

JOB CRAFTING MEASURES OF MID CAREER EMPLOYEES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to examine the job crafting measures of middle age employees and its relationship with work autonomy. The study proposes that middle age employees will undertake more job crafting measures if their work provides them decision latitude. The study is mainly based on primary data which was collected through the respondents consisting of employees from private universities of Himachal Pradesh. The data was collected from 51 private university teachers located in Shimla and Solan districts of Himachal Pradesh. In order to get the required information a well designed questionnaire was prepared and administered among respondents. The data thus collected have been analyzed with the help of SPSS 17. The various statistical tools viz., correlation analysis and regression analysis were used to examine the data.

Key words: Middlescence, job crafting, middle age, HEI, higher education institutions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Middlescence

Middle-essence is a transitional period, between the ages of forty and fifty, marked by an increased desire to find or create greater meaning in one's life. A large part of an adult life comprises of the mid life period. Like adolescence, middlescence can be a time of frustration, confusion, and alienation but also a time of self-discovery, finding new directions and starting new beginnings (Morison, Erickson & Dychtwald, 2006). People may be stereotypical of

one's midlife or may feel more like their youth. According to Morrison, Erickson & Dychtwald (2006), midcareer employees are least likely to be of the view that their workplace is congenial or fun or that it offers ample opportunity to do new things. People in mid career are sandwiched between the responsibilities of work and home. According to a report by Harris Interactive of more than 7,700 workers (as cited in Morrison *et al.*, 2006) people in their mid career work for longer hours than their older and younger counterparts, with 43% saying they are passionate about their jobs; 33% feel energized by their work; 36% feel that they are in dead-end job; and more than 40% reported feelings of burnout. In mid life period, people re-evaluate their vocational accomplishments like regrets for having pursued a particular vocation, for not having risen high enough on the ladder of success, or for neglecting family in favour of work (Yaffe & Stewart, 1984). Mid career employees who are not fully engaged in their work might start looking for opportunities outside their work, if not taken care of by the organizations. They can be even more threatening to the organizations, if they plan to stay, because the problem of burned-out employees is even more taxing than that of turnover.

1.2. Job Crafting

In the last few decades, a shift has taken place from manufacturing sector to service and then to a knowledge economy. In today's shifting environment, employees need to redesign their job or work environment. The field of occupational health has started to pay increased attention to the concept of job crafting i.e., an employee initiated job design/redesign (Sakuraya *et al.*, 2017). The term 'Job Crafting' is defined as "the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Based on the concept of job crafting, Wrzesniewski & Dutton (2001) proposed three types of job components viz. task boundary, relationship boundary and cognitive boundary. *Task crafting* refers to employees altering the various set of responsibilities prescribed by a formal job description, for instance adding or dropping tasks, altering the nature of tasks or changing amount of time, energy and attention allocated to various tasks. *Relational crafting* refers to classification of persons who interact while performing a task and setup of a relationship boundary, for example, who to work with and how often. *Cognitive crafting* refers to changing the way a worker views a job and setting up of cognitive boundaries including changing the goal of the work, its meaning and its performance.

Job crafting has been recently integrated into the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model. The JD-R model describes the relationship between work characteristics and well being outcomes. In the JD-R conceptualization, employees craft their job by changing the level of *job demands* and *job resources*. *Job demands* refer to those aspects that require sustained physical, psychological, social or organizational efforts and skills and are associated with certain physical or psychological costs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job demands have been further classified into two viz. challenging job demands and hindering job demands (Van Den Broeck *et al.*, 2010). Challenging job demands such as work and time pressure stimulate employee motivation as employees feel satisfied when they accomplish challenging tasks. Hindering job demands such as role ambiguity and interpersonal conflict have negative impact on the health of the employees. *Job resources* are physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that help individuals achieve their working goals, stimulate personal growth, learning and development or reduce job demands or associated physical or psychological costs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

1.3. Work Autonomy and Job Crafting

Work autonomy is defined as the degree to which the job provides freedom, independence and discretion to the employees in scheduling the work and in determining the procedure to be

used for carrying it out. Older workers have long been perceived as passive participants in the process of aging (Nijssen, 2016). However, they have now started to shape their environment to fit around the work related changes they experience due to aging (Wahl, Warsson, & Oswald, 2011). Job crafting has been a widely used technique to help employees shape up their jobs. According to Kooij, Tims & Kanfer (2015) older employees craft their job to adjust the work to their personal preferences, motives and abilities, which change with age. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) in their study model specified work autonomy as an important factor to stimulate job crafting. Leana *et al.* (2009) also found level of discretion and interdependence as predictors of collective job crafting.

Based on the above arguments, the present study aims to examine the job crafting measures of middle age employees and its relationship with work autonomy. The study propose that middle age employees will undertake more job crafting measures if their work provides them more decision latitude. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H₁: There is significant correlation between work autonomy and task crafting.

H₂: There is significant correlation between work autonomy and cognitive crafting.

H₃: There is significant correlation between work autonomy and relationship crafting.

H₄: There is significant difference in task crafting measures of teachers at varied levels of work autonomy.

H₅: There is significant difference in cognitive crafting measures of teachers at varied levels of work autonomy.

H₆: There is significant difference in relationship crafting measures of teachers at varied levels of work autonomy.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Participants and Procedure

The study is mainly based on primary data which was collected through the respondents consisting of employees from private universities of Himachal Pradesh. The data was collected from 51 private university teachers located in Shimla and Solan districts of Himachal Pradesh. In order to get the required information a well designed questionnaire was prepared and administered among respondents.

2.2. Measures

Work autonomy: The scale of Van Valdhoven and Meijman (1997) was used to measure work autonomy. It is a self-administered survey instrument developed to evaluate the work situation of individual employees. The scale includes 11 items, asking respondents to indicate the extent to which they could control their work situation, for example “Do you have an influence on the pace of work?” Items were answered on a five point response scale, ranging from 0(*Never*) to 4(*Always*).

Job crafting: Job crafting was assessed using the Measure of Job Crafting (MJC; Dvorak, 2014). The scale has three factors viz – task, cognitive and relational crafting. Items include, “I change the way I complete certain work tasks to make them more interesting to me” and “I change my tasks to better suit my skills”. Items were answered on a five point response scale, ranging from (1= *Disagree*, 2= *Somewhat Agree*, 3= *Agree*, 4= *Strongly Agree*, 5= *Very Strongly Agree*).

2.3. Data Analysis

The data thus collected has been analyzed with the help of SPSS 17. The various statistical tools viz., correlation analysis and regression analysis were used to examine the data.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Relationship between job crafting and work autonomy

Table 1 shows the results of correlation coefficient between work autonomy and job crafting (task, cognitive and relationship crafting). As shown in table, work autonomy is found to be significantly and positively correlated with task crafting ($r=.57^{**}$, $p<.05$) and relationship crafting ($r=.72^{**}$, $p<.05$). Thus, hypotheses H1 and H3 were supported by the analysis. However, no significant relationship was found between cognitive crafting and work autonomy ($r=.26$, $p=n.s.$). Thus, hypothesis H2 was rejected.

Table 1 Correlation coefficients between work autonomy and job crafting

	Work Autonomy
Task Crafting	.57**
Cognitive Crafting	.26
Relationship Crafting	.72**

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

3.2. Classification of Teachers on the Basis of Work Autonomy Scores

Teachers were classified on the basis of their work autonomy (see Table 2) into three groups, based on the scores obtained in the questionnaire, as those with:

- Low work autonomy: Score < (Mean – 0.5 S.D.)
- Average work autonomy: Scores between (Mean – 0.5 S.D.) and (Mean + 0.5 S.D.)
- High work autonomy: Score > (Mean + 0.5 S.D.)

Table 2 Classification of teachers on the basis of their work autonomy scores

	Classification								
	Low			Average			High		
	N	%	Mean	N	%	Mean	N	%	Mean
WAUT	20	39	2.82	18	35	2.11	13	25	3.54

From table 2, it can be inferred that, majority of the teachers are on low (39%) and average (35%) work autonomy and 25% are on high work autonomy.

3.3. Job Crafting Measures at Varied Levels of Work Autonomy

Table 3 Test of homogeneity of variances – Task variety

Crafting	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Task	3.71	2	48	.039
Cognitive	1.38	2	48	.259
Relationship	.128	2	48	.880

One of the assumptions of the one-way ANOVA is that variances of the groups should be similar. Table 3 shows the results of Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variance, which tests for similar values. The significance value is greater than 0.05 for cognitive and relationship crafting and therefore the assumption of homogeneity of variance is supported. However, for task crafting, the significance value is less than 0.05. This means the assumption of homogeneity of variance is not met and therefore two robust tests (Brown-Forsythe and Welch) were conducted that should be accurate when the homogeneity of variance is not true.

Table 4 Robust tests of equality of means

		Statistic	Df1	Df2	Sig.
Task Crafting	Welch	70.06	2	28.2	.000
	Brown-Forsythe	84.61	2	41.2	.000

The results presented in Table 4 show that there is a significant difference in task crafting measures (F=70.06, p<0.05) among teachers with low, average, and high work autonomy.

Table 5 ANOVA table for job crafting at varied levels of work autonomy

Job Crafting	Sources of Variance	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Cognitive Crafting	Between groups	106.23	2	53.11	3.67	.033
	Within groups	693.92	48	14.45		
	Total	800.15	50			
Relationship Crafting	Between groups	658.08	2	329.0	33.99	.000
	Within groups	464.66	48	9.68		
	Total	1122.7	50			

Table 5 shows the details of ANOVA analysis. F value was found to be significant for cognitive crafting (F=3.67, p<0.05), implying significant differences in cognitive crafting measures of teachers with low, average and high work autonomy. In addition, F value was found to be significant for relationship crafting (F=33.99, <0.05). The results imply significant differences in relationship crafting measures of teachers with low, average and high work autonomy.

Since the groups were found to be significantly different on task, cognitive and relationship crafting in one-way ANOVA, post hoc tests were employed to identify the pair of groups that contributed to significant differences. The results of the comparison are summarized in Table 6, Table 7 and Table 8.

Table 6 Games-Howell post hoc test for comparison of task crafting measures of teachers at varied levels of work autonomy

(I) AutG	(J) AutG	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Low	Average	-9.38889*	.78862	.000	-11.3327	-7.4450
	High	-7.96154*	.92644	.000	-10.2440	-5.6790
Average	Low	9.38889*	.78862	.000	7.4450	11.3327
	High	1.42735	.74070	.156	-.4391	3.2938
High	Low	7.96154*	.92644	.000	5.6790	10.2440
	Average	-1.42735	.74070	.156	-3.2938	.4391

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 6 shows the results of Games Howell post hoc analysis. From the results presented in the table it is clear that for task crafting, the mean score between low and average and low and high groups differed significantly ($p < 0.05$) at 5% level of significance. However the p value for the average and high group was found to be greater than 0.05, implying that there were no significant differences among these groups. Therefore the results imply that task crafting measures differed significantly among teachers with low and average, and low and high work autonomy; however it does not differ significantly between teachers with average and high work autonomy. Thus, hypothesis H4 is accepted.

Table 7 Tukey HSD post hoc test for comparison of cognitive crafting measures of teachers at varied levels of work autonomy

(I) AutG	(J) AutG	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Low	Average	-3.16667*	1.23531	.036	-6.1542	-.1791
	High	-2.57692	1.35458	.149	-5.8530	.6991
Average	Low	3.16667*	1.23531	.036	.1791	6.1542
	High	.58974	1.38391	.905	-2.7572	3.9367
High	Low	2.57692	1.35458	.149	-.6991	5.8530
	Average	-.58974	1.38391	.905	-3.9367	2.7572

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 7 shows the results of Tukey HSD post hoc analysis. From the results presented in the table it is clear that for cognitive crafting, the mean score between low and average groups differed significantly ($p < 0.05$) at 5% level of significance. However the p value for the low and high and average and high groups was found to be greater than 0.05, implying that there were no significant differences among these groups. Therefore the results imply that relationship crafting measures differed significantly among teachers with low and average work autonomy; however does not differ significantly between teachers with low and high and average and high work autonomy. Thus, hypothesis H5 is accepted.

Table 8 Tukey HSD post hoc test for comparison of relationship crafting measures of teachers at varied levels of work autonomy

(I) AutG	(J) AutG	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Low	Average	-6.49444*	1.01086	.000	-8.9392	-4.0497
	High	-8.24231*	1.10846	.000	-10.9231	-5.5615
Average	Low	6.49444*	1.01086	.000	4.0497	8.9392
	High	-1.74786	1.13246	.280	-4.4867	.9910
High	Low	8.24231*	1.10846	.000	5.5615	10.9231
	Average	1.74786	1.13246	.280	-.9910	4.4867

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 8 shows the results of Tukey HSD post hoc analysis. From the results presented in the table it is clear that for relationship crafting, the mean score between low and average and low and high groups differed significantly ($p < 0.05$) at the 5% level of significance. However the p value for the average and high group was found to be greater than 0.05, implying that there were no significant differences among these groups. Therefore the results imply that

relationship crafting measures differed significantly among teachers with low and average, and low and high work autonomy; however it does not differ significantly between teachers with average and high work autonomy. Thus, hypothesis H6 is accepted.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The present study aimed to examine the job crafting measures adopted by middle age employees. The study found a significant relationship between work autonomy and task crafting and relationship crafting. In addition, from the analysis of the results it was noted that job crafting measures differed among employees at varied different levels of work autonomy. Task crafting and relationship crafting, was found to be significantly different among low and average work autonomy groups and low and high work autonomy groups. Also, cognitive crafting measures differed significantly among low and average work autonomy groups. From the analysis of the results of the study it is clear that job crafting plays an important role in shaping up careers during middle age. If given sufficient amount of autonomy, employees can design their jobs and stay productive in their jobs

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