

Abstracts

A Quarter-Century of Job Crafting Research: Current Status and Future Prospects

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A quarter-century has passed since the emergence of the concept of job crafting, which refers to how individuals proactively reshape their jobs. Early research emphasized the intrinsic process through which individuals find new meaning and fulfillment by crafting their jobs. Around 2010, the concept was reconceptualized as self-initiated behavior to adjust job demands and resources, and this shift spurred theoretical and empirical work in tandem with the development of the job demands–resources model. The framework was subsequently extended to include approach and avoidance orientations, and efforts to build integrative models began to emerge from around 2020. The concept has expanded beyond individual jobs to encompass long-term careers and broader life domains, and intervention research has gained momentum. However, research to date has tended to focus on individual perspectives such as meaningfulness and well-being. Going forward, it will be necessary to actively incorporate a management perspective to develop an integrated understanding that balances organizational and individual perspectives, as well as to examine the effectiveness of practices and interventions that enable this balance. Additionally, there is a need to deepen our understanding of job crafting in light of the transformations in organizations, work, and work styles driven by digitalization and the advance of AI.

Job Crafting and Employee Proactivity in Japanese Workplaces: A Theoretical and Empirical Examination

Rie Fujisawa (Aoyama Gakuin University)

Japan has a long tradition of institutionalizing employee proactivity, raising the question of whether the concept of job crafting (JC), which is rooted in individually driven, meaning-centered work redesign, offers genuine novelty and utility in the Japanese context. This paper addresses this question through both theoretical analysis and discussion of empirical evidence from existing studies. In the theoretical analysis, this paper identifies the distinctiveness of JC in its explicit attention to emotional and cognitive dimensions beyond task-level changes, and in its implication that managers support rather than direct employee proactivity. Examining the Japanese context, this paper argues that while task-based proactivity has been extensively institutionalized, emotion-driven proactivity has remained largely invisible under Japan's traditional human resource management systems. JC provides the language and legitimacy to make such behavior visible. Drawing on cross-cultural studies using data from five countries (Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Singapore), this paper introduces measurement invariance testing as a methodological framework for cross-cultural JC research and discusses its implications. Evidence from these studies confirms that JC can be measured equivalently across samples and that its functional patterns vary by cultural context. The paper concludes by discussing theoretical and practical implications for JC research and practice in Japanese workplaces.

The Relationship between the Internalization of Corporate Philosophy, Employee Job Crafting, and Psychological Outcomes: An Examination of Differences through Multiple-Group Structural Equation Modeling Focusing on Philosophy Orientation

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It is believed that the extent to which job crafting (JC) occurs and the ways in which its results manifest vary depending on the social context. This study focuses on corporate philosophy. Specifically, it aims to clarify the differences in the mechanisms through which the internalization of corporate philosophy as determined by its orientation (flexibility orientation versus control orientation, internal focus orientation versus external focus orientation) motivates JC and influences its psychological outcomes. We conducted an online survey and analyzed data from 495 regular employees (305 men, 190 women; $M = 44.24$, $SD = 12.11$). The results confirmed that, overall, internalization of corporate philosophy promotes JC and has a positive effect on intra-group conflict and work engagement, while

having a negative effect on burnout. Next, we examined differences in the mechanisms of the impact of internalization of corporate philosophy across different orientation groups using multiple-group structural equation modeling. Focusing on flexibility/control, we found that these differences could not explain the variation in the effect from JC to the promotion of intra-group conflict. However, when focusing on internal/external, the external focus orientation group showed a tendency for JC to promote intra-group conflict. These results suggest that the relationships among internalization of corporate philosophy, JC, and intra-group conflict differ according to the orientation of corporate philosophy.

Job Crafting in the Era of Longer Working Lives

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This article reconsiders job crafting (JC) not merely as a technique for enhancing work engagement, but as a practice addressing career adaptation in extended working lives. Reviewing JC and career crafting studies and analyzing interviews with employees in their fifties at a manufacturing firm, it identifies three forms of JC: generational handover, relational reconfiguration, and adjustment within one's discretion. The findings show that mid- and late-career JC reorganizes work into practices that are accepted by others and can be handed down to successors, requiring receptive supervisor support and organizational backing.

Positive Mental Health and Job Crafting in Occupational Health

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Job crafting has attracted increasing attention as an intervention strategy for enhancing work engagement in occupational mental health. This article reviews current evidence on job crafting interventions and discusses future directions for research and practice. Recent occupational health policies and practices have emphasized not only the prevention of mental disorders but also the promotion of positive mental health, including work engagement and well-being. Although evidence from randomized controlled trials (RCTs) of workshop-based and digitally delivered job crafting interventions has steadily accumulated, evidence regarding their effectiveness in improving work engagement remains limited. In addition, recent intervention studies have begun to focus on team job crafting. Future occupational health practice and research should place greater emphasis on enhancing meaningful work and work identity, strengthening job crafting self-efficacy, and developing supportive organizational environments. Furthermore, as artificial intelligence (AI) increasingly influences work environments, its impact on job crafting and employee well-being warrants continuing investigation.

The Significance of Employee Proactivity in Flexible Work Styles and Work Environments: Research Perspectives on Boundary Management and Office Utilization

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Since around 2020, Japanese companies have been increasing the flexibility of their work styles and work environments. For example, as dual-income households have become widespread, balancing work and family life has become a challenge. Flexible work arrangements such as telework, which can blur the boundaries between work and personal life, can serve as both a form of support and an obstacle to achieving this balance. Furthermore, regarding the physical work environment, and particularly office environments, there has been a trend toward greater autonomy and diversity in spatial design, such as the adoption of non-territorial offices and the creation of spaces within offices to support a variety of activities. This flexibility in both work styles and the work environment generally provides employees with more room to exercise autonomy, and it can be argued that such flexibility is only fully realized when employees actively exercise their autonomy. In this paper, we conduct a research review on the two themes of work styles balancing work and family life and work environments as represented by office spaces, including their relationship with telework and demands for autonomy. In particular, we introduce relevant prior research on the importance of workers acting as crafters of their own environment, who actively seek an optimal balance for themselves (such as boundary management tactics

and ingenious ways of utilizing office space), which is a phenomenon that has been attracting attention in recent years in relation to both themes.

Informal Learning Involving Self-Regulation and Two Streams of Job Crafting: A Theoretical Review

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This article presents a theoretical review of how informal learning involving self-regulation influences two streams of job crafting research. Informal learning involving self-regulation is defined as learning as a social practice in which employees acquire knowledge and meaning through interaction with others while using regulatory strategies and metacognition, such as setting their own learning goals, planning their progress, and monitoring their learning. Job crafting research has developed into two major streams. The first is the original perspective, which emphasizes the reconstruction of work meaning and work identity, and the second is the job demands–resources perspective, which focuses on employees' adjustments through observable day-to-day behaviors. This article argues that informal learning involving self-regulation influences the first stream by stimulating a desire for a positive self-image and enhancing meaningfulness at work, and also influences the second stream by facilitating the acquisition of knowledge and skills, workplace improvement, and the adjustment of job resources and demands. The article further discusses traditional informal learning in Japanese firms, particularly informal on-the-job training and small-group activities, and argues that these practices have promoted job crafting through a holistic view of work, skill formation, and workplace improvement. However, they also involve negative aspects such as homogeneity and enforced voluntariness. Cross-boundary learning may mitigate these negative aspects. Finally, the article suggests the possibility of redefining informal learning involving self-regulation as learning crafting.

Differentiating the Relationship between Job Autonomy and Mental Health According to Occupational Status: Controlling Confounders That Precede Job Selection

Yuki Torii (The University of Tokyo)

This study aims to reveal whether high occupational status strengthens the positive relationship between job autonomy and mental health, considering confounders of the interaction effects of occupational status and job autonomy on mental health. Some previous studies have identified occupational differences in the relationship between job autonomy and mental health, and argue that this is caused by differences in the degree of difficulty and professional specialization in these occupations. However, other studies have shown that occupational differences are caused by other factors, such as personal values regarding work. This study analyzed data from the Japanese Life Course Panel Surveys, and the results showed that high occupational status leads to a stronger influence of job autonomy on mental health only for men in random-effects models and fixed-effects models, which do not control for time-constant confounders of the interaction term. Additionally, this relationship disappeared in fixed-effects individual slopes models, which controlled for these confounders. This study showed that the confounders that preceded job selection were the cause of the interaction effects of occupational status and job autonomy on mental health in men.

How Do Institutional Practices of High School Graduates Entering the Workforce Influence Job Location Selection? Estimation of Causal Effects Using the Ridge Augmented Synthetic Control Method

Kei Sakaguchi (Komazawa University)

This study examines how institutional practices in the Japanese labor market for high school graduates affect students' choice of employment location. In particular, it quantitatively compares two job application systems: the traditional one-student-one-company system, which is widely adopted across prefectures, and the multiple-application system, which has been introduced as an alternative in some areas. Since high school graduates constitute an important source of youth labor, their within-prefecture employment is closely related to local workforce retention and youth outmigration. The analysis focuses on the three prefectures Akita, Tottori, and Okinawa, which have shifted from the one-student-one-

company rule to the multiple-application system, and examines whether this institutional change affected the number of students employed within their home prefecture. To address the difficulty that only a very limited number of cases experienced the policy change, this study employs the ridge augmented synthetic control method, which enables causal inference by constructing an appropriate comparison based on pre-intervention time-series data. The results show no statistically significant effects in Akita or Tottori, while in Okinawa the policy change may have increased within-prefecture employment. An important background factor is that Okinawa was the only prefecture where the multiple-application system was actually observed to be in use, and that local employment preferences are particularly strong in the prefecture. These findings suggest that in regions with strong local employment preferences, such as Okinawa, the introduction of a multiple-application system may expand students' opportunities to apply to local firms and thereby increase within-prefecture employment.