

Original Article (Qualitative)

Designing a Job Crafting Model for Faculty Members

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Abstract

This study was carried out with the purpose of creating a job crafting model for the faculty members of Persian Gulf University. This research is qualitative in and based on the data-driven theory and the data were collected through a series of semi-structured interviews with 17 faculty members. For sampling, the snowball sampling method was utilized, and the data analysis was conducted using Strauss and Corbin's grounded theory with a focus on a selective and pivotal approach. In order to better validate and ensure reliability, the data were reviewed by peers and experts, and coding was conducted by two independent researchers. Our findings also show that our proposed model includes 58 key concepts, which can be categorized into five main groups, including antecedents, strategies, intervening factors, underlying causes, and consequences. This model indicated that job crafting leads to both personal and the professional development of faculty members. Furthermore, job crafting increases creativity, motivation, and productivity within the academic environment. The results of this study can aid university policy-making as well as the management by contributing to the creation of agreeable conditions for enhancing job crafting and improving the quality of education and research.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

In an unstable working environment, employees' skills, creativity and proactive job changes play a pivotal role when it comes to organizational innovation and survival (Dewi & Harahap, 2024). Therefore, researchers emphasize the importance of designing flexible jobs where employees have the ability to proactively change their roles and tasks (Zhang & Parker, 2019). Job crafting refers to the countless ways through which employees can alter and personalize their jobs (Weisman et al, 2022). Job crafting is a rather unorthodox concept that challenges our traditional view of human resource and our knowledge regarding job design. Job crafting in an academic setting can be characterized by the active redesign of roles by employees to better align with their abilities and personal preferences. Job crafting can play a functional role in enhancing job satisfaction, well-being, and productivity, and is reinforced by a supportive learning environment and effective leadership (Melhem & Yakoub, 2023). With this being said, universities, as institutions which hold pivotal roles in development, play a fundamental role in advancing the scientific and social growth of communities by relying on faculty members as key human resources (Mehmood & Noureen, 2024). Recent studies also indicate that the human capital of faculty members is closely related to different aspects of their jobs, and its development is crucial for the success of universities.

Emphasizing on compensation, especially when it comes to non-financial aspects, plays a key role in maintaining and enhancing human capital.

Therefore, designing a job crafting model can help with improving faculty performance, enhancing the quality of higher education, as well as promoting sustainable development. For instance, a study by (Melhem & Yakoub, 2023) examined the antecedent and consequences of job changes in an academic setting and revealed that supportive learning environments coupled up with learning-enhancing leadership have a positive impact on job crafting, which as a result leads to faculty job satisfaction. Despite numerous international studies, comprehensive research on designing a job crafting model for faculty members has yet to be conducted in Iran; this study aims to fill this gap by identifying the key elements of the model through a literature review. The findings of this study can help policy makers, universities and even faculty members to better leverage opportunities to enhance job crafting. Based on this, the present research seeks to answer the question: What does the job crafting model of university faculty members in Iran look like?

Theoretical Framework

Job Crafting Among University Faculty Members

Higher education institutions, because of their focus on delivering high quality services, are heavily interested in maintaining their faculty members' commitment to help enhance performance and promote progress (Oppong & Oduro-Asabere, 2025; McNaughtan et al., 2022). This tendency is particularly supported by the notion that faculty members tend to show greater loyalty to their field of study and profession rather than to the institution in which they serve (Lawrence et al, 2012). Job crafting in university professors leads to increased work engagement as well as performance. Using role expansion strategies as well as social communication strategies enhances faculty members' commitment and social service behavior (Ortega-Egea et al, 2024). Faculty members can participate in their job redesign by utilizing task strategies, relational strategies, and cognitive strategies, and due to the professional nature of their work, they usually possess high levels of job autonomy (Grant et al, 2017). Job crafting can also have positive effects on work engagement and help better facilitate participative behaviors and work interaction through increased autonomy and task independence (Baka & Prusik, 2025). The findings also emphasize the significance of job

crafting as an effective strategy for enhancing job satisfaction as well as well-being among university faculty members. Through the active modification of tasks and roles, supported by a conducive learning environment and effective leadership, this process also contributes to increased productivity. This process can also increase productivity through actively altering tasks and roles and the support by a conducive learning environment and effective leadership (Melhem & Al-Yakoub, 2023).

A study by (Ortega-Egea et al, 2024) examines how utilizing approach and avoidance strategies in faculty members' job crafting can have results on humanitarian behaviours. Results indicate that approach strategies enhance humanitarian behavior, while avoidance strategies have a negative impact on humanitarian behaviour. Furthermore, job commitment plays a critical mediating role, which can help better highlight the importance of supporting faculty members to strengthen their commitment and service-oriented behavior.

Methodology

This study is qualitative and is also based on the grounded theory approach, which is designed to develop native (domestic) theories from field data. Furthermore, the data were collected through 17 semi-structured interviews with faculty members at Persian Gulf University. For the sampling, the purposive and snowball methods were utilized, and data analysis was performed through open, axial, and selective coding based on Strauss and Corbin's method, with the MaxQDA 2020 software. To help ensure the study's validity and reliability, independent coding by two researchers as well as text reviews, and careful supervision of the analysis process was performed.

Research Findings

The present study utilized the grounded theory method, and was performed in four stages: At first, the data were collected through a set of semi-structured interviews which were executed with 17 faculty members at Persian Gulf University. Then, through open, axial, and selective coding, 880 initial concepts were categorized into 58 subcategories and ultimately into 5 main categories. These five main categories include career growth, innovation, culture, and performance improvement. In the following stages, the relationships between units were thoroughly analyzed and a theoretical framework was then developed. Furthermore, the demographic characteristics of the sample were examined to provide a comprehensive framework for faculty job crafting.

Conclusion

The present study was completed in order to create a job crafting model for faculty members. The findings, presented in this study is in line with several other studies, namely (Almasradi et al., 2022; Laguía et al., 2024; Ortega-Egea et al., 2024) (Melhem & Yakoub, 2023) and (Mukherjee & Dhar, 2022) (Grant et al, 2017; Melhem, 2019) (Rózsa et al, 2023; Mülder et al, 2022; Almasradi et al, 2022)). Job crafting can be viewed as an innovative approach to redefining professional roles and responsibilities. By utilizing individual capabilities and creativity, job crafting plays a critical role in improving the quality of educational and research performance of faculty members. Unlike traditional job designing models, through fostering self-management, self-motivation, and active interaction with the organizational environment, job crafting enables creative job redesigning. Furthermore, this study also indicates that job crafting is influenced by predecessors such as individual characteristics, motivations, professional capabilities, social culture and values, and lastly organizational environment. Additionally; this study also indicated that job crafting faces challenges such as psychological, structural, financial, and cultural ones. Moreover, Contextual factors such as organizational structure, culture, management, training, resources, and technology play a key role in advancing or hindering this process. Various strategies such as structural changes,



training, teamwork, motivation, and resource support can have positive effects on developing job crafting. This process can have several positive outcomes, such as career growth, improved service quality, personal and organizational development, satisfaction and motivation between faculty members, mental health and scientific progress. Faculty members play a pivotal role in scientific progress and improving educational quality as the foundations of the academic system and in order to attain sustainable development, it is necessary to provide practical solutions to improve their performance. The present study offers several suggestions such as developing educational programs, creating supportive environments, providing financial resources, continuous evaluation, encouraging innovation, and strengthening connections with industry in order to improve academic quality. Moreover, this study also names factors such as interdisciplinary collaborations and connections with the labor market to help facilitate innovation and the adaptation of education. Despite setbacks such as a small sample group and geographic focus, this study stressed the fact that career creativity is essential for improving educational quality, job satisfaction, and sustainable development of both universities and society. Lastly, this study suggests for future studies to be conducted, especially in the field of new technologies.