

Employee Job Crafting Mechanism Driven by Generative Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract: As the core driving force of the fourth industrial revolution, the new generation of generative artificial intelligence represented by ChatGPT has 'destructively' entered the workplace and changed the way employees work. It is of practical significance to explore the content and form of its impact on job crafting. Based on the job demand resource model, this study constructs a theoretical framework for the impact of workplace big language model application on job crafting. The study finds that generative artificial intelligence can trigger employee-driven job crafting by improving employee self-efficacy, and increase employee insecurity to trigger employee defensive job crafting. The results of this study broaden the relevant research in the field of generative artificial intelligence and employee job crafting, and look forward to the future research direction on the basis of the limitations and shortcomings of the current model.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Generative Artificial Intelligence, Job Crafting.

1. Introduction

As the core driving force of the fourth industrial revolution, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is changing our social and economic landscape at an alarming rate. It plays a vital role in many fields such as health care, transportation, finance, services, and education. More and more companies are beginning to integrate AI into business operations [1, 2]. The rise of a new generation of generative artificial intelligence represented by ChatGPT is a major change in the field of artificial intelligence, subverting people's understanding of artificial intelligence. With the accelerated intelligent transformation of enterprises, the application of generative artificial intelligence represented by big language model in the workplace is deepening, which not only reshapes the organizational model, but also profoundly affects the work content, work mode and other aspects of employees. Its role has gradually evolved from a simple auxiliary partner to a partner, and even become a competitor of human employees [3, 4]. In this situation, employees may take the initiative to adjust their work tasks and roles to adapt to these changes, which stimulates employee job crafting [5, 6].

At present, the research on job crafting focuses more on exploring the relationship between employees' personal characteristics and job task needs. The in-depth analysis and understanding of the phenomenon of job crafting caused by generative artificial intelligence in the working environment by providing resources is still insufficient. In addition, most of the previous studies explored the mechanism and output of job crafting in the traditional work environment from a static perspective, and rarely analyzed the driving process of job crafting from the perspective of dynamic evolution [7]. For the popularization of generative artificial intelligence in the workplace, one of the key tasks of current research is how to enable employees to actively adapt to and integrate into this emerging technology, so as to effectively reshape and optimize the working mode in the digital age. Although the current research has discussed the antecedents and outcome variables of job crafting, there is a lack of in-depth analysis of the impact path of job crafting under the application of

generative artificial intelligence [8]. Therefore, from the perspective of resource conservation, this study intends to explore the mechanism and path of the role of generative artificial intelligence in job reconstruction in the digital work environment, aiming to stimulate the work motivation of employees and help enterprises build a technology-oriented work model and environment that adapts to digital transformation.

2. Literature References

2.1. Job Crafting

2.1.1. Definition of job crafting

The origin of the concept of job crafting can be traced back to 1987. Kulik and other scholars pointed out that employees will actively adjust to their work according to the differences in the working environment. Based on this, Wrzesniewski and Dutton first proposed job crafting, a bottom-up job design method, from the perspective of role theory in 2001. Job crafting is defined as employees adjust their work content and methods according to their personal needs and interests to obtain job role identity and job meaning. This definition emphasizes that employees spontaneously change their work to meet their own needs, and divides job crafting into three types: task crafting, relationship crafting, and cognitive crafting [9]. Specifically, relationship reshaping refers to adjusting the frequency and efficiency of interaction with others; task reshaping refers to changing the scope or type of work; cognitive reshaping is the adjustment of perceptions and attitudes towards work.

On this basis, Tims and Bakker (2010) put forward a new concept of job crafting from the perspective of job requirements-resources, that is, employees take the initiative to adjust their personal abilities and needs to maintain the balance between job resources and job requirements, so as to ensure that they are able to work and maintain physical and mental health [10]. They divided job crafting into four dimensions: increasing structural work resources (expanding career development opportunities), increasing social work resources (seeking assistance from colleagues and feedback

from superiors), increasing challenging work requirements (taking on challenging tasks proactively), and reducing obstructive work requirements (alleviating job stress and fatigue).

Due to the great differences between the two perspectives, many scholars have tried to integrate the two types of job crafting. Bruning and Campion (2019) combined approach-avoidance motivation theory to integrate a job crafting model including approach role crafting, approach resource crafting, avoidant role crafting and avoidant resource crafting [11]. Bindl et al. (2018) and Lichtenthaler et al. (2018) divided job crafting into two types according to regulatory focus theory, namely, facilitating job crafting and defensive job crafting [12, 13]. Promoting job crafting refers to the proactive behavior of employees to achieve positive work results, such as increasing work resources, challenging requirements and expanding tasks, interpersonal and cognitive scope; defensive job crafting refers to the positive coping strategies adopted by employees to prevent negative work outcomes, which involves reducing the needs of potential negative effects and narrowing the scope of work tasks and interpersonal relationships. Based on the background of the digital era, Chinese scholar Shi Yanwei and his team (2023) deeply discussed and constructed the theoretical framework of "digital work reshaping," aiming to reveal how individuals actively adapt to and integrate digital technology to achieve the organic synergy between their personal preferences, technical operation ability and the needs of digital work environment [14]. This concept emphasizes the individual in the face of digital tasks, through the flexible adjustment of the actual operation and cognitive level, in order to achieve the purpose of maximizing the use of digital resources and optimizing job performance.

Although the definition of job crafting has not been unified in the academic circle, its core lies in the redefinition of work by individuals according to their own needs to exert subjective initiative and shaping, so as to enhance the sense of meaning and identity of work. This behavior is reflected in the bottom-up spontaneous and continuous adjustment of work content, and flexible adjustment according to the actual situation. The ultimate goal of individual job crafting is to improve job performance by coordinating the fit between personal resources and the working environment, and to obtain job well-being, satisfaction and job meaning.

2.1.2. Research on the antecedent variables of job crafting

The study found that factors such as personal traits, personal motivation, value orientation and cognitive attitude at the individual level will have a significant impact on job crafting behavior. In terms of personality traits, Bakker et al. (2012) based on the theory of positive personality, pointed out that employees with proactive personality tend to be more inclined to actively improve the working environment, reshape the way of working, and thus improve work efficiency [15]. Yang Jianchun and Zhang Linlin also confirmed that employees with high proactive personality will more actively adjust their work processes to better adapt to work, and are more likely to carry out job crafting behavior. In addition, Rudolph et al. (2017) found that in addition to proactive personality, extraversion, responsibility, openness, and core self-evaluation also have a positive impact on employee job crafting [16]. In terms of personal motivation and value orientation, domestic scholar Chen Jian'an et al. (2020) found that achievement motivation and consistency

culture can jointly drive self-directed job crafting [17].

Some scholars have confirmed that there is a positive correlation between individual promotion regulatory focus and individual job crafting behavior from the perspective of regulatory focus. The research of Bindl (2018) and Lichtenthaler et al. (2019) revealed that promotion-focused employees tend to pursue personal growth and development [12]. They will actively seek resources and take the initiative to undertake challenging tasks, so as to implement proactive job crafting. In contrast, defensive-oriented employees value job stability and safety more, are more sensitive to negative outcomes and work risks, and tend to adopt defensive job crafting [13]. At the level of cognitive attitude, Tims et al. (2012) and Zhang Min et al. (2021) pointed out that employees with higher self-efficacy are more likely to make proactive behaviors such as creating a positive working atmosphere and improving job performance, showing a higher tendency to job crafting [10, 18]. Based on the theory of cognitive evaluation, Liu Shuzhen et al. (2019) proposed that individual's job insecurity may stimulate their job crafting behavior, and leadership support and self-efficacy as coping resources can help individuals alleviate the pressure caused by job insecurity, thereby enhancing the positive effect of job insecurity on job crafting [19].

2.1.3. Research on the antecedent variables of job crafting

By combing the relevant research, it is found that the individual's job crafting behavior will affect the individual's attitude, behavior and results. The influence of job crafting on work attitude is mainly reflected in the individual's job satisfaction, work engagement, work well-being, work meaning and so on. Leana et al. (2009) revealed that job crafting effectively improved employee satisfaction and job involvement by promoting employees to adopt more personalized work styles. [20] Similarly, Bakker and Oerlemans (2019) also highlighted the significant positive effect of job crafting on work engagement [21]. Tims (2012) and Slemp et al. (2013) argue that job crafting can enhance employees' job competence, meet the needs of autonomous behavior, and promote the improvement of personal well-being [10, 22]. Hou Yurong et al. (2021) found that job crafting significantly enhanced employees' job well-being by improving person-job fit [23]. In addition, Gao Jing et al. (2023) based on the research background of the digital age, found that job crafting has a significant positive impact on improving the sense of work meaning of the new generation of employees [24].

The impact of job crafting on work behavior and results is mainly reflected in promoting employees' innovative behavior, work performance, creativity and so on. Xin Xun and Miao Rentao (2018) conducted research based on the perspective of innovation performance, and found that employees' job crafting by adjusting the task scope or interpersonal relationship boundary can effectively stimulate the internal driving force, enhance professional happiness, and then promote the improvement of individual innovation performance [25]. Ni Xudong (2023) demonstrated that both approach-oriented and avoidance-oriented job crafting have a positive impact on employees' job performance from the perspective of time span [26]. However, some studies have also shown that job crafting may have negative consequences. For example, the meta-analysis results of Rudolph et al. (2017) show that defensive job crafting is positively correlated with employee turnover intention [16]. Lichtenthaler and

Fischbach 's (2019) meta-analysis also found that defensive job crafting can lead to a decline in employees ' job engagement and performance, and increase their job burnout [13].

2.1.4. Research Review

By systematically reviewing and sorting out the existing literature on job crafting, it is found that although the research on the definition, measurement methods and effects of job crafting has been relatively comprehensive, most of the previous studies have focused on how job crafting plays a role in traditional work situations. The discussion of individual job crafting behavior in the new work environment is still scarce, especially in the context of the digital age, the impact mechanism of artificial intelligence on employee job crafting is rarely studied. The wide application of artificial intelligence in the field of work has changed the requirements of work tasks, work methods and work scenarios [27]. These changes require employees to correctly understand and skillfully use artificial intelligence technology to ensure that they can effectively meet the challenges of digital workflows and successfully adapt to the continuous changes in this field [27, 28]. However, the existing research on job crafting mainly discusses the relationship between employees ' own preferences and traditional work tasks, and the specific elements of the working environment of generative AI applications and their impact are not fully discussed.

2.2. Generative Artificial Intelligence

2.2.1. Definition of generative artificial intelligence

At the Dartmouth conference in 1956, the concept of artificial intelligence was first introduced by John McCarthy and others. Although scientists failed to give a precise definition at that time, the conference laid the foundation for the subsequent development of artificial intelligence. Subsequently, the concept and connotation of artificial intelligence have been gradually enriched and clarified in the continuous research of scholars. Early researchers regarded artificial intelligence as a simulation of human intelligence processes. It relies on computer technology and systems to automatically learn from experience and perform human tasks, thereby improving work efficiency [29]. Since then, most scholars have defined AI as a system that can systematically understand and interpret external data, learn from it, and flexibly apply learning outcomes to achieve specific organizational goals and tasks [30, 31]. Although the definition of artificial intelligence has undergone many iterations, there is currently no accepted definition. This is mainly due to the complexity of human intelligence itself is difficult to define, the continuous progress of artificial intelligence technology leads to frequent changes in the definition, and different stages and types of artificial intelligence are easily confused with each other [32].

Generative Artificial Intelligence is an important branch in the field of artificial intelligence. Its core is to generate new and valuable content by using computer algorithms and large-scale datasets. This technology is based on the deep integration of deep learning, complex algorithms and large-scale datasets. It can not only process and analyze information, but also independently generate brand-new and creative content, such as text, images, audio, video and even code, playing an indispensable role in deep intelligent fields such as new content creation, human-computer interaction and product innovation [33]. At present, generative artificial intelligence represented by ChatGPT and Wenxin Yiyan can

generate high-quality content in various fields, such as novels, codes, articles, etc. Generative artificial intelligence is a machine system with high intelligence and flexibility, which can be regarded as the product of the combination of traditional physical labor and the neural network functions of the human brain, namely the so-called "robot". Essentially, it stems from the continuous innovation of humans in the cutting-edge research field of "brain-like intelligence".

2.2.2. The driving factors for employees to use artificial intelligence

Unlike the early applications of artificial intelligence, generative AI has not yet been officially and widely adopted by enterprises in the workplace. The research finds that the foreign generative artificial intelligence product Chat GPT has four relatively prominent core capabilities: the ability to generate heuristic content, the ability to understand dialogue situations, the ability to execute sequential tasks, and the ability to parse programming languages. These capabilities enable Chat GPT to perform outstandingly in aspects such as natural language understanding and content generation [34]. The domestic generative artificial intelligence product iFlytek Xinghuo possesses capabilities such as multi-style and multi-task long text generation, multi-level and cross-language language understanding, broad domain open knowledge Q&A, and situational thinking chain logical reasoning, etc [35]. For employees, they have considerable autonomy in choosing whether to work with generative artificial intelligence. Currently, using Chat GPT at work is an "active" choice behavior for a small number of employees. However, there are relatively few studies on the working situations where employees "actively" choose to work with and cooperate with artificial intelligence technologies, and there is a lack of theoretical explanations for this active choice behavior. Reviewing the research of scholars at home and abroad, it is found that the discussions on the driving factors of generative artificial intelligence mainly unfold from three aspects, namely technological attitude, social environment and individual perception. In terms of technical attitudes, users have different attitudes towards different characteristics of new technologies, including vigorous promotion of technological innovations, objective acceptance of the impact of new technologies and perception of ease of use [36, 37]. In terms of the social environment, social support, including interpersonal influence, etc., is an important factor influencing users' technological adoption of generative artificial intelligence [38]. In terms of individual perception, hedonic motivation, interest, and the influence of social media have a positive impact on users' behaviors in using generative artificial intelligence [39, 40].

2.2.3. Research Review

Reviewing the research on generative artificial intelligence such as Chat GPT at home and abroad, it is found that scholars mainly focus on safety risks and legal regulation, education and other fields, and there are relatively few studies on the impact on the workplace. Although some scholars have begun to discuss the impact and challenges of generative artificial intelligence such as Chat GPT on organizational human resource management, the research is mainly carried out from the theoretical level. Since employees ' use of generative artificial intelligence is a process of mutual adaptation and change, we believe that employees will reshape their work in the process of using generative artificial intelligence. It is necessary to explore the reasons that affect employees ' use of generative artificial intelligence and the influence mechanism

of their use behavior on job performance through qualitative research. In addition, we need to make it clear that generative artificial intelligence technology cannot completely replace the role of human beings in work. They are just an auxiliary tool to improve work efficiency and quality. In the future work, it is necessary to pay attention to the balance and cooperation between artificial intelligence and human employees to ensure the integration of human intelligence cooperation, so as to achieve better work results.

3. Theoretical Framework and Research Proposition

3.1. Generative Artificial Intelligence and Facilitating Job Crafting

Facilitative job repositioning refers to the proactive behaviors taken by employees to achieve positive work outcomes, such as increasing work resources, challenging requirements, and expanding tasks, interpersonal and cognitive scopes, etc. Its core motivation stems from individuals' pursuit of resource acquisition and growth opportunities [9]. In knowledge-intensive industries, the penetration of generative artificial intelligence has significantly transformed traditional working patterns. As an emerging technological tool, generative artificial intelligence can provide new resources and capability extensions for knowledge workers through functions such as automated content generation, data analysis optimization, and decision support, thereby stimulating the possibility of them proactively reshaping their work. From a theoretical perspective, the resource conservation theory holds that individuals tend to acquire and maintain resources to meet environmental demands. As an external resource, the application of generative AI can reduce the resource consumption of employees in repetitive tasks, while freeing up resources for more creative activities, enabling employees to focus more on activities such as strategic analysis and innovative design, thereby promoting the reshaping and optimization of work processes. In addition, generative AI may enhance employees' confidence in their own abilities by providing real-time feedback and learning support, and encourage them to attempt cross-disciplinary collaboration or undertake more challenging tasks.

Proposition 1: Generative artificial intelligence is positively correlated with facilitative job reshaping.

3.2. Generative Artificial Intelligence and Facilitative Job Reengineering: The Mediating Role of Role Width Self-efficacy

Role-width self-efficacy refers to an employee's perception of their ability to perform a broader range of tasks. From the perspective of the gain path, the application of artificial intelligence will bring more idle resources to individuals. Employees can independently learn and apply new skills, thereby stimulating employees' promoting job reshaping behaviors by enhancing the self-efficacy of role breadth. On the one hand, employees can utilize artificial intelligence to handle more complex and cognitive-demanding tasks, helping them capture massive amounts of data information, conduct data analysis, and provide decision-making support, etc. This can endow employees with idle resources and work autonomy, which is conducive to strengthening their confidence in handling broader and more challenging tasks,

and thereby enhancing their sense of role breadth and self-efficacy. Research shows that role width self-efficacy is the direct driving force for employees to exhibit positive behaviors. Employees with a strong sense of role width and self-efficacy often experience greater job autonomy and control at work, and have more confidence in their ability to optimize the working environment. This makes them tend to use artificial intelligence to adjust and optimize job content and methods. Believe that you can handle the challenges brought by artificial intelligence well and gain benefits from it to implement facilitative job reshaping. Therefore, this study holds that artificial intelligence has a positive correlation with facilitative job remodeling, and artificial intelligence has a positive impact on facilitative job remodeling by enhancing role width self-efficacy.

Proposition 2: Role width self-efficacy plays a mediating role in generative artificial intelligence and facilitative job remodeling.

3.3. Generative Artificial Intelligence and Defensive Job Crafting

Defensive job crafting refers to proactive measures taken by employees to avoid negative work outcomes, such as reducing negative impact requirements and narrowing the scope of work tasks and interpersonal relationships. Its core motivation is resource protection and risk aversion. The application of generative artificial intelligence represented by the big language model in the workplace is deepening. It not only reshapes the organizational model, but also profoundly affects the work content, work mode and other aspects of employees. Its role has gradually evolved from a simple auxiliary partner to a partner, and even becomes a competitor of human employees. Its alternative threat to traditional knowledge work is very likely to trigger employees' defensive response. Technology shock theory points out that the introduction of new technologies may cause stress through role ambiguity, increased workload or outdated skills. The 'black box' and fast iteration characteristics of generative AI are very likely to aggravate employees' concerns about their role value and promote them to maintain occupational safety through defensive job crafting. For example, employees may reduce their commitment to AI's more alternative tasks, and instead emphasize human-specific skills such as emotional communication and complex decision-making to achieve self-protection. In addition, the conservation of resources theory further explains that when individuals perceive the risk of resource loss, they will give priority to defensive strategies to prevent further loss. In this context, employees may think that it is useless to consume more resources to engage in non-role behavior, such as constantly avoiding potential threats and risks in work, sticking to the existing work mode rather than actively exploring innovation, reducing the scope of work tasks and interpersonal interaction, etc., thus triggering employees' defensive job crafting behavior.

Proposition 3: There is a positive correlation between generative artificial intelligence and defensive job crafting.

3.4. Generative Artificial Intelligence and Defensive Job Crafting: The Mediating Role of Job Insecurity

Job insecurity refers to the individual's anxiety about the stability of future work perceived in their professional environment, which reflects the individual's internal anxiety and uncertainty about the possible job instability. In the face

of uncertainty or change in the work environment, employees often experience a sense of job insecurity. This negative emotional experience is considered as a resource loss in the COR theory [13]. On the one hand, the self-decision-making ability and automatic execution function shown by artificial intelligence technology pose potential challenges to employees' job positions, skill needs and professional knowledge fields, which not only reshapes the role positioning of traditional professions, but also puts forward the need for upgrading and transformation of the existing skill system. On the other hand, the integration of artificial intelligence technology into the work field will not only reshape the work process, innovate the work methods, but also redefine the work characteristics. By integrating and reconstructing the task composition of existing jobs, improving the level of skills required for jobs, and then promoting employees to realize the phenomenon of artificial intelligence-driven job substitution and its accompanying potential unemployment risk. These will undoubtedly aggravate employees' job insecurity, constantly consume individual energy and work resources, and trigger a series of negative consequences. According to COR theory, actual or potential resource loss can produce negative experiences and trigger psychological stress responses. When employees perceive that their sense of job security is threatened but they cannot respond effectively, it will stimulate individual self-protection mechanisms, so that individuals believe that it is useless to consume more resources to engage in extra-role behaviors, such as constantly avoiding job threats and risks, narrowing the scope of work tasks and interpersonal relationships, etc., thus triggering employees' defensive job crafting behavior. Therefore, this study believes that generative artificial intelligence promotes employees' defensive job crafting behavior by enhancing employees' job insecurity.

Proposition 4: Job insecurity plays a mediating role in generative artificial intelligence and defensive job crafting.

4. Analysis and Discussion

Based on the conservation of resources theory, this study reveals the excitation mechanism of generative AI application on job crafting, and explores the influence path of generative AI on job crafting. First of all, this study expands the research field and content of job crafting. The existing research on job crafting mainly focuses on its results, and mainly focuses on how job crafting plays a role in traditional work situations, and generally regards job crafting as a single positive behavior. With the introduction of the big language model into the work scenario, there is little discussion on how the generative artificial intelligence in the context of the digital economy causes employees to reshape their positive work and negative work. Therefore, based on the conservation of resources theory, this paper further fills the research gap of job crafting and broadens the research context and scope of job crafting. Secondly, this study enriches the research of generative artificial intelligence on job crafting of knowledge workers in the context of digital intelligence work from the perspective of resource conservation theory. The existing literature on artificial intelligence is mainly carried out from a macro perspective. Although organizational psychologists are increasingly concerned about the consequences of the introduction of artificial intelligence in the workplace, empirical research on the impact on individual employees is still scarce. With the wide application of big language models

in the field of work, helping employees actively adapt to new artificial intelligence technologies is an important task for current research on job crafting in the digital age. On this basis, this paper expands the related research of generative artificial intelligence, and tries to explore the mechanism of generative artificial intelligence on employee job crafting.

This research perspective can help managers more comprehensively understand the impact of employees' psychological state on employees' work behavior. In the work environment, promotive job crafting can have a positive impact on the organization and individual employees, while defensive job crafting employees tend to have more negative work attitudes and behaviors, which may not only hinder personal growth, but also is not conducive to the improvement of overall organizational effectiveness. Therefore, organizations can reduce employees' willingness to produce defensive job crafting by implementing various incentives, such as moderate appreciation by leaders, encouraging employees to participate in decision-making, and supporting employees to learn new skills. From this point of view, enterprises can reduce the psychological tendency of employees' defensive job crafting through a series of incentive strategies, such as moderate appreciation of the leadership, encouraging employees to participate in decision-making, and providing training to help them master new skills. Through in-depth understanding of the role of generative artificial intelligence in the working environment, enterprises should build an inclusive cultural environment, rationally allocate internal resources and optimize processes, so as to fully release the potential of artificial intelligence, promote the sustainable development of enterprises and help realize the innovation and reshaping of employees' working mode.

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