

Job crafting and work engagement: A study of civil service bureau employees in the Kingdom of Bahrain



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ABSTRACT

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This study examined the impact of job crafting on work engagement among Bahraini Civil Service Bureau employees. A survey was used to collect data from 278 participants resulting in a 93.3% response rate. The findings showed that increasing structural job resources, decreasing hindering job demands and increasing challenging job demands had a positive and statistically significant impact on work engagement. However, there was no significant relationship found between increasing social job resources and work engagement. Reducing hindering job demands was identified as the most influential dimension followed by increasing structural job resources and increasing challenging job demands. The study recommended encouraging employees to consult their superiors, providing more flexibility in job task execution and motivating participation in new programs. These findings contribute to understanding the relationship between job crafting and work engagement offering practical implications for enhancing employee engagement and well-being in the Civil Service Bureau.

Contribution/ Originality: This study provides valuable insights into the relationship between job crafting and work engagement within the unique context of Bahraini Civil Service Bureau employees. The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature on job crafting and work engagement and offer practical implications for organizations in the public sector seeking to enhance employee engagement and productivity.

1. INTRODUCTION

The positive aspects of mental health and employee well-being have received considerable attention from business organizations recently [1]. One of the most widely recognized positive mental health outcomes is work engagement which is considered an important factor in enhancing job-related outcomes [2, 3]. At the organizational level, these outcomes encompass enhanced productivity, increased total income and increased profits while at the individual level, work engagement reduces psychological exhaustion, increases feelings of happiness, enhances organizational commitment [4] reduces intentions to leave and increases the level of job satisfaction and innovation opportunities for those employees [5-7].

As a result, work engagement has emerged as an indispensable feature that highlights how employees perceive their work, how they care about it and how they fully engage in it. Finally, the results of such immersion will likely

increase their creativity and can provide more dynamic results in their workplace since employees are more attached to their work when they can organize themselves in their work and use their mental abilities to make the best decisions in completing their job tasks and to monitor their behavior to determine whether they have accomplished their job tasks well and to correct any mistakes that may have occurred during accomplishing these tasks [2, 8, 9].

For many decades, work engagement has constituted one of the most crucial threats to business organizations. Individuals who lack work engagement are physically separated from their work roles and even exhibit cognitive, mental and emotional withdrawal behaviors while performing those roles. They are only physically present but psychologically absent when occupying and performing any organizational role [10].

Academics and researchers have examined the antecedents that may enhance work engagement. Among them, job crafting is one of the most important positive motivators especially since it allows employees to incorporate some changes in their job activities, design work tasks, change how they perceive their work and negotiate the content of the job [11].

In this context, the body of literature on work engagement has asserted that these individuals will resist investing energy in the work they do and may even try to persuade others not to immerse themselves which is known as “relationship toxicity”. This stemming from making more effort may generate a belief in their managers that this is the normal rate of work that must be fulfilled which in turn may lead to lower individual contribution, thus lower organizational performance and thus impair the organization’s ability to innovate [12].

On the other hand, there are inconsistent results among these studies which constitute a research gap that calls for in-depth research into this relationship after reviewing the extant literature that studied the relationship between job crafting and work engagement. According to some studies, job crafting has a favourable and statistically significant effect on employee engagement at work [10, 13]. These findings were not consistent with other research that found no statistically significant relationship between job crafting and employee engagement [14] whereas researchers that analysed the adverse impacts of job crafting on work engagement [15] in other studies concluded that workers who actively modify their work environment through job crafting may become more adaptable and flexible. The capacity for self-regulation is limited. So, job-crafting behaviors may result in an energy loss that impairs job immersion. On the other hand, such self-regulation also requires energy. The relationship between job crafting and work engagement is thought to be highly complex based on the aforementioned information. Therefore, more research is needed to clarify the role of reduced job requirements as a form of job crafting and its impact on work engagement [16]. This was confirmed by a recent study that asserted that there is a need to understand the basic aspects of the concept of work engagement and its mechanism of action [17, 18].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Job Crafting

Employees actively and freely decide to alter the nature of their work, the scope of their responsibilities and the working environment to shift the scales in favor of a more immersive work environment [5]. The literature shows that job crafting can lead to constructive structural dependencies such as enhancing job pleasure [19], organizational commitment and work engagement since employees who model their jobs have a higher level of immersion in their tasks [20].

2.2. Work Engagement

Employees implement job crafting to demonstrate their work significance by coordinating their job responsibilities with their work orientation. This involves reframing their jobs to match their abilities and needs, thereby enhancing their work engagement [21]. The main hypothesis of the study is proposed as follows based on this argument:

H₁: There is a statistically significant impact of job crafting components including increasing structural job resources, decreasing hindering job demands, increasing social job resources and increasing challenging job demands on the work engagement of employees in the Civil Service Bureau in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Figure 1 illustrates the theoretical model of the study and illustrates sub hypotheses derived from the main hypothesis of the study.

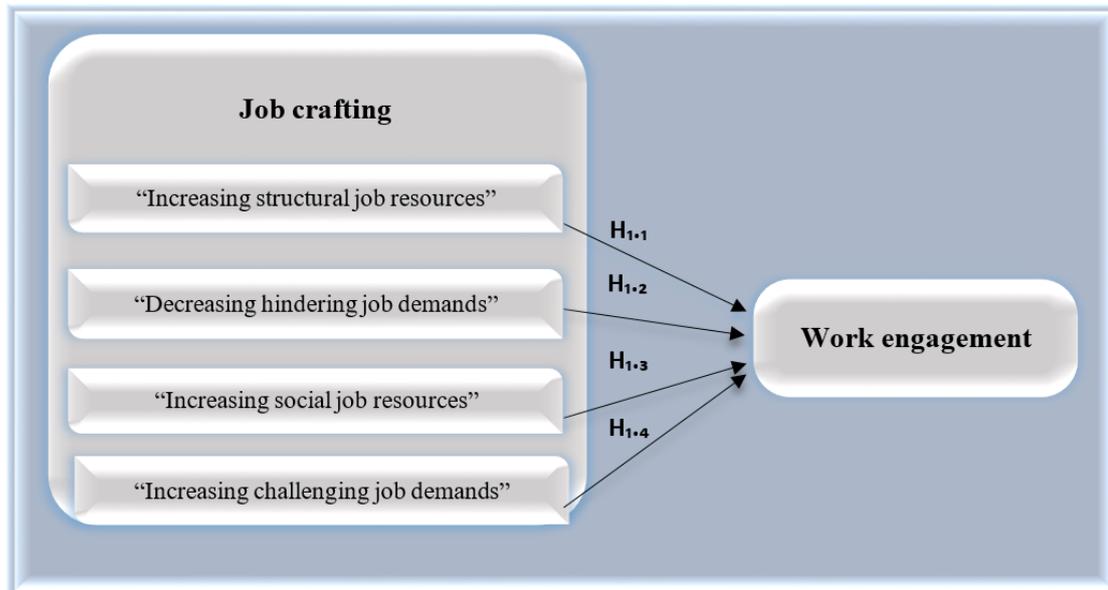


Figure 1. The theoretical model of the study.

2.3. The Relationship between Job Crafting and Work Engagement

Job crafting and work engagement are positively correlated because the former enables workers to develop the Gleim resources they have developed through job crafting which has helped them to develop their resources [22]. Employees will reinvest these resources since they will be preventing the loss of the ones they developed through the creation of their jobs. In other words, job crafting facilitates employees' reinvestment of the resources they have created through work engagement. The employees who are fully immersed in their work will expend their energy through their dedication and engagement. According to Tims et al. [19] enhancing structural and social resources is positively associated with work engagement using its impact on job resources. This develops as a result of workers becoming more engaged, active and dedicated due to the demanding nature of their jobs [23, 24].

3. METHODOLOGY

The human resources department of the Civil Service Bureau in the Kingdom of Bahrain received the study questionnaire through an electronic link (Google Docs) and it was their responsibility to share the link with all Civil Service Bureau employees. 278 filled out questionnaires were retrieved constituting a response rate of 93.28%. Two forms with incomplete answers were excluded. Thus, 276 questionnaires were valid for analysis.

This study used the descriptive-analytical approach which is the appropriate method for accurately describing human phenomena to measure the effect of job crafting on employees' work engagement in the Civil Service Bureau of the Kingdom of Bahrain. It also revealed the characteristics of the study variables, tested its hypotheses and addressed its questions.

This study used a job crafting scale consisting of 21 items adapted from Bakker et al. [25] to measure job crafting. This scale encompasses four dimensions: increasing structural job resources, decreasing hindering job demands, increasing social job resources and increasing challenging job demands. Additionally, work engagement

was measured using a 17-item scale derived from Schaufeli and Bakker [26]. Table 1 provides an overview of the respondents' background information.

Table 1. Background of the respondents.

Demographic variables		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	182	66%
	Female	94	34%
Age	30 years and under	143	51.8%
	31-40 years old	69	25%
	41-50 years old	24	8.7%
	51 years and over	40	14.5%
Education qualification	Secondary or lower diploma	8	2.9%
	Bachelor degree	5	1.8%
	Master degree	218	79%
		45	16.3%
Years of experience	5 years or less	95	34.4%
	6- 10 years	84	30.4%
	11-15 years	54	19.6%
	16 years and over	43	15.6%
Job title	Employee	189	68.47%
	Specialist	67	24.2%
	Head of department	15	5.43%
	Department director	5	1.81%

4. RESULTS

A multiple regression analysis was conducted which is illustrated in Table 2 to test the extent of the impact of job crafting on the level of work engagement of employees in the Civil Service Bureau in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The results of Table 2 for multiple linear regression analysis show that job crafting has a statistically significant impact on employees' work engagement in the Civil Service Bureau of the Kingdom of Bahrain at the significance level of 0.01. This is supported by the high value of the calculated f-value (165.69) at the statistical significance level (0.000) which is less than the significance level ($0.01 \alpha \leq$). As a result, the results indicate that job crafting explains 70.5 percent of the variances or disparities in the work engagement of Civil Service Bureau employees based on the adjusted determination coefficient (Adj. R²), the total of which was .705. Accordingly, the first main hypothesis (H1) is supported which states that there is a positive statistically significant impact of job crafting on the work engagement of employees in the Civil Service Bureau in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Table 2. Results of the analysis of variance for multiple linear regression to test the size of the impact of job crafting on the work engagement of employees in the Civil Service Bureau in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean squares	Correlation coefficient R	Coefficient of determination R ²	Modified determination factor adj R ²	Test value F-test	Sig F.significance level
Regression	62.086	4	15.522	0.842	0.710	0.705	165.689	.000000
Residual the rest	25.387	271	0.094					
Total	87.473	275						

An analysis of variance test for multiple linear regression was also carried out to determine the extent to which the job crafting dimensions affected the work engagement of employees in the Civil Service Bureau in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The results of this test are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of the analysis of variance for multiple linear regression to test the size of the impact of job crafting on the work engagement of employees in the civil service Bureau in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Dimensions	β	T- value	Sig.	Indication
Constant	0.417	6.299	0.000	Significant
Increasing structural job resources	0.224	5.917	0.000	Significant
Decreasing and hindering job demands	0.349	6.058	0.000	Non-significant
Increasing social job resources	0.303	5.178	0.058	Non-significant
Increasing challenging job demands	0.116	1.903	0.000	Non-significant

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of statistical analysis.

The statistical results presented in Table 3 indicate the influence of different dimensions on work engagement as determined by the β coefficient. A substantial impact was found when burdensome job demands were reduced. This was demonstrated by the coefficient value which is statistically significant at a significance level of 0.01 and supported by the coefficient T. Therefore, the first sub-hypothesis (H1.2) derived from the main hypothesis indicates a positive and statistically significant effect of reducing burdensome job demands on work engagement among employees in the Bahraini Kingdom's Civil Service Bureau.

The second rank in terms of impact is attributed to increasing structural job resources with a coefficient value and a coefficient T both statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Thus, the first sub-hypothesis (H1.1) derived from the main hypothesis is validated indicating a positive and statistically significant effect of increasing structural job resources on employees' work engagement in the Civil Service Bureau of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

In contrast, the impact of increasing challenging job demands ranks third with a coefficient (T) and a β coefficient value, both statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This confirms the validation of the fourth sub-hypothesis (H1.4) derived from the main hypothesis which suggests a positive and statistically significant impact of increasing challenging job demands on the work engagement of employees in the Civil Service Bureau in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

However, the statistical results did not demonstrate a significant effect of increasing social job resources on work engagement. The coefficient (T) was not statistically significant as the significance value (0) exceeded the levels of statistical significance (0.01 and 0.05). Consequently, the third sub-hypothesis (H3) derived from the main hypothesis which proposes a positive and statistically significant impact of increasing social job resources on work engagement is rejected.

In a nutshell, the findings indicate the significant influence of reducing burdensome job demands, increasing structural job resources and increasing challenging job demands on work engagement. However, increasing social job resources did not demonstrate a significant effect on work engagement among employees in the Civil Service Bureau of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

All of the research's sub-hypotheses except the one about expanding social job resources which was found to be unsupported must be examined and confirmed based on the above analysis of multiple linear regression.

5. DISCUSSION

The following conclusion is drawn after considering the responses provided by the current study sample as well as the relationships and effects between the studied variables:

1. Increasing structural job resources comes in second after decreasing and hindering job demands in terms of its impact on the work engagement of the employees of the Civil Service Bureau in the Kingdom of Bahrain because the employees of the Bureau are trying to develop themselves professionally. It can be concluded that they are more

inclined towards learning which makes them enjoy learning and show curiosity for new ways to solve problems. This in turn enhances their desire to gain more functional knowledge and acquire new skills that enhance their efficiency and increase their chances of developing their abilities making them move forward towards professional development. On the other hand, it has become clear that a small number of the employees of the bureau do not decide for themselves how to accomplish their work tasks. Thus, it can be concluded that these employees lack autonomy in choosing how to accomplish the job tasks assigned to them. This reflects their lack of freedom to act according to their values and their convictions while meeting their job objectives and their inability to make decisions regarding their job tasks without the constant interference of their supervisors.

2. Decreasing and hindering job demands come first in terms of their impact on the work engagement of employees in the Civil Service Bureau in the Kingdom of Bahrain because the employees of the Bureau are trying to reduce contact with people whose problems affect them emotionally. In other words, they are keeping in contact with their peers at work who suffer from psychological problems at the lowest level. This might cause them psychological exhaustion which may negatively affect their psychological well-being and consequently lead to a decline in their job performance and low productivity. On the other hand, it was noted that the employees of the bureau are trying to ensure that they do not have to make many difficult decisions at work; thus, it can be concluded that some of those employees suffer in some cases from the ambiguity of their job role which may push them to make some decisions that are characterized by uncertainty which may constitute a challenge to them that might negatively impact their energy. As a result, this makes employees feel as if they lack control over their job decisions.

3. The increase in social job resources did not have a statistically significant impact on the work engagement of employees in the Civil Service Bureau in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Some employees of the bureau do not tend to know the opinion of their colleagues at work about their job performance. Thus, it can be concluded that some employees do not accept the feedback from their peers which may be interpreted by others as a level of self-doubt or lack of merit in the ability to accomplish the assigned tasks to the fullest extent based on possessing proper job knowledge and skills that qualify the employee to perform without the need to ask others about his or her level of performance. On the other hand, it was noted that some employees of the Bureau tend to seek advice from their co-workers. Thus, it can be concluded that employees of the Bureau receive social support in terms of exchanging views and giving advice and guidance to their peers which may enhance their access to solutions if the advice relates to one of the situations or problems they face in the course of their work.

4. The increase in challenging job demands comes in third place after increasing structural job resources in terms of their impact on the work engagement of employees in the Civil Service Bureau in the Kingdom of Bahrain since most of the employees of the Bureau regularly undertake additional tasks even though they do not receive additional remuneration for them. Thus, it can be concluded that accepting additional job tasks acts as a motivator for them to spend more energy on their work as these employees perceive it as an opportunity to achieve and prove competencies even if they are not rewarded for it by their supervisors. On the other hand, it has been found that some employees do not tend to proactively get engaged in any potential projects. Thus, it can be concluded that some employees do not actively pursue new opportunities in the event of a new project and they are reluctant to get exposed to new developments or changes that may require them to cope with a new system that may be involved in this project which hinders their attainment of potential gains and reduces opportunities to enhance their competencies.

5. In terms of work engagement, the majority of the study sample was overwhelmed with happiness when they worked hard. Thus, based on the observation that the job tasks employees engage in serve as a motivating factor, it can be inferred that these individuals experience positive emotions when they exert effort. This can be attributed to the appealing nature of the tasks which leads them to experience a state of extreme satisfaction known as "flow." This state reflects their optimal engagement and enjoyment derived from performing the job tasks. On the other

hand, it was revealed that some employees of the Bureau believe that their job does not represent a source of inspiration for them.

6. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that those employees perceive that the job tasks assigned to them involve a great deal of monotony which limits their ability to put forward any innovative proposals due to a lack of feeling that their job inspires them. Such inspiration would provoke their mental abilities to challenge existing assumptions and increase their motivation to increase their career immersion especially their dedication to work.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Several recommendations were suggested that would contribute to enhancing work engagement by broadening the practice of job crafting as follows based on the formulated conclusion and drawing on promoting the level of work engagement of those employees through job crafting in the Civil Service Bureau in the Kingdom of Bahrain:

1. To reconsider giving those employees more flexibility in deciding how to carry out the job tasks assigned to them which will make them shift towards keeping pace with the steady changes that might be required especially in light of being confident in their ability to respond to the demands of each unique situation they experience in the course of work which will drive them to be more creative.

2. It is recommended to encourage the employees of the Bureau to consult their seniors regarding the difficult decisions that they might have to take to ensure that employees are not subject to those psychological pressures arising from feeling psychologically uncomfortable. This may increase the psychological stress of the employee and make him feel as if he is experiencing a state of negative emotions. This might constitute frustration in accomplishing the tasks assigned to him and an obstacle to achieving his job goals.

3. Additionally, it is recommended to work on changing the organizational culture of many employees who consider that the feedback from co-workers about the job performance of the individual should not be perceived as depreciating the employee or an indication that he is not fully familiar with his assigned job tasks. On the contrary, feedback should be viewed as a potential tool to increase the level of efficiency and effectiveness of job performance since peers may be more able to evaluate some of the things that the employee does not notice.

4. Furthermore, it is suggested to motivate those employees to participate in the new programs that the Bureau may launch and to highlight that making more effort through such participation will make them feel that their work is more challenging and more motivating. This will increase their motivation to learn which may result in the development of their job skills and knowledge through their contribution to a more challenging work environment.

5. Finally, it is recommended to involve the employees of the Bureau in updating their job description by including them in job tasks that may convey to them a sense of challenge, thus inspiring them to deal with problems that arise in the work context from a different perspective and to challenge existing assumptions. This might enhance their level of work engagement and dedication to work in particular.

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