

The Role of Job Characteristics, Job Crafting and Work Engagement on Job Performance: A Study on Service Industry

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ABSTRACT: The present paper was undertaken with an aim to assess the role of job characteristics, job crafting and work engagement on performance. The two dimensions of performance explored are task performance and contextual performance. The study was conducted on middle level managers working in hotels. The sample of the study was 90 for the analysis of which a correlation design was employed. The results revealed that all the three predictor variables (job characteristics, job crafting and work engagement) have a positive and significant relationship with both task performance as well as contextual performance. Further, regression analysis revealed that work engagement contributed the most to job performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that engaged employees perform better.

Keywords: job characteristics, job crafting, work engagement, performance

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I. INTRODUCTION

Service industry being, the part of the economy that creates various service, is majorly comprised of banking, media and entertainment and hospitality. The Indian hospitality industry has emerged as one of the key drivers of growth among service sectors in India. As a result the hospitality industry in India has become a large employment creator. So, designing a job and describing the process and thereafter selecting appropriate individuals is a challenge now-a-days, therefore a well designed job leads to positive outcomes (well-being, better performance). The basic requisite of job design is job characteristics. Job characteristics refers to “specific aspects of job such as knowledge and skills, mental and physical demands, and working conditions that can be recognized, defined and assessed” (Naude, 2010; Schuurman, 2011). Attributes of job that serve as motivational functions are considered in job characteristics. These attributes focus on improving the performance of employees by enhancing their job with the five dimensions that come under job characteristics : skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback (Griffin & Moorhead, 2010; Bacha, 2014). These five core dimensions influence the three critical psychological states as given by Hackman and Oldham (1980). The three psychological states are experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility and knowledge of results. According to the job characteristics model given by Hackman and Oldham experienced meaningfulness is a product of skill variety, task identity and task significance, with the presence of these three dimensions employees experience meaningfulness in their work. Responsibility comes from having autonomy in work and feedback provides knowledge of results. The five core job characteristics are skill variety, task identity, task significance, feedback and autonomy.

Although, through the process of job designing, all the contents of a job are explicitly defined, the employees seldom perform the job as it is formally portrayed in the official job description. It has been a general practice among workers to modify their predefined work schedules and tasks to make them convenient as per their own comfort level. The term coined to define this phenomenon is “Job Crafting”. Job crafting is a bottom-up process as opposed to the traditional top-down process of job characteristics. It is a proactive behaviour in which employees themselves try to alter their job to achieve meaningfulness in their work. It is an alternative perspective of job design. Job crafting was first introduced by Wrzesniewski and Dutton in 2001, and defined job crafting as “the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work”. With job crafting employees have the scope to change the task and social components of their job by way of altering their task and relational boundaries. Such alterations lead to a different experience of work meaningfulness. Job crafting can be applied in varied degrees from highest to lowest level of organization as well as from simple routine jobs to the most complex jobs. Various positive outcomes of job crafting are psychological wellbeing (Berg, Grant & Johnson, 2010), work engagement and performance (Tims, Bakker &

Derks, 2012), organizational citizenship behaviour, job satisfaction, affective commitment, flourishing and reduced turnover intention. The three types of job crafting are task crafting, relational crafting and cognitive crafting. Task Crafting refers to changing the physical or temporal boundaries of task by adding or eliminating a task, reconsidering the time and effort devoted to various tasks, etc. whereas Relational Crafting refers to alterations in interpersonal interactions at work in the process of performing a task i.e., when, how or with whom to interact and Cognitive Crafting refers to reframing the cognitive boundaries to alter the perceptions that employees have about the task and relationships at work. By making such modifications in job, employees are better able to identify with their job and utilise their skills in the best way possible making them more engaged in their work. Work engagement was first defined by Kahn (1990) as “a construct that refers to the investment of physical, cognitive and emotional energy at work”. Authentic selves of engaged employees can be witnessed through physical involvement, cognitive awareness and emotional connections. In 2002, Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma and Bakker defined work engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigor, dedication and absorption”. Vigor refers to high levels energy and resilience, investing great deal of effort in performing tasks and to maintain such investment in the face of difficulties. Dedication refers to high levels of involvement, enthusiasm and feeling challenged by one’s work. Employees with dedication have a sense of pride, significance and inspiration. Absorption refers to being happily engrossed and immersed in work and losing a sense of time. Being highly immersed and devoted to their work employees perform to the best of their abilities. Individual work performance (IWP) can be defined as “behaviours or actions that are relevant to the goals of the organization” (Campbell, 1990). IWP does not focus on results of actions, rather it focuses on behaviours or actions of employees, the behaviours that are under the control of individuals excluding the ones that are constrained by environment. (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002) Broadly, there are three dimensions of IWP. The most attended to dimension is task performance, second dimension is contextual performance and the third is counterproductive work behaviour.

Task performance refers to the proficiency with which one performs the central tasks of the job. Of course, the central tasks will differ from job to job. It may include work quality, work quantity and job knowledge. It includes activities that are formally prescribed in the job description and evaluates the basic required duties of the job (Ng & Feldman, 2009). Under contextual performance come the behaviours that go beyond the formally defined work goals like taking on extra tasks, coaching newcomers, and showing initiative. The behaviour that supports the climate and culture of an organization but may not necessarily support the technical core also represent contextual behaviour (Jex & Britt, 2008). Contextual activities promote organizational effectiveness by shaping the organizational, social and psychological context.

Most of the empirical work on job characteristics focuses on task performance and overall performance and the studies show small, but positive relationships between job characteristics and job performance. Researches exploring the relationship between of job characteristics with contextual performance are scarce. Previous researches have shown that there is a significant influence of job characteristics on individual performance. (Indartono, Chiou, & Chen, 2010; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006, 2008; Humphrey et al., 2007) A study on 139 managers showed the influence of job characteristics was greater on task performance as compared to contextual performance. (Hernaus & Mikulic, 2013) Another study conducted on 154 employees in metal company studied the effect of job characteristics on task and contextual performance revealing a significant relationship between job characteristics and task performance. (Kahya, 2007)

A study which examined proactive personality as a predictor of in-role performance through job crafting revealed that the employees who scored high on proactive personality were more likely to craft their jobs and this job crafting behaviour was predictive of in-role performance. (Bakker, Tims, & Derks, 2012) In a study conducted on customer service personnel a positive relationship was found between job crafting and contextual performance. (Akoto, 2015)

A study in which work engagement was studied as a predictor of in-role performance and extra-role performance, it was found that there was work engagement was significantly related to both in-role performance and extra-role performance. (Jackson, 2014) A study on 54 Dutch teachers revealed that there was a positive association between work engagement and performance. (Arnold B Bakker & Matthijs Bal, 2010) Another study which examined conscientiousness as a moderator between work engagement and performance depicted that there was a positive relationship between work engagement and task performance and also between work engagement and contextual performance. (Bakker, Demerouti, & Brummelhuis, 2012)

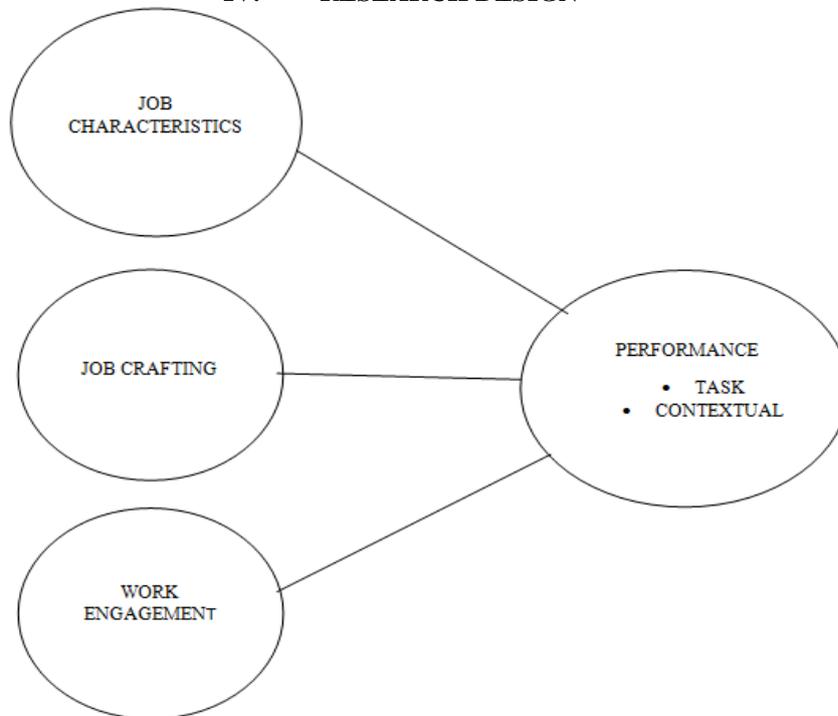
II. OBJECTIVE

- To investigate the relationship between job characteristics, job crafting, work engagement and performance i.e. task and contextual performance.
- To explore the contribution of job characteristics, job crafting and work engagement in relation to task and contextual performance.

III. HYPOTHESES

- There will be no significant relationship between job characteristics, job crafting, work engagement and task and contextual performance.
- The three measures (job characteristics, job crafting and work engagement) will not significantly contribute to predict task and contextual performance.

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN



V. SAMPLE

For the present study data was collected from 90 middle-level managers working in five star hotels.

Inclusion Criteria:

Permanent employees with a minimum association of 3 years with the current organisation and with a minimum qualification of diploma in hotel management were included in the sample.

Exclusion Criteria:

Employees on the probation period and analysis on the basis of gender were kept out of the purview of the study.

VI. INSTRUMENTS

For measuring job characteristics, Job Diagnostic Survey developed by Hackman and Oldham, 1980 was used. The scale is divided into two parts with total 15 items. The scale measures five job characteristics: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. For each job characteristic 3 items are assigned. Job Crafting Questionnaire developed by Slemp and Vella-Brodrick (2013) was used to measure job crafting. The questionnaire has 15 items and measures three dimensions of job crafting: task crafting, relational crafting and cognitive crafting. Five statements are assigned to measure each dimension of job crafting.

To measure work engagement, Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 (UWES-9) developed by Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova (2006) was used. The scale has total 9 statements divided into 3 statements for each dimension of work engagement: vigour, dedication and absorption.

For measuring performance, Individual Work Performance Questionnaire 1.0 (IWPQ 1.0) developed by Koopmans et al, (2014) was used. The questionnaire has 18 items out of which 8 items are assigned for the measurement of contextual performance.

VII. RESULT TABLES

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of variables under the study

VARIABLES	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Job Characteristics	5.77	.87
Job Crafting	5.31	.84
Work Engagement	5.01	.86
Task Performance	3.13	.75
Contextual Performance	3.18	.83
N=90		

Table 2: Correlational Matrix

Criterion Variable	Predictor Variables		
	Job Characteristics	Job Crafting	Work Engagement
Task Performance	.551**	.583**	.731**
Contextual Performance	.673**	.696**	.703**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed).

Table 3: Regression Analysis

Job Characteristics, Job Crafting, Work Engagement and Task Performance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.766 ^a	.587	.572	.49407

a. Predictors: (Constant), WE, CHARACTERISTICS, CRAFTING

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	29.793	3	9.931	40.683	.000 ^b
	Residual	20.993	86	.244		
	Total	50.786	89			

a. Dependent Variable: TP

b. Predictors: (Constant), WE, CHARACTERISTICS, CRAFTING

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-2.770	.603		-4.596	.000
	CHARACTERISTICS	.277	.090	.257	3.074	.003
	CRAFTING	.015	.162	.010	.093	.926
	WE	.808	.137	.601	5.920	.000

a. Dependent Variable: TP

Job Characteristics, Job Crafting, Work Engagement and Contextual Performance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.726 ^a	.527	.511	.58589

a. Predictors: (Constant), WE, JC, CRAFTING

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	32.896	3	10.965	31.944	.000 ^b
	Residual	29.521	86	.343		
	Total	62.417	89			

- a. Dependent Variable: CP
- b. Predictors: (Constant), WE, JC, CRAFTING

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.710	.418		-1.698	.093
	JC	.188	.169	.196	1.115	.268
	CRAFTIN G	.177	.213	.179	.829	.409
	WE	.373	.154	.384	2.420	.018

a. Dependent Variable: CP

- JC: Job Characteristics
- Crafting: Job Crafting
- WE: Work Engagement
- TP: Task Performance
- CP: Contextual Performance

VIII. DISCUSSION

The present paper was conducted to assess the relationship between job characteristics, job crafting, work engagement and performance (task and contextual performance). A well-structured job is designed on the basis of the job characteristics. However, there is always a scope for customisations or modifications in a job through which employees are able to enhance their engagement in the job leading to better performance.

The first hypothesis formulated for examination was that there will be no relationship between job characteristics, job crafting, work engagement and task and contextual performance. The correlation analysis revealed that the three predictor variables job characteristics ($r=0.551$, $p<0.01$), job crafting ($r=0.583$) and work engagement ($r=0.731$, $p<0.01$) were positively and significantly related to task performance and also; job characteristics ($r=0.673$, $p<0.01$), job crafting ($r=0.696$, $p<0.01$) and work engagement ($r=0.703$, $p<0.01$) showed a positive and significant relationship with contextual performance. From the results it can be inferred that a positive perception of job characteristics and moreover the opportunity to craft the job which enhances the engagement level of employees lead to a better task performance as well as contextual performance.

A well-defined job helps the employees to function and perform the tasks in a way that delivers desired outputs. Favourable job characteristics like timely feedback, freedom to take own decisions up to a certain level, identification with the job and its meaningfulness along with usage of various skills allow the employees to deliver good performance. By having a clear picture of what is to be done and how it is to be done employees are able to perform the core activities in the most efficient way possible. Studies have shown a positive relationship between job characteristics and task performance. (Hernaus & Mikulic, 2013; Eswar, 2013; Onukwube & Iyagba, 2011; Kahya, 2007)

Also, a job that provides opportunity to employees to alter the fragments of their jobs as per their own preferences also enhance the performance of employees. As the employees customise the job according to their desired pace, they are able to perform the job with a pleasant state of mind which enriches their performance. So, greater the perceived opportunity for job crafting, more enhanced will be the performance. Studies have shown a positive relationship between job crafting and task performance (Bakker, Tims & Derks, 2012) as well as between job crafting and contextual performance (Akoto, 2015).

Lastly, a highly engaged employee will performance better as engaged employees are ready to go to extreme levels to accomplish a goal by putting in extra efforts and hard work with devotion. They do not restrict themselves rather they are always ready to save the organisation from a bad day. Various studies have shown a positive relationship between work engagement and task performance (Jackson, 2014; Bakker, Demerouti & Bruumelhuys, 2012; Christian, Garza & Slaughter, 2011) and also between work engagement and contextual performance (Bilal, Shah, Yasir & Mateen, 2015; Bakker, Demerouti & Brummelhuys, 2012; Christian, Garza & Slaughter, 2011).

Furthermore, it was hypothesised that job characteristics, job crafting and work engagement would not contribute to performance. Regression analysis was carried out; in which job characteristics, job crafting and work engagement were predictor variables and task performance and contextual performance as criterion variables. The analysis revealed that the three predictor variables accounted for significant proportion of variance of 58.7% in task performance and 52.7% of variance in contextual performance. The coefficient of work engagement was reported as 0.601. Therefore, for every unit of increase in work engagement, a 0.601 unit increase in task performance is predicted. Regression analysis also predicted significant role of job

characteristics in task performance. On similar lines, the coefficient of work engagement was reported as 0.384, where every unit of increase in work engagement, a .384 unit increase in contextual performance is predicted. Overall, work engagement emerged as the most significant predictor of both task and contextual performance. So from the regression analysis it can be explained that the employees who get immersed in their work and don't shy away from putting in extra efforts and are defensive of the organisation in difficult and unfavourable circumstances are the ones with remarkable performance. They excel in core activities and also go beyond the formal boundaries to support the standardised functioning of the organisation.

IX. CONCLUSION

Although, a well-designed job provide a structure about how a job is to be carried out but having the comfort to make changes in that structure as per own convenience matching the interest and abilities of the self allows the employees to improve their involvement in the job. This involvement motivates the employees to keep performing better as they become engaged in their work.

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