# A systematic review of job crafting in the South African context

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**ABSTRACT**

**Purpose of the study:** Much attention is given to the design of employee work. Recent research has focused on the self-initiated design of work through job crafting. An exploratory systematic review was conducted to provide an overview of job crafting research conducted within the South African context.

**Design/methodology/approach:** A systematic review was employed, and inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed. For the data search, keywords/phrases included "job crafting" and "job crafting + South Africa" for a period spanning 2010 to 2020. Three South African journals and two international databases in the organisational sciences were selected.

**Findings:** A total of 81 studies were identified; 70 were excluded, and four were duplicate studies. Seven thus met the inclusion criteria. The findings were analysed through thematic narrative analysis. It evident that the Tims *et al.* (2012) approach was widely used, and most studies followed a cross-sectional design. Although such studies are helpful, it warrants the use of diary design studies and panel studies within a South African context. This is aligned to prominent research internationally.

**Recommendations/value:** Overall research on job crafting has a limited cross-sectional scope within the South African context. It is recommended that researchers within this space, more specifically within work and organisational psychology, embark on longitudinal, panel design, and diary design studies.

**Managerial implications:** The dynamic nature of organisations and how employees perform their work has warranted organisational scholars to research proactive behaviours in the workplace. The study provides valuable insights for research and practice.

Keywords

Job crafting; JD-R model; proactive behaviour; systematic review

**JEL Classification: M12**

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The 21st century workplace presents notable changes, with the rise of the gig economy, the advent of technology, and increased globalisation (Cascio & Aguinis, 2018). As a result, there are growing levels of complexity and uncertainty (Dierdorff & Aguinis, 2018). Furthermore, modern organisations face increasing workloads and the added pressure to work more efficiently (Demerouti *et al.,* 2017). Such organisations require engaged employees who display proactive (i.e., self-initiated) behaviours (van den Heuvel *et al.*, 2015). Research suggests that employees can make daily changes to their work that can improve their overall well-being (Petrou *et al.*, 2012) and performance (Tims *et al.*, 2014) and result in their finding meaning in their work (Dhanpat *et al.*, 2019). This forms part of a larger set of behaviours referred to as job crafting, whereby employees shape, mould and change the boundaries of their jobs (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Tims & Bakker, 2010; Tims *et al.*, 2012).

Within the contemporary workplace, there is a need to develop a job that is a fit for all employees and design flexible jobs in which employees can change their tasks and roles proactively (Grant & Parker, 2009). Over the years, organisations have been fixed on traditional top-down interventions of job redesign. More recently, research has taken a proactive perspective on job redesign. As such, job crafting has started gaining momentum in research and practice as a bottom-up, individual job redesign alternative (Bakker, 2015; Vogt *et al.*, 2016). By engaging in job crafting, employees modify their work according to their motives, based on their personal goals (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Tims *et al.*, 2012).

The current study aims to review and take stock of job crafting research in South Africa thus far. The study will therefore contribute towards the scant research into job crafting within the South African context. This aim will be achieved by employing a systematic review of job crafting studies conducted within the country. The review of empirical research expands on previous research on job crafting and examines its various perspectives, namely, the operationalisation of job crafting, job crafting theory, measures, and outcomes. To this end, both the construct itself and directions for future research are made clearer.

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# 2.    LITERATURE REVIEW

The theory of job crafting is presented based on the perspective of Wrzesniewski and Dutton, (2001) detailing job crafting to include changes related to task, cognitive and relational crafting and Tims *et al.*'s (2012) perspective which frames job crafting related to job demands and resources model. Measure and outcomes of job crafting are also detailed.

## 2.1    Job crafting theory

Employees have the opportunity to actively influence their working experience (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) by engaging in job crafting. Job crafting is considered a form of proactive work behaviour (Grant & Ashford, 2008). Employees who embark on job crafting make physical and cognitive changes in the tasks they face and what they think about their job, so they are able to adapt to their work environment (Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2007). The term job crafting was first introduced by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001:179), who defined it as "the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work". Job crafting is considered an employee-initiated approach to work design (Tims & Bakker, 2010; Tims *et al.*, 2012). It is important to note that a job design has implications for how employees experience their work (Wrzesniewski *et al.,* 2013). Elements of job design are founded upon a traditional top-down approach, and early scholars in the field have long been interested in the employee experience (Oldham & Hackman, 1981).

## 2.2    Perspectives of job crafting

The following section explores the various perspectives of job crafting proposed by various authors. These have subsequently been used and adapted by other authors (such as those included in this systematic review).

### 2.2.1  *Wrzesniewski and Dutton's conceptualisation*

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) identified three types of job crafting: task crafting, cognitive crafting, and relational crafting. *Task crafting* relates to the task and duties that an individual can change or modify, relating to the type, quantity, and scope of performance. *Cognitive crafting* relates to a change in employees' perception or understanding of their job and through this, finding meaning in it. *Relational crafting* refers to modifying the social relationships that occur in the workplace. Such interactions can be modified in terms of quantity and quality. In sum, Wrzesniewski and Dutton's perspective asserts that job crafting is an active behaviour whereby employees alter their jobs through physical and/or cognitive modifications in their work environment. Over the years, various studies have made use of this conceptualisation and measured the dimensions of this perspective (see Ghitulescu, 2006; Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013; Niessen *et al.*, 2016).

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### 2.2.2  Tims et al.'s perspective

Tims *et al.*'s (2012) perspective frames job crafting with the changes related to job demands and resources that employees initiate. This conceptualisation of job crafting is embedded in the job demands–resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001). Within this model, job characteristics are categorised into two separate categories: demands and resources. *Job demands* refers to aspects within a job that require sustained effort (physical, emotional, mental, and psychological), whereas *job resources* promote growth and development and reduce job demands (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In this approach, employees are able to balance their job demands and resources with individual needs and abilities (Tims *et al.*, 2012). This perspective of job crafting outlined four different dimensions or behaviours, namely, (a) increasing structural job resources, (b) increasing social job resources, (c) increasing challenging job demands, and (d) decreasing hinderance job demands.

### 2.2.3  Hierarchical structure of job crafting

Recent developments in the study of job crafting have proposed two higher-order constructs, namely, *approach* and *avoidance* crafting (Bruning & Campion, 2018; Zhang & Parker, 2019). Such job crafting behaviours are differentiated by whether job crafting is behavioural (see Tims *et al.*, 2012) or cognitive (see Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Zhang and Parker (2019) noted that behavioural crafting can lead to cognitive crafting. As a result, their research postulated eight types of job crafting, characterising each by whether it is approach or avoidance oriented, behavioural or cognitive, and whether it is directed towards job demands or job resources.

## 2.2    Job crafting measures

Various measures of job crafting have been developed to assess the construct. These measures have been widely used and are valid and reliable. Some measures (see Ghitulescu, 2006; Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2014; Niessen *et al.*, 2016) have been based on Wrzesniewski and Dutton's (2001) three-dimensional construct (i.e. task crafting, cognitive crafting, and relational crafting). Job crafting has also been operationalised through Tims and Bakker's (2010) conceptualisation, which is embedded in the JD-R framework (Nielsen & Abildgaard, 2012; Petrou *et al.*, 2012; Tims *et al.*, 2012). There are several published studies that have used these valid and reliable measures since their emergence. A recent meta-analysis concluded that the most widely adopted theoretical model of job crafting is the one proposed by Tims and Bakker (2010), which positioned job crafting in the JD-R model (Rudolph *et al.*, 2017).

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Initial studies on job crafting were primarily conducted with qualitative methods and using Wrzesniewski and Dutton's (2001) conceptualisation (see Berg, Grant & Johnson, 2010; Berg, Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2010; Vuori *et al.*, 2012; Gascoigne & Kelliher, 2018). Such qualitative studies have contributed to the extant literature and theoretical perspectives of job crafting. Lazazzara *et al.* (2020) indicated that qualitative research offers better insights and clarification on aspects of job crafting, as it concerns specific experiences and thoughts of employees unique to their particular context.

Quantitative studies on job crafting have empirically tested both Wrzesniewski and Dutton's (2001) conceptualisation (see Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013, 2014; Weseler & Niessen, 2016) and Tims *et al.*'s (2012) perspective. Studies built on the Tims *et al.* (2012) approach tested job crafting through daily level (see Petrou *et al.*, 2012; Tims *et al.*, 2014; Bakker & Oerlemans, 2019;) and weekly level studies (see Petrou *et al.*, 2017; Geldenhuys *et al.*, 2021).

### 2.3 Outcomes of job crafting

Job crafting research suggests that employees craft their work based on their personal needs and goals (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Tims *et al.*, 2012; Wrzesniewski *et al.*, 2013). In doing so, employees can find meaning in their work and are better able to identify with their work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). On a daily basis, employees make personal changes to their work that can affect their performance and well-being (Petrou *et al.*, 2012). Employees can also see an increase in motivation, thereby improving one's job fit and improving the overall work experience (Lu *et al.*, 2014; Bruning & Campion, 2018). Job crafting leads to an increase in work engagement over time, on a daily level and weekly level (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2019; Frederick & VanderWeele, 2020). Employees who craft the boundaries of their work may display higher levels of work engagement, can increase their development, and improve their performance (Van Wingerden *et al.*, 2017).

## 3. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research design was employed, and a systematic review method was adopted (Popay *et al.*, 2006). A systematic review allows the researcher to review the most relevant research available on the topic of interest (in this case, job crafting within the South African context). Various authors have identified systematic reviews to be expedient in examining, evaluating, and analysing documented research, and the method has been widely accepted and used (Kable *et al.*, 2012; Schachtebeck & Thabane, 2017; Dhanpat, 2021).

### 3.1 Research Setting

The objective of the study was to assess the job crafting research conducted within the South African context. In the present study, the research interest of job crafting was targeted to

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achieve the goals of the study. The study is positioned in an academic and research domain (within work and organisational psychology).

## 3.2    Data Extraction and Analysis

A systematic review was employed to assess studies on job crafting within a South African context. The eight-step process detailed by Xia and Watson (2019) was enlisted and followed thus: (a) formulating the research problem, (b) developing and validating the review protocol, (c) searching the literature, (d) screening for inclusion, (e) assessing quality, (f) extracting data, (g) analysing and synthesising data, and (h) reporting the findings.

Within the current context of the study, the systematic review was underpinned and guided by the following review question: "What type of job crafting research has been conducted in South Africa?" Newman and Gough (2020) recommended that a review question is necessary, as it provides insight into key decisions about which studies to include, where to look for them, how to assess their quality, and ways to combine the findings.

A systematic review was conducted of the literature on job crafting in South Africa. A literature search was conducted in three open access South African journals. Thus, data were collected by embarking on an online search involving a keyword search for job crafting. The systematic review was bound by the systematic review parameters, which included documented research on job crafting and refined the search to South Africa. "Job crafting" was used as the keyword, as it is the core to this research in locating relevant studies. The search was limited to papers published between 2010 to 2020 in the following journals: (a) South African Journal of Human Resource Management (SAJHRM), (b) South African Journal of Industrial Psychology (SAJIP), and (c) South African Journal of Economics and Management Sciences (SAJEM). These open access journals are accredited by the Department of Higher Education and Training, and they best represent the scope of the publication of job crafting research. In addition to this, two international databases known for publishing research in the field of work and organisational psychology were selected: (d) EBSCOhost and (e) SAGE. To obtain a potential list of research from the database, the following keywords were searched: "job crafting" [Title] and "South Africa" [anywhere].

The review was conducted in early March 2020. To govern the study and ensure its quality, the following inclusion criteria were employed. The first criterion was the publication timeframe. The search was set for publications between 2010 and 2020, that is, the last decade. Only full-length, peer-reviewed journal articles of an empirical nature were used in the study. Non-empirical research, such as book reviews and opinion papers, were excluded. A final criterion stipulated those articles needed to have "job crafting" within their title and have data collected

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from a South African sample; hence, all other articles were excluded. The inclusion and exclusion criteria developed set out rules for studies to be selected for the review. Insight into this process is provided to ensure transparency. Subsequently, the criteria are shaped by the review question (Newman & Gough, 2020).

The following information was extracted for the systematic review: details of the author, year of publication, definition of job crafting used, job crafting conceptualisation, measuring instrument, design, sample, other variables measured, and key findings. Systematic reviews contribute towards the advancement of scholarly knowledge (Xiao & Watson, 2019). More so, Okoli and Schabram (2010) noted a caveat that such studies should be held at the same value, quality, and rigor of other literature and research designs. According to Männistö, *et al.*, (2020), systematic reviews employ rigorous methodology and adopt evidence-based knowledge linked to research objectives.

Männistö *et al.*, (2020) stated that systematic reviews use a rigorous methodology in screening original and relevant research. This is achieved through evidence-based knowledge aligned to the research goals and objectives. The systematic review of studies (literature reviews) allows for enhancing the quality through replicability, reliability, and validity of such reviews. Hence, the design of systematic literature reviews should be tailored to address the research question (Kitchenham & Charters, 2007).

## 4.    FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A literature search was employed to obtain articles on job crafting within a South African context. A keyword search using the term "job crafting" was applied to the three open access South African Journals (SAJHRM, SAJIP, and SAJEMS). Further to this, a search was conducted two international databases (SAGE and EBSCOhost). For the international databases, the search terms "job crafting" and "South Africa" were included. Table 1 presents a summary of the criteria used for the systematic review. Mainly, these studies did not include the term "job crafting" in the title. Two articles had the term in their title but were excluded as they were not conducted within the South African context. Upon further inspection, four articles retrieved in the search in EBSCOhost were duplicates, and the duplicate copies were thus removed from the search. The remaining seven articles were subjected to the analysis. Table 1 provides insight into the criteria selected for the systematic review.

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Table 1:        Criteria used for systematic review

| Criterion | Description |
|---|---|
| Date | Studies published during 2010 to 2020 |
| Geographic location of study | Data to have been collected in South Africa |
| Language | Study to be published in English |
| Peer review | Published articles to be peer reviewed |

Source: Author's own compilation

Table 2 presents the preliminary literature search of 81 studies. From the 81 studies, 70 were excluded from the analysis as they did not meet the inclusion requirements (see Table 1).

Table 2:        Preliminary literature search

| Concept | Database/Journal | Discovered | Not accepted for analysis | Accepted for analysis |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Job crafting | SAJHRM | 21 | 20 | 1 |
| | SAJIP | 43 | 39 | 4 |
| | SAJEMS | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| | SAGE | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| | EBSCOhost | 11 | 7 | 4 |
| Subtotal | | 81 | 70 | 11 |
| Less duplicates | | | | 4 |
| Total accepted for analysis | | | | 7 |

Source: Author's own compilation

Table 3 presents a summary of the seven articles that were extracted from the literature review in terms of author(s), year of publication, definition of job crafting used, job crafting conceptualisation, measuring instrument, design, sample, other variables measured, and key findings.

Table 3:        An overview of job crafting, definition, conceptualisation, design findings and sample

| Study | Definition | Conceptualisation | Design | Measuring instrument | Example item | Variables | Findings | Sample |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bell and Njoli (2016) | the "self-initiated change behaviours that employees engage in with the aim to align their jobs with their own | Based on Tims et al. (2012) | Quantitative, cross-sectional design | Job Crafting Scale Tims et al. (2012) | No examples cited | Big Five factors | The findings showed that the Big Five factors of Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Openness to Experience, and Neuroticism play a significant role in | N = 246 administrative employees in higher education |

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| | preferences, motives, and passions" (Tims *et al.,* 2012:173) | | | | | | predicting job crafting propensities. | |
| de Beer *et al.* (2016) | Job crafting is, in the context of the JD-R model, about moulding a job according to the employee's preferences, skills, and abilities – and thereby making actual changes in levels of job demands and job resources (Berg & Dutton, 2008; Tims *et al.,* 2012). | Based on Tims *et al.* (2012) | Quantitative, cross-sectional design | Job Crafting Scale (Tims *et al.,* 2012) | "I make sure that my work is mentally less intense" | Work engagement, job satisfaction | Regression results revealed that increasing structural job resources with challenging job demands and increasing social job resources were significant predictors of work engagement in both groups. Contrary to expectations, decreasing hindering job demands was a negative predictor of job satisfaction in the mining group. Furthermore, increasing social job resources was also a significant predictor of job satisfaction in both groups. | N = 470, comprised of: |
| Peral and Geldenhuys (2016) | Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) defined job crafting as the process in which employees redesign or modify their jobs | Tims *et al.* (2012) | Quantitative, cross-sectional design | Job Crafting Scale (Tims *et al.,* 2012) | "I make sure that I use my capacities to the fullest" | Work engagement, psychological meaningfulness | A positive relationship was found between job crafting (increasing structural resources and challenging job demands) and work engagement. Furthermore, psychological meaningfulness mediated the relationship between job crafting and work engagement among the sampled high school teachers. | N = 251 high school teachers |
| Peral and Geldenhuys (2018) | "The physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001:179). | Tims *et al.* (2012) | Quantitative, cross-sectional design | Job Crafting Scale (Tims *et al.,* 2012) | "I make sure that I use my capacities to the fullest" | None | The study disclosed the dimensionality of the JCS, the hierarchical ordering and fit of the items, the functionality of the response format, and the ability of the JCS to measure invariantly across men and women, yielding new and interesting insights into the psychometric properties of the scale. | N = 318 working individuals |
| Geldenhuys and Peral (2020) | Job crafting is a promising workplace strategy that employees can use to increase their work-related well-being (Tims *et al.,* 2015). | Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) | Quantitative, cross-sectional design | Job Crafting Questionnaire (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013) | "I introduce new approaches to improve my work" | Personality and performance | The study results showed that the Big Five personality traits indirectly influenced job performance (i.e. in-role behaviour, organisational citizenship behaviour) through job crafting as a mediator. | N = 580 South African employees |
| Thomas *et al.* (2020) | The term job crafting refers to proactive employee behaviours that seek to optimise the work environment, frequently by addressing the balance between job demands and job resources | According to the JD R model, job crafting can have positive effects (both directly and indirectly) on both | Quantitative, quasi-experimental research design | Job Crafting Scale (Tims *et al.,* 2012) | "I ask others for feedback on my job performance" | Work engagement | At the post-intervention measurement point, participants exposed to the intervention showed significantly higher levels of work engagement than those in the comparison group. Across the entire sample, changes in work engagement were correlated with changes in job crafting behaviours but were not, however, | N = 64 construction industry employees |

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| | (Demerouti, 2014). | job performance and work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Tims et al., 2012). | | | | | correlated with changes in job demands and resources. | |
| Vermooten et al. (2019) | Job crafting is the process whereby employees, through their personal initiative, adjust their work environment to ensure that their need for congruence with their environment is met and to improve the meaningfulness of their work-related activities (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). | Tims et al. (2012) | Quantitative, cross-sectional design | Job Crafting Scale (Tims et al., 2012) | "I ask others for feedback on my job performance" | Proactive personality, meaningful work, employee engagement, turnover intention | Results demonstrated that job crafting, proactive personality, and meaningful work significantly predict variance in employee engagement and turnover intention. | N = 391 financial services employees |

Source: Author's own compilation

The studies ranged through a period of 2010 to 2020. All seven studies followed a quantitative research design and employed a cross-sectional design. Only one study used a quasi-experimental research design (see Thomas et al., 2020). The sample size varied across the studies identified. The smallest sample ($N$ = 64) was used in an intervention study (see Thomas et al., 2020) and the largest sample ($N$ = 580) of employees across the labour market in South Africa (see Geldenhuys & Peral, 2020).

Studies presented various definitions of job crafting. Two studies used the Tims et al. (2012) definition (see Bell & Njoli, 2016; de Beer et al., 2016). Other studies used the Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) definition of job crafting (see Peral & Geldenhuys, 2016; Vermooten et al., 2019), while Demerouti's (2014) definition (see Thomas, Plessis & Thomas, 2020) and Tims et al.'s (2015) definition (see Geldenhuys & Peral, 2020) were also presented.

Linked to the definition used in each study is how job crafting was operationalised and measured. Since all studies followed a quantitative design, analysing the measuring instrument is essential. All studies made use of pre-established measures. It was determined that six of the seven studies operationalised job crafting based on the Tims et al. (2012) conceptualisation, and hence, the Job Crafting Scale developed by Tims et al. (2012) was used to measure job crafting (Bell & Njoli, 2016; de Beer et al., 2016; Peral & Geldenhuys, 2016; 2018; Vermooten et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2020;). Only Geldenhuys and Peral's

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(2020) study was conceptualised on the premise of Wrzesniewski and Dutton's (2001) definition and therefore used the Job Crafting Questionnaire (JCQ) developed by Slemp and Vella-Brodrick (2013).

The contexts in which job crafting was studied varied. Administrative employees in higher education, teachers in secondary education, employees in the mining and manufacturing sectors, workers in the construction industry, and financial services were some of the fields represented in the surveyed literature (see Table 3, "Sample" column).

Job crafting was tested with several variables within the domain of work and organisational psychology. Bell and Njoli (2016) tested the personality variable, which included job crafting as an outcome variable for personality. Geldenhuys and Peral (2020) tested the indirect relationship between personality and job crafting, and Vermooten *et al.* (2019) examined the influence of proactive personality on job crafting. Other studies looked at the predictive value of job crafting on work engagement (see de Beer *et al.*, 2016; Peral & Geldenhuys, 2016; Vermooten *et al.*, 2019); meaning (see Peral & Geldenhuys, 2016; Vermooten *et al.*, 2019); and other organisational and individual outcomes such as performance (see Geldenhuys & Peral, 2020), job satisfaction (see de Beer *et al.*, 2016), and turnover intention (see Vermooten *et al.*, 2019). Only one study set out to explore the psychometric properties of the Job Crafting Scale by employing a Rasch analysis (see Peral & Geldenhuys, 2018).

## 5.    DISCUSSION

This study presented an overview of job crafting theory in terms of its two distinct theoretical perspectives, namely, Wrzesniewski and Dutton's (2001) original conceptualisation and Tims *et al.*'s (2012) perspective, based on JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). A new approach to job crafting was also presented, namely, approach versus avoidance crafting (Zhang & Parker, 2019). The study explored job crafting within the South African context by employing a systematic review of research spanning 10 years, ranging from 2010 to 2020. From the inclusion and exclusion criteria, seven studies were considered acceptable for analysis. This confirms that research in job crafting is emerging within the South African context and remains in its infancy.

All studies conducted followed a quantitative research design. No qualitative studies were identified. This validates the notion that job crafting is currently predominantly researched using quantitative research designs (see Bakker & Oerlemans, 2019; Dhanpat *et al.*, 2019; Geldenhuys *et al.*, 2021). Earlier studies, however (see Lyons, 2008), focused on the qualitative aspects of job crafting. Demerouti (2014) noted that job crafting is a recent concept,

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and various studies are qualitative in nature, which presented the need for more studies with a quantitative focus. Notably, all studies analysed in this systematic review made use of cross-sectional designs. Similarly, other studies have researched job crafting through cross-sectional designs (see Brenninkmeijer & Hekkert-Koning, 2015; Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2016; Radstaak & Hennes, 2017; Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2014). Literature has confirmed the sharp rise in measuring job crafting through quantitative diary measures, and this method has become popular. Recent studies have been conducted using weekly diary studies (see Costantini *et al.*, 2021; Dhanpat *et al.*, 2019; Knight *et al.*, 2021; Rofcanin *et al.* 2019). A weekly diary allows for examining within-person behaviours and fluctuations over time (Rofcanin *et al.*, 2019). Moreso, such designs investigate individuals' behaviours on a weekly basis, with repeated administration of a measure (Ohly *et al.*, 2010). Studies on job crafting have prompted research using daily diary studies (see Demerouti *et al.*, 2015; Peeters *et al.*, 2016; Tims *et al.*, 2014). Researchers have advocated using diary studies (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995; Reis & Gable, 2000), as they are associated with various benefits, such as their ability to provide insights into the temporal dynamics of individuals and their associated work experiences over time (Bolger *et al.*, 2003; Ohly *et al.*, 2010).

According to Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), job crafting behaviour is a continuous initiative and frequently occurs over time, not a single or once-off event. Various empirical studies have confirmed the fluctuating nature of job crafting occurrences (see Mäkikangas, 2018; Tims *et al.*, 2014, 2016). Hence, the use of diary measures is highly valuable, as indicated by the previously mentioned studies.

The study identified that job crafting was predominantly conceptualised using the Tims *et al.* (2012) perspective. The study revealed that there are various outcomes linked to job crafting. Studies analysed in this systematic review have mainly established that employees who embark on job crafting are likely to remain engaged and find meaning in their work; job crafting is furthermore linked to job satisfaction.

## 5.1    Limitations of the study

Any form of research conducted will present limitations. The present study used a review period of 10 years, and, as a result, any research conducted before this date would have been excluded. Three South African journals and two international databases were selected as data sources for this study, to the exclusion of other data sources, such as Google Scholar and alternative databases. Future researchers should extend this systematic review by making use of various other databases, as well as Google Scholar. As another criterion was that

sources had to be peer-reviewed published articles. Empirical studies presented through conference proceedings or dissertations, for example, would therefore have been excluded.

## 5.2    Implications for future research and managerial implications

Although job crafting has garnered much interest abroad, there is a great need for studies on job crafting in the South African context. This will shed light on employee-initiated job design. Zhang and Parker (2019) asserted that construct clarification is also needed in this field. Through the systematic review, it is evident that studies on job crafting in South Africa are at an early stage. Internationally, research on job crafting has flourished and provides fresh new insights on job crafting linked to various outcomes. It will be insightful for scholars in this field to undertake such research through replication studies or even validation studies. Zhang and Parker (2019) put forward a new job crafting type, and there is need for this to be empirically tested. Hu *et al.* (2019) confirmed that such studies are lacking and need to be clarified further.

Overall research on job crafting has a limited cross-sectional scope within the South African context. It is recommended that researchers within this space, more specifically within work and organisational psychology, embrace this methodology and embark on longitudinal, panel- and diary-design studies. Diary studies are considered a valuable tool to investigate constructs such as job crafting that can be studied within the social, psychological, and physiological processes, as they unfold in daily or weekly situations (Bolger *et al.*, 2003; Ohly *et al.*, 2010).

There are various conceptualisations of job crafting that have been framed within varying perspectives, outlining definitions, and methodological aspects. However, job crafting remains relatively unexplored, limiting the chances of describing and explaining the mechanisms of job crafting through a South African lens and deriving outcomes that can advance the field.

## 6.    CONCLUSION

Systematic reviews are essential in providing valuable insight into research conducted over the years. Evaluating such research and providing an overview will assist future researchers in guiding their research within the field. It is recommended that researchers in South Africa consider the changing aspects of one's job and measure the fluctuating nature of job crafting through the use of weekly or daily diary designs. More so, operationalising job crafting through interventions is likely to optimise employee well-being and assist in keeping employees engaged.

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