Meaningful Components of the “Job-Crafting” Concept: Approaches to Operationalization and Functioning Mechanisms

S.D. Gurieva[a], E.A. Yumkina[b] , A.V. Postanina[c], T.G. Yanicheva[d], L.V. Mararitsa[e]
Department of Social Psychology, St. Petersburg State University, 7/9 Universitetskaya inb., Saint-Petersburg, Russia
s.gurieva@spbu.ru; katerinayum.@mail.ru; studentolimp14@yandex.ru; kinunen@yandex.ru; arisamararitsa@mail.ru

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Abstract: The article presents a meta-analysis of scientific literature on the problem of proactive human behavior in the workplace (job-shifting). It is found that the concepts of proactive behavior and job-shifting were defined by researchers through different methodological bases, which made it difficult to operationalize them correctly and use them in intervention programs. As a result, the author's definition of the phenomenon under study was proposed. The most general is the construct of proactivity as the orientation of the subject of activity. It is substantiated that the exact synonyms in the logical series are proactive work construction and job crafting. Such meaningful criteria of job crafting as purposefulness, constructive creativity, and independence are specified. Various typologies of proactive behavior are considered and the author's classification based on the meaningful criteria and spheres of job crafting is proposed. The criterion of purposefulness differentiates types of proactive working behavior as directed to the realization of personal, group,organizational or universal values. The criterion of constructive creativity differentiates the measure of originality of the changes made and separates innovative or reproductive behaviors (in task crafting). The criterion of independence allows differentiating proactive actions by the degree of independence from the social context (in relationship crafting). All this together with taking into account the constructive and destructive consequences of proactivity formed the basis for modeling the mechanisms of job crafting at the subject level. The following concepts were proposed: existential and destructive crafting, supportive and dependent crafting, professional and debilitating crafting.

1 INTRODUCTION

We propose to imagine a real situation. A temple is being built, and people (workers) are carrying heavy stones to the top of the mountain. And you and I were witnesses of this process. On theway we met three people. The first person carrying the stone walks with a radiant and happy face. When asked - What are you doing? - he answered that thanks to his labor on the top of the mountain will appear a divine temple, which will remain in history, where people will go for many years. The second person walks weary, tired, hardly moving his legs. When asked - What are you doing? - he answered that he was carrying a heavy stone, weighing more than 9 kilograms, 273 in number, and thatthere is still a lot left, he does not see the end of the construction of the temple. The third man walks with a detached and indifferent face. When asked - What are you doing? - he replied that he can't waitfor the day to be over and he can't wait to see his family. A similar situation describing three differentemployee behaviors can be observed within a modern organization. In this connection, the main question arises: how can the three different patterns of behavior be explained and what mechanisms underlie their functioning.

The current situation in the labor sphere is characterized by a tendency towards the demandfor

[a] https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4305-432X
[b] https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4539-7235
[c] https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0613-7353
[d] https://orcid.org/0009-0002-7107-099X
[e] https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3858-5369

a new type of specialist who would be effective in the conditions of multitasking and uncertainty. In order to increase the innovative potential of employees, in a number of companies there is a growingdemand for special educational programs on job crafting that stimulate proactive behavior of employees. Proactive human behavior is among the intensively developed concepts in modern applied psychology and has a wide range of applications, including learning, work, interpersonal relationships, and self-development. A distinctive feature of proactive behavior is the conscious pursuit of personaland professional goals, as well as the search for new opportunities for one's growth and development.

Certainly, awareness alone in showing personal initiative is not enough for a person to acquirenot only psychological resistance to constant stresses, but also to become creative in these conditions.

Nor can these programs be reduced to motivational training. As an earlier review of job-crafting interventions (Kazantseva, Gurieva, Mararitza, 2022) showed, the tasks of such programs involve serious internal work of a person on himself, starting from the transformation of his leading goals and values and ending with changes in communication with people around him.

The most important criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of an educational program is a detailed elaboration of the main concepts that determine its content, targets of diagnostics and psychological intervention. The diversity of approaches to the definition of proactivity and job crafting,as well as the evidence that intervention programs do not always produce the desired results (van den Heuvel, Demerouti, Peeters, 2015) indicate the existence of a serious methodological problem. The root of this problem lies, in our opinion, in the gap between the depth of expected results and the short-term nature of educational interventions. In this regard, the aim of this paper is to go beyond narrow approaches and analyze different points of view on the definition of proactive human work behavior as the main substantive criterion of job crafting. On this basis, to formulate clear criteria for the typology of different types of job-shifting, which are important for the subsequent operationalization of this concept and the development of methods for its diagnosis.

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is a thematic meta-analysis of review, theoretical and empirical articles on the problem of job crafting. The search was carried out in the Google Academy database using the keywords: "job crafting", "proactive personality", "proactive behavior". The articles were selected according to the criteria of relevance, citation and topicality.

3 RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Based on the results of the systematic review and comparative analysis, two tables were compiled tosee the stages of the content of the concept of proactive behavior (Table 1) and job-crafting (Table 2).

Table 1: Criteria for determining an employee's proactive behavior at work.

Content criteria proactive behavior	Proactive behavior is understood as.	Author , source.
Dispositional approach		
Determination Initiative Responsibility	Responsible approach to achieving objectives	(Bateman, Crant, 1993)
Personal success Forecasting problems	Achieving personal success and anticipating possible problems	Kanfer R., Chen G. (Kanfer, Chen, 2008)
Determination Going beyond the work situation	Trying to get out of the situation situations, not limited to resources and conditions	(Ilyina, Lepekhin, Manichev, 2022)
Motivational approach		
Determination Improving conditions and environment	Emphasison consciou s accomplishment set goal	(Swietlik, 1968)
Self-organization Internal locus controls	The desire for self-organization, reinforcing the internal locus of control	(Petrou, Bakker, 2016)
Positive contribution of a man in his personal and professional development	Strengthening the positive contribution of the individual to his or her personal and professional development	Demerouti E., et. al (Demerouti, Hewett, Haun, 2020)
Self-	The process of	(Peeters,

development Searching for new opportunities	self-development through search new opportunities	Arts, Demerouti, et al. 2016)
Self-development Overcoming obstacle	Activities aimed at overcoming obstacles	(Grant, Ashford, 2008)
determination Self-development Conversion environments	Sustainable tendency of the personality to self-development	(Parker, Wil liams, Tur ner, 2006)
Will Consciousness Spontaneity Meta-needs Responsibility	Free manifestation by the individual of his or her highest spiritual needs	(Erzin, Epanchintseva, 2013)

Table 2: Criteria for defining job crafting.

Content criteria job crafting	Job crafting is understood as.	Author , source.
Behavioral approach		
Independence Optimization of personal and work goals	changes that workers independently make to their own work requirements and work resources to achieve and/or optimize their personal (work) goals.	(Tims,Bakker, Derks, 2012)
Cognitivist approach		
Creativity Improvisation Self-determination Self-determination	Creative approach to rethinking your workand yourself in it	(Wrzesniewski , Dutton, 2001)
Hierarchical (synthetic) approach (cognitive-behavioral)		
Activity Initiative Achieving personal goals and values	ways in which employees actively initiate changes in the physical, cognitive or social characteristics of their work. It is an informal process that employees use to shape their work practices to fit their personal interests and values.	(Slemp, Vella-Brodrick, 2013)
Changes Getting closer to the goal	Work change attitudes that support the achievement of personal and organizational goals	(Zhang., Parker, 2006).

4 CRITERIA FOR DEFINING PROACTIVITY AND PROACTIVE BEHAVIOR

Let us consider the differentiation of the concepts of personal proactivity and proactive behavior, clearly distinguished in the American and European scientific schools. Thus, in the context of the American approach, proactivity is understood as a disposition of personality In other words, as an attitude in which affective, cognitive and behavioral components can be distinguished. According to the European school, proactivity is an inherent property of a person. Let us consider the essence of these approaches in more detail.

4.1 A dispositional approach to defining proactivity

The concept of disposition implies a person's readiness to act in a certain way in accordance with the situation. Proactive behavior in this case is considered as a direct expression of disposition to initiatechanges in order to influence the situation. The theoretical basis of the dispositional approach goes back to the theory of symbolic interactionism (Bateman, Crant, 1993). E. Demerouti (Demerouti et al.,2020), P. Petrou (Petrou et al., 2018) drew attention

to the fact that the disposition of proactivity can be stimulated by environmental factors such as support from colleagues, leaders and the organization, as well as the availability of opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Disposition is a more plastic formation of personality, reflecting its stable relationship with the environment. V.A. Yadov developed the dispositional theory of personality, which allows us to consider human activity on a level-by-level basis, distinguishing in it dispositions of the highest level of integration (value orientations) and more private regulators of deeds and actions (Self-regulation and forecasting..., 2013). By virtue of its connection to the human-situation system, dispositions are a suitable target for training.

4.2 A motivational approach to defining proactivity

One of the first works on proactivity (Swietlik, 1968) analyzed in detail what theories of personality were used to create the construct of proactivity. It combined the psychoanalytical view of Z. Freud (the dichotomy of unconscious and conscious behavior), the concept of needs of A. Maslow (in particular, the idea of self-actualization), the position on the innate proactivity of a person of G. Allport, the theory of needs of G. Murray (Swietlik, 1968). The generalizing point in all these approaches is the idea of innate activity and creative beginning of personality (called "ego", "self" or "self"), which at every moment of time carries out the choice of goals, ways of action and decision-making. In addition, in modern works on proactivity (Erzin, Epanchintseva, 2013), (Hidayat et al., 2023) one can often see references to the work of V. Frankl, where he emphasized the importance of personal meaning in a person's responsible attitude to his or her own life (Frankl, 1990, p. 67-68).

The main difference between this approach and the dispositional approach is that proactivity is rooted in the biological structure of a living organism. Proactive behavior here can be understood as a form of self-actualization and expression of energy constantly circulating in the human body. If a person, for some reason, does not show initiative, it indicates the presence of barriers to the release ofhis energy, but proactivity itself is an inherent attribute of a person.

Research in this vein (Frese, Fay, 2001) shows that proactive individuals are typically characterized by a high degree of motivation to achieve goals, resourcefulness, and the ability to anticipate and avoid potential problems. Individuals with high proactivity are more likely to become leaders because they seek out new opportunities for growth and development, as well as take an active role in decision-making and problem solving.

People who exhibit proactive traits tend to be more successful in their careers, training and education, and relationships with others. They are more prone to self-development and adaptation to changing circumstances.

From the perspective of the motivational approach, short-term interventions can work with barriers that prevent the expression of personal proactivity. In this approach, however, long-term therapeutic work with the person is relevant in order to achieve profound change.

Now that we have reviewed the main methodological attitudes in understanding proactivity, let usanalyze the constructs of proactive work behavior and job crafting that are more particular to this concept.

5 CRITERIA FOR DEFINING JOB CRAFTING

Many researchers at the level of common sense point out the similarity of proactive behavior of personality and job-crafting, but the same researchers point out the difficulties in attempts to establish logical connections between them (Zhang, Parker, 2019), (Niessen, Weseler, Kostova, 2016), (Tims, Bakker, 2010). The selection of initial methodological positions shows that the conceptualization of the concepts of proactive behavior and job-crafting was carried out on different grounds. Researchers did not set a special task of in-depth analysis of the approaches to understanding the nature of personality. Thus, if we turn to Table 2, we can see that the definitions of job-shifting were built either on the basis of behavioral approach, or on the basis of cognitive approach, or in the logic of synthesis of these two views with the recognition of the independence of cognitive and behavioral changes.

In our opinion, if we try to summarize the data from Tables 1 and 2, we can see that the behavioral definition of job-crafting is close to the dispositional approach to understanding proactive behavior, and the cognitive definition with its emphasis on the transformation of internal meanings finds common ground with the motivational approach to proactivity. In a strict sense, the above methodological attitudes cannot be synthesized without a serious rethinking of

more general methodological assumptions. It is important for authors developing methods of diagnostics or interventions in the field of job-crafting to clearly indicate within the framework of which psychological direction they are being developed.

In this regard, we will offer our own view on the correlation of the analyzed concepts. Thus, there is a general category of proactivity as a characteristic of the orientation of the subject of activity. This orientation implies a goal-oriented, conscious and creative attitude of the subject to reality (including to himself). The object of this orientation can be many phenomena of personal and professional life. Therefore, it is reasonable to distinguish proactivity in personal life and proactivity at work.

Proactivity and crafting coincide in their functional meaning in terms of making changes or transforming reality. At the same time, the concept of crafting clearly emphasizes the creative and improvement aspect[1] . In this respect, the concept of crafting is more precise and narrower than proactivity.

Further, because proactivity (and crafting) is related to activity, it has an internal plan (presentedto the subject) and an external plan (expressed in behavior). Hence, we can speak of proactivity with respect to inner meanings (cognitive crafting) and proactive behavior (behavioral crafting). As can be seen, with respect to the internal plan of action, it is not possible to compare proactivity with crafting without some clarifying term. Earlier work proposed the term proactive job construction as an exact synonym of job crafting (Kazantseva, Gurieva, & Mararitza, 2022). In this sense, proactive job construction is also synonymous with proactive work behavior.

Finally, we understand job crafting (proactive behavior at work) as an *employee's independent, planned activity aimed at constructive improvements in the work process and personal life, taking into account the tactical and strategic development goals of both the individual and the organization*.

6 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

An important applied consequence of the formulation of the definitions is a typology that allowsstructuring the diversity of initiative shown by people.

7 TYPOLOGIES OF JOB CRAFTING

Review works devoted to proactive behavior at work or job crafting revealed a great variety of itsforms. Thus, A.M. Grant described 14 types of proactive actions of employees (Grant, Ashford, 2008):seeking feedback; taking initiative in achieving personal and organizational goals; actively adapting to new conditions; expressing their views, "selling"/promoting the problem, taking responsibility, planned influence on individuals and groups, expanding the work role, revising their tasks, creating tasks, breaking rules, implementing ideas and solving problems, harming individuals and organizations, creating social networks. This list indicates that there is an urgent need in the scientific community to systematize and streamline proactive behavior.

One of the first to propose a clear set of criteria for systematizing multiple forms of proactive employee action was M. Frese and D. Fay. They assumed that if a person's behavior at work is deliberate (purposeful), future-oriented and planned, it can be regarded as proactive. The authors especially emphasize the role of future orientation in proactivity or the ability to anticipate any threat or problem by a person, because it is thanks to it that a new goal of activity and an algorithm for its achievement are born (Frese, Fay, 2001).

There are other approaches to the typology of proactive behavior in the workplace. Some authors focus their attention on what consequences an employee's initiative can have for the organization. Consequently, constructive and destructive proactive behavior is distinguished (Belschak, Den Hartog,Fay, 2010). Constructive behavior includes such behavior that is accompanied by an increase in productivity and job satisfaction of employees, and an increase in the company's profits. Destructive or negative proactive behavior involves causing physical or moral harm to an individual or to the company as a whole (Hou, Huang, 2021), resulting in increased employee dissatisfaction, increased tension in work units, which ultimately leads to losses to the organization itself. It is important to note that the destructive moment in proactive behavior is usually caused by two factors. The first is relatedto the low qualification of the employee (Belschak, Den Hartog, Fay, 2010), when negative consequences from the initiative are related to the lack of knowledge, skills or abilities, or their overestimation. The second factor relates to the moral sphere and is represented by a pronounced dominance on the pursuit of selfish goals

at any cost. With regard to this motive, we would like to emphasize a deeper premise associated with the alienated attitude of the employee to the results of his work.

Other authors classify proactive behavior depending on the employee's length of service in the company (Cooper-Thomas, Burke, 2012). Thus, proactive behavior of a newcomer and a long-time team member is considered. The specificity of the newcomer's behavior is seen in the fact that it is mainly focused on seeking feedback, requesting coaching in order to maximize adaptation to the new work environment. As adaptation progresses, the focus of proactivity shifts to taking the initiative to improve the work process.

The most popular typology of proactive behavior at work is proposed by M. A. Griffin et al. analyzing employee proactivity at the level (Griffin, Neal, Parker, 2007):

1) individualized tasks;
2) of the work team;
3) organizations.

Within each of these levels, behaviors are assessed such as:

(a) Initiating workflow improvements;
b) productive creativity (developing new ways of performing tasks);
c) introduction of new ways/technologies into the work process.

Based on these criteria, well-established scales have been developed to assess proactivity in the workplace.

Another typology of working proactive behavior belongs to O.N. Ilyina, N.N. Lepekhin, S.A. Manichev. It is based on the principle of structuring various types of proactive behavior depending onthe sphere of organizational activity (Ilyina, Lepekhin, Manichev, 2022). The authors describe 7 types of proactive behavior: speech behavior; search for resources and social support; proactive knowledge-based assistance; proactive security of sociotechnical systems; proactive customer service; proactive career building; professional health.

In our opinion, it is advisable to make a typology of proactive behavior based, on the one hand, on universal criteria, independent of any spheres of activity, where it can be significantly fragmented. On the other hand, in socio-psychological terms, it is essential to take into account the social context in which proactive behavior is implemented.

In this regard, we made an attempt to develop a typology of proactive human behavior, based on the approaches of M. Frese, D. Fay (universal criteria) (Frese, Fay, 2001) and M. A. Griffin, A. Neal and S. K. Parker (social context) (Griffin, Neal, Parker, 2007). The following universal criteria of proactive behavior are given in our proposed definition of proactive behavior: purposefulness, constructive creativity, and autonomy.

The first criterion fits well with the level consideration of the social context and allows us to distinguish four forms of individual proactive behavior:

1. aimed at achieving personal goals;
2. aimed at achieving the goals of the working group;
3. aimed at achieving the goals of the organization;
4. aimed at the realization of universal goals and values.

Further, the second criterion - constructive creativity (i.e. creative character) allows to distinguish innovative and reproductive proactive behavior. Changes initiated by an employee can be completely original developments or based on a combination of already existing schemes, techniques and ways ofperforming activities.

The third criterion - independence in conjunction with involvement allows us to speak about alienated and non-alienated proactive behavior of a person. In the case of non-alienated proactive behavior, all elements or stages of a person's activity are under his/her control. In other words, it is complete or absolute proactivity. In the case of alienated proactive behavior, the initiative of changes concerns only a separate stage of activity and is not fully subordinated to the will of the person.

Finally, in terms of content, proactive actions can be categorized according to the key areas of job craft (Table 3, Figure 1):

Table 3: The content of human behavior according to the job craft typology.

Areas of job crafting	The content of human behavior
Sense crafting	Proactive human activity to initiate and rethink the goals and values of the activity
Task crafting	Proactive human activity on rethinking and optimizing ways ofactivity
Relationship crafting	Proactive activity of an individual to change and developrelationships with colleagues

Job-crafting: mechanisms of functioning

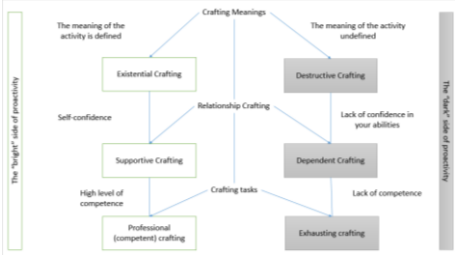
After analyzing the typology of job crafting, let us turn to its mechanisms and effects. The analysisof empirical data shows that proactive behavior at work has correlations with conscientiousness, extraversion from the Big Five factors, objective labor productivity and self-efficacy. Moreover, correlations of proactive employee behavior with educational attainment, general intellectual ability, and innovation are additionally noted (Tornau, Frese, 2012). It is important that the authors differentially considered the links with proactivity as a personality trait and with proactive behavior. This material suggests that the underlying mechanism of job-crafting is internal work with meanings or cognitive crafting.

In addition, there are examples of the disruptive sides of proactive behavior at work (Belschak, Den Hartog, Fay, 2010). These disruptive sides correspond perfectly to the three domains of job crafting.

Thus, when there is a deficit of meaningfulness of one's activity in global terms (meaning crafting),there is an excessive emotional attitude of proactive people to their work. Identifying their goals with the company's goals, they perceive its problems as their own and suffer more from burnout. Another negative effect is related to the fact that employees are basically alienated from their activity, seeing no meaning for themselves in anything, but they try to overcome it through feverish activity. When there is excessive solicitation of feedback from colleagues (relationship crafting), there is increased irritation from coworkers. When proactivity is combined with low skills (task crafting), the risk of miscalculation and mistakes increases (Belschak, Den Hartog, Fay, 2010).

Thus, taking into account all these facts and based on the hierarchical model of job crafting, it is proposed to expand and supplement it, resulting in the first introduction of a whole set of interrelated concepts (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2).

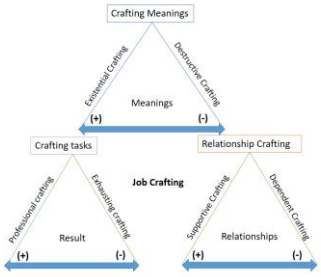
Table 3: The content of human behavior according to the job craft typology.



So, the main starting point is meaning crafting. Special mental actions of a person to search foror redefine the meanings of his/her activity are proposed to be called *existential crafting*. The result ofthis is the determination of the global meaning of one's activity (in the limit, up to the meaning of life). The main psychological mechanism is self-reflection.

In a special dialectical connection with the concept of existential crafting is *destructive crafting*, which is understood as special mental actions to avoid searching for certainty or constructive rethinkingof the meanings of one's activity. In essence, destructive crafting is based on the activation of psychological defenses of the personality. It should be emphasized that a person's psychological defenses can also perform a constructive function, supporting a certain meaning of activity (or belief). There are two mechanisms in destructive crafting: (a) when psychological defenses are directed againstthe meaningfulness of life and activity in principle, or (b) when a person defends himself against the critical evaluation of an already irrelevant belief and the formation of a new one.

Table 3: The content of human behavior according to the job craft typology



The next pair of concepts refers to relationship crafting. Under *supportive crafting we* understand special communicative actions of a person to establish and strengthen relations with colleagues for the purpose of mutual support and mutual development. The distinctive side of supportive crafting is that a person has adequate self-esteem, self-confidence, due to which support is required within the framework of objective necessity. On the contrary, when a person's self-esteem is underestimated, he/she begins to feel a constant need for support and feedback, in connection with which the concept of *dependent crafting is* proposed - special communicative actions of a person to establish and strengthen relationships with colleagues in order to compensate for his/her own low self- esteem. Thus, dependent crafting is

compensatory in nature.

Finally, the third pair of concepts refers to task crafting. Here we can distinguish *professional (competent) crafting* as special actions of a person on creative transformation of ways of performing their everyday tasks, based on a high level of knowledge and skills. If there is a lack of competence, *we* can speak about *exhausting crafting* as special actions of a person to transform ways of performing his/her everyday tasks, which are compensatory and rather neurotic in nature due to low competence. In exhausting crafting, one may get the impression that a person is constantly engaged in some activeactivity, but its final result is minimal.

As a result, existential, supportive, and professional crafting belong, figuratively speaking, to the "light triad" of proactive personality orientation, whereas destructive, dependent, and debilitating make up the "dark triad" of proactivity.

8 CONCLUSION

In the course of comparative analysis of various definitions of proactive behavior, it was found that there are two approaches to its conceptualization: dispositional and motivational. The first one considers the system of a person's attitudes and activities taking into account the social context. The second one emphasizes the inner need of an individual to maximize his or her potential.

Comparison of various definitions of proactive behavior at work and job-crafting has shown that they are developed from different general methodological approaches, so that despite their proximity from the point of view of common sense, researchers face difficulties in their correct logical correlation.We have made an attempt to overcome this difficulty in the context of the activity approach. Thus, proactivity is the broadest concept in this series and distinguishes the orientation of the subject of activity. If proactivity characterizes a conscious and purposeful transformation of the situation, then in crafting the criterion of creativity and perfection is added. In the external plan of activity proactive behavior and behavioral crafting coincide. Internally, the comparison of the concepts requires clarification. This is the identification of proactive job design, proactive behavior at work and job crafting. As a result, the author's definition of job-shifting is proposed.

The analysis of various typologies of proactive behavior at work allowed us to develop our own gradation of it on the basis of three content criteria: purposefulness, constructive creativity, and independence. Thus, correlation of purposefulness with the ethical side of activity and level consideration allowed us to propose a typology of internal mental actions on purposefulness. The criterion of constructive creativity makes it possible to gradate the measure of originality of the changes made. The criterion of independence allows differentiating proactive actions by the degree of independence from some external factor.

All this together with the constructive and destructive consequences of proactivity gave grounds for modeling the mechanisms of crafting functioning at the subject level and proposed six new concepts: existential and destructive crafting, supportive and dependent crafting, professional and debilitating crafting. Further research is supposed to be directed towards the operational development of these constructs and the creation of diagnostic scales that will improve the assessment of the effectiveness of educational programs on job-crafting.

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