Job Crafting Interventions: Do They Work and Why?

Evangelia Demerouti, Maria C. W. Peeters and Machteld van den Heuvel

Abstract The majority of job redesign initiatives follow a 'top-down' approach, in which management optimizes job demands and resources to obtain successful organizational outcomes. However, these approaches are not always effective. Little is known about the effectiveness of interventions, where employees proactively optimize their work environment in order to improve their well-being, motivation, and performance. One such job redesign strategy is job crafting. Job crafting is proactive behaviour that enables individuals to fit the job characteristics to their needs and preferences by seeking resources, seeking challenges and reducing demands. The first aim of this chapter is to describe the design of the job crafting intervention, which integrates a two-day crafting workshop intervention, followed by 3 or 4 weekly self-set crafting assignments and a reflection session. The second aim of this chapter is to present theoretical explanations regarding how the job crafting intervention leads to desired changes for both employees and organisations. We base our argumentation on social cognitive theory, experiential learning theory and situated experiential learning narratives. The final aim is to present an overview of the existing evidence regarding the effectiveness of the intervention. It is concluded that the job crafting intervention is a promising tool to help organisations to support and maintain employee well-being and (to a somewhat lesser extent) performance, even during times of organizational change. The chapter ends with several suggestions for future research and practice.

Keywords Job crafting intervention · Performance · Well-being

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1 Introduction

The vast majority of job redesign studies have followed a 'top-down' approach (e.g., introducing autonomous work groups or job enrichment interventions) in which management optimizes job demands and resources to obtain successful organisational outcomes (Briner & Reynolds, 1999; Nielsen, 2013). However, only 30% of 'top-down' job redesign interventions are effective in either improving health and well-being or performance, but not both (Balogun & Hope Hailey, 2004). As the complexity of contemporary jobs increases, job redesign interventions with more participatory approaches are required (Nielsen, Randall, Holten, & Rial-Gonzales, 2010). In addition, interventions where employees learn how to take initiative to shape their own job design and work contexts (Grant & Parker, 2009), are becoming increasingly important for organizational success and can form part of such participatory approaches. Organisational processes seem too complex to be captured by strict 'traditional' job redesign frameworks only (Briner & Reynolds, 1999), and more positive, proactive interventions 'that work' are needed in all work domains (Karanika-Murray, Biron, & Cooper, 2012; Meyers, van Woerkom, & Bakker, 2013).

By emphasising active collaboration between employees and management during change processes, participatory approaches have many benefits. They offer individuals more job control and take into account individuals' active adjustments to their work environment (Nielsen, 2013). Most importantly, they view workers themselves as 'the experts' of their jobs, since they know their own job best. Therefore, it is crucial that intervention design and implementation make use of that expert knowledge (Dollard, Le Blanc, & Cotton, 2008). However, Daniels, Gedikli, Watson, Semkina, and Vaughn (2017) concluded after a systematic review of intervention studies that "participatory approaches to improve job design have mixed effects on well-being, job design and performance, including adverse outcomes in some circumstances" (p. 1184). This happened despite the fact that the interventions used randomised control trials and large sample sizes. The authors state that process analysis could not uncover whether implementation issues were responsible for null or adverse effects.

In this chapter we focus on interventions that have the potential to be effective in various work contexts. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) provides a useful framework to explore how individuals can proactively 'fit' their work environment to their personal skills, needs, and abilities as it stresses the role of job demands and job resources (Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2012). In detail, the JD-R theory considers individuals as active agents in the ever-changing work context (Demerouti, 2014), who can be motivated to optimize their job demands (i.e., aspects of the job that require effort) and resources (i.e. aspects of the job that facilitate effective functioning) to achieve their work goals. Teaching employees how to adapt demands and resources can have a positive impact on their work-related well-being, motivation, and performance as they can face future job challenges with more control (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). One job redesign strategy that gives individuals more

control in changing their work environment is 'job crafting', because it enables individuals to shape the job to their own needs and preferences (Tims & Bakker, 2010). Because individuals adjust the task, relational, or cognitive boundaries of their work when they craft their job, the levels of work engagement and work meaning are also expected to increase (Demerouti, 2014; Tims & Bakker, 2010; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

The goals of this chapter are (1) to explain what is meant by job crafting as a tool for individual job redesign, (2) to describe an intervention aimed at stimulating job crafting behaviour, work-related well-being and employee work performance, from now on called ' the job crafting intervention' (3) to explain how the job crafting intervention leads to desired changes for both employees and organisations, (4) to present an overview of the existing evidence regarding the effectiveness of the intervention and (5) to conclude with several suggestions for future research.

2 Job Crafting as a Tool for Individual Job Redesign

Job crafting is defined as the changes individuals make in their task or relational boundaries, as well as cognitive changes in perceptions of their work, in order to find more meaning in their job (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Task-related changes refer to adaptations to the form, scope or number of job tasks, relational changes refer to adaptations to whom one interacts with or how, and cognitive changes refer to reframing how one perceives the job. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) define job crafting as daily behaviour rather than long-term changes. In order to capture the daily changes in job characteristics that employees may pursue, some scholars (Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli, & Hetland, 2012; Tims & Bakker, 2010) theoretically frame job crafting in the JD–R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). Job crafting is then conceptualized as the changes employees make in their job to balance their job demands and job resources with their personal abilities and needs (cf., Tims & Bakker, 2010). Job demands refer to aspects of the job that require effort and therefore are associated with psychophysiological costs, whereas job resources refer to aspects of the job that facilitate dealing with job demands, goal accomplishment, and growth (Demerouti et al., 2001).

Petrou et al. (2012) defined job crafting as proactive employee behaviour consisting of seeking resources, seeking challenges, and reducing demands. Specifically, *seeking resources* (e.g., performance feedback, advice from colleagues, support from managers, maximizing job autonomy) represents a strategy to deal with job demands and to achieve goals or to complete tasks. This is underpinned by Hobfoll's (2001) suggestion that a basic human motivation is directed towards the accumulation of resources, which are important for the protection of other valued resources. *Seeking challenges* may include behaviours such as seeking new tasks at work or asking for more responsibilities once assigned tasks have been finished. Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura (1989) argue that when individuals engage in activities offering opportunities for growth, they seek challenges to maintain motivation and avoid boredom.

While these *expansion-oriented* forms of job crafting are aimed at accumulating external and internal resources that enable employees to grow and find meaning (i.e., seeking resources, seeking challenges), *reduction-oriented* job crafting (Demerouti & Peeters, 2018) refers to behaviours that are targeted towards minimizing or optimizing the emotionally, mentally, or physically demanding aspects of one's job (i.e., reducing or optimizing demands). Reducing job demands might be a strategy to protect health from the negative impact of excessively high demands. Training people to craft their job may enhance feelings of self-efficacy and control, because the training integrates principles to build self-efficacy (i.e., role modelling, verbal persuasion and mastery experiences) and individuals are in charge of any changes that occur (Van den Heuvel, Demerouti, & Peeters, 2015). Next, we discuss the design and basic principles of our job crafting training.

3 Description of the Job Crafting Intervention

In 2015, Van den Heuvel, Demerouti and Peeters were among the first to develop and test a job crafting intervention. The intervention aims to increase employees' awareness regarding the ways in which they can adapt their job to their own needs in order to experience more joy, engagement, and meaning in their work. In line with the JD-R conceptualisation of job crafting, the adjustments refer to specific job demands and job and personal resources. Participants learn to identify and target job demands and resources that are unique to their work environment. The objective of the job crafting intervention is to increase participants' motivation and engagement via two different routes: (1) through promoting self-directed behaviour of employees and (2) through strengthening personal resources. Previous research showed that it is possible to facilitate self-directed behaviour through interventions (e.g., Demerouti, van Eeuwijk, Snelder, & Wild, 2011).

The job crafting intervention consists of a number of phases (see Fig. 1): (1) Conducting interviews with employees and other relevant stakeholders such as supervisors/ managers, to get a thorough understanding of the type of work and the context; (2) A job crafting workshop; (3) weekly job crafting 'experiments' in the everyday reality of employees' work setting, using a using a diary or logbook; and (4) a reflection session in which participants reflect on the entire job crafting process.

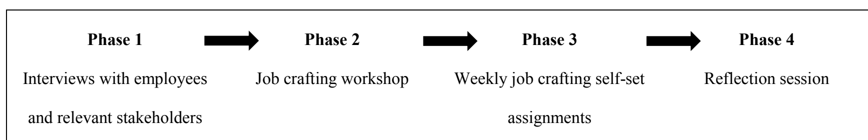

Fig. 1 Timeline of the job crafting intervention

Specifically, in the first phase, and in order to make sure the intervention covered the needs of employees, interviews are conducted with potential participants prior to the intervention. The interviews generally focus on the tasks of the employees that will potentially attend the training as well as the relevant demands (e.g., 'what are hindering aspects in your work contexts?'; 'what positive challenges do you perceive at work?') and resources (e.g., 'what helps you to achieve you work-related goals?'). Moreover, during the interviews, we generally discuss what good performance looks like in their role and what may hinder them from achieving this. Additionally, we explore examples of their past crafting behavior. During the training, this input is used to inspire and set examples and to customize the intervention.

The second phase of the intervention concerns the job crafting workshop consisting of a full-day or half-day session in small groups of employees (up to a maximum of 20). First, through various explanations and exercises the employees get to know the JD-R model. The exercises are designed to build awareness of employees' working environment according to the JD-R principles. A simple job analysis is conducted during which participants make an overview of their most important tasks and subtasks. Consequently, they focus on job demands and job resources that are relevant for their job. Next, the theory on job crafting is explained and participants are asked to identify a work characteristic (demand or resource) or work situation that they would like to change via crafting. They are asked to share these situations as a case study. These personal stories are then discussed in sub-groups to inspire and help each other to find ways of crafting the situation. This approach helps participants to learn from each other's ideas, which is useful for drawing up their crafting plan in a later stage of the training. The trainers walk around during the exercises assisting the participants. The last part of the workshop is dedicated to preparing a so-called 'Personal Crafting Plan' (PCP). Participants again focus on their own work environment and identify one or more work characteristics (demands or resources) or work situation that they would like to change using crafting. The PCP consists of specific crafting actions that the participants undertake for a period of three or four weeks depending on the study context (see Table 1 for some examples). Employees are asked to write down crafting goals for the weeks following the workshop in a small booklet (a diary) and to keep reports of their crafting activities of that week. The goals have to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely) and participants are encouraged to transfer their goals to their diaries during the training.

During the third phase, the intervention continues with weekly job crafting 'experiments' in the everyday reality of employees' work setting. In the job crafting intervention of Van den Heuvel et al. (2015), participants were asked to perform the self-set job crafting actions in the following order per week: increase job resources (i.e., search for feedback and for social support), decrease job demands (i.e., reduce physical or cognitive demands), seek job challenges (i.e., new tasks and responsibilities), and finally again increase job resources (i.e., search for autonomy, participation in decision making, and developmental possibilities). This was based on the idea that boosting the presence of resources may be easier than working on demands, and also it may help to generate the necessary energy to work on demands in the two 'middle'

Table 1 Examples of crafting strategies to be customized by participants

Seeking resources	Seeking challenges	Reducing demands
• Look for feedback • Look for support • Use your autonomy • Participation in works council • Look for learning opportunities • Decoration of workplace • Compliments folder in outlook • Invest in relationships	• Use your talent/interests (sports, language knowledge) • Coaching/mentoring • Strategical thinking • New projects	• Simplify tasks • Work more efficiently/plan/time management • Delegate tasks • Check e-mail twice a day • Make clear agreements • Look for quiet space

weeks. Indeed, in the process evaluation of this first intervention, it was observed that reducing demands is at times difficult for employees, since not all demands are within their span of control. Later intervention studies have sometimes chosen a different order for the PCP content, depending on the particular needs of the organizations involved. For instance, in the study of Gordon et al. (2018) participants were asked to first seek resources (week 1) then to seek challenges (week 2) and finally to reduce demands (week 3). In the study of Demerouti, Xanthopoulou, Petrou, and Karagkounis (2017) increasing demands (seeking challenges) was not included and the focus was more on resources. During the first week, participants worked on increasing job resources, during the second week they focused on reducing job demands, and during the third week the goal was again to increase resources. In this way, they started and ended with a simpler assignment, as during interviews it became clear that employees found it easier to seek resources than to reduce demands. However, based on the limited existing evidence, no conclusions can be drawn regarding which sequence of job crafting assignments may work best in a certain context.

In the last phase, the intervention concludes with a reflection session. During this half-day, participants discuss successes, problems, solutions, and next steps. In this way, employees learn from each other's experiences during the four weeks of experimenting with job crafting. Moreover, attention is given to how employees can overcome future, potential obstacles that hinder their job crafting attempts.

4 The Job Crafting Intervention Versus Workplace Interventions

Where does the job crafting intervention fit in theoretically when zooming out and focusing on the broader workplace interventions literature? Numerous interventions are available to increase motivation and well-being at work. Workplace interventions aimed at preventing stress at work or increasing motivation and well-being at

work can roughly be divided into three categories: (1) primary interventions; i.e., interventions aimed at actively eliminating or tackling the stressors at work (e.g., redesigning the workplace, changing time schedules, or changing tasks initiated by the supervisor), (2) secondary interventions; interventions that boost resilience by teaching employees how to deal with stressors at work (e.g., stress management training, relaxation techniques, cognitive strategies or coping-methods) and (3) tertiary interventions that focus on treatment of employees with serious stress-related health problems (Kompier & Cooper, 1999). Tertiary interventions are less relevant for the purpose of this chapter, as the current job crafting intervention is not developed for treating employees with (mental) health problems. A further distinction is that interventions can be focused on the individual or on the organization as a whole (cf. Semmer, 2006).

Job crafting as a proactive form of behaviour can express itself in both primary as well as secondary actions (Van den Heuvel et al., 2015). Job crafting behaviour tends to have a primary focus, in that employees proactively make changes to optimize their work environment (without having been taught to do so). The job crafting intervention in the form of a training course can be described as a secondary intervention focused on teaching the individual to initiate self-set actions that can be both secondary and/or primary in nature (Van den Heuvel et al., 2015). Job crafting actions can include elements that re-design the work environment to eliminate stressors (primary focus). For example, when an employee delegates certain highly demanding tasks, or exchanges stressful tasks for other more enjoyable tasks. As an outcome of the job crafting intervention some employees decided to change jobs or to apply for a transfer within their organization. Job crafting behaviours can also focus on activities that gear the employee to build resilience, for example, building support-networks, taking regular breaks or asking for feedback. These actions may be classified as secondary since they help to deal with stressors, but will not necessarily eliminate the stressor or structurally change the workload. We think that because job crafting may include both primary and secondary actions, it makes it an effective strategy to achieve positive outcomes.

4.1 How Does the Job Crafting Intervention Lead to Desired Changes?

From the description of the intervention programme, it can be inferred that the intervention focuses on achieving individual change at two levels: (1) cognitions and (2) behaviour. To achieve a change in cognitions, employees are encouraged to reflect on their work situation and to recognize their work tasks and aspects of their job that they would like to change. Changing behaviour is reflected in the training through familiarisation with the theory on job crafting and the JD-R model (verbal persuasion and persuasive suggestions), role-modelling (vicarious learning), as well as goal set-

ting, sharing, shaping, and positive feedback (during the training and the reflection session) to enforce new behaviour (Bandura, Adams, & Beyer, 1977).

The core elements of the intervention are based on social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989), which suggests that the interaction between person, behaviour, and environment is critical for planning behaviour change interventions, underscoring that people are not passive recipients of an intervention. The theory states that learning occurs in a social context (Bandura, 1989) and emphasises the human ability to self-regulate, via self-monitoring (i.e., observation of one's own behaviour), goal-setting, feedback, and the enlistment of social support (Bandura, 1997). Accordingly, successful behaviour change is achieved through mastery experiences, triggered by vicarious learning and imagery, verbal persuasion from others, and adjustments to physiological and emotional states. Moreover, goal-setting, persistence, and focused selection of activities and environments are also significant for learning and behaviour change. During the training, employees challenge assumptions regarding their work characteristics, via group discussions and the sharing of success stories. At the end of the training, employees draw up a PCP for a number of weeks directly after the training. The plan stimulates effective job crafting behaviour, because it concerns self-chosen job crafting actions, that employees believe will help them adapt better at work and to experience more work enjoyment. These PCP goals represent manageable units that enhance efficacy beliefs (Luthans, Avey, Avolio, & Peterson, 2010).

In addition to focussing on insights of social cognitive theory, the intervention uses elements of experiential learning theory to increase job crafting behaviour (Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2001). That is, the intervention highlights participants' past experiences with job crafting to facilitate learning and actual behavioural change. Past experiences are important in learning new behaviour according to the experiential learning theory, which proposes that knowledge is created by transforming past experiences (Kolb et al., 2001). Therefore, the intervention incorporates the four stages that are important in the learning process. That is, learning starts with concrete experiences with the behaviour, followed by reflection on this behaviour (Sumsion & Fleet, 1996). After reflection, individuals are in the third stage and have abstract ideas about the new behaviour and how they could benefit from implementing it (Kolb et al., 2001; Sumsion & Fleet, 1996). During this stage it is important to stress the value of behaviour to increase individual's willingness to invest energy and time in implementing the behaviour (Nielsen, Randall, Brenner, & Albertsen, 2009). During the last stage individuals actively test the behaviour to create new experiences (Kolb et al., 2001). In order to stimulate the implementation process, implementation intentions and goal-setting is extremely important (Arneson & Ekberg, 2005; Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). The above-mentioned theoretical behaviour change methods are incorporated in our intervention (for an overview see Table 2), to encourage employees to actively apply all three job crafting dimensions and to stimulate behavioural change.

In order to further improve the original intervention of Van den Heuvel et al. (2015), Gordon et al. (2018) added an exercise, based on the 'thinking-in-action approach' (Benner, Benner, Hooper-Kyriakidis, Kyriakidis, & Stannard,

Table 2 Overview of the job crafting intervention according to Dubbelt, Demerouti, and Rispens (submitted)

Steps	Aspects of the intervention that reflect the experiential learning theory
Step 1: Concrete experiences	• Providing real-life examples from interviews conducted with employees • Every employee has at least some experience with job crafting (Lyons, 2008) by doing a Situated Learning Narratives (SELN; Benner, 1984) exercise, we encourage people to think about positive past behaviour in problem solving situations
Step 2: Reflection	• SELN exercise further encourages employees to think about how that behaviour may be helpful in attaining future goals. In a group context, they stimulate others' thinking about problem solving behaviours
Step 3: Abstract concepts	• Demonstrating the value of job crafting for work-related outcomes such as work engagement (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002), via the Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)
Step 4: Creating new experiences	• Setting three specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) goals (Doran, 1981) for the three/four weeks after the intervention (e.g. week 1: seeking resources, week 2: decreasing demands, week 3: seeking challenges). By setting three goals, employees can practice all three job crafting strategies • Weekly reminders are sent to encourage goal achievement (e.g., Fjeldsoe, Marshall, & Miller, 2009) • The trainer encourages participants to think about possible facilitating factors and obstacles for their goals. This way, employees can think ahead about dealing with obstacles and how to optimally use facilitators

2011; Benner, 1984). Their intervention was set in a healthcare context and this approach integrates nursing theory into practice, with the use of experiential learning in the form of narratives to help build expert clinical judgment (i.e., Situated Experiential Learning Narratives; SELN). The SELN helps to stimulate participants' actualization and understanding of how their work behaviours could be viewed as a form of job crafting. Stimulating reflection can help individuals to bridge the gap between positive past behavioural and future goals (i.e., stimulate actualization of job crafting) and increase understanding of what helps them to proactively adjust their jobs (Benner, 1984). Simulated patient encounters and experiential narratives are being successfully used in medical schools and nursing to improve problem understanding, clinical forethought, critical and creative thinking and skilled know-how regarding patient health care (Benner et al., 2011).

Taken together, the job crafting intervention is based on insights of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989), experiential learning theory (Kolb et al., 2001) and situated experiential learning narratives (Benner, 1984). It builds on past experiences, stimu-

lates reflection, learning and goal-setting and creates success experiences by teaching people how they can be co-creators of their own job. It is expected to work because it teaches individuals how to adjust their work in small and effective ways such that it fits to their preferences. Put differently, job crafting enhances the person—environment fit (Lu, Wang, Lu, Du, & Bakker, 2014). Due to top-down interventions, organizational changes or rigid job descriptions, the P-E fit of employees can be endangered, possibly leading to a less optimal fit and sub-optimal well-being and performance (Caldwell, Herold, & Fedor, 2004). As job crafting concerns changes that individuals make to their tasks, demands and resources with the aim to align those elements to their preferences, they can potentially restore their P-E fit, assuming they are successful in executing their crafting actions.

4.2 To What Extent Is the Job Crafting Intervention Effective?

The job crafting intervention as described above was originally developed and tested by Van den Heuvel et al. (2015) (study 1) and has served as a blueprint for implementations in many different kinds of organizations and for slightly different purposes. In this section, we discuss the studies that are based on the original intervention of Van den Heuvel et al. (2015) and describe how the intervention was adapted to the specific target group, what the specific aim of the intervention was and what the effects of the intervention were. All these interventions have in common that they use the same methodology and are primarily aimed at training employees how to craft their job demands and job and personal resources effectively. We excluded job crafting interventions that were designed on the basis of different guidelines, such as the interventions of Van Wingerden, Bakker, and Derks (2016). The latter were based on the Michigan Job Crafting Exercise (JCE) (Berg, Dutton, Wrzesniewski, & Baker, 2008). Also, interventions that explicitly trained other aspects than job crafting itself, such as enhancing personal resources (Van Wingerden, Bakker, & Derks, 2017) or strength and interests crafting (Kooij, van Woerkom, Wilkenloh, Dorenbosch, & Denissen, 2017) were excluded. Table 3 presents an overview of the studies that will be discussed in this section.

All studies presented in Table 3 had a quasi-experimental design (including an intervention group and a control group) with a pre- and post-test. The pre-test occurred just before the intervention started whereas the post-test was taken up to four weeks after the completion of the job crafting assignments. In general, individuals in the intervention group participated voluntarily, whereas the control group was not selected randomly in all cases. For measuring job crafting, most studies used the scale of Petrou et al. (2012). In the study of Demerouti, Xanthopoulou, et al. (2017) (study 5) the seeking resources and reducing demands scale were each supplemented with 1 item ('I made sure I had enough variety in my work activities' and 'I tried to set less strict deadlines for myself', respectively), because these behaviours were

Table 3 Overview of studies on the job crafting intervention

Study	Occupational group	Effect on job crafting	Effect on job resources	Effect on personal resources	Effect on well-being	Effect on performance
1. Van den Heuvel, Demerouti, and Peeters (2012), Van den Heuvel et al. (2015)	39 employees of police district	NS	Opportunities for development LMX	Self-efficacy	Negative affect Positive affect	NI
2. Gordon, Demerouti, and Le Blanc (2018)	119 medical specialists	Seeking challenges Reducing demands	NI	NI	Engagement Exhaustion Health	Adaptive Task Contextual
3. Gordon et al. (2018)	58 nurses	Seeking resources Reducing demands	NI	NI	Engagement Exhaustion	Adaptive Task (NS) Contextual (NS) Objective performance (NS)
4. Dubbelt et al. (submitted)	60 university employees	Seeking resources Reducing demands			Engagement	Task performance (NS) Career satisfaction (NS)
5. Demerouti, Xanthopoulou, et al. (2017)	72 municipality workers	Reducing demands	NI	NI	Positive affect Openness to change	Adaptive performance (NS)

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Study	Occupational group	Effect on job crafting	Effect on job resources	Effect on personal resources	Effect on well-being	Effect on performance
6. Hulshof et al. (2019)	74 unemployment agency employees	Reducing (hindering) demands	NI	NI	Engagement Empowerment	Service-oriented performance (NS) Empowering service (NS) Customer-rated empowering service (3 month) (NS) Customer-rated empowering service (1 year) Objective performance (8 month) (NS)
7. Peeters, Van den Heuvel, and Demerouti (2017)	83 civil servants	Seeking resources Seeking challenges Reducing demands Cognitive crafting	Social support colleagues (NS) Autonomy Opportunities for development	Awareness Self-efficacy (NS)	Engagement Positive affect Negative affect	NI

addressed as important job crafting examples by the respondents. Hulshof, Demerouti, and Le Blanc (2019) (study 6) used the job crafting scale of Tims et al. (2012) consisting of four instead of three dimensions as is the case with the scale of Petrou et al. (2012).

Van den Heuvel et al. (2015) (study 1) tested the job crafting intervention among 39 employees of a police district, while the control group consisted of 47 police employees from different districts. The intervention had a positive effect on two job resources, namely leader-member exchange (LMX) and work-related opportunities for development. These were higher at time 2 compared to time 1, while for the control group, no change was found. Besides job resources, self-efficacy as a personal resource, also increased in the training group (and not in the control group). Finally, participants reported more positive affect and less negative affect after the training than before, indicating that the job crafting training not only influenced the job resources but also employee well-being. Interestingly, no effect of the intervention was found on the job crafting dimensions and all reported effects were detected with univariate (t-tests) rather than multi-variate tests (repeated measures ANOVAs). This may be due to the small sample size and limited statistical power. An interesting addition; this study also included weekly measures of levels of crafting behaviours and resulting outcomes. Although the sample size was very small, some results were found in terms of fluctuating levels of job crafting and its outcomes. During the weeks when participants experimented with 'seeking resources', results showed higher levels of job resources. Also, more positive affect was reported in the weeks when participants worked on seeking resources and reducing demands. No effects were found of weekly job crafting behaviours on weekly self-efficacy and weekly negative affect.

Gordon et al. (2018) (studies 2 and 3) applied a modified version of Van den Heuvel et al.'s (2015) intervention in order to increase individuals' understanding and application of job crafting behaviours into their daily work. Specifically, their intervention was shorter (i.e., including a three-hour instead of an eight-hour workshop), had less demands/requirements (e.g., participants had to complete fewer assignments), and built on participants' experiential learning experiences. Gordon et al. (2018) tested the impact of the job crafting intervention on employee well-being and job performance by using a group of Dutch medical specialists ($N = 119$) and a group of nurses ($N = 58$), who were confronted with changes in their work tasks. The job crafting intervention had positive effects on well-being (i.e., work engagement, health, and reduced exhaustion), and job performance (i.e., adaptive, task, contextual) for both intervention groups. Importantly, whereas Van den Heuvel et al. (2015) (study 1) found no effect of the intervention on the job crafting scores, Gordon et al. (2018) did find effects of the intervention on the job crafting scores, which explained the effects of the intervention on the well-being and job performance outcomes. More specifically, results reveal that the intervention positively related to some of the changes in individuals' job crafting behaviours (seeking challenges for medical specialists and seeking resources for nurses), which then related significantly and positively to their work engagement (for both groups) and performance (only for medical specialists).

Dubbelt et al. (in press) (study 4) examined whether job crafting was trainable among university employees (i.e., intervention group, N = 60, and control group, N = 59). The intervention was successful in increasing participants' seeking resources and decreasing demands behaviour, as well as work engagement. In contrast, the authors did not find a direct effect of the intervention on task performance and career satisfaction. Instead, they found that the intervention affected task performance and career satisfaction via the seeking resources behaviour of employees. In addition, they found that seeking resources behaviour mediated the relationship between the intervention and work engagement. By increasing seeking resources behaviour, the intervention indirectly affected participants' work engagement, task performance, and career satisfaction.

Demerouti, Xanthopoulou, et al. (2017) (study 5) evaluated the effects of a job crafting intervention designed to help Greek employees deal with organizational changes due to austerity measures and increase their well-being, adaptive performance and openness to such changes by stimulating job crafting behaviours. The intervention was conducted among 72 employees of a municipality in Greece. It was found that participants in the intervention group reported higher levels of reducing demands, as well as higher positive affect and openness to change. However, both the experimental and control group showed a significant decrease in adaptive performance over time, which may be explained by the unfavourable austerity context. Whereas seeking resources did not increase in the intervention group, it was found that *changes* in seeking resources related positively to changes in positive affect, openness to change and adaptive performance. Finally, whereas the effect of the intervention on adaptive performance was only explained by reducing demands, this indirect effect was not in line with expectations, since increases in reducing demands in the intervention (vs. the control) group, related negatively to adaptive performance. In additional analyses and in line with Oldham and Hackman (2010), Demerouti, Xanthopoulou, et al. (2017) found that participation in the intervention increased openness to change and adaptive performance because individuals felt more positive affect. These results support the central conclusion that stimulating employees to craft their job in general, relates to improvements in their well-being, openness to change and adaptation over time, but not always due to increases in job crafting behaviour.

Hulshof, Demerouti and Le Blanc (2019) (study 6) evaluated the effects of a job crafting intervention, aimed at preventing decreases in employee well-being and performance due to organizational changes. Seventy-four employees of a Dutch unemployment agency participated in the intervention. Whereas the multivariate analysis failed to result in significant effects, the univariate analysis detected a significant increase in decreasing hindering demands for the intervention group. The intervention was able to maintain empowerment levels: they only declined in the control group. Also, the intervention prevented a decrease in work engagement as univariate pre-post comparisons showed a decrease in work engagement for the control group, but not for the intervention group. The intervention had no effect on self-reported performance. Next to self-reported performance, the authors took customer-rated measures of performance into account. Although they did not find any differences

between the groups three months after the intervention, the intervention group was rated significantly more positively by their customers than the control group one year after the intervention. This may indicate that behavioural change takes time to occur, which could be an important explanatory mechanism to be considered in future research designs. Overall, the job crafting intervention was promising in sustaining employee well-being during times of change, as the intervention helped to prevent feelings of powerlessness due to organizational changes and helped to enable employees to reach their (work-related) goals.

Finally, Peeters et al. (2017) (study 7) tested the effects of a job crafting intervention among 83 civil servants. It was expected that participating in the intervention would lead to an increase in several personal and job resources, as well as situational awareness and higher levels of work-related well-being. First of all, univariate analyses revealed that the intervention group showed elevated levels of job crafting compared to the control group. In this study cognitive crafting was also included, which is a relatively understudied form of crafting in the current empirical literature. The intervention appeared to be successful in increasing cognitive crafting, which is in line with observations during the process evaluation, where many participants commented on how they enjoyed gaining a 'fresh' perspective on their job during the training and positively reframing their work or work environment. Also, the intervention increased perceptions of autonomy, opportunities for development and situational awareness. No effects were found for social support from colleagues and for self-efficacy. Finally, positive and negative affect changed in the desired direction and the increase in work engagement was marginally significant for the intervention group ($p = .056$), while this change was not significant for the control group.

Based on the existing evidence regarding the effectiveness of the job crafting intervention, a number of tentative conclusions can be drawn. First of all, the original intervention of Van den Heuvel et al. (2015) (study 1) has proven to be a valuable blueprint and seems to work well in guiding development and implementation of variations or customised versions of the job crafting intervention in different occupational settings. It provides clear guidelines for development, while offering enough degrees of freedom to adapt the intervention to the specific needs and wishes of different occupational groups and clients.

Next, results suggest that the job crafting intervention is effective in stimulating aspects of job crafting behaviour, although the effects cannot always be detected with multivariate tests. Discussions with participants indicate that the questionnaires we use to measure crafting, are not appropriate to capture the whole range of behaviours. Participants may very well craft specific aspects of their work, that are not reflected in the scale, and thus quantitative methods at times miss out on interesting idiosyncratic forms of job crafting that the intervention may stimulate.

Taking a closer look at the specific crafting behaviours that have been triggered by the intervention, it seems that reducing (hindering) demands especially shows consistent results; it changed in all seven studies reviewed. This is surprising because reducing demands is the job crafting behaviour that employees seem to have most difficulties with when formulating a self-chosen goal during the workshops and that they use less often. Perhaps this also statistically explains why we find the effect

on this dimension (reducing demands) and not on the other dimensions (seeking resources and challenges), which are practiced by individuals to a higher extent even before the intervention (cf. ceiling effect).

Further, the intervention is effective for improving employee well-being, particularly work engagement and affect. For performance (including task, contextual and adaptive performance) the effects were slightly more fragmented. Five of the studies included 15 performance indicators in total, of which only 5 indicators appeared to have changed after the intervention. Moreover, Gordon et al. (2018) (studies 2 and 3) and Hulshof et al. (2019) (study 6), were able to include other-rated performance indicators and/or objective performance, and it appeared that only other-rated performance one year later was affected by the intervention. We might speculate that the job crafting intervention is especially effective in improving well-being of employees while it takes more effort to create lasting effects on the performance of the participants.

Several of the studies confirmed that specific crafting dimensions (that differed by study) explained the effects of the intervention on well-being and performance outcomes. The resulting significant mediation effects provide evidence that a Hawthorne effect cannot explain the effects of these interventions. However, one of the studies in a changing organizational context due to austerity measures, showed that job crafting is not the only explanation why the intervention is effective. Rather, positive affect proved to be another mediator, indicating the complexity of the impact of job crafting interventions within contexts. These findings seem to support the proposition of Oldham and Hackman (2010) that the benefits of job crafting may "derive from substantive changes in the work itself" or "merely from having the opportunity to tailor one's own work responsibilities" (p. 471). In a related vein, the studies of Van den Heuvel et al. (2015) (study 1) and Peeters et al. (2017) (study 7) show that the job crafting intervention is also effective in improving job resources and personal resources. Although it differed between both studies which specific resources increased after the study, it also supports the assumption that a Hawthorne effect is not responsible for the effects of the intervention.

Taken together, the job crafting intervention is a promising tool to help organisations to support and maintain employee well-being and (to a somewhat lesser extent) performance, even during times of organizational change.

5 The Future of the Job Crafting Intervention

Ever since the first study by Van den Heuvel and colleagues was published (first in Dutch in 2012 and later in English in 2015) we have gained new practical experience and evidence regarding the merits of the intervention. In this section we describe how we think both research and practice can proceed in order to further improve the content and implementation of the intervention as well as the research on its effectiveness.

So far, an important unresolved issue refers to the lack of appropriateness of the current job crafting scales for capturing all important job crafting behaviours of employees in specific occupational groups (see earlier). This might explain why the effect of the intervention on job crafting behaviours is often not significant: the scales are perhaps not sensitive enough (Van den Heuvel et al., 2015). In support of this assumption, Demerouti, Xanthopoulou, et al. (2017) did find an effect of the intervention on both job crafting dimensions where additional items were added. This might be a good example to follow in future studies. On the basis of interviews with representative employees of the specific target group, one could get an impression of how job crafting could evolve and which crafting behaviours are specifically relevant for this group and, depending on the outcomes, researchers could decide to add specific items to the original scale. However, next to the sensitivity of the job crafting scales to capture specific behaviours that may change after the intervention, it is possible that the intervention effects take longer to occur than just a few weeks after the intervention which is generally when the post measure took place, although the exact number of weeks is not explicitly specified in all studies. Future studies should explore this explanation but using longer time frames, e.g., three to six months.

From our practical experience, we know that it is important to keep employees committed to the intervention and their self-set goals by communicating regularly with them and sending them reminders about their goals. This motivates them to complete the whole intervention programme (including the reflection session). The reminder emails however, are general and not personalized for each individual. We think that the job crafting intervention would be even more effective if it would be supported by an on-line or e-health tool or app. Such a tool could support and encourage participants by providing extra material about the training, reminding them of their self-set goals, and to monitor their own state daily. We do not necessarily suggest that an on-line tool should replace the face-to-face intervention, but we think such a tool could support and improve commitment and behaviour change, especially during the weeks of experimenting with the new job crafting behaviours.

During the job crafting training employees learn how to craft their job effectively and are stimulated to do so, as they set SMART goals, which they work on after the workshop. The critical question is how to stimulate employees to keep crafting their job even after the training is completed. This issue is discussed during the reflection session, when employees reflect on possible obstacles and facilitators for continuing their job crafting behaviour. Nevertheless, it remains unclear how to maintain the effects of the intervention in the long run. Although one study found that the effect of the intervention on customer ratings of employee service quality was significant even one year after the intervention, all other studies measured the effect of the intervention shortly after its completion. In this way, it is hard to determine whether the intervention has enduring effects and what can be done to increase its impact over time. Are, for instance, physical reminders to the intervention (in the form of a card or poster) sufficient or should the organisation or leaders/supervisors regularly remind participants during meetings or other organisational processes? Another road to improve the long-term learning transfer of the intervention to daily work routines is to apply the insights from relapse prevention theory more systematically (Rahyuda,

Syed, & Soltani, 2014). Marx (1982) introduced the term relapse prevention for the first time in the corporate training context and defined relapse prevention as a self-management intervention that teaches trainees the strategies to overcome the potential threats that impede the generalization of the newly learned skills [such as: understanding the difference between the training and the job contexts, creating a support network, predicting the first slip in the transfer of training, developing a threat coping strategy, and monitoring the process of skill transfer (Marx, 1986)]. It could be worthwhile to train the participants in an extra session on these relapse prevention skills.

Although the job crafting intervention was effective in stimulating reducing demands behaviour in several studies (i.e., studies 2–7), this dimension did not prove to be a significant mediator of the effects of the intervention on the examined outcomes except in the study by Demerouti, Xanthopoulou, et al. (2017) (study 5) where it was significantly, but negative instead of positively related to adaptive performance. This seems to indicate that reducing demands tends to be a dysfunctional crafting strategy, which does not necessarily need to be trained during job crafting interventions. To overcome this problem, Demerouti and Peeters (2018) recently introduced 'optimising demands' as a new, additional type of reduction-oriented job crafting behaviour. Whereas reducing or minimising demands refers to making a job less strenuous, optimising demands refers to simplifying the job and making work processes more efficient. Their study showed that optimising demands was positively related to work engagement. Because of its promising role for improving well-being and its constructive nature we would like to encourage future scholars to include this new type of job crafting in the job crafting intervention.

Related to this point, researchers could examine to what extent the intervention is successful in changing the perception of job characteristics (Demerouti, Van den Heuvel, Xanthopoulou, Dubbelt, & Gordon, 2017). Currently, only two studies focus on the change in levels of job resources, i.e., van den Heuvel et al. (2015) and Peeters et al. (2017). However, as job crafting aims to change challenges and demands, it is important to examine whether the intervention does alter the perceptions of these job characteristics. A focus on the change of both resources and demands could give more insight into the process of how well-being and performance change as a result of the intervention. For instance, perceived or real changes in job demands and job resources may explain why the job crafting intervention is effective.

Another critical question is what the role of the supervisor is in facilitating the effectiveness of the intervention. This issue has not been examined yet in any of the studies, although it may be very important. The supervisor can create the context in which job crafting behaviour is possible and accepted (by empowering employees). On the contrary, the supervisor can also restrict or frustrate the crafting attempts of the employees by being authoritarian. Additionally, the supervisor can play a key role in stimulating employees to keep crafting their job after the intervention, and by using crafting in daily team practices. Supervisors may also stimulate how employees cognitively craft meaningfulness during organizational change, by providing information that helps employees to make sense of the changes (Van den Heuvel, Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2013). Finally, the supervisor can play a

crucial role in highlighting which crafting behaviour is in line with the organizational goals and in helping employees to align their own goals with those of the organization/team. Recent research of Wang (2017) demonstrates that leaders can cultivate well-performing employees by facilitating their job crafting behaviour. Their findings suggest that mainly expanding job crafting behaviour (i.e., seeking resources and seeking challenges) are more likely to take place under transformational, moral and empowering leadership. Future scholars could further consider how to involve the supervisor in the job crafting process.

In some intervention groups we noticed that the composition of the groups in terms of well-being levels was very diverse. Although most employees appeared to have moderate well-being levels, some individuals were at high risk of developing burnout or were recovering from burnout. Having such diversity in a training group influences the group dynamics and can at times undermine levels of positivity. A positive development would be to develop a customised version of the job crafting intervention specifically targeted at training employees at high risk of developing burnout and employees returning to work after burn-out such that not only their burnout symptoms are reduced but also their functioning/performance at work is improved.

The intervention has been extensively tested in Dutch organizations and operating within Dutch culture which, in line with Hofstede (https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/greece,the-netherlands) is characterized by low power distance, low masculinity and high individualism (Hofstede, 1980). The intervention proved also to be partly effective in the Greek context (affected by austerity led organizational changes), which is high on power distance, high on masculinity and low on individualism. This finding suggests that the job crafting intervention may be effective in other country contexts as well. However, more research is necessary to justify whether the job crafting intervention is effective in various cultural contexts.

6 Conclusions

The goal of this chapter was to discuss an intervention aimed at stimulating job crafting behaviour as a bottom-up, proactive type of behaviour that employees may use to improve their job characteristics. The intervention is tested in a number of studies, and in this chapter we reviewed the existing evidence, explained how and why it works and we made several suggestions for future research and practice. This chapter discussed the studies that are based on the job crafting intervention of Van den Heuvel et al. (2015). There are, however, other nice examples of job crafting interventions available (e.g. van Wingerden et al., 2016, 2017), which are worthwhile considering when one is interested in job crafting interventions. Moreover, up until now the focus has mainly been on the effect evaluation. Future efforts could additionally pay more attention to process evaluation of the intervention (Abildgaard, Saksvik, & Nielsen, 2016) and mediating mechanisms. Taken together, evidence from the 7 studies that were discussed in this chapter strengthens our belief and

trust in the current job crafting intervention. It is not only based on theories of work motivation and learning behaviour, it also leaves enough room for customizing it to specific target groups (such as employees at high risk for burnout) and occupational situations (such as organizational change) and other relevant settings. We hope that future studies will improve the effectiveness of the interventions such that it becomes even more valuable for employees and their organizations.

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