



Effects of age on job crafting

Exploring motivations and behaviors of older and younger employees

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The key concept

Job crafting: involves proactive, bottom-up ways in which employees alter the task, cognitive, and relational boundaries of their jobs.

Wrzesniewski & Dutton (AMR, 2001)

Why engaging in job crafting?

To avoid this....



Job crafting behaviors

Task crafting: entails changing the number, scope or type of job tasks done at work.

Relational crafting: entails changing either the quality or amount of interaction with others at work.

Cognitive crafting: involves any cognitive change about jobs

Wrzesniewski & Dutton (AMR, 2001)

Job crafting motivations

The need for *personal control*

The desire to create and sustain *a positive self-image, in one's own eyes or in the eyes of others*

The need for *human connection*

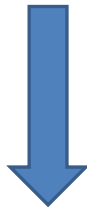
Wrzesniewski & Dutton (AMR, 2001)

Theory

Life span development theory (Freund 2006)



Different job crafting motivations?



Different job crafting behaviors?

Theory

Age and Task crafting:

- Older employees have been found to have a more routinized work style than their younger peers (Maurer, 2001).
- Younger employees have gained their experience in a work environment where flexibility is the norm (Yeatts & Hyten, 1998 in Yeatts et al (2000)).

Theory

Task crafting:

We assume that older employees are less motivated (than younger employees) to craft their tasks.

Theory

Age and Relational crafting:

- Relational demography theory: The effect of perceived relative age is especially salient for older employees (Cleveland and Shore, 1992).
- Carstensen's et al (2000) socio-emotional selectivity life span theory, younger employees are motivated to form new contacts, while older employees are motivated to deepen their existing relationships (De Lange et al 2009)

Theory

Relational crafting:

We assume that older employees are likely to be more motivated to improve the quality of their relationships and increase the amount of interactions with their fellow peers.

We assume that younger employees are likely to be more motivated to increase their amount of interactions by forming new relationships.

Theory

Age and Cognitive crafting:

Compared to older employees younger employees are described in literature as individuals who continuously want to learn (Lang & Carstensen, 2002) and acquire new information (de Lange et al, 2009).

Theory

Cognitive crafting:

We expect that younger employees are likely to be more motivated to engage in cognitive crafting than older employees

Method

- A socially responsible non-profit organization in the Netherlands providing care and assistance for homeless citizens
- 15 older employees: >45
- 15 younger employees: <44
- Semi-structured interviews
- Data analysis steps:
 - Identifying job-crafting motivations and behaviors in both groups
 - Comparing and identifying differences

Findings

- Employees engaged the most in *task crafting* (old and young)
- Employees engaged mainly in job crafting to *assert a control* over their jobs (old and young)
- Second motivation: a positive self-image in one's own eyes (old) and in the eyes of others (younger)
- Differences:
 - Younger employees engage more in all behaviors
 - Younger employees can have two motivations for one behavior

Findings

Illustrations of task crafting

I heard that we will expand soon. Hopefully I will then get a leading role in the mailroom. I mean, I know that I am old and I think my younger colleagues have a bigger chance in getting that position. But I have gained relevant experience in my life to have such a responsibility. You know even if I am old I still would like to develop myself and get a higher position. Besides that I feel that I can do a lot more than what I am doing now (Positive self-image) (receptionist, older employee)

Findings

Illustrations of relational crafting

- *When I just started working here, I talked a lot with one specific colleague. But he started to have feelings for me and he wanted obviously more. So I decided to talk less often to him. I don't want such a relationship at work, because I think that this will negatively influence our work collaboration (personal control) (personal assistant, younger employee)*

Findings

Illustrations of cognitive crafting

Before I started working here, I was told that I would do administrative tasks as well. I was happy to hear this, because it meant that I could do more than just answering phone calls. But in practice this turned out not to be true, which I find very disappointing. Unfortunately, my work is now too boring for me (positive self-image) (receptionist, older employee)

Discussion

- Younger employees act upon all three types of job-crafting
- Older employees (*lower job positions*) want to craft their jobs feeling that they have the expertise and ability to do more work. **But don't actually do it!**
- Cognitive crafting arises from experience which shapes personal needs
- All three forms of job crafting occur in conjunction with one another

Dilemma!

Individual Creativity and Team Spirit; when working together in teams:

- Younger employees seem to be more creative and generate new ideas
- Older employees prefer to keep things as they are.
- **However, a unity of purpose and shared solutions must be achieved! How to solve this dilemma?**

Why do we need a servant leader?

It seems that older employees (lower job positions) want to craft jobs, but they lack confidence and are afraid to do so:

- Which characteristics of a servant leader would help in this situation?
- Why?

Why do we need a servant leader?

It seems that older employees are not motivated to develop new relationships (relational crafting), they can get isolated from the group or team:

- Which characteristics of a servant leader would help in this situation?
- Why?

10 characteristics of a servant leader



Greenleaf (1970)

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Thank you for your attention and input!



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