being" (Eisenberger et al., 1986, p. 501). Employees with a high level of perceived organizational support are more interested in their organizations, tend to judge their jobs favorably, and are attached to the organization (Chen et al., 2009; Hobfoll et al., 2003). Thus, perceived organizational support is considered to be one of the key organizational-related factors in predicting employees' attitudes and performance in their jobs since it signals a reciprocal social exchange relationship between the company and employees (Zhang et al., 2012). In the hotel industry, customer-contact employees are at the forefront of providing quality service to customers. Employees' perceptions of their work climate or environment exert substantial influences on the service quality and customer satisfaction (Davidson et al., 2001). In addition, their perceptions increase creative performance while reducing employees' burnout and turnover intention (Chiang and Hsieh, 2012; Tsai et al., 2015).

The conservation of resource (COR; Hobfoll, 1989) theory can be applied to understand the positive effect of perceived organizational support on employees' job crafting. The theory posits that people strive to gain and protect their resources. Moreover, when individuals have surplus resources, they tend to seek more resources by utilizing their existing ones (Hobfoll, 1989). Thus, organizational support can be a major vehicle to expand employees' resources beyond what they already have (Hobfoll et al., 1990). According to the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), resources include objectives (e.g., company and work), conditions (e.g., good relationships with others and job security), energies (e.g., knowledge, perceptions, and favors owed), and personal characteristics (e.g., mastery and customer orientation). Thus, perceived organizational support as a resource might encourage employees to gain more resources by utilizing job crafting. In other words, when perceiving a higher level of support from the organization, employees may initiate task crafting to achieve a valuable objective, specifically, their work, and to be involved in changing relationships with others in the workplace and their perceptions of their jobs in order to have better working conditions and more energies as resources.

H1a. Perceived organizational support is positively related to employees' task crafting.

H1b. Perceived organizational support is positively related to employees' relational crafting.

H1c. Perceived organizational support is positively related to employees' cognitive crafting.

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