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JOB CRAFTING IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR PROJECT SUCCESS AND CAREER SATISFACTION

Abstract

There is growing evidence that project managers are a heterogeneous group of people. Practitioners hold competing perspectives of project managing and have increasingly greater agency in the choice of tools and method used in their roles. Using job crafting theory, we contribute to the literature on project management careers by measuring how, and to what extent, project managers customise their jobs to better fit their motives, strengths and passions. Job crafting involves self-initiated behaviours that shape, mould, and change job design to better suit the individual. Using structural equation modelling and a sample of IT project managers (N=245) the objectives of the paper seek to i) establish whether one's perspective of project management predicts job crafting behaviour, ii) explore how job crafting is used in project management and, iii) ascertain whether the benefit of job crafting is individual, project-based or both. The findings show that a value creation perspective of project management predicts job crafting behaviour. A performative link between task crafting and project success is established which in turn impacts long term career satisfaction. In contrast, relational crafting by project managers positively contributes to job satisfaction, but does not support project success.

Keywords: *job crafting, project management, IT professionals*

1. Introduction

The project management field is perhaps best known for successfully institutionalizing various standards of best practice from a multidisciplinary perspective (Akkermans et al., 2019; Crawford, 2007; Ahlemann et al., 2009). Traditional project management praxis tends to be prescriptive and control orientated (Engwall, 1992; Packendorff, 1995; Söderlund, 2004; Hodgson and Paton, 2016). For some, this represents an ideology of predictability and control (Hodgson and Cicmil, 2007) and, for others, 'epistemological puberty' (Crawford *et al.*, 2006; Pant and Baroudi, 2008; Thomas and Mengel, 2008; Gillard, 2009; Ramazani and Jergeas, 2015; Lauren and Schreiber, 2017). Flexible/agile project management (c.f. Smith & Oltmann, 2010; Burgan & Burgan, 2012) has grown in both popularity and legitimacy. Our focus is not project management methodology per se. There is a difference between knowledge of methodology and what expert practitioners actually do (Cooke-Davies et al, 2007; Papke-Shields et al., 2010; Matos et al., 2019). Our interest is in the latter; the human dimension of project work, or what Smith calls the "wily, shrewd skills...the know-how of a capable project performer" (2007:11). While the extant literature acknowledges different perspectives of project management (PM), there is a lack of theoretical integration between project management perspectives (PPM), and how project managers actually use job crafting to achieve project success. We take a career theory perspective (Keegan, Ringhofer, & Huemann, 2018; Akkermans et al., 2020) and explore how job crafting, self-initiated behaviours aimed at changing the scope of one's job tasks, interactions and meaning, contributes to a structured approach to project flexibility at the individual level.

Project managers are not a uniform group of people, they differ in how they see project *managing* and in terms of how and why they pursue project careers (McKevitt, et al, 2017). In short, different perspectives of project management (PPM) coexist. These range from a narrow ('task') perspective to a broader ('value-creation') approach (Andersen, 2008; 2016). The task perspective reflects the traditional "one-size-fits-all" approach to PM where project success is meeting planned time, cost and quality criteria. The value-creation perspective accepts moving targets, organisation politics and ultimately prioritises the creation of value in the permanent organisation.

This paper seeks to better understand individual project flexibility using the lens of job crafting behaviours (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). Job crafting captures what employees do to voluntarily redesign their jobs in ways that can foster job satisfaction, as well as engagement, resilience, and ability to thrive at work (Berg *et al.*, 2008). This is conceptualised as a self-driven process and is motivated by specific needs and preferences that involve individuals shaping their job (Berg *et al.*, 2010) without changing the core of their work (Bruning & Campion, 2018). Organisations generally design work as embodied in job descriptions (Humphrey *et al.*, 2007), however it is challenging for organisations to design jobs that fit the specific needs of all individual employees (Grant & Parker, 2009). The involvement of individuals in shaping their job, with consideration of their idiosyncratic characteristics and preferences is, therefore, increasingly viewed as important (Jooss *et al.*, 2021). Task, relational and cognitive job crafting are specific self-initiated behaviours that shape, mould, and change job design to better suit the individual. In contrast to methodological approaches, flexibility will be studied using a 'bottom-up' or employee driven form of work redesign. Our first research objective is to establish whether one's perspective of project management (PPM) influence job crafting behaviour.

While the general management literature has highlighted the flexibility and proactivity involved in job crafting (Tims *et al.*, 2013), little is known about how these behaviours manifest in the context of project environments. It is currently unclear how job crafting theory contributes to project flexibility. The second objective explores how job crafting is used in project management, specifically if project managers use all or some combination of task, relational and cognitive crafting. Finally, the literature has established that the target and principal beneficiary of job crafting behaviour is the individual job crafter. The final objective examines the consequences of job crafting behaviour on project success, job and career satisfaction. Our goal is to provide much needed insight into whether the benefits of job crafting are exclusively individual, project-based or both.

The paper contributes to the literature in several ways. We argue that job crafting processes are constructive and legitimate as opposed to idiosyncratic. This increases the normative value of job crafting in project management, from one which is currently seen as a voluntary behaviour, to one that is strategically important. We posit that an

individual's perspective of project management (PMM) matters to the extent that the value-creation perspective predicts greater task, relational and cognitive job crafting behaviour. Our empirical evidence finds a performative link between the value creation perspective of PM, task crafting behaviour, project success and career satisfaction. Interestingly, only task crafting supported project success and, contrary to the literature, this relationship did not impact short term job satisfaction. The flexibility that bottom-up task crafting offers is essentially used to get the project "over the line" (i.e., achieve project success). This, in turn, positively impacts long term career satisfaction. In contrast, relational crafting positively contributes to job satisfaction but does not support project success. This suggests that the benefit of decisions a PM makes to change the number and quality of social interactions whilst getting the project "over the line" is temporal in nature and impact.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. First, a review of the literature defines the concepts of interest including job crafting processes, and outcomes. We then propose a theoretical model that is subsequently empirically tested. The methods section defines the sample, as well as the scales and constructs used to measure the variables of interest.

2. Literature review

The normative question of how project managers should practice their craft is a recurring theme in the project management literature (Müller and Jugdev, 2012). A top-down approach to PM job design is generally accepted. Standards, guides and principles of PM are periodically revised and certified (ref required). However, proponents of job crafting argue that job boundaries, the meaning of work, and work identities are not fully determined by formal job requirements (Berg et al., 2013). The concept of job crafting has gained significant interest from scholars over the last 20 years. The interest recognises the fact that individuals play a key role in the design of their own roles (e.g. Miner, 1987) and the positive relationship between job crafting and performance (Lee and Lee, 2018). For example, studies have been undertaken among childcare educators where job crafting was established as a form of employee proactivity (Leana, et al., 2009). Additional research into job crafting is evident among nursing (Bakker 2018; Chang et al, 2020; Baghdadi et al., 2021) management

consultants (Singh and Singh, 2016) and salespersons (Luu, 2020). Individuals have the latitude to define and enact the job, acting as “job crafters”. Common to definitions of job crafting is that it is bottom-up in nature (Niessen et al., 2016).

2.1 Job Crafting definitions and dimensions

Two dominant approaches to job crafting are the role-based and resource-based perspectives (Bruning and Campion, 2018). The former defines job crafting in terms of the individual’s work role and the changes he or she makes to the boundaries of the task, as well as the relational and cognitive domains of work. According to Berg *et al.* (2008: 211) “job crafting captures what employees do to *redesign their own jobs* in ways that can foster job satisfaction, as well as engagement, resilience, and thriving at work” (emphasis added). The resource-based perspective frames job crafting as a strategy used to seek resources and avoid demands where “*employees may make* to balance their job demands and job resources with their personal abilities and needs” (Tims and Bakker, 2010: 34 emphasis added).

In this paper, we adopt the seminal role-based perspective of job crafting as it is employee-centric and takes a motivational and social perspective of work design (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). The rationale for using job crafting theory is that it speaks to many of the contemporary challenges in the workplace including empowerment, engagement and work life balance. Given the demanding and stressful nature of project managing (Pinto, et al., 2014; Jugdev et al., 2018) job crafting provides a structured set of self-initiated behaviours aimed at changing the scope of one’s job tasks, interactions and meaning.

Job crafting behaviour has three dimensions; *task crafting* refers to initiating physical changes in the number, scope or type of activities one completes on the job. *Relational crafting* relates to the way and with whom one decides to socially interact with at work to change the job. Finally, *cognitive* crafting relates to the way one sees one’s job making it more personally meaningful. Job crafting is enacted by making changes to the task, cognitive and relational levels of one’s job (Table 1).

Table 1: Crafting techniques

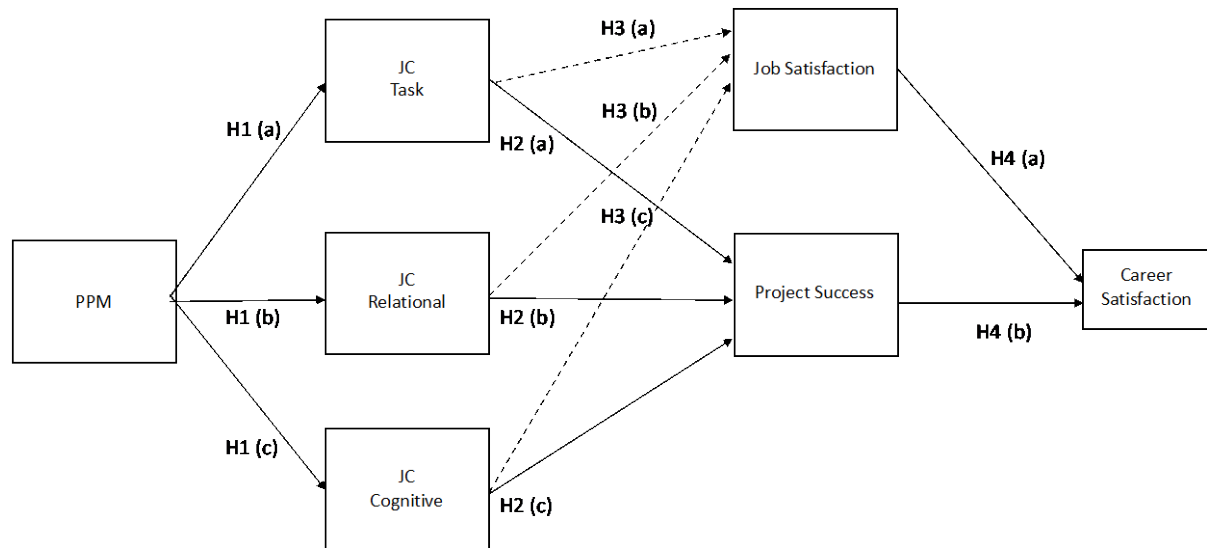
Crafting	Description	Example
Task	Reducing or increasing tasks, modifying the nature of tasks, revising the attention given to certain tasks.	Taking on new tasks, changing work processes, or devoting extra time to certain aspects of the job.
Relational	Changing the social interactions and relationships with others at work.	Tailoring relationships to serve specific beneficiaries/reprimanding or dismissing unpleasant beneficiaries/selecting contexts to help value beneficiaries.
Cognitive	Reframing the social purpose of work to align with one's passion.	Changing the way we think about relationships among tasks.

Source: Adapted from Berg, Dutton and Wrzesniewski, 2008

Changing task boundaries means altering the form or number of activities one engages in while doing the job. For example, an accountant who creates a new method of filing taxes to make her job less repetitive. Changing relational boundaries means exercising discretion over with and whom one interacts during work e.g. hospital cleaners caring for patients by integrating themselves into the workflow of their floor units and talking to the sick. Finally, changing cognitive boundaries refers to altering how one sees the job (i.e., discrete parts or integrated whole). For example, an insurance agent that sees her job as 'working to get people back on track' after a car accident rather than 'processing claims'.

The relationship between job crafting and project management is potentially important. Project management involves carrying-out a range of activities over finite periods of time. It involves many and varied interactions which in turn require flexibility (Turner and Muller, 2003). Job crafting influences which tasks get completed, how employees complete them and the interpersonal dynamics of the work itself. It has potential to greatly impact individual as well as organisational performance (Berg, Dutton and Wrzesniewski, 2008). We propose a theoretical model that illustrates expected relationships between one's perspective of project management and job crafting, and the subsequent relationship between job crafting, project success and career outcomes (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Theoretical model



2.2 Perspectives of PM (PMM)

Almost four decades ago Lichtenberg observed that “in the same way that we do not all accept the same lifestyle, we cannot all be suited to the same form of project management” (1983: 101). Project managers have different perspectives of project management itself (Andersen, 2016). They differ too in how they learn informally (Savelsbergh *et al.*, 2016), and in terms of their identity and career orientations (McKevitt, et al., 2017). Role theory (Turner, 1986; Broderick, 1999) supports the idea that PMs do not simply passively adopt roles in isolation. Roles emerge as interpretations of requirements and constraints in action, shaped by other role occupants and actors, for example the team or sponsor (see Bechky, 2006; Zwikaël and Meredith, 2017; Breeze et al., 2020). What is less understood is whether an individual’s perspective of PM shapes the job crafting of tasks, relationships and cognition. The task and value-creation perspectives (Andersen, 2016) have different views on how projects should be carried out. The task perspective see project managing as a uniform set of principles and rigid processes. The value-creation perspective emphasizes the importance of synchronizing project and organisational processes, composite deliveries and evolutionary development. We expect that project managers adjust the tasks they perform, irrespective of the stability of the environment or the existence of job descriptions (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001).

H1(a). There is a positive relationship between PPM and task crafting.

H1(b). There is a positive relationship between PPM and relational crafting.

H1(c). There is a positive relationship between PPM and cognitive crafting.

2.3 Job crafting outcomes

Job crafting is important as it affects the meaning of work (i.e., the individuals understanding of the purpose of their work) and work identity (i.e., who am I and why what I do matters). *Job crafters* are individuals who actively compose both what their job is physically, by changing a job's task boundaries; what their job is relationally, by changing the interactions and relationships they have with others at work, and what their job is cognitively, by changing the way they think about relationships among tasks. Next, we propose how job crafting affects project and work-related outcomes.

Project success and job crafting behaviours

Early definitions of *project management success* defined the concept narrowly using efficiency measures, such as time, cost and quality (Pinto & Slevin, 1987; Atkinson, 1999; Hazebroucq & Badot, 1996; Westerveld, 2003). Within this view of success, the process of managing the project is top-down with a known set of outputs or artefacts (Zwikaël and Globerson, 2004) at each stage of the lifecycle. Task crafting can therefore be expected to support efficiency by reducing, modifying and altering how much time and energy is spent on certain project tasks over others. In a positive way, task crafting involves taking on new tasks and changing work processes. The outcome of task crafting is not universally positive, however. The same processes can be used to overcome perceived obstacles or to evade, reduce or eliminate part of one's work (Berg et al, 2010; Leana et al., 2009; Tims et al., 2009; Bruning et al. 2018).

A broader view of *project success* emerged in the 1990s and early 2000s. This recognised the importance of effectiveness; satisfying stakeholders (Pinto and Prescott, 1988) and achieving client acceptance (Pinto & Slevin, 1987; Rusare & Jay,

2015). Project relationship management requires the active development, cultivation, and maintenance of key project stakeholders (Mitchell et al, 2007; Veal, 2011). Project managers must manage expectations, influence as well as reconcile conflicting stakeholder claims (Freeman, 2010; Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Friedman and Miles, 2002). Relational crafting involving the changing of social interaction patterns may complement the effectiveness of so-called “hard” (technical) skills. Like task crafting, social relationships can be used to affect different goals. Sturges (2012) highlights the use of relational crafting to achieve greater work life balance. This involved individuals increasing relational intensity with direct managers and reducing the intensity of “unnecessary” social interactions.

In terms of cognitive crafting, the front end of the project lifecycle is when individuals can usefully engage in project shaping (Smith and Winter, 2010). This is one attempt in sense-making about what constitutes a new project. Taking an exclusively cognitive perspective, projects are simply a synthesis of human sensation and expectations about how multiple resources are to be used (Whitty, 2005). A “mental model”, for example, allows us to imagine projects variously as social, political, or development-related (Winter and Szczepanek, 2008). Taken together, we posit the following hypotheses:

H2(a). There is a positive relationship between task crafting and project success.

H2(b). There is a positive relationship between relational crafting and project success.

H2(c). There is a positive relationship between cognitive crafting and project success.

Job and career satisfaction

Plomp *et al.* (2016) confirmed that job crafting was positively related to job satisfaction and to the development of career-related skills and abilities, including objective career success (Cenciotti, Alessandri, and Borgogni, 2017). Those who engage in job crafting proactively attempt to align their work conditions to their own needs and abilities (Parker and Collins, 2010). They create a challenging work environment that fosters

the enthusiasm and absorption that is characteristic of engagement (Tims, Bakker & Derks, 2012; Harju *et al.* 2016) and job satisfaction (Bakker, Tims, & Derks, 2012). We therefore posit the following hypotheses:

H3(a). There is a positive relationship between task crafting and job satisfaction.

H3(b). There is a positive relationship between relational crafting and job satisfaction.

H3(c). There is a positive relationship between cognitive crafting and job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction evaluates the status quo of an individual's job situation (Greenberg & Baron, 1997). It reflects a shorter time period than career satisfaction. The latter considers progress to date and includes a broader range of factors, including sense of purpose (Heslin, 2005). Career satisfaction is an important criterion for valuing an individual's career as a whole (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995). Job satisfaction is often conceptualized as an indicator of career satisfaction and the concepts are highly correlated (Holland, 1996; Judge et al., 1999).

H4(a). There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and career satisfaction.

H4(b). There is a positive relationship between project success and career satisfaction.

The proposed model starts with the premise that individual project managers have the latitude to define and enact their job, acting as "job crafters". Although mainstream project management adopts a top-down approach to job design including procedures and prescriptive standards, there is ample evidence that project managers need flexibility in their approach to managing projects. The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between PPM and job crafting to determine if job crafting affects both project success and instrumental job and career related outcomes. The paper poses a total of eleven hypotheses to be tested empirically. Significantly, the

scope of this paper, is to test relationships between job crafting and project management perspectives and outcomes.

3. Methods

The research approach used was grounded in positivist epistemology (Crotty, 1998) using deductive theory construction and hypothesis testing (Babbie, 2013). The objective of the research was to simultaneously test the relationship between Project Management Perspective (PMM) and job crafting behaviours (H1) and the relationship between job crafting behaviours project-related outcomes (H2) and career outcomes (H3-H4). A quantitative approach was taken to addressing the research objectives using structural equation modelling.

3.1 Data collection

Data was collected between June and August 2020 and consisted of a cross-sectional sample of IT project managers with the assistance of the Project Management Institute in Ireland. The questionnaire was distributed to those individuals registered on the PMI LinkedIn forum and the design of the questionnaire followed guidelines set by Dillman (1991). Responses were collected using an online web-survey platform, QuestionPro. The questionnaires were analysed using SPSS v23 and the widely-used program in structural equation modelling (SEM) research, MPlus. The sequence of questions (i.e. dependent variables of project success, job satisfaction and career satisfaction) and independent variables of job crafting and project management perspective were positioned separately to minimise respondents developing their own theories about possible cause-effect relationships (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986).

3.2 Sample characteristics

To ascertain non-response bias, we employed Armstrong and Overton's (1977) test of significant differences between early and late responses. The results revealed no significant differences between early and late responses. Respondents consisted of males (130) or 53% and females (115) or 47%. A descriptive analysis of participating project managers is included in Table 2. The median age profile was the 40–49 age

group and respondents reported a high level of formal education with 46% of respondents holding a degree and Master's degree (35%).

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of participating project managers

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Gender			
Female	115	46.9	46.9
Male	130	53.1	100.0
Age			
Up to 25	1	.4	.4
25-29	6	2.4	2.9
30-39	77	31.3	34.3
40-49	114	46.5	80.8
50+	47	19.2	100.0
Tenure (Current position)			
> 6 months	20	8.2	8.2
6 months – 1yr	26	10.6	18.8
1-3 years	72	29.4	48.2
3-5 years	76	31.0	79.2
> 5 years	51	20.8	100.0
Education			
None	7	2.9	2.9
Diploma	33	13.5	16.3
Degree	114	46.5	62.9
Masters	86	35.1	98.0
PhD	5	2.0	100.0

3.3 Measurements

Measurement scales were derived from the existing literature that have been validated by scholars. All scales exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.6 for composite reliability (Nunnally, 1978) and showed strong values for the coefficient alpha. Scales and correlation matrix are included in Appendix 1.

4. Findings and analysis

The proposed model fits the data well: $X^2 = 92.431$, $df = 10$, $p = 0.00$, $RMSEA = 0.063$, $CFI = 0.98$, $TLI = 0.99$, $CI = 0.000$ to 0.146 . The statistically significant parameter

estimate indicates support for hypotheses 1(a) ($\beta = 0.69$, $p < .05$) and 1(b) ($\beta = 0.75$, $p < .05$), and 1(c) ($\beta = 0.68$, $p < .05$).

Figure 2: Results

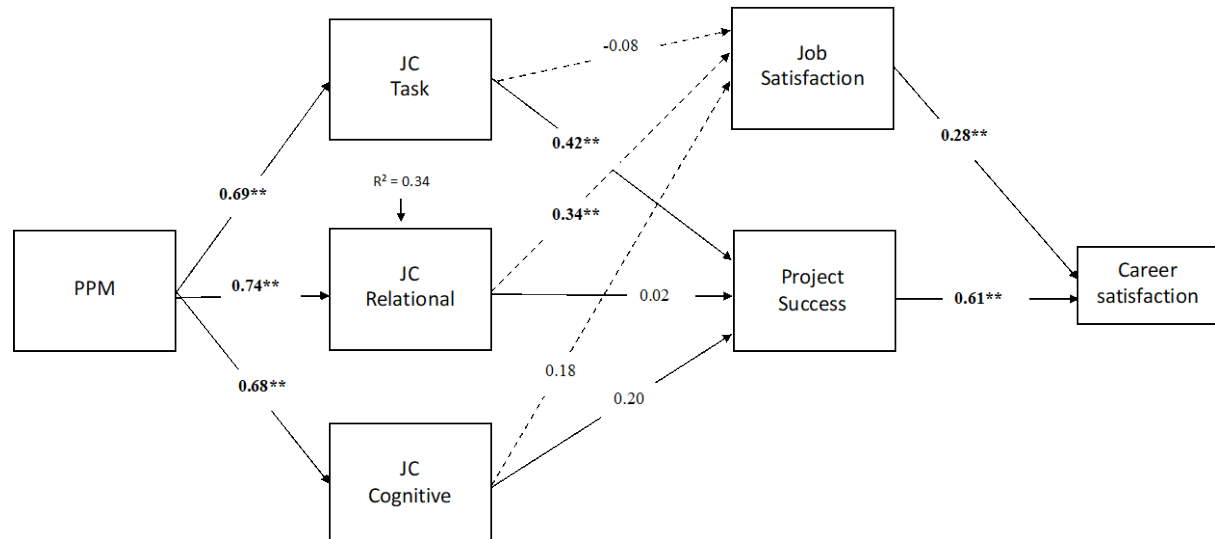


Table 2: Project management perspective and job crafting

Hypotheses	β	Significance	Sig	Direction
H1 (a). There is a relationship between PPM and task crafting.	0.69	$p < 0.05$	Supported	Positive
H1 (b). There is a relationship between PPM and relational crafting.	0.74	$p < 0.05$	Supported	Positive- the higher organisational perspective the higher is relational crafting
H1 (c). There is a relationship between PPM and cognitive crafting.	0.68	$p < 0.05$	Supported	

The statistically significant parameter estimate indicates support for hypotheses 2(a) ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.05$). Hypotheses 2(b) and 2(c) were not supported as the parameter estimate was not significant.

Table 3: Job crafting and project success

Hypothesis	β	Significance	Sig	Direction
H2 (a). There is a positive relationship between task crafting and project success.	0.42	$p < 0.05$	Supported	Positive
H2 (b). There is a positive relationship between relational crafting and project success.	0.02	$p > 0.05$	Not supported	Positive
H2 (c). There is a positive relationship between cognitive crafting and project success.	0.20	$p > 0.05$	Not supported	Positive

The statistically significant parameter estimate indicates support for hypotheses 3(b) ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.05$). There was no support for hypotheses 3(a) or hypotheses 3(c).

Table 4: Job crafting and job satisfaction

Hypothesis	β	Significance		Direction
H3 (a) There is a positive relationship between task crafting and job satisfaction	-0.08	$p > 0.05$	Not supported	
H3 (b) There is a positive relationship between relational crafting and job satisfaction	0.34	$p < 0.05$	Supported	Positive
H3 (c) There is a positive relationship between cognitive crafting and job satisfaction	0.18	$p > 0.05$	Not supported	

The statistically significant parameter estimate indicates support for hypotheses 4(a) ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.05$) and 4(b) ($\beta = 0.61$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 5: Job satisfaction, project success and career satisfaction

Hypothesis	β	Significance		Direction
H4 (a) There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and career satisfaction.	0.28	$p < 0.05$	Supported	Positive
H4 (b) There is a positive relationship between project success and career satisfaction.	0.61	$p < 0.05$	Supported	Positive

The relationships proposed in the model explains 50% of the variance in career satisfaction ($r = .50$), 18% of the variance in job satisfaction ($r = .18$), and 31% of the

variance in project success ($r = .31$), 48% in the variance of task crafting ($r = .48$), 55% in the variance of relational crafting ($r = .55$), and 46% in the variance of cognitive crafting ($r = .46$).

We next discuss the findings of the paper and the implications for theory and practice.

5. Discussion

The point of departure for this paper was to acknowledge that different perspectives of project managing co-exist, and the need to better understand the human aspects of successful project work. Although perspective are incomplete theories, we hypothesized that perspectives matter and influence job crafting behaviours and proposed consequences for project success and work-related outcomes. The research question was to explore how job crafting contributes to a more structured approach to project flexibility at the individual level. Our interest was in the proactive, agentic behaviours of project managers as opposed to project management philosophies, methods and tools. We next discuss the contribution and implications of the findings for project management theory and practice.

5.1 PM Perspective and job crafting

From a career vantage point, our contribution demonstrates that job crafting provides a useful theory to better understand the processes of project flexibility at the individual level. The positive relationship between the value-based perspective of PM and job crafting lends credibility to the hypothesized link between project management perspective and task, relational and cognitive job crafting behaviours. In sum, all three dimensions of job crafting were positively related to the value-based perspective of PM. Importantly, as Andersen states: “differences in perspectives mean different ways of understanding and interpreting the working situation, which should be discussed *before* deciding on tools and techniques” (Andersen, 2016: 63, emphasis added).

Hypotheses 1 (a-c) establishes that project managers do engage in job crafting whether they are consciously aware of the action or not (Van Wingerden, Derks and

Bakker, 2015). One important implication is a synergy between the personal meaning derived from task crafting and how the value-creation perspective of PM prioritizes value delivery over task completion. In other words, task crafting is pursued if it will deliver value to the organisation and not just because it was planned to. A project will fail in strategic terms, even if it successfully produces the intended outputs (Williams and Samset, 2010).

5.2 Job crafting and consequences for project management

The positive relationship between task crafting and project success supports the contention that job crafting is *more* than a project manager generating proactive ideas, “playing to their strengths” or engaging only in tasks and activities they enjoy (Muller, et al., 2010). The second implication is to alleviate the fear that job crafting in the context of project management is a glorified form of shirking. The findings establish tangible project benefit to task crafting in addition to the more personal benefits of relational crafting as outlined in the literature. The model shows a clear path from a value-creation perspective of PM, task crafting, project success and career satisfaction. The flexibility that bottom-up task crafting offers is essentially used to get the project “over the line” (i.e., achieve project success), and by extension salary increases, bonus and stock options are linked to project success criteria. The project, project manager, and the permanent organisation itself all benefit from the individual’s talents and potential. From a career perspective, the supported hypotheses provide an excellent example of career (‘knowing-how’) competence (Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003).

However only task crafting emerged as a complete hypothesized path through our model. It is therefore necessary to discuss the non-significance of relational and cognitive crafting. The non-significance of H2(b), relational crafting and project success may reflect the pivotal role of stakeholder salience (Mitchell, et al., 1997) in the project environment. As such, managing a small few critical relationships closely is necessary but not sufficient for project success, however, having meaningful, helpful or energizing social relationship clearly has a positive impact on job satisfaction. A plausible conclusion is that relational crafting promotes job satisfaction which is required to maintain the energy and enthusiasm in the short run. After all, a successful

project team is measured in part precisely in their transience (see Grabher, 2010). The measure of relational crafting leans heavily toward internal team relationships, while project success is more orientated toward external stakeholders. A less sanguine conclusion is that an enthusiastic project team does not translate into enthusiastic clients. The non-significance of cognitive crafting may reflect the reality that PMs tend not to be involved in the front-end conceptualisation of projects but are essentially a 'hired gun' to deliver execution (Morris and Geraldi, 2011). This is also substantiated by the fact that cognitive crafting is strongly related to a need for positive self-image more so than the need for control or human connection (Niessen et al., 2016).

5.3 Implications for practice

Our findings provide another stepping stone that bridges the gap between PM theory and practice. Consideration of work design approaches (Humphrey et al., 2007) for PM roles, as well as a critical view on job crafting is required by HR practitioners. When designing PM jobs working arrangements that provide some degree of latitude should be considered. We argue that organisations should focus their attention on directing appropriate resources to PMs and clarify what success looks like. Managers can motivate PMs to engage in crafting by implementing supportive HR systems. This may be a challenge for many organization as Raja et al. (2013) highlight that “elevating the HR function role to reconcile with project-based work” is challenging and requires HRM models that account for the specific features of such work. Such systems should include HR processes and practices around training, information sharing and participative management (Hu et al., 2021). In this context, crafting is more likely to result in positive consequences. Our findings suggest that two of the three job crafting dimensions are constructive and legitimate as opposed to idiosyncratic. This increases the normative value of job crafting, from one which is currently seen as a voluntary behaviour, to one that is strategically important. Under the theme of “work smarter” significant change was made in 2021 to the global PMP syllabus. The PMI now assess Agile/hybrid philosophy – as distinct from methodology – as well as soft skills such as emotional intelligence. We contend that job crafting, whilst not a panacea for flexibility, is likely neutral with respect to the form of project management methodology used, and holds promise for individuals, projects and organisations. Learning and development professionals in conjunction with project management offices (PMO) could offer job crafting training to promote flexibility and work life balance. It is

important for future research to further unpack the motives for job crafting in project management. Although this paper takes a career perspective, necessity could also drive job crafting behaviour, or indeed the individual's need for greater purpose.

6. Conclusion

This premise of this paper was that more insight into the human aspects of project work is needed. The paper contributes a theoretical bridge between how project managers think about projects (PPM), and how they use job crafting to achieve project success. The findings contribute to the debate on what and how project managers do in the context of project work. Through the use of a survey design and structural equation modelling, our theoretical framework provides insight into how job crafting is used and the consequences on work and project outcomes. The paper enlarges the scope of interpersonal 'soft' skills in PM to include job crafting and the importance of project management perspectives in driving these behaviours and their subsequent effects on project success, job satisfaction and career satisfaction. Like any research inquiry the authors accept limitations. We did not probe if project managers are constrained in their use of relational and cognitive crafting. Rather than a problem of willingness, the uniqueness of projects and interdependent nature of the work may constrain the ability for PMs to engage in job crafting. There are, of course, other factors that may explain the use of job crafting in project such as project management self-efficacy (Farashah et al., 2019), project context or the situational environment. Indeed, it is not implausible that a value-based project context virtually demands the individual design the job. There are other contextual variables that may well impact PMM, job crafting, and the definition of project success. A fruitful question for future qualitative research would be to ascertain the prevalence of job crafting along the project lifecycle. Given the agreement that that tasks and method of project managers vary, another important question is to clarify if certain knowledge areas of project management are more susceptible to job crafting than others.

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Appendix 1

Task versus organization perspective of project management was measured using a single bipolar item following Andersen (2016). Respondents were asked to rate the two statements below on a 7-point scale including “0” for indifference. Respondents were asked to read to statements and rank their perspective accordingly:

“The main task of the project is to execute the defined task” (-3 to -1) and “The main task of the project is to create a desirable development in the organization receiving the deliverables of the project” (1 to 3). Cronbach’s $\alpha = .90$

Job crafting was measured using Slemp and Vella-Bredrick (2013). Respondents were asked “Please indicate the extent to which you engage in the following behaviours using the following scale: 1 = Hardly Ever, to 6 = Very Often”. (Note: 'Very Often' means as often as possible in your workplace). Cronbach’s $\alpha = .90$

Task crafting:

1. *Introduce new approaches to improve your work*
2. *Change the scope or types of tasks that you complete at work*
3. *Introduce new work tasks that you think better suit your skills or interests*
4. *Choose to take on additional tasks at work*

5. *Give preference to work tasks that suit your skills or interests*

Relational crafting:

1. *Make an effort to get to know people well at work*
2. *Organise or attend work related social functions*
3. *Organise special events in the workplace (e.g., celebrating a co-worker's birthday)*
4. *Choose to mentor new employees (officially or unofficially)*
5. *Make friends with people at work who have similar skills or interests*

Cognitive crafting:

1. *Think about how your job gives your life purpose*
2. *Remind yourself about the significance your work has for the success of the organisation*
3. *Remind yourself of the importance of your work for the broader community*
4. *Think about the ways in which your work positively impacts your life*
5. *Reflect on the role your job has for your overall well-being*

Job satisfaction was measured using the 3-item global indicator developed by Camman, et al (1983). This measure uses three items to assess job satisfaction: (1) all in all, I am satisfied with my job; (2) in general, I don't like my job (reverse scored); and, (3) in general, I like working here. These items were scored on a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$

Career satisfaction was measured using the 5-items scale by Greenhaus et al., (1990). The five items are: (1) I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career; (2) I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals; (3) I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for income; (4) I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for advancement; (5) I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for the development of new skills. Cronbach's $\alpha = .90$

Project success was measured using Khan et al., (2013) Cronbach's $\alpha = .95$

End-users were satisfied with the project product or service

Suppliers were satisfied

Project team were satisfied

Other stakeholders were satisfied

Project meets overall performance goals (functionality, budget and timing

Project meets user requirements

Meets the projects purpose

Clients were satisfied with the results

There is reoccurring business with the client

Meets your own self-defined success criteria

Table 6 Correlation Matrix

	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Perspective on Project Management	1.00						
2	Task	0.690**	1.00					
3	Relational	0.743**	0.737**	1.00				
4	Cognitive	0.676**	0.947**	0.722**	1.00			
5	Job Satisfaction	0.418**	0.348**	0.416	0.357	1.00		
6	Project Success	0.401	0.600**	0.456	0.588**	0.163	1.00	
7	Career Satisfaction	0.719**	0.924**	0.729	0.907	0.374**	0.669**	1.00

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).