



Tour leaders' job crafting: Scale development

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ABSTRACT

Job crafting is an emerging construct that has been applied in various disciplines but remains largely unexplored in the tourism industry. The purpose of this study was to develop a scale for measuring tour leaders' job crafting. First, focus group interviews and content analysis were conducted to generate the initial items. Second, two surveys involving respective sample sizes of 268 and 253 were conducted. Through a rigorous development process, the 30-item four-dimensional tour leaders' job crafting scale was proven to have reliability and validity. This study extends current knowledge of the field of job crafting in the tourism industry and provides a foundation for further investigation of tour leaders' job crafting and the relationships between the related constructs. The scale provides a useful tool for tour leaders to understand their own job crafting level. Furthermore, the results can serve as a reference for managers in recruiting and training tour leaders.

1. Introduction

Group package tours (GPTs) are a common mode of overseas travel in numerous Asian countries (Tsauro & Teng, 2017) such as Taiwan, Japan, China, and South Korea. In 2016, there were 14.59 million outbound departures of Taiwanese nationals; 72.1% of those were for tourism, and 31.3% of tourists from Taiwan chose a GPT for their overseas travel (Taiwan Tourism Bureau, 2017). According to the Japan National Tourism Organization, 17.1 million Japanese traveled abroad in 2016 and the ratio of Japanese package tourists (vs. individual travel) was 45.3% (JTB Corporation, 2017). In China, 57.3 million outbound tourists chose a GPT, accounting for 46.9% of the outbound tourist population in 2016 (China National Tourism Administration, 2017). These data indicate that GPTs remain essential in the international tourism market. The most distinctive feature of a GPT is the tour leader, who accompanies and helps customers throughout their journey (Wang, Hsieh, & Chen, 2002; Wang, Hsieh, & Huan, 2000). A tour leader is indispensable to a GPT and represents the travel agency as its frontline employee (Wong & Lee, 2012). In addition, a tour leader is a key intermediary between the destinations and tourists. Therefore, tour leaders' various service qualities and tourists' impression of them are crucial to the overall success of tours (Chang, 2014; Wang et al., 2002) and affect the overall reputation of the travel agency (Heung, 2008).

Job crafting is an essential topic, particularly in the tourism industry, because tour leaders have intensive contact with tourists and

receive various demands from them during the journey (Cheng, Chen, Teng, & Yen, 2016; Tsauro & Teng, 2017). Tour leaders should design and adapt to their roles under existing situations to meet the diverse needs and unpredictable demands of tourists (Tsauro, Yen, & Yang, 2011). Job crafting refers to an employee's exquisite redefining of their own job to enhance its perceived meaning (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). These bottom-up behaviors involve employees altering their own job boundaries, and they shape how the employees understand the job objectives and clearly define their own job content. Grant and Ashford (2008) stated that job crafting is an informal and uninstructed proactive behavior in the workplace. Job crafting reflects an employee's effort to successfully complete tasks and matches employee's preferences and abilities.

Regarding the definition and dimensions of job crafting, Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) defined job crafting as the physical and cognitive changes that employees make to alter the task or relational boundaries of their job. Leana, Appelbaum, and Shevchuk (2009) argued that job crafting is an employee's proactivity to change their own job boundaries and craft their own job content. Based on the job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001), Tims, Bakker, and Derks (2012) redefined job crafting as employees taking initiative and making changes to balance their job demands and job resources according to their personal abilities and needs. Job crafting builds on the fundamental proposition of Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, which posits that individuals

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strive to retain, protect, and accumulate resources to cope with threats to their well-being (Hobfoll, 1989). According to the aforementioned definition, Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) indicated that the three dimensions of job crafting comprise changes in task, relational, and cognitive boundaries. Leana et al. (2009) demonstrated that job crafting can be divided into two types: individual and collaborative crafting. Furthermore, Tims et al. (2012) divided job crafting into four dimensions comprising (a) increasing structural job resources, (b) increasing social job resources, (c) increasing challenging job demands, and (d) decreasing hindering job demands.

Although several studies on organizational behavior have investigated job crafting (Leana et al., 2009; Tims et al., 2012; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), the concepts and connotations of job crafting have been inconsistent. Particularly, a tour leader's job characteristics differ from those in typical office jobs. The relational boundary of tour leader is more extensive and complex. Tour leader can make greater proactive behavioral changes to their jobs by altering the extent or nature of their relationship with other stakeholders as well as creating more job resources than other jobs, which implies that tour leaders may enact different forms of job crafting behaviors. Therefore, existing job crafting scales and questionnaire items may not effectively interpret a tour leader's behavior and performance. The existing literature (e.g., Leana et al., 2009; Tims et al., 2012) is indeed inadequate to elaborate the contents and dimensions of tour leaders' job crafting from a tour leader's perspective. To answer these questions, the present study investigated tour leaders' job crafting by clarifying its meaning and connotations and developed a conceptualized scale for measuring tour leaders' job crafting. Essentially, the present study applied job crafting theory to topics related to tour leaders. To fill the research gap regarding tour leaders' job crafting, the present study outlined and summarized tour leaders' job crafting behaviors according to their job characteristics before further clarifying the applicability of job crafting theory in practical job design for tour leaders. The present study expected to expand HRM and organizational behavior theories and knowledge, specifically for tour leaders, and propose practical managerial suggestions.

2. Literature review

2.1. Tour leaders

The World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations defines a tour leader as a person who manages an itinerary on behalf of their travel agency to ensure that the program is implemented as described in the travel agency's literature and the agreement with consumers (WFTGA, 2003). According to the definition by the International Association of Tour Managers and the European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations, a tour leader's job is to escort an individual or group of travelers from a foreign country or the tour leader's home country to a city or a region where they visit memorial halls, attractions, or museums; the tour leader also gives information about the local culture, natural heritage, and environment in the language of the tour members' choice and using motivating and entertaining approaches (EFTGA, 1998). Therefore, a tour leader is the provider of core tourism products and services during tourism product transactions and service consumption, and they play an indispensable and crucial role in a GPT (Heung, 2008; Luoh & Tsauro, 2014). Numerous studies have stated that a tour leader plays multiple roles including leader, communicator, pathfinder, mentor, mediator, and entertainer (Cohen, 1985; Weiler & Black, 2014). Luoh and Tsauro (2014) adapted the research findings in Cohen (1985) and incorporated GPT characteristics in Asia to classify a tour leader's roles as follows: instrumental role, social role, interactional role, communicative role, dealing with emergency, and care role.

A tour leader's job requires diverse skills, involves complex tasks, and possesses autonomy (Cheng et al., 2016). To increase tour members' satisfaction during their journey, tour leaders frequently seek new

ideas about how to service their customers (Tsauro et al., 2011) and display different tour guiding styles (Tsauro & Teng, 2017). Mancini (1996) proposed that in response to their multiple roles, tour leaders employ strategies and approaches that include maintaining fairness, praising tour members' behaviors, exceeding customers' expectations, remaining calm while dealing with chaotic behavior, employing effective leadership, and maintaining flexibility. Tour leaders conduct their business according to the travel itinerary and content arranged by the hiring travel agency, and related regulations also list detailed job duties and content. However, facing GPT travelers' diverse needs and various emergencies during a journey, tour leaders must self-craft their job attitude, content, boundaries, and how they approach interaction with customers. In addition, tour leaders must convert their ideas into action to meet each tour member's individual needs, which indicates the importance of job crafting in the accomplishment of tour leader tasks.

2.2. Job crafting

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) pioneered the concept of job crafting and defined it as an action in which employees change their job content and boundaries through practical and cognitive adjustments. Their proposed job crafting model states that the motivations of job crafting comprise the need for control over job meaning, need for positive self-image, and need for interpersonal connection with other employees; the model also states that job crafting practice consists of changing task boundaries (i.e., altering the type and number of job tasks), changing cognitive boundaries (i.e., altering the view of work as discrete parts or a whole), and changing relational boundaries (i.e., altering approaches and the nature of interactions with others at work). Through changes in job design and the social environment of the workplace, job crafting changes employees' job meaning and work identity. Therefore, Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) argued that job crafting is accomplished by an individual's construction of their job and execution of the job's content. Job crafting enables employees to establish job meaning, understand the job's objective, and shape their work identity and roles. Subsequent empirical studies have revealed that job crafting is crucial to person–job fit (Chen, Yen, & Tsai, 2014; Tims, Derks, & Bakker, 2016), work engagement (Bakker, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Sanz Vergel, 2016; Harju, Hakanen, & Schaufeli, 2016; Van Wingerden, Bakker, & Derks, 2017), job satisfaction (Cheng et al., 2016), job performance (Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2015), workplace well-being (Slemp, Kern, & Vella-Brodrick, 2015) and burnout (Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2013).

Leana et al. (2009) developed evaluation dimensions and questionnaire items for the investigation of childcare workers' job crafting and argued that job crafting refers to employees' proactive changing of their own job boundaries and shaping of their actual job content so that employees' efforts better reflect their job performance and capability. Leana et al. (2009) further divided job crafting into individual crafting and collaborative crafting. Individual crafting refers to employees' proactive changing of their own job boundaries to enable actual job performance, whereas collaborative crafting involves collaborative efforts among employees to change work processes. Tims et al. (2012) developed a job crafting scale according to the four dimensions in the JD-R model. Increasing structural job resources refers to increasing resource variety, opportunities for self-development, and job autonomy; increasing social job resources refers to seeking social support, supervisory coaching, and performance feedback; and increasing challenging job demands refers to attempting to expand job boundaries or adjusting tour-leading tasks in order to seek challenges. However, employees may proactively lower their job demands by avoiding difficult job tasks and setting low performance goals when they perceive that the job demands have exceeded their capability; this phenomenon is known as decreasing hindering job demands.

Nielsen and Bildgaard (2012) adapted the findings in Tims et al. (2012) to further develop a job crafting scale suitable for blue-collar

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