

# Job Crafting: A Review of Theoretical Integration and Application Extension

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**Abstract:** Likely reflecting its value in today's dynamic environment, the amount of research on job crafting is burgeoning. There are two dominant perspectives of job crafting—the original theory from north american school of job crafting research and the job demands resources perspective from european school of job crafting research. We argue that job crafting can also be understood from a new perspective, i.e. rationality and emotion. Reviewing literature on job crafting, especially on its theoretical integration and application extension, we conclude that the researches have been expanded to integrate new theoretical frameworks and better understand practical application, i.e., the literature has incorporated new theories like individual strengths theory, regulatory focus theory, and emotional theory into job crafting research. It has also developed practical strategies for dealing with dirty work, aging employees, workers with an unanswered calling. And as a contribution, we provide a new taxonomy of job crafting: rational and emotional perspectives. Future studies should focus on the mechanisms of job crafting in practice, relationship between leadership, role-shifting and job crafting, and the construction of positive identities based on job crafting. At last, limitations of this review are presented, including interrelation of emotional and rational job crafting, association of emotional and rational type with other kinds of job crafting, such approach-avoidance or quantitative-qualitative perspectives.

**Keywords:** Job Crafting, Theoretical Integration, Application Extension, Rational Job Crafting, Emotional Job Crafting

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## 1. Introduction

In the early 21st century, the psychology and behavioral fields produced a current of "positive thought," including the strengths movement [1], the positive psychology movement [2] and the positive organizational scholarship [3]. Affected by such ideas, managers began to seek active individuals in the workplace, and the concept of job crafting was put forward accordingly. This term refers to employees actively redesigning their work from the bottom-up to improve job satisfaction and the meaning of their work. Since Wrzesniewski, Dutton, and their teams proposed the concept in 2001 [4], job crafting has received increasing attention of scholars from all over the world, also it has shown good prospects: theoretical integration and practical application extension [5, 6]. A few studies have made a detailed review of

the concepts, measurements, antecedents, and outcomes of job crafting [5, 7-9], and these play an indispensable role in future studies. Studies on job crafting in recent years not only have grown in scope, but also extended to the value of application in other fields, including job crafting interventions [10], theoretical integration [11, 12], and practical applications in special groups [13]. The constant growth of this theory has ultimately been applied in practice to the benefit of society. Therefore, the importance of these studies on the applications of job crafting is self-evident, especially for employees and organizations. As far as we are concerned, no scholar has summarized the literature on theoretical integration and practical application extension of job crafting, so it is necessary to classify concerning research systematically. The purpose of the paper is to review and integrate the two main streams of job crafting and extend its application into new areas both theoretically and practically. It will progress as

follows: firstly, we briefly outline the concept of job crafting; then, we describe its theoretical integration and practical application expansion. Finally, future research is present.

## 2. Job Crafting

Since the emergence of job crafting, the literature on the

concept has continued to deepen and expand. However, there are two mainstreams of literature on job crafting from North American school and European school (see Table 1). And according to the motives of job crafting, we think they also fall into two categories: rationality-driven job crafting (rational job crafting) and emotion-driven job crafting (emotional job crafting).

**Table 1.** Comparisons of different studies on job crafting (Wrzesniewski and Dutton 2001; Tims and Bakker 2010).

Researchers	Purpose/motivation	Strategy	The way of job crafting
North American school	Autonomously control the working limits;	Change the boundaries of the mission;	Task crafting
	Build a positive self-image;	Change cognitive boundaries;	Cognitive crafting
European school	Establish relationships with others.	Change the boundaries of the relationship.	Relational crafting
	Work resource supply matches demand;		Increasing structural job resources
	Work ability matches the position.		Increasing social job resources
			Seeking challenging job demands
			Decreasing hindering job demands

### 2.1. North American School of Job Crafting Research

Wrzesniewski and Dutton's team, the representative researchers of job crafting from north America, originally proposed job crafting as proactive actions that employees take to redefine a task or relational boundaries in order to align their interests, motivation, and passions with their work [4]. In addition, they argued that job crafting can be implemented in three ways. (1) Task crafting: employees actively change the task boundary, either increasing or decreasing the amount of a task to be performed or expanding or diminishing the scope of the task. (2) Cognitive crafting: employees change their personal perceptions or value judgments of work. (3) Relational crafting: employees change the relational boundary or the scope of their social circle. On the basis of Wrzesniewski's work, other researchers like Leana et al. [14] proposed collaborative job crafting—team members change the tasks or methods through cooperation, communication, and experience sharing. Although it departs from Wrzesniewski and Dutton's [4] view that job crafting is a personal behavior, Leana et al. [14] believed that collaborative job crafting is also a kind of job crafting and that it can achieve positive results in improving work quality and job performance. It is worth noting that scholars in North America School of job crating were also cognizant of relationships at work, regardless of whether they were the result of individual initiative or an act of cooperation.

### 2.2. European School of Job Crafting Research

Tims and Bakker [15], two Dutch scholars, combined job crafting with the job demand-resources (JD-R) model to redefine job crafting as employees making "behavioral changes in order to match their abilities with job demands and job resources"[16-18]. They argued that there are four types of job crafting. (1) Increasing structural job resources (e.g., resource variety and development opportunities). (2) Increasing social job resources (e.g., social and organizational support or feedback from leaders and

colleagues). (3) Seeking challenging job demands. This means when employees feel they have sufficient resources and are not satisfied with the current situation, they actively increase work tasks or seek new opportunities. (4) Decreasing hindering job demands, referring to reduce tasks to avoid some adverse impacts. Thus Tims and Bakker inspired a new theoretical model and formed the basic framework for job crafting in the European literature. In general, no matter how job crafting is defined, it's a proactive behavior in which employees change the content and methods of work from the bottom-up to meet the needs of individuals or groups, and to obtain meaning from their work.

### 2.3. Rational and Emotional Job Crafting

By comparing the two main streams of job crafting present by North American school and European school, we concluded that Tims and Bakker [19] looked job crafting as regulation of work demand and resources, emphasizing its rational factor, whereas Wrzesniewski & Dutton [4] explained job crafting in a motivational way, emphasizing its intrinsic benefits. On the basis of above research, new forms of job crafting keep bringing out by academia, for example, Ko [20] asserted job crafting included environmental crafting and resource crafting besides task, relational and cognition crafting. Philipp Wolfgang Lichtenthaler [21] extended the job demands-resources job crafting model with reasoning from regulatory focus theory and differentiated promotion-focused job crafting (i.e., job crafting through increasing job resources and challenging job demands) from prevention-focused job crafting (i.e., job crafting through decreasing hindering job demands). In addition, based on the European School's perspective and its adaption to the context of traditional Chinese culture, Hu et al. [22] proposed a localized moderation-based job crafting. They re-defined the nature of work design both individually and collectively. In order to have a holistic understanding of extant researches on job crafting, Zhang et al. [5] reviewed concerned studies to date, delineated job crafting's antecedents and outcomes, recognized job characteristics, individual differences,

motivational characteristics and social context as antecedents of job crafting, and individual attitudes, behaviors, wellbeing as outcomes. Particularly, Wrzesniewski and Dutton [23] not only describe three individual needs that give rise to job crafting motivation: (a) need for control over job and work meaning, (b) need for positive self-image, and (c) need for human connections, but also think job crafting can change the design and social environment of the job, and consequently change work meaning and work identity. Through further investigation, we argued that most researches on job crafting, either antecedents or types, are its rational factors, ignoring intentionally or unintentionally emotional factors involved in job crafting domain. But in practical context, job crafting driven by emotion is ubiquity. Take unanswered calling as an example, those who could not pursue their calling, either because of career compromise, forced disruption (work injury) and identity transition are feeling regret and more likely to craft their job to merely meet such emotional needs. Also, Qi [24] examined emotional attachment in terms of organizational embeddedness and affective commitment as a factor inducing job crafting. The results indicated that organizational embeddedness and affective commitment were both positively related to job crafting. Schwartz [25] recalled his internship at summer vocation, in one job, “feeling like I was a key part of a worthwhile enterprise was enough to make look forward to going to work, and to doing good work myself”. In another job as a research assistant, he described “this, although, was not part of my job, but doing it eagerly made my official job much more meaningful to me”. Indeed, researches from Javaida et al. and Palm et al. [26, 27] showed emotional demand were significantly associated with both psychological and physiological health. So, we argue job crafting behaviors are not only driven by rationality such as person-job fit, efficiency, external goal, decrease of work demands which we call rationality driven job crafting or rational job crafting (RJC), but also by emotions such as pursuit of calling, decrease of regret, which we call emotion driven job crafting, or emotional job crafting (EJC). Clarifying EJC from RJC is both important and practical. For example, EJC is pervasive in old workers as well as in other groups. As older people perceive their future time as more limited than younger people, they are likely to give higher priority to emotionally meaningful social interactions and goals, such as generativity and emotional intimacy [28], and to focus on positive experiences which makes them better at regulating their emotions [29]. Even in the origin conception of job crafting, Wrzesniewski & Dutton [4] underscored the implication for emotional use in terms of positive sense of meaning and identity regarding each form of job crafting. For task crafting, they use as an example of teacher who spends time learning new classroom technology to fulfill his passion for IT. In another example, Diane was a lifelong fan of mystery and crime novels, it was the detective nature of audit work that drew her to the field even when she was an undergraduate [30]. In all, little theory or research has directly examined job crafting as an emotional mechanism

for employees to cultivate a positive sense of meaning and identity of work. Yet, these emotional factors may be at the center of why some employees job craft and how job crafting can benefit them over time.

### 3. Theoretical Integration of Job Crafting

In order to further explore and expand mechanisms and application of job crafting, scholars have gradually integrated other theories into the domain of job crafting. At present, these theories included individual strengths theory, regulatory focus theory, social learning theory, and emotional theory.

#### 3.1. Job Crafting and Individual Strengths Theory

Individual strengths are a series of personal [31] or essential [32] characteristics that allow an individual to perform better. They mainly stem from the character strengths of positive psychology [33] and the talent of strengths movement [34]. Individual strengths enable individuals to be energetic, grow and achieve optimal objectives. Ideas and theory of individual strengths have been gradually applied to education [35], business management [36], health care [37], and other fields. But researchers found that the proper utilization of individual strengths requires a particular situation [38]. If an environment is inharmonious or intolerant of failures, these strengths can be seen as efforts at individual self-advancement, which will invite jealousy, noncooperation, or even hindrance. Based on this logic, managers need to create a friendly working environment through the crafting of tasks, relationships, and cognition. In this environment, using strengths brings benefits and incentives to other workers and the organization, rather than provoking threats and disparagements [39]. Employees craft their job on the basis of individual strengths, which makes it easier to achieve person-job fit between job performance and job engagement [40]. This effect is durable, and the impact is deeper than when strengths-based job crafting is lacking [41, 42]. It is clear that job crafting and individual strengths are interactive, so the integration of the two theories should contribute to better results. That is why scholars around the world are so interested in this topic [11, 12], and accordingly positive psychology and positive organizational behavior have merged.

Haidt proposed combining these two theories as early as 2012 [43]. He claimed that individuals could get more satisfaction from their job and their attitude would become more positive when the use of individual strengths and crafting job were more consistent. Berg, Dutton, and Wrzesniewski [23] argued employees crafting their jobs based on individual strengths, interests, and motivation improved meaning and identities at work. Later, Kooij et al. [11] confirmed such statement and extended the concept of job crafting to job crafting toward strengths and interests which refer to employees redesigning the work in accordance with strengths and interests respectively. Simultaneously,

they also proved that job crafting interventions toward strengths and interests can help improve person-job fit, especially for older employees with more confidence and motivation. Kooij *et al.* [11] also suggested that job crafting toward strengths and interests can be an effective tool to improve the adaptability of older employees. In the same year, Tian and Liu [12] came up with the concept of strengths-based job crafting (SJC)—an active and pro-social behavior in which employees use their strengths to craft their jobs. They pointed out that SJC, by dedicating oneself to others, organizations, and society more broadly, helped individuals find their true-self, reach a harmony between humanity and the environment, obtain their best state, and be their best-selves [44]. They also demonstrated the positive impact of SJC on individual career success, career calling, organizational performance, and organizational changes. In short, SJC allows individuals to benefit more people by recognizing themselves more clearly, redesigning their work along individual strengths and interests.

### 3.2. Job Crafting and Regulatory Focus Theory

Although job crafting brings lots of positive outcomes for individuals and organizations, it is accompanied by various obstacles and challenges [45, 4]. Many conservative employees prefer not to craft their jobs [46]. Also, job crafting is impacted by individual attitudes and motivations related to frustration and hindrance [47]. As a result, researchers began to incorporate the regulatory focus theory into job crafting theory to explain such phenomenon. The regulatory focus theory was proposed by Higgins [48] which stated that people, when engaged in self-regulation, would adopt different strategies even facing same situation. For example, when engaged in hedonism, some people choose to pursue happiness, while others avoid pain. Higgins also distinguished two motivational styles: promotion-focused versus prevention-focused motivation. Promotion-focused individuals, who strive for achievement and self-fulfillment, aim to maximize positive outcomes, while prevention-focused individuals strive for safety and security. They focus on responsibilities and obligations, aiming to minimize negative outcomes. In general, the difference is that promotion-focused individuals adopt self-enhancement while prevention-focused individuals adopt avoidance for self-protection.

Studies have shown that individuals with different motivations engage in different job crafting behaviors [49–52]. For example, Petrou, Demerouti, and Schaufeli [53] found that when dealing with organizational changes, promotion-focused employees prefer resource job crafting (e.g., seeking resources) or learning skills through communication. But prevention-focused employees are less communicative and often decrease uncertainty and avoid failure by reducing task requirements. Brenninkmeijer and Hekkert-Koning [50] asserted that compared to prevention-focused individuals, promotion-focused individuals had a stronger desire to take actions and were more likely to gain a sense of accomplishment by assuming new work responsibilities. In other words, their intention to craft their

job is stronger. Actually, The above scholars have discussed the relationship between job crafting theory and regulatory focus theory. More obviously, Lichtenthaler and Fischbach [54] combined the regulatory focus theory with job crafting for the complete integration of the two theories for the first time. This resulted in two types of job crafting: promotion-focused job crafting and prevention-focused job crafting. Promotion-focused job crafting means that employees craft their jobs primarily by increasing job resources and seeking challenging work demands. Prevention-focused job crafting refers to job crafting that decreases job demands. Their research showed that individuals with promotion-focused job crafting behaviors are more likely to experience positive emotions at work, accompanied by better physical health and work outcomes. Whereas prevention-focused job crafting was often connected with negative emotions (e.g., depression or low excitement) and career disappointment. The contributions of such integration are: (1) to improve and expand the previous JD-R model for studying the mechanisms between job crafting and employees' motivation or outcome more closely; (2) to analyze the reasons for the negative effects of job crafting when job context remains stable. Of course, this could be due to differences in the job context, i.e. differences between the workplaces where prevention-focused and promotion-focused job crafting are more likely. However, the integration of job crafting and regulatory focus theory could help organizations implement differentiated management systems to accommodate employees with different motivations—managers should stop the prevention-focused individuals from crafting their jobs, and encourage promotion-focused individuals to craft their jobs so that they have the necessary job resources [54], or an appropriately challenging work environment [49].

### 3.3. Job Crafting and Emotion Theory

Efficiency and humanity are two kinds of logic in the field of management [61]. The former is represented by calculation and the latter by emotion in organizations and management logic. Calculation is rational thinking for accomplishing goals or pursuing profits, while emotion refers to the perceptual thinking that individuals' behaviors are affected by their emotions, which is part of the hypothesis of social man. As Crozier [62] put it, an individual in the organization not only has two hands but also a heart, which is to say, in addition to efficiency, there are emotions in the organization. Then, as a proactive behavior, can job crafting be divided into two aspects: calculation-based job crafting and emotion-based job crafting? Although job crafting based on calculation for efficiency is the foundation of survival and development of individuals and businesses, the emotional needs and the realization of values are equally essential. At present, the variables included in job crafting are mostly internal demands and external influences, such as sense of control [4], efficiency [17], person-job fit [15] and organizational support [63]. In other words, job crafting is mostly based on calculation, but how about job crafting based on emotion?

Emotion is a way of connecting individual self-consciousness with a work system [64], and is the impetus for self-control [65, 66]. That is to say, emotion is at the core of how an individual interprets and fulfills their role in the organizational system's order [67]. Voronov and Weber [65] suggested that emotion can be assessed by two criteria: naturalness and authenticity. Natural emotions, which are external and are consistent with professional roles, focus on rational calculations, while authenticity, which is voluntary and non-professional, is the integration of self-awareness and organizational role, and can benefit organizations or individuals. So, it is necessary to integrate emotional theory into job crafting and to divide job crafting into two types, rationality-driven job crafting and emotion-driven job crafting. That is why we come up with the two concepts earlier. First, it helps us to explore the roots of job crafting and the motivation of employees' job crafting behaviors deeply and even further expand the concept of job crafting. Second, studies have found that individuals can internalize institutions through emotional transformation [68], and emotions are part of the institutional process [65]. The internalization of institutions is a process in which the institutions are continuously and voluntarily recognized by employees. This process is accompanied by job crafting behaviors that employees learn constantly. They reshape themselves to achieve the integration of self-awareness [16, 18]. Last and DiMaggio [69] pointed out that an individual's motivation may not only stem only from interests, but also from the satisfaction of certain emotional needs [70]. The introduction of emotional theory into job crafting may help analyze the individual's inner emotional need to engage in job crafting.

In summary, the integration of job crafting with other theories not only contributes to their development, but also brings more benefits to employees and organizations as well.

## 4. Application Extension of Job Crafting

Theoretically, a lot of researches revealed that job crafting can produce positive effects on both individuals and organizations. So, scholars in this field have gradually shifted their attention to practical applications through job crafting interventions in specific groups and situations, which means job crafting can be used as a coping strategy for dirty work, aging, unanswered calling, etc.

### 4.1. Job Crafting and "Dirty" Work

Since the theory of job crafting was developed, there have been many studies on its impact. However, studies of job crafting among particular groups are currently attracting much attention. One of these groups have been labeled "dirty" work practitioners, because the work they are doing is regarded by the public as "dirty work." In detail, these occupation and work tasks are disgusting, but socially necessary, and in the eyes of the public, they are immoral (morally dirty), low-status, undignified (socially dirty), unsanitary or dangerous (physically dirty). These include

catering services, housekeeping, etc. [71]. Several studies revealed that "dirty" work has lots of negative impacts on incumbents, such as negative self-perception, sense of helplessness and shame [72], and negative organizational identity [73]. These can lead to difficulties in constructing positive identities and social recognition [74]. However, many researchers found that although presence of stigma of "dirty" work, the workers generally shape meaningful professional ideologies [75] and seek to construct a positive self-narrative about the meaning of work [76]. These induced positive effects, such as professional pride and professional identity [77]. In other words, if "dirty" workers can reshape job perceptions, value judgments, and work relationships, they still can find the meaning of work and re-establish their social identity and happiness. Wrzesniewski, Dutton, and Debebe [78] conducted an experiment with hospital cleaners in England and found that the cleaners have the motivation to help patients and visitors beyond their working scope because they craft work perceptions and task boundaries by perceiving themselves as part of the medical staff. And it is worth noting that these crafting behaviors make the work more enjoyable and facilitate job satisfaction and meaning. Fuller and Unwin [13] conducted a detailed study, in which they focused on "dirty" workers who are low-grade, low-paid, and low-skilled porters responsible for moving medical equipment, specimens, and patients. They found that porters often cared for the patients, responded positively to the patient's cleaning requirements, and communicated amicably with the patients. Some porters even played music or told jokes to help patients improve their mental health. These behaviors can be considered as job crafting. Specifically, porters used their professional knowledge and practical experience to craft their jobs to achieve professional and personal value, while making a great contribution to nursing work. So Fuller and Unwin [13] called on the hospital managers to realize the benefits of job crafting behaviors from the porters by recognizing their value and enhancing their status and wages. In general, "dirty" work practitioners are indispensable and can play an important role in society through job crafting.

### 4.2. Job Crafting and Aging Employees

In recent years, Due to continuously low or falling fertility rates, as well as increasing life expectancy and retirement ages, populations and workforces are aging worldwide. And it has posed a great threat for organizations and older workers as well [79]. On the one hand, older employees are often regarded as stubborn, with poor performance and poor learning ability. Therefore, organizations give them fewer job opportunities and "force" them to work within their responsibilities, which limits their job resources [80]. On the other hand, aging employees are facing certain person-job misfits, including the reduction of task engagement caused by boring long-term work and disconnects between older employees' health conditions and their job requirements [81]. Studies have shown that older employees can improve the person-job fit by job crafting to maintain motivation and

ability to work, which is an effective strategy to help employees age successfully at work [11, 82]. For example, some employees may fail to balance job demands with their ability, but job crafting can adjust the imbalance and increase person-job fit [62], especially in older employees [83]. Meanwhile, in the human life cycle, aging people come to understand their strengths and weaknesses better than young people, and they know better how to adjust their expectations to their abilities [84], which means it is maturity that makes older employees more autonomous, self-controlled, and responsible [85]. Therefore, it can be said that they are more capable of crafting their jobs based on their strengths and interests [11]. Moghimi *et al.* [80] mentioned that although older employees are mostly less interested in learning new skills and new tasks than younger employees, they are more proficient in existing tasks and often have a friendly relationship with colleagues. Therefore, older employees can craft their jobs based on these strengths. Furthermore, researches indicate that job crafting better improves person-job fit for older employees than younger employees [11]. Another function of job crafting is to promote aging employees successfully, and the key is to have certain adaptability and personalized job design [81]. Firstly, job crafting can help older employees adjust to age-related changes in individual resources by adapting job demands [86]. Secondly, it can increase job performance and improve work motivation [87]. Lastly, the bottom-up characteristics of job crafting help older employees to redesign their jobs based on their work experiences, abilities, attitudes, and preferences [88]. For accommodative crafting, older employees can hire the assistants or avoid jobs that require high memory capacity, high-tech, sales, and services [89]. However, the key to each of these types of job crafting is that organizations provide a good environment for older employees and guide them to actively craft their jobs [11], especially to engage in promotion-focused job crafting [87].

#### 4.3. Job Crafting and Unanswered Calling

There are employees in organizations, who, for various reasons, can't engage in the careers (or work) that they would really like. This is called unanswered calling (UAC) [45]. In

this case, an individual's current work is inconsistent with their values, interests, inner desires, and self-identifications. Studies have shown that the failure to respond to an inner calling can result in a series of negative consequences, such as professional career regrets [90], loss of life happiness [45], and weakening of organizational identity. These would directly affect work behavior and job performance of employees [91]. Faced with such phenomenon, how should individuals and organizations respond? Job crafting may be an effective strategy. Because job crafting essentially means that employees can redesign their jobs according to their interests, hobbies, and inner callings, it allows them to perceive the meaning of work and their own subjective well-being [91]. This can substitute for the professional regrets and negative consequences that UAC inflicts on individuals. Tian *et al.* [92] argued that individuals can eliminate the negative effects of UAC through job crafting, including task crafting (focusing on and completing UAC-related tasks) and cognitive crafting (establishing a cognitive connection between work and UAC). These behaviors, they argue, can make their current job closer to the nature of their calling. So, organizations can help employees cope with UAC through job crafting interventions. Job crafting interventions involve interveners who direct employees to redesign their work to a certain extent in order to make the employees' behaviors consistent with their strengths, motivation, and organizational goals to improve individuals and organizations' performance [12, 41]. Job crafting intervention embodies the practical value of job crafting and the concept has been popular in recent years [12]. Researchers showed that job crafting intervention contributed to improving subjective wellbeing [93, 94] and job performance [10]. At present, intervention methods mainly include job crafting training, job crafting exercises, use of job demand and resource model, and personal development crafting intervention (see Table 2). Of the above, job crafting (intervention) should be an effective way to deal with UAC, and the organizations can intervene appropriately for employees with different intervention methods to help them respond to UAC correctly, thereby improving the performance of employees and organizations as well.

**Table 2.** The methods of job crafting intervention.

Intervention methods	Researchers	Intervention design
Job crafting training	Van Wingerden <i>et al.</i> 2016; Demerouti, Bakke 2014.	1. Communication/design of job crafting; 2. Implementation of job crafting; 3. Exchange of experiences; 4. Evaluation of effect.
Job crafting exercises	Berg <i>et al.</i> 2008.	1. Investigation of employees' work; 2. Depicting the plan for job crafting; 3. Forming a role framework; 4. Setting the goals and strategies of job crafting.
Job crafting intervention based on job demand and resource model	Van Den Heuvel <i>et al.</i> 2015; Demerouti <i>et al.</i> 2011.	1. Knowledge training for job crafting; 2. Setting the goals of job crafting; 3. Rethink job crafting profoundly.
Personal development crafting intervention	Schoberova 2015	1. Training of intervention targets; 2. Communication between the intervener and the employees; 3. Evaluation of effect.

In short, the value of job crafting has increasingly been extended to new functions [95]. In the future, it will hopefully be applied to more fields.

## 5. Future Directions

Much research has defined, theorized about, and

investigated job crafting. In this review, we synthesized some different types of crafting by expanding and integrating new theoretical frameworks and practical application of job crafting. But questions deserving scholar attention still exists in the literature. Here, we propose a road map for future research.

### **5.1. The Mechanisms of Job Crafting**

As mentioned above, job crafting is increasingly used in practice, and whether to deal with “dirty” work, organizational changes, or unanswered callings, most of the results are positive. However, few studies have explained how job crafting works—in other words, the mechanisms of job crafting are still unclear. But some scholars have conducted preliminary studies recently. For example, Rizwan, Humayon, Shahid [96] found that work engagement can serve as a mediator between job crafting and job creativity. Xin and Miao [97] proved that positive emotion and meaningful work play a multiple-mediate role in the relationship between job crafting and creative performance. Inclusive leadership, as well as perceived organizational support [98] and psychological empowerment [99] plays a moderating role. But compared to other aspects of job crafting research, such as antecedents and outcomes, there are too few studies in the areas of job crafting mechanisms. Moreover, it is unknown at present whether the effects of the process are short-term or long-term, which will inevitably have an adverse impact on the further study of job crafting and job crafting intervention experiments. Based on the above analysis, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth study of the mechanisms of job crafting.

### **5.2. Relationship Between Leadership and Job Crafting**

Although job crafting has a positive impact on employees and organizations, it can also have a negative impact on the crafters, their colleagues, or their organizations. For example, increasing work content or work challenges can lead to overload, stress, and burnout [91]. Job crafting without a precise understanding of organizational goals can lead to low performance for the whole organization [100]. Therefore, when directing employees to craft their jobs, organizations should ensure the effectiveness of job crafting as much as possible. More specifically, it is necessary to help employees actively craft their jobs and ensure that job crafting methods can satisfy employees needs and be beneficial (at least harmless) to others in the organizations. Demerouti and Bakker [101] have mentioned that job crafting combined with traditional top-down work design may be more efficient. In other words, employees can state their intentions to leaders, meanwhile leaders need to guide employees to craft their jobs in a direction that is consistent with organizational goals and provide employees with an atmosphere of support and trust. Leadership may play an important role in creating such an atmosphere. For example, transformational leadership can promote positive behavior among employees [102] and empowering leadership may effectively motivate

employees to craft their jobs [103]. So, future research can focus on the relationship between leadership and job crafting to promote job crafting effectively in practice.

### **5.3. Job Crafting and Role-Shifting**

With the instability of the labor market, there are many employees who voluntarily make changes to their roles in terms of job identity, work attitude, and work relationships. Studies have shown that job shifting can affect individuals' career successes. For example, Rigotti [104] showed that role shifting can improve job satisfaction; how often you shift your work roles can even predict your rewards and welfare afterwards [105]. In recent years, role shifting has attracted more and more scholarly attention [106]. This is in line with the essence of job crafting: employees actively change work relationships, perceptions, and tasks in order to make their interests, motivations, and passions fit their work. That means that job crafting is likely to be a useful tool for job shifting, because job crafting has a direct effect on job shifting and research has shown that job crafting has a positive impact on professional identity and regaining identity [77]. However, the relationship between job crafting and job shifting requires further study in the future.

### **5.4. The Construction of Positive Identities Based on Job Crafting**

Work identities are an important part of a complete life. As Butler [107] once said: “From age 21 to 70, we spend more time on working than sleeping, eating, and accompanying our family members.” So, it is crucial to construct positive identities that help individuals develop the ability to conquer setbacks and stress, to enter into new fields, and to live a happy and fun life [78]. Dutton, Roberts, and Bednar [108] proposed positive identities based on four perspectives (virtue, evaluative, developmental, and structural) and suggested that social resources (e.g., the quality and diversity of interpersonal relationships) can be used to construct positive identities, including changing perceptions of internal and external relationships. This will increase relationships with external members, augmenting self-recognized resources to cope with external threats and presenting self to establish close relationships with others. Both the relational crafting of the European scholarship or the increasingly social and structural resources of North America's JD-R model can be used to construct positive identities and help employees find meaningful work to regain their identities [13]. Based on the above, can we help employees construct their positive identities with job crafting behaviors? It can be achieved not only by crafting relationships and increasing resources, but also by crafting work tasks, cultivating cognition of work and value and increasing the demands for challenging work. Employees' positive identities are very meaningful to individuals and organizations, but there are only a few studies on how to construct them. So, this topic needs further study in the future and the job crafting theory may be a very good starting point.

## 6. Conclusion and Limitations

In recent years, there is a large increase of studies on job crafting, and several literature reviews exist, but this review provides a new perspective for job crafting: rationality and emotion perspective. Also, we conclude that research has been expanded to integrate new theoretical frameworks and better understand practical application, additionally, the literature has incorporated new theories like individual strengths theory, regulatory focus theory, social learning theory and emotional theory into job crafting research. It has also developed practical strategies for dealing with dirty work, aging employees, workers with an unanswered calling, and organizational restructuring.

Of course, this study has a few limitations. First, we divide job crafting into emotional and rational types, but how these two aspects of crafting interrelate remain unknown, and one area worth investigating further is the potential for dynamic interrelationships among different types of job crafting. It can be inferred from existing empirical findings that emotional crafting and rational crafting is positively related across persons, but perhaps at the intrapersonal level, there are dynamic associations. Second, there are several studies integrating role-resource with approach-avoidance, proactive-reactive motives with approach-avoidance job crafting [7], they enrich our knowledge on job crafting. This research lacks such association of emotional and rational type with different kinds of job crafting, such approach-avoidance or quantitative-qualitative perspectives. Third, there is also a methodological limit. We do not seek out all the research concerned job crafting, leading our paper to a possible conclusion bias, for example, emotional and rational job crafting may not be separated, they are only one kind type of job crafting.

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