

Crafters of one's own success. A time-lagged study on the mediating role of job crafting dimensions in the relationship between protean career and career success.

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Several economic and organizational phenomena have forced an increasing number of individuals to take the lead of their own career (Hall et al., 2018), as organizations reduced their commitment towards their employees' career development. As the number and momentousness of occupational transitions has risen, the increased individuals' responsibility for their career management implies that they need to show proactivity to shape their own career (Cortellazzo et al., 2020).

This increased need to proactively manage their own career, namely protean career (PC), may be easily paired to another, more specific, phenomenon, that is job crafting, which is related to proactively modify aspects of one's job to create a better fit between the job and one's personal characteristics. So, while PC can refer to manage one's career and to pursue one's personal career goals and values, job crafting refers to the customization of one's job to increase one's person-job fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2006). While PC has often been related to career success as an outcome (Hermann et al., 2015), limited evidence is available in regards to job crafting (Kundi et al., 2020).

Building on career motivation theory (London, 1983) and on job crafting theory (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), we aim at examining how the association between PC, on the one side, and subjective and objective career success, on the other side, was mediated by the three dimensions of job crafting, namely increasing structural resources, increasing social resources, and increasing challenging demands. In particular, we are interested in assessing job crafting, not as a whole construct, but via its three different dimensions, as some scholars (Tims et al., 2013) pointed out that each of these could be differentially associated with distinct outcomes.

Data were collected from a sample of 712 Italian employees through a time-lagged research design. At Time 1, respondents filled out a measure of PC. At Time 2, 594 individuals filled out another questionnaire assessing the distinguished job crafting dimensions, and subjective and objective career success. Data were analysed through Structural Equation Modeling.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis showed that the original PC scale did not fit well with the data, while one of its two sub-scales, namely Self-Directed Career Management (SDCM), did. Therefore, we retained it for subsequent analyses. The results from our analyses showed that SDCM was positively associated with increasing structural job resources, increasing challenging job demands, and with subjective and objective career success. In addition, increasing structural job resources was positively associated with subjective career success, while increasing challenging job demands was positively associated with objective career success. In regards to mediation effects, increasing structural job resources mediated the relationship between SDCM and subjective career success, while increasing challenging job demands mediated the association between SDCM and objective career success.

Our study has some theoretical implications. First, the differentiation between the three job crafting dimensions has proven to be valuable as they were differentially associated with the distinguished outcomes variable. Second, this conclusion also applies to the mediation effects, as we have found two exclusive mediation paths. Third, it was meaningful to contrast the associations of the job crafting dimensions with either subjective or objective career success. From a practical point of view, future job crafting interventions should be focused on increasing structural job resources and challenging job demands as they have proven to be significant predictors of career success.

References

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