



The Impact of Job Crafting on Employees' Adaptive Performance: A Context of Digital Transformation

Lijun Sun*, Hui Li

School of Economics and Management, Nanjing Tech University, Nanjing 211816, China

*3095986006@qq.com, Lihui2012@njtech.edu.cn

Abstract. With the rapid evolution of the digital economy, how individuals adapt to the changing workplace has become an important issue in both academia and practice. Job crafting is the process by which employees shape and redefine work tasks, perceptions, and interactions to optimize their fit with work. It plays an indispensable role in individual adaptation in the workplace. Therefore, based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, this study tested the hypotheses using SPSS 27.0 with a sample of 598 questionnaires. The results indicate that both promotion-focused and prevention-focused job crafting have positive impacts on employees' adaptive performance. Thus, organizations should focus on promoting employees' job crafting behaviors to enhance their adaptive performance, thereby facilitating the adaptive development of the enterprise.

Keywords: promotion-focused job crafting, prevention-focused job crafting, employees' adaptive performance

1 Introduction

In recent years, the global economic situation has been characterized by complexity and slow recovery, posing numerous challenges. In 2025, although the global economy has a moderate recovery trend, but it still faces many constraints, including slow inflation decline, rising debt risks, geopolitical tensions, and the resurgence of trade protectionism. This uncertainty in the global economy has placed higher demands on both organizations and individuals. In the face of the ever-changing social and economic environment, how employees can effectively adapt has become crucial for both individual career development and organizational success.

With the rapid development of the digital economy, digital transformation of enterprises has become an inevitable trend. McKinsey's report shows that 70% of enterprises have failed due to employee resistance, which shows the important role of employee participation and adaptation to enterprises in the digital age. Therefore, facing the organizational change of digital transformation, higher demands are placed on employees' adaptive performance. Adaptive performance is related to employees' employ ability and career sustainability, and it directly affects the implementation and effectiveness of corporate digital transformation. Hence, both in management practice and theoretical

construction, there is an urgent need for a systematic study of employees' adaptive performance in the context of digital transformation.

According to the COR theory, individuals are motivated to acquire, protect, and maintain their resources to safeguard the self and support social relationships^[1]. In the face of potential resource loss, employees take corresponding measures to avoid such losses, and if losses have already occurred, they seek to regain resources. When enterprises are in the context of digital transformation, individuals act to obtain resources or prevent resource loss by engaging in behaviors that correspond to the changing environment of the organization. This, in turn, triggers promotion-focused and prevention-focused job crafting behaviors^[2]. The process of engaging in promotion-focused and prevention-focused job crafting influences employees' adaptation to change. Therefore, based on the COR theory, this study explores the impact of promotion-focused and prevention-focused job crafting on employees' adaptive performance, aiming to provide valuable insights for employees' adaptive performance in the context of corporate digital transformation.

2 The Oretical Analysis and Research Hypothesis

Job crafting is the proactive behavior of employees to adjust their work to meet their own needs, skills, and preferences.^[3] In the context of digital transformation, the impact mechanism of job crafting on employees' adaptive performance is a complex process involving the interplay of multiple factors. Tims et al. have categorized job crafting into two types: promotion-focused and prevention-focused job crafting. These two types of job crafting play distinct roles in influencing employees' adaptive performance^[4].

According to the COR theory, individuals with richer resources are better equipped to withstand the impact of organizational changes such as digital transformation. Moreover, they tend to exhibit higher levels of proactivity and adaptability when facing change. Therefore, during corporate digital transformation, employees with abundant resources are more likely to engage in promotion-focused job crafting in order to acquire even more resources. Promotion-focused job crafting is a proactive work behavior that involves employees actively altering their job content to enhance job challenges and resource availability. This behavior is typically driven by employees' needs for growth and development. They increase structural job resources such as autonomy, job variety, and opportunities for advancement to gain control over their work and achieve better personal growth and development.

Firstly, proactive job crafting enhances employees' perceived employability through motivational job characteristics, which in turn helps employees better adapt to changing job demands and environments.^[5] Secondly, this type of job crafting not only affects individual job performance but also enhances work-related well-being and performance by increasing job meaning and identity^[6]. Additionally, research has found that job crafting behaviors that increase structural resources and challenging demands can significantly enhance employees' work engagement, thereby promoting job performance and improving employees' adaptability.^[7] In summary, promotion-focused job crafting

positively impacts employees' adaptive performance by increasing job resources, enhancing challenging job demands, improving job meaning and identity, and boosting job engagement and satisfaction.

H1: Promotion-focused job crafting positively affects employees' adaptive performance.

Individuals with limited resources may perceive threats of resource loss when facing digital transformation, such as outdated skills, job insecurity, and uncertainties in career development. These perceived threats can trigger prevention-focused job crafting behaviors. Prevention-focused job crafting refers to the behaviors employees engage in to avoid negative job characteristics and outcomes by reducing hindering job demands.

Firstly, prevention-focused job crafting helps employees cope with job stress by reducing job demands and increasing job resources, which positively impacts job performance and thereby has an indirect positive effect on adaptive performance.^[8] Secondly, in some cases, prevention-focused job crafting can facilitate collaboration among team members and enhance team performance.^[9] Lastly, defensive job crafting is typically manifested by reducing hindering job demands, such as narrowing the scope of work, reducing non-essential tasks, and minimizing unnecessary social interactions. These actions help employees conserve psychological and emotional resources in high-stress environments, thereby alleviating their work burden and enhancing their adaptability to work.^[10] Therefore, during the digital transformation of enterprises, employees can adopt defensive job crafting to reduce stress, avoid negative impacts, and enhance their adaptive performance.

H2: Prevention-focused job crafting positively affects employees' adaptive performance.

The proposed conceptual model of this study was displayed in Figure 1.

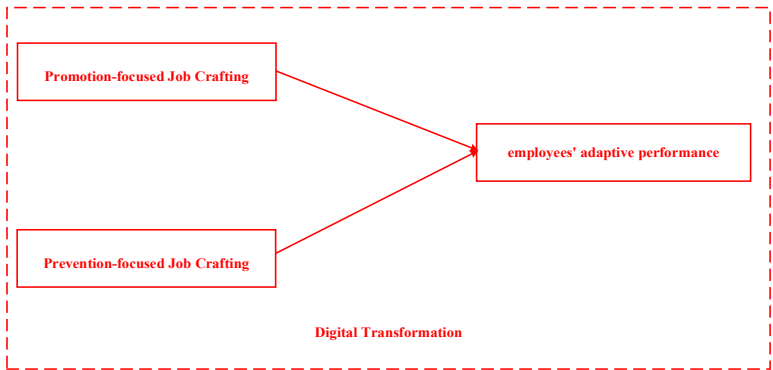


Fig. 1. Research model.

3 Method

3.1 Sample

This study collected data by distributing questionnaires to employees of enterprises undergoing digital transformation. The questionnaires were conducted anonymously to ensure the protection of relevant privacy. The survey covered multiple industries, including finance, computer services and software, and manufacturing. A total of 723 questionnaires were distributed, and 686 were returned. After excluding 88 invalid questionnaires, 598 valid questionnaires were obtained, with an effective response rate of 87.17%. Among the respondents, the majority were male, with a total of 318 individuals, accounting for 53.18%. In terms of age, the largest group was aged between 25 and 34, with 242 individuals, representing 40.47%. Regarding education level, the highest number of respondents had a bachelor's degree, with 222 individuals, accounting for 37.12%. In terms of work experience, the largest group had 3 to 5 years of work experience, with a total of 206 individuals, representing 34.45%. Regarding the nature of the enterprises, the majority were private companies, with 239 individuals, accounting for 39.97%. In terms of industry classification, the IT industry had the highest number of respondents, with 114 individuals, representing 19.06%.

3.2 Measures

To ensure the scientific validity and reliability of the measurement tools, this study employed internationally recognized and well-established scales as the basis for measurement. All variables were measured using a Likert five-point scale. The specific scales are as follows:

(1) Promotion-Focused Job Crafting (PROJC): This study used the four-dimensional, 21-item scale developed by Tims et al. (2012)^[4]. For example, items include "I actively seek to learn new knowledge and skills from my work" (increasing structural job resources); "I actively seek feedback or suggestions from colleagues at work" (increasing social resources); and "If there is a new project, I will be among the first to learn and try it" (increasing challenging job demands). Cronbach's α was 0.964.

Prevention-Focused Job Crafting (PREJC): This scale includes items such as "I try to reduce the psychological pressure from work" (reducing hindering job demands). Cronbach's α was 0.929.

(2) Adaptive Performance (AP): This study used the scale developed by Griffin et al. (2007)^[11], selecting only the items related to adaptive performance to better fit the research theme. For example, items include "Adapting well to changes in core tasks" (individual task adaptive performance); "Effectively dealing with changes that affect the work unit (e.g., new members)" (team member adaptive performance); and "Flexibly responding to overall changes in the organization (e.g., changes in management)" (organizational member adaptive performance). Cronbach's α was 0.944.

Considering that demographic variables such as gender, age, education background, and work experience may influence the research conclusions, these factors were included as control variables in the analysis to enhance the accuracy of the research findings.

4 Results

4.1 Common Method Bias Testing

To examine whether common method bias (CMB) exists in the data, this study employed a dual-testing approach for verification. First, the Harman single-factor test was conducted. The analysis extracted three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. The variance explained by the first factor was 36.963%, which did not reach the critical threshold of 40%. Second, the “unmeasured single-source latent factor method” was used for further examination. After introducing a common method factor into the original three-factor model, the results showed that the changes in model fit indices were all below 0.03, and the overall model fit did not improve significantly. In conclusion, the common method bias in this study is within an acceptable range.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

The results of the descriptive statistics and correlation analysis of the variables are presented in Table 1. The analysis shows that promotion-focused job crafting ($r = 0.204$, $p < 0.01$) is significantly positively correlated with employee adaptive performance, and prevention-focused job crafting ($r = 0.386$, $p < 0.01$) is also significantly positively correlated with employee adaptive performance. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 are preliminarily supported.

Table 1. Results of descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients (N=598)

Variables	Mean Value	Standard deviation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gender	1.470	0.500	1						
Age	2.150	0.937	0.055	1					
Education background	2.520	0.743	-0.033	-	1				
Work Experience	2.460	0.985	0.066	0.792**	-0.478**	1			
PROJC	3.500	1.104	-0.055	0.092*	-0.065	0.047	1		
PREJC	3.469	1.177	0.002	-0.036	-0.019	-0.043	0.167*	1	
AP	3.413	1.162	-0.011	-0.077	0.061	-0.04	0.204*	0.386**	1

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

This study employed hierarchical regression analysis using SPSS 27.0 to further test the hypotheses. The results are presented in Table 2. The analysis shows that promotion-focused job crafting ($r = 0.215$, $p < 0.001$) is significantly positively correlated with employee adaptive performance, and prevention-focused job crafting ($r = 0.388$, $p < 0.001$) is also significantly positively correlated with employee adaptive performance. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 are further supported.

Table 2. Results of regression analysis

Variables	AP			
	M1	M2	M3	M4
Gender	-0.008	0.005	-0.009	0.001
Age	-0.108	-0.138	-0.106	-0.127
Education background	0.039	0.047	0.058	0.063
Work Experience	0.068	0.084	0.092	0.102
PROJC		0.215***		0.362***
PREJC			0.388***	0.154***
R ²	0.010	0.055	0.159	0.182
ΔR^2	0.010	0.045	0.149	0.172
F	0.957	4.939***	15.917***	16.329***

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

5 Conclusions

Based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory and empirical testing, this study finds that both promotion-focused job crafting and prevention-focused job crafting have positive impacts on employees' adaptive performance. This research enriches the literature on job crafting and adaptive performance in the context of digital transformation and extends the antecedents of employees' adaptive performance.

In practical terms, during the process of digital transformation, first, companies should encourage employees to engage in both promotion-focused and prevention-focused job crafting. Promotion-focused job crafting can help employees acquire new knowledge and skills, enhance their adaptability and ability to cope with change, and thereby promote the development of the enterprise. Second, prevention-focused job crafting can reduce employees' work pressure and, in turn, mitigate negative emotions related to work. Finally, it is essential to encourage employees to proactively learn new knowledge and skills and to enhance their work autonomy. By granting employees more autonomy and decision-making power, they can take initiative and be creative in their work, further improving adaptive performance. Therefore, companies should

break away from rigid management systems, encourage employees to actively participate in decision-making and innovation, and thereby stimulate their passion and creativity at work, leading to higher work efficiency and quality.

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