A Proactive Attempt to Enhance Organizational Performance from the Bottom Up: A Dynamic Process Perspective on Job Crafting

Authors: Chen Zhijun, Ji Shunhong, Zhang Huihua, Zhang Huihua

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Abstract

Employees' bottom-up proactive improvement and reshaping of work can effectively compensate for the motivational deficiencies inherent in top-down job design within organizations. Therefore, this study focuses on job crafting, investigating how individual and team job crafting can enhance organizational performance. First, grounded in action theory, it conducts an in-depth analysis of "job crafting behavior itself," thereby constructing a dynamic process model of job crafting and elaborating in detail on the developmental process of job crafting as well as the mutual influence processes between individual and team levels. Second, from the individual level, it examines two mechanisms through which employee job crafting influences individual performance. Finally, applying a team process perspective, it elucidates the mechanism through which team job crafting influences team performance. The dynamic process model of job crafting derived from this study can provide theoretical guidance and practical reference for organizations seeking to diffuse and institutionalize job crafting as a generalizable work model.

Full Text

Preamble

Proactive Endeavors to Foster Organizational Performance via a Bottom-Up Approach: Research on Job Crafting from a Dynamic Process Perspective

CHEN Zhijun[1], JI Shunhong[1], ZHANG Huihua[2]
([1] College of Business, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, Shanghai 200433, China)
([2] Department of Human Resource Management, Shanghai Normal University, Shanghai 200234, China)

Abstract: Employees' proactive efforts to improve and reshape their work from the bottom up can effectively compensate for motivational deficiencies inherent in top-down job design. This study focuses on job crafting to explore how individual and team-level crafting behaviors enhance organizational performance. First, grounded in action theory, we conduct an in-depth analysis of "job crafting behavior itself" to construct a dynamic process model of job crafting, elaborating on the developmental trajectory of crafting behaviors and their cross-level mutual influence between individuals and teams. Second, we examine two mechanisms through which individual job crafting influences individual performance. Finally, from a team process perspective, we explicate the mechanisms linking team job crafting to team performance. The dynamic process model of job crafting derived from this research provides theoretical guidance and practical reference for organizations to diffuse and institutionalize job crafting as a generalizable work model.

Keywords: job crafting, dynamic process, influence mechanism, organizational performance
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1. Problem Statement

Job crafting describes the process through which employees autonomously adjust and redesign their job roles, work relationships, and work environments to achieve person-job fit (Tims et al., 2012; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Distinct from traditional job design philosophies, this proactive, value-oriented, bottom-up approach to job redesign achieves an organic integration of individual developmental needs and job characteristics (Tims et al., 2022; 胡睿玲, 田喜洲, 2015), and has increasingly become critical for organizations to navigate uncertainty and gain competitive advantage (Petrou et al., 2016; 李海舰, 李燕, 2020). Both theoretical and empirical research demonstrates that employee job crafting not only enhances individual work engagement and meaningfulness (Rudolph et al., 2017; Zhang & Parker, 2019) but also positively contributes to team performance (McClelland et al., 2014) and organizational innovation (Demerouti, 2014; Wang et al., 2016). Unlike conventional top-down, centralized management and motivational initiatives, job crafting offers a bottom-up opportunity and pathway for improving employee and organizational performance (胡巧婷等, 2020). How organizations can proactively identify and seize these opportunities while effectively addressing challenges or constraints encountered during the crafting process represents a pressing practical issue.

A comprehensive review of job crafting research (Rudolph et al., 2017; 田喜洲等, 2020; 王桢, 2020) reveals three primary limitations. First, the analytical level is relatively singular. Existing research has been confined to individual-level analysis, lacking a holistic understanding of job crafting's systemic organizational impact, particularly regarding how crafting elevates to the organizational level and becomes a generalizable work model. Second, the research scope is narrow. Current studies treat other organizational members as passive observers

and recipients of crafting behaviors, limiting investigations to how crafting enhances individual performance and satisfaction (Demerouti, 2014; Wang et al., 2016) while neglecting possibilities of active intervention, support, rejection, or even resistance from others. Consequently, a complete explanation of how job crafting improves team and organizational performance remains elusive. Third, theoretical perspectives are limited. Previous research has primarily employed individual-level frameworks such as social learning theory, the job demands-resources model, and attribution theory to analyze crafting effects (Ji, 2022; Tims et al., 2015). As job crafting research extends to team and organizational levels, additional theoretical perspectives are urgently needed to better explain and analyze organizational crafting phenomena.

Addressing these limitations, this study focuses on the dynamic process through which job crafting enhances organizational performance, analyzing key pathways and boundary conditions. Organizational performance represents effective outputs at different levels that organizations exhibit to achieve their goals, encompassing not only individual-level behaviors and outcomes related to task objectives but also team-level action processes and performance (Aguinis, 2013; DeNisi & Smith, 2014). Accordingly, this paper addresses three research questions: (1) Integrating ontology and action theory, we conceptualize job crafting as action to reveal its dynamic process, mapping the mutual influence between individual and team-level crafting. (2) Based on social distance theory, we uncover the underlying psychological mechanisms and boundary conditions through which employee job crafting influences individual performance. (3) From an entity-based team process perspective, we analyze the process mechanisms and boundary conditions linking team job crafting to team performance. Our objective is to establish a theoretically sound, replicable, and generalizable model based on job crafting that produces lasting impacts on individual and organizational performance, while providing practical guidance for organizations to proactively harness job crafting's benefits and address its challenges.

2.1 Foundational Research on Job Crafting

Organizational management research has primarily examined job crafting through two theoretical lenses: the role perspective and the resource perspective. The role perspective originated from the seminal work of Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), who discovered that employees actively change job content and reshape roles to achieve identity and meaning. They defined job crafting as proactive physical or cognitive changes individuals make to alter the task or relational boundaries of their work, identifying three dimensions: (1) task crafting—actively changing the number, scope, and type of work tasks; (2) relational crafting—actively changing the quality and quantity of interpersonal interactions at work; and (3) cognitive crafting—actively altering existing perspectives and ideas about work. The resource perspective (Tims & Bakker, 2010) posits that individuals engage in job crafting to cope with external pressures and challenges while balancing job resources and demands. This

approach identifies four dimensions: (1) increasing structural job resources (e.g., seeking learning opportunities); (2) increasing social job resources (e.g., obtaining supervisor feedback); (3) increasing challenging job demands (e.g., adding task content); and (4) decreasing hindering job demands (e.g., reducing mental strain).

Recent scholarship has further developed job crafting's conceptual boundaries. For instance, Lichtenthale and Fischbach (2019) drew on regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997) to propose a dual classification integrating role and resource perspectives, distinguishing between promotion-focused crafting (proactively addressing problems and challenges to improve performance) and prevention-focused crafting (reducing work content, avoiding specific tasks, and circumventing risks). Bruning and Campion (2018) synthesized role and resource perspectives, dividing job crafting into four dimensions: (1) approach role crafting (including work role expansion and social relationship expansion); (2) approach resource crafting (including designing one's own work, adaptation, and metacognition); (3) avoidance role crafting (reducing work roles); and (4) avoidance resource crafting (reducing resource-seeking). Zhang and Parker (2019) proposed a three-level theoretical framework where promotion-prevention motivation theory occupies the highest level, yielding different crafting orientations (approach vs. avoidance); the role perspective resides at the second level, determining specific forms (cognitive vs. behavioral crafting); and the resource perspective operates at the base level, specifying content (resource enhancement vs. demand adjustment).

Building on these perspectives and conceptualizations, researchers have developed multiple measurement scales. Representative instruments include: (1) Tims et al.'s (2012) 21-item scale based on the resource perspective, measuring increasing structural resources, increasing social resources, increasing challenging demands, and decreasing hindering demands; (2) Slemp and Vella-Brodrick's (2013) 15-item scale grounded in Wrzesniewski and Dutton's (2001) three dimensions; (3) Weseler and Niessen's (2016) 14-item, five-dimensional scale based on the role perspective, including expanding task crafting, reducing task crafting, expanding relational crafting, reducing relational crafting, and cognitive crafting; and (4) Bruning and Campion's (2018) 30-item scale comprising five approach-oriented and two avoidance-oriented dimensions across seven factors. Grounded in approach-avoidance motivation theory, this study focuses on two job crafting types: approach crafting and avoidance crafting, primarily employing Bruning and Campion's (2018) scale as the measurement tool.

2.2.1 Research on Individual Job Crafting

Since Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) formally introduced the concept, individual job crafting research has flourished. Beyond conceptual development and measurement, scholars have explored numerous antecedents and outcomes (Rudolph et al., 2017; Zhang & Parker, 2019). Antecedent research encompasses individual traits and motivations, job characteristics, and social contextual in-

fluences, while outcome analyses have primarily examined effects on individual attitudes, behaviors, psychological resources, and career development (Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2016; Wang et al., 2016).

Among outcome variables, job crafting's impact on individual performance has received the most attention, with performance effects further differentiated into specific types: in-role performance (Alonso et al., 2019), extra-role performance (Geldenhuys et al., 2021), objective performance (Gordon et al., 2018), counterproductive work behavior (Demerouti et al., 2015), and overall performance (Berdicchia & Masino, 2019). Generally, job crafting promotes individual performance, though different crafting types yield varying effects. From a resource perspective, Bakker et al. (2012) found that seeking resources and challenges positively correlates with performance, while decreasing hindering demands negatively correlates with performance. Similarly, Berdicchia and Masino (2019) noted that not all crafting dimensions affect performance: increasing structural resources and challenging demands positively predict performance, decreasing job demands negatively predicts performance, but increasing social resources shows no relationship with performance. From a role perspective, Geldenhuys et al. (2021) found that task crafting enhances in-role performance through increased meaningfulness, cognitive crafting enhances both in-role and extra-role performance through meaningfulness, while relational crafting only positively correlates with extra-role performance.

Beyond examining antecedents and outcomes, some studies have analyzed job crafting's mediating and moderating roles. In mediation research, Guan and Frenkel (2018) found that job crafting mediates the relationship between HR practices and in-role/extra-role performance. Li et al. (2020) demonstrated that job crafting mediates the proactive personality-innovative performance relationship only when organizations lack high-involvement work systems. Similarly, Hur et al. (2019) showed that perceived organizational support strengthens the indirect effect of corporate social responsibility perceptions on performance through job crafting. In moderation research, Vogel et al. (2016) found that job crafting weakens the relationship between value incongruence and employee engagement/performance. Zahoor and Siddiqui (2023) revealed that increasing social and structural resources buffers the negative relationship between customer incivility and service recovery performance/emotional exhaustion.

This review reveals that distinguishing between job crafting content and dimensional constructs is crucial for accurately analyzing its effects. Since different dimensions represent distinct orientations toward changing job resources and environments, they produce divergent outcomes. Moreover, research on the pathways and boundary conditions through which job crafting influences individual and organizational performance remains relatively scarce compared to studies on antecedents and outcomes. Current research seldom examines the composition and development of job crafting behavior itself, with few dynamic process analyses of crafting behaviors.

2.2.2 Research on Team Job Crafting

Compared to mature individual-level research, team job crafting inquiry remains developmental. Conceptually, Leana et al. (2009) first extended job crafting to the team level, proposing collaborative job crafting—employees cooperatively reorganizing and redesigning work to achieve shared team goals. Tims et al. (2013) emphasized that team job crafting does not require every member to craft identical aspects; rather, it represents an implicit process of collective, synergistic effort where teams jointly determine what and how to craft in a goal-directed manner to achieve team objectives (Mäkikangas et al., 2016).

Empirical research has primarily examined team job crafting's effects on individual- and team-level variables. Regarding individual-level impacts, Uen et al. (2021) found that team job crafting positively relates to individual innovative work behavior through team psychological capital. Alonso et al. (2019) reported positive relationships between team crafting and individual job satisfaction. Cheng et al. (2016) demonstrated that team crafting enhances individual performance and organizational commitment, particularly when individuals perceive low organizational support. Concerning team-level effects, McClelland et al. (2014) found that team job crafting positively influences team engagement and in-role performance through team control, interdependence, and efficacy. Yadav and Dhar (2021) discovered that team crafting positively affects service recovery performance.

Notably, scholars have applied social learning theory to examine relationships between team and individual crafting, finding that team job crafting inspires individual crafting (Tims et al., 2013). Others have explored team crafting's mediating and moderating roles. For instance, Tuan (2020) found that team job crafting mediates the charismatic leadership-team performance relationship. Mäkikangas et al. (2016) revealed that team increases in structural and social resources strengthen the relationship between engagement and team performance. Chinese scholar 王桢 (2020) proposed a comprehensive theoretical model examining team crafting antecedents and outcomes based on job design theory and team process models, though empirical findings remain unpublished.

Overall, team job crafting significantly impacts employee development and organizational performance (Oldham & Hackman, 2010). However, current research on team crafting's effects and mechanisms remains limited. Conceptually, team job crafting is more complex than its individual counterpart, necessitating more refined dimensional specification. Critically, future research must apply theoretical frameworks appropriate for team-level analysis to accurately verify and explore its differential effects, rather than simply replicating individual-level logic.

In summary, job crafting research has achieved considerable progress in both theory and empirical testing, particularly at the individual level. Nevertheless, significant issues require deeper investigation. Most notably, existing research remains fragmented and dispersed, lacking an integrative framework that uni-

fies scattered individual- and team-level studies to comprehensively understand job crafting's systemic organizational impact. This study's core objective is to construct such a model, revealing the process through which job crafting influences organizations to make it acceptable, replicable, generalizable, and capable of producing lasting impacts on individual and organizational performance.

3. Research Framework

This project comprises two modules: Module 1 adopts a macro-level qualitative approach, establishing a dynamic process model to explain how employees and teams enact job crafting activities. Module 2 employs micro-level quantitative research, focusing on psychological processes and behavioral outcomes of individual and team responses to job crafting, examining crafting effects and mechanisms at both levels. Specifically, three sub-studies are included: Study 1 corresponds to Module 1, while Studies 2 and 3 correspond to Module 2.

3.1 Study 1: Dynamic Process Model of Job Crafting

Existing research typically introduces job crafting concepts directly, examining crafting behaviors from role, resource, or integrated perspectives without analyzing the enactment process itself. This lack of understanding of job crafting's dynamic process hinders targeted interventions and support for employee crafting in practice. This sub-study focuses on job crafting itself, examining which factors and their combinations influence crafting completion to meticulously depict its evolutionary process. Additionally, based on this understanding, it reveals the mutual influence process between individual and team job crafting. Compared to existing research, this study features two distinct characteristics: First, it treats job crafting as a process—transforming the "point" into a "line"—by analyzing crafting itself rather than merely introducing the concept. Second, based on process understanding, it establishes connections across individual and team levels to explore their interactive effects, thereby addressing the limitation of fragmented individual and team crafting research (Tims et al., 2022).

Entity theory and ontology represent two distinct process research approaches. Entity theory defines reactions and changes as "entity" movement across different stages or states (Tuckman, 1965), employing an "input-output" process framework (Marks et al., 2001) where subsequent changes from initial reactions are explained through repetitive mediating mechanisms. Ontology conceptualizes phenomena as processes themselves (Alvesson & Karreman, 2007; Davis, 1971), positing that phenomena can change across structure, behavior, events, and boundaries (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002), with these changes constituting a worthy research focus that produces different outcomes. Job crafting requires not only changes triggered by job and task inputs but also construction of appropriate task structures, work contexts, and process boundaries aligned with team member characteristics. Simultaneously, job crafting itself continuously undergoes processes of "collaborative identification" or "rejection and alienation,"

even experiencing "non-team" or "de-teamification" states. Given these characteristics, ontology offers unique advantages for understanding job crafting processes, as it can transcend predetermined theoretical frameworks when considering structure, behavior, and boundaries related to crafting (Alvesson & Karreman, 2007; Davis, 1971), making it suitable for research focusing on job crafting itself.

While ontology provides a perspective for understanding job crafting processes, it lacks a concrete analytical framework. Action theory and the concept of "flow" built upon it can fill this gap. Action theory is widely applied to discuss human behavior and consciousness processes (Nitsch & Hackfort, 2016), with the advantage of integratively considering person, task, and environment in proximity to everyday action reality (Pels & Kleinert, 2022). Action results from person-environment interaction, representing a process where individuals, tasks, and situations respond to environmental demands. According to action theory, flow is a state where individuals are completely immersed in activities requiring no reflective self-consciousness yet possessing deep control (Engeser & Schiepe-Tiska, 2012, p. 1). From action theory and flow perspectives, job crafting can be viewed as an action whose process forms flow, which in turn signifies evolution and change. Flow-based action continuously undergoes changes that serve as contexts for action modification, thereby generating subsequent actions. As a state, flow correlates with pleasant experiences and performance (Engeser & Schiepe-Tiska, 2012). Because ontology offers a perspective distinct from entity theory, while action theory and flow provide analytical frameworks, we integrate these approaches to propose the dynamic process model of job crafting shown in Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper].

We first focus on job crafting itself (left side of Figure 1). Job crafting is the process through which individuals take action to complete crafting tasks. To understand this process, we draw on action theory and flow concepts (Pels & Kleinert, 2022) to decompose task completion into two elements: (1) task elements, referring to job crafting tasks; and (2) functional elements, referring to behaviors (observable activities), psychological states (including cognition, emotion, motivation, and volition), and skills (action capabilities) related to task completion. Consequently, job crafting manifests as two types of structural matching: matching among similar functional elements (e.g., among behaviors, psychological states, and skills) and matching between task and functional elements. Job crafting action thus transforms into an examination of these structural matches. By definition, job crafting necessarily induces changes in tasks, contexts, boundaries, or behaviors. Based on this premise, we posit that associations or matches exist between one person's behaviors, psychological states, skills, and tasks and those of others, which we term initial matching (see sections marked "1" in Figure 1). Additionally, secondary matching represents matches between job crafting task elements and functional elements—that is, matches between functional elements (behaviors, psychological states, and skills) and their combinations with tasks (see sections marked "2" and "3" in Figure 1).

Beyond structure, job crafting's other characteristic is dynamism, encompassing at least two aspects: (1) dynamics of initial and secondary matching under fixed task conditions, and (2) changes experienced to complete corresponding tasks and maintain continuous matching under task variation conditions. In this dynamic process, structures exist on a continuum between complete matching and complete mismatching. Both types of structural matching continuously fluctuate, occupying points along this continuum at any given moment. Flow emerges when matching exists; no flow occurs with mismatching. For job crafting, initial matching forms the foundation for secondary matching, which originates from and subsequently helps solidify initial matching, thereby regulating flow dynamics. Without task processing and matching based on environmental demands, no flow exists. The job crafting process thus involves continuous fluctuation between two structural matches, with ongoing adjustments to maintain structural matching during sustained change.

Based on this process understanding, we further explain the relationship between individual and team job crafting. According to integrative group flow theory (Pels & Kleinert, 2022), corresponding structures and dynamics exist at the group level (right side of Figure 1). Group structure describes and explains how team systems, tasks, environments, and their interrelationships match. Two types of structural matching constitute group structure: (1) group initial matching—matching among team members' tasks, behaviors, psychological states, and skills (marked "1" in Figure 1's right side); and (2) group secondary matching—matching between the team's overall behaviors, psychological states, skills, and their combinations with group tasks (marked "2" and "3" in Figure 1's right side). Regarding dynamism, team job crafting exhibits similar dynamic processes as the individual level, with continuous fluctuation and adjustment between two structural matches to maintain alignment, albeit occurring at the team level.

How does individual-level job crafting develop into team-level crafting? According to Pels and Kleinert (2022), the aggregate of one member's matching relationships with other team members creates team-level emergence. This team matching, emerging from inter-member relationships, represents a novel characteristic—a team behavior that individual members cannot perform alone. In other words, team job crafting originates from individual crafting but differs from simple aggregation; it is an emergent property of individual crafting resulting from simultaneous construction of all individual matches. During this process, each team member contributes to team emergence. A small individual event (e.g., one team member's behavioral change) can trigger large team changes, potentially affecting both overall team behavior and team crafting task completion. In team contexts, individual job crafting's structures and dynamics develop into team job crafting through activation, emergence, and construction.

The aforementioned describes the individual-to-team process. However, throughout the dynamic process, teams and individuals mutually influence each other. This process includes not only individual-to-team effects but also team-

to-individual influences, which manifest as solidification, supplementation, and incubation. Focusing on solidification and using emotion as an example psychological state from Pels and Kleinert (2022): when team secondary matching is perceived by members as a positive experience (e.g., happiness due to good team progress), this shared experience becomes solidified and reinforces secondary matching maintenance. On one hand, happiness (positive emotion) creates tendencies to maintain secondary matching through initial matching (e.g., identity identification). On the other hand, this shared emotion representing team initial matching (happiness as a shared team emotion) both facilitates team secondary matching (e.g., coordinating team action) and solidifies individual initial matching (e.g., interpersonal relationships) and secondary matching (e.g., actively engaging in common goal achievement). This exemplifies how secondary matching solidifies itself by solidifying initial matching.

In summary, we propose that individual and team job crafting establish a criss-crossing dynamic relationship through both within-level sequential matching processes (initial to secondary matching at individual and team levels) and cross-level bottom-up (individual-to-team) emergence of higher-level initial and secondary matching, as well as top-down (team-to-individual) influence processes (e.g., solidification) affecting initial and secondary matching. Within a specific time period, these matching relationship chains can be reversible or discontinuous. For example, in section "1" on Figure 1's left side, Member 1's psychological state could influence Member 2's psychological state or vice versa, or Member 2's psychological state could influence Member 1's job crafting (representing discontinuity or indirect influence). Similar patterns apply to other numbered paths in Figure 1. In other words, this dynamic process description provides a comprehensive framework where researchers can always locate corresponding points or paths for their topics and can 截取 specific segments as needed.

Overall, this sub-study addresses the academic gap in analyzing job crafting itself, which limits practical understanding of crafting facilitators and barriers. Focusing on job crafting itself and grounded in ontology, action theory, and flow theory, we attempt to reveal two dynamic processes: the job crafting action process itself and the mutual influence process between individual and team crafting. Regarding the crafting process, we decompose task completion into task and functional elements, centering on structure and dynamism to examine their matching and interrelationships, proposing a dynamic process model based on structural matching. Concerning individual-team relationships, based on process understanding, we reveal a bottom-up activation-emergence-construction process from individual to team crafting and a top-down solidification-supplementation-incubation process from team to individual crafting.

We emphasize that this dynamic process model is currently framework-level. In specific research, we will optimize and refine functional element classifications

(behaviors, psychological states, skills) and task element categories (e.g., assessing task appropriateness, determining necessary refinements) based on multiple case analyses, while inductively summarizing factors that facilitate or hinder structural matching and their coping mechanisms to enrich the baseline model. Methodologically, we plan to select teams across multiple industries (e.g., healthcare teams, online platforms, intelligent manufacturing and design companies). In Phase 1, we will use critical incident technique through interviews and descriptions of typical behaviors to capture characteristic features and element compositions of individual and team crafting. In Phase 2, we will employ semi-structured depth interviews, organizational secondary data (interviewees' and teams' actual work records), and participant observation to understand dynamic evolution of individual and team job crafting.

Additionally, while this model provides in-depth analysis of job crafting action itself, it does not consider specific outcomes (e.g., performance). Therefore, subsequent studies (Studies 2 and 3) will build on Study 1 to examine representative topics regarding crafting action's performance effects. Study 2 focuses on individual job crafting action's performance effects, where individual crafting action refers to matching between personal job crafting task elements and psychological state functional elements (e.g., cognitive factors represented by task urgency, responsibility perception, and psychological detachment). Study 3 examines team crafting action's effects on team performance, where action refers to matching between team job crafting task elements and team psychological state functional elements (e.g., cognitive factors represented by team reflexivity and transactive memory systems, and affective factors represented by team conflict). Matching reflects "flow" magnitude, which can be operationalized through consistency between variable relationships (similar to covariation between variable scores). Through these two sub-studies (examining variable relationships from a "flow" perspective rather than simple variable analysis), we aim to preliminarily test the proposed model's validity while extending existing empirical findings.

3.2 Study 2: Mechanisms Linking Job Crafting to Individual Performance

This study draws on social distance theory to examine how employee job crafting influences job performance (conceptual model shown in Figure 2 [Figure 2: see original paper]). Social distance theory posits that social distance reflects the closeness and connection between individuals and groups (Liberman et al., 2007). When employees change and craft their work, this behavior alters their social distance from the organization. Because individual job crafting reconstructs work content, methods, relationships, and environments, it affects employees' social interactions and connections with the organization, subsequently changing their psychological distance from it. This psychological distance shift produces different behavioral cognitions that ultimately affect individual work performance. As previously noted, distinguishing job crafting dimensions is critical for accurate effect analysis. Accordingly, Studies 2 and 3 both differentiate be-

tween approach-oriented and avoidance-oriented job crafting (Bruning & Campion, 2018). Approach-oriented crafting represents proactive, problem-solving, and improvement-oriented behaviors that continuously seek resources and challenging demands. Avoidance-oriented crafting represents avoidance-directed behaviors, manifesting as reducing hindering and social demands, decreasing work tasks, and systematically withdrawing from work.

Figure 2. Individual Job Crafting's Influence Mechanism on Job Performance

3.2.1 Relationship Between Individual Approach Crafting, Responsibility Perception, and Performance

Approach-oriented job crafting (e.g., expanding work responsibilities or social relationships) can reduce employees' social distance from the organization and stimulate responsibility perception. Responsibility perception reflects employees' beliefs about voluntarily engaging in organizationally beneficial proactive behaviors, encompassing concern for organizational interests and helping achieve organizational goals (Eisenberger et al., 2001). When employees engage in approach-oriented crafting, they achieve higher work engagement and better job fit through communication and feedback with supervisors and colleagues (Wang et al., 2016), increase job satisfaction and well-being (Rudolph et al., 2017), and generate more resources and opportunities for teams and organizations (Bipp & Demerouti, 2015), thereby enhancing social interaction with the organization. Under this close psychological distance, individuals' organizational identification and insider status perception strengthen, further stimulating helping intentions and responsibility perception (Van Knippenberg, 2000). Responsibility perception subsequently promotes performance improvement. Driven by strong organizational responsibility perception, employees not only strive to complete in-role tasks but also set higher goals and contribute more extra-role proactive behaviors, helping organizations overcome development obstacles and improve operational efficiency. Therefore, we propose:

H1a: Employees' approach-oriented job crafting positively influences individual job performance through responsibility perception.

3.2.2 Relationship Between Individual Avoidance Crafting, Psychological Detachment, and Performance

In contrast, avoidance-oriented job crafting (e.g., reducing work responsibilities or social relationships) increases employees' social distance from the organization, leading to psychological detachment. Psychological detachment describes individuals physically and mentally distancing themselves from work, no longer allocating resources to address job demands (Sonnentag, 2012). Since avoidance-oriented crafting aims to reduce task demands and social interactions (Nielsen & Abildgaard, 2012), it not only decreases work engagement but also triggers work withdrawal and increased turnover intentions (Rudolph et al., 2017), while gen-

erating higher interpersonal conflict in organizations (Tims et al., 2015). Under these circumstances, employees' social distance from the organization increases, reducing organizational commitment and gradually detaching psychologically from existing job requirements and content. Psychological detachment subsequently reduces individual job performance. On one hand, high detachment indicates decreased work focus, making it difficult to fully engage in tasks and leading to quality deterioration (Fritz et al., 2010). On the other hand, high detachment creates stronger boundaries between work and non-work roles (Ashforth et al., 2000), requiring more time and resources to return to normal work mode. With limited total resources, individuals have fewer resources available for task consideration and completion. Therefore, we propose:

H1b: Employees' avoidance-oriented job crafting negatively influences individual job performance through psychological detachment.

3.2.3 Moderating Role of Task Urgency

Task urgency refers to individuals' subjective perception that available time may be insufficient for task completion (Szollos, 2009). This cognition represents not only high time pressure but also affects information processing and cognitive evaluation (Lallement, 2010). Specifically, under low task urgency, individuals possess more cognitive resources and higher construal levels, engaging in greater information exploration and deep processing. Under high time pressure, construal levels decrease, and individuals prefer simpler information processing strategies (Liberman & Trope, 1998). Thus, as task time pressure increases, employees' construal levels decline. Lower construal levels cause individuals to narrow their psychological scope, focusing more on immediate, concrete needs rather than long-term goals (Liberman et al., 2007). However, responsibility perception is abstract, transcending personal interests to emphasize organizational long-term development (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; 翁清雄, 席酉民, 2011). Under high task urgency, the positive effect of approach-oriented crafting on responsibility perception weakens. We infer that task urgency's negative moderating effect transmits through responsibility perception, ultimately reducing individual job performance. Therefore, we propose:

H2a: Task urgency moderates the positive relationship between approach-oriented job crafting and responsibility perception, and consequently moderates the indirect positive effect of approach-oriented job crafting on individual job performance via responsibility perception. These relationships are weaker when task urgency is high.

Similarly, when task urgency increases, individuals' lower construal levels strengthen the positive relationship between avoidance-oriented crafting and psychological detachment. In this situation, employees' temporal horizon narrows, focusing on satisfying immediate personal interests and concrete needs rather than long-term development, leading to increasing psychological detachment from avoidance-oriented crafting. Increased psychological detachment

further reduces individual job performance. Therefore, we propose:

H2b: Task urgency moderates the positive relationship between avoidance-oriented job crafting and psychological detachment, and consequently moderates the indirect negative effect of avoidance-oriented job crafting on individual job performance via psychological detachment. These relationships are stronger when task urgency is high.

3.3 Study 3: Mechanisms Linking Team Job Crafting to Team Performance

This study draws on a team process perspective to examine how team approach-oriented and avoidance-oriented job crafting affect team performance (conceptual model shown in Figure 3 [Figure 3: see original paper]).

Figure 3. Team Job Crafting's Influence Mechanism on Team Performance

3.3.1 Relationship Between Team Approach Crafting, Team Reflexivity, and Performance

Team reflexivity refers to team members' public reflection on team goals, strategies, and processes, making corresponding changes to adapt to current or future environments (Konradt et al., 2016). As a team transition process occurring before performance episodes, team reflexivity focuses on evaluation and planning activities (Marks et al., 2001). Research indicates that feedback information, as critical input for behavioral norms and performance improvement, is an important proximal factor triggering team reflexivity (Konradt et al., 2016). Team approach-oriented job crafting, as a goal-directed team proactive behavior, provides important feedback information for team development, including quality resources and challenging job demands (Tims et al., 2013). In this context, teams adjust goals based on achieved accomplishments and carefully consider resource allocation and specific action plans for addressing challenges. Enhanced team thinking and focus on working more effectively lead to higher performance. First, team reflexivity provides direction for performance improvement, fostering systematic understanding of past problems (Schippers et al., 2007) and helping teams consider more effective work methods. Second, team reflexivity focuses not only on past achievements but also prepares for future actions (LePine et al., 2008). This proactive advancement of team goals promotes translating reflective content into actual team actions, providing action support for performance improvement (De Jong & Elfring, 2010). Therefore, we propose:

H3a: Team approach-oriented job crafting positively influences team performance through increased team reflexivity.

3.3.2 Relationship Between Team Avoidance Crafting, Team Conflict, and Performance

Team relationship conflict refers to tension, anger, hostility, or other negative emotions arising when team members perceive inconsistencies or incompatibilities among each other (Tyler & Blader, 2003). As an interpersonal interaction process, team relationship conflict is often triggered by team-level heterogeneity (Mohammed & Angell, 2004). Team avoidance-oriented job crafting exacerbates team-level heterogeneity by reinforcing team rejection of tasks exceeding work requirements and consuming substantial emotional resources (Mäkikangas et al., 2016), thereby inducing team relationship conflict. Specifically, as established work tasks, teams cannot permanently and completely avoid hindering job demands. This implies that only some team members can craft through avoidance strategies, increasing peers' workload and creating imbalanced resource distribution, while focusing members on individual rather than collective interests (Tims et al., 2015). For members unable to engage in avoidance crafting, hostility emerges when they perceive their interests are violated (de Wit et al., 2012). For those who do engage in avoidance crafting, they not only refuse to assume these hindering responsibilities but may even distance themselves from members who cannot. These mutual hostilities and distancing trigger team relationship conflict. When relationship conflict emerges, it not only diverts members' work focus and reduces task engagement (Shaw, 2011) but also creates barriers to team communication and collaboration (DeChurch et al., 2013), thereby reducing team performance. Therefore, we propose:

H3b: Team avoidance-oriented job crafting negatively influences team performance through increased team relationship conflict.

3.3.3 Moderating Role of Team Transactive Memory Systems

Transactive memory systems refer to cooperative division-of-labor systems among team members for encoding, storing, and retrieving knowledge across different domains (Wegner, 1987), emphasizing the distribution of knowledge and expertise and how dispersed knowledge is integrated. When transactive memory system levels are high, team members specialize in different domains (Ellis, 2006). This means resources and increased demands obtained through team approach-oriented crafting are relatively independent, increasing the necessity for team communication. In this scenario, team approach-oriented crafting strengthens members' exchanges about added resources and demands, and discussions about resource allocation and challenging task responses. Different specialties lead members to more thoroughly demonstrate their performance, difficulties, and development plans during communication, helping teams identify past development limitations and adjust actions accordingly, setting more targeted resource allocation and development plans, thereby enhancing team performance. Therefore, we propose:

H4a: Team transactive memory system moderates the positive relationship

between team approach-oriented job crafting and team reflexivity, and consequently moderates the indirect positive effect of team approach-oriented job crafting on team performance via team reflexivity. These relationships are stronger when transactive memory level is high.

Similarly, under high transactive memory systems, team members develop interdependent yet specialized cooperation patterns (Wegner, 1987). Although team avoidance-oriented crafting represents rejection of some hindering demands, when transactive memory is high, these hindering demands are also independent yet interrelated. In this situation, these demands more likely require team coordination rather than being completed by a few individuals, fundamentally reducing team relationship conflict probability. Reduced team conflict significantly promotes member engagement and collaborative communication, ultimately enhancing team performance. Therefore, we propose:

H4b: Team transactive memory system moderates the positive relationship between team avoidance-oriented job crafting and team relationship conflict, and consequently moderates the indirect negative effect of team avoidance-oriented job crafting on team performance via team relationship conflict. These relationships are weaker when transactive memory level is high.

Unlike Study 1, Studies 2 and 3 will employ multiple methods including experiments (with interventions) and surveys for cross-validation. Participants will include cross-industry MBA and EMBA students and multi-source organizational samples. Survey data collection will occur in three phases at one-month intervals (adjustable based on sample characteristics). Phase 1 (T1) will measure independent variables, moderators, and control variables; Phase 2 (T2) will measure mediators; and Phase 3 (T3) will measure dependent variables.

4. Theoretical Contributions

Leveraging employees' spontaneous, bottom-up job crafting can compensate for centralized, top-down management deficiencies and enhance organizational performance. As job crafting's breadth expands and its influence extends to team and organizational levels, theoretical boundaries must be broadened. Previous research has failed to provide complete explanations for how job crafting enhances team and organizational performance, primarily because it analyzed crafting's partial, static organizational impacts, treated other members as passive observers, and exhibited fragmented characteristics that hinder comprehensive depiction of crafting's systemic organizational influence.

This project centers on job crafting, addressing three limitations in prior research—scope, breadth, and theoretical perspective. We transcend the conventional "input-output" process framework by innovatively incorporating dynamic flow processes, break the fragmented research pattern separating individual and team levels, and extract a job crafting process model featuring bottom-up (individual-to-team) dynamic activation and top-down (team-to-individual) dynamic solidification. Simultaneously, we delineate

potential mechanisms and boundary conditions through which crafting effectively enhances individual and team performance, inspiring organizations to better utilize employees' bottom-up proactive endeavors. Specific theoretical contributions manifest in three aspects:

First, we inject new theoretical content into job crafting research. Grounded in ontology and action (flow) theory, we treat job crafting as a process, revealing two dynamic processes: the job crafting action process itself and the mutual influence between individual and team crafting (see Figure 1). Regarding the action process, by decomposing task completion into task and functional elements and centering on structure and dynamism, we propose a continuous matching process model based on task elements. Concerning individual-team relationships, based on process understanding, we reveal bottom-up activation-emergence-construction and top-down solidification-supplementation-incubation processes. Unlike research that directly introduces job crafting concepts or isolates individual or team crafting, this study transforms the "point" into a "line," analyzing the crafting process itself and elaborating cross-level interactions. This deepens our understanding of job crafting and contributes theoretically to revealing its change processes.

Second, we construct a path model of job crafting's influence on individual performance. How crafting behaviors affect individual performance has been a central focus. Previous research has been limited to analyzing effects on engagement, need satisfaction, and satisfaction (Rudolph et al., 2017; Zhang & Parker, 2019), with relatively simplistic internal mechanism exploration and neglect of employees' self-cognition and adjustment after crafting. Distinguishing from traditional job demands-resources and social exchange perspectives, we introduce social distance theory to explain how different crafting types affect employees' psychological cognitive distance from the organization, thereby influencing performance. Specifically, we propose that approach-oriented crafting positively affects performance through responsibility perception, while avoidance-oriented crafting negatively affects performance through psychological detachment, with task urgency moderating both relationships. Under high task urgency, the positive indirect effect of approach crafting via responsibility perception weakens, while the negative indirect effect of avoidance crafting via psychological detachment strengthens. This model enriches individual-level theoretical contributions and provides a new perspective for job crafting research.

Third, we reveal team-level mechanisms and boundary conditions. Current job crafting research concentrates primarily on the individual level, with limited knowledge about team-level effects (Tims et al., 2022). Drawing on an entity-based team process perspective and distinguishing team approach and avoidance crafting, we examine how different team crafting types affect team task and relational processes under varying transactive memory system levels, thereby influencing team performance. Specifically, team approach-oriented crafting positively affects performance through increased team reflexivity, while team avoidance-oriented crafting negatively affects performance through increased

team relationship conflict, with both relationships moderated by transactive memory systems. When transactive memory is high, the positive indirect effect of approach crafting via reflexivity strengthens, while the negative indirect effect of avoidance crafting via relationship conflict weakens. These insights advance our understanding of team job crafting's conceptual boundaries and enhance theoretical comprehensiveness from a team perspective.

Overall, our research innovates in two ways: (1) We innovatively propose a dynamic process model of job crafting, featuring two interrelated innovations. First, we adopt an "actor-centered" rather than "variable-centered" approach, focusing on job crafting action itself to parse the process through actors' behaviors, psychological states, and skills and their relationships with crafting tasks. Second, regarding dynamism, we posit that job crafting's dynamic process involves structural matching within and between functional and task elements, and continuous structural matching across temporal contexts. Based on this structural matching, we reveal dynamic cross-level influence processes. (2) We expand theoretical perspectives. While previous research primarily employed individual-level frameworks like social learning, job demands-resources, and attribution theories (Ji, 2022; Tims et al., 2015), Study 1 integrates ontology and action (flow) theory, Study 2 applies social distance theory, and Study 3 adopts a team process perspective. Incorporating these new theoretical perspectives, we preliminarily construct a "flow"-based job crafting model that contributes to deeper understanding of crafting process changes and cross-level behavioral linkages.

Furthermore, this research offers managerial implications for optimizing job crafting and improving organizational performance. First, it moves organizational change from the "ivory tower" to the "masses." Traditionally, organizational change is viewed as a top-down or organization-led strategic implementation process. By focusing on employees' bottom-up influence processes, this project provides a micro-foundation for organizational change, identifying job crafting as a bottom-up implementation mechanism. Second, exploring psychological processes and behavioral outcomes through which individuals and teams dynamically respond to job crafting helps organizations and leaders more comprehensively and accurately understand opportunities and challenges created by crafting, inspiring better internal focus mechanisms to fully leverage crafting's effects. Finally, the identified boundary conditions of crafting's influence mechanisms can inspire organizations to design innovative, sustainable job crafting management systems and supporting measures that drive greater benefits for teams and organizations.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.