Approach Job Crafting and Relationship Conflict: The Moderating Effect of Zero-Sum Mindset

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Abstract

At present there is a growing demand for cooperation and teamwork at the workplace. Meanwhile, in the background, more and more employees are participating in job crafting, a proactive stance in modifying aspects of the job. So far, most research has stayed on the individual level of the notion while highlighting the positive outcomes of approach job crafting. This has created a gap in the literature where little is known about how work colleagues might be negatively affected by this type of job crafting. The current study aims to uncover whether employees tend to engage in more relationship conflict when their coworker is actively approach job crafting based on the premises of relative deprivation theory. Moreover, it is hypothesized that zero-sum mindset positively moderates this interaction. To investigate this, a self-report cross-sectional questionnaire ($N = 91$) was conducted. No significant results to support either hypothesis were found. Consequently, it is deduced that more research is needed to confidently reject the existence of an interaction. Further theoretical and practical implications are addressed in the paper.

Keywords: job crafting, approach job crafting, interpersonal perspective, relationship conflict, zero-sum mindset

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Mindset

A shift in organizational work design is currently taking place where being proactive is becoming the dominating approach in a work environment. Accordingly, organizations increasingly value employee initiative to introduce adjustments to cope with the dynamic work climate (Grant & Parker, 2009). This corresponds to the recognition of job crafting as a relevant and influential concept. The notion is briefly defined as the changes individuals make concerning their job resources and job demands (Tims & Bakker, 2010). Researchers most often differentiate between approach and avoidance crafting. Zhang and Parker (2019) define the former as the deliberate and targeted measures to seek advantageous components at the job. In contrast, they characterize the latter type as intentional actions dedicated to evading or circumventing the negative aspects of the job.

Although job crafting is a relatively new construct, many studies have been published exploring the related effects; however, most of these efforts have always been directed towards certain focus points. The trends highlighted by researchers so far are the individual nature of job crafting and its positive outcomes (Tims et al., 2015). Nevertheless, scientific findings indicate that when individuals participate in job crafting without engaging their coworkers, reactions from the coworkers are still elicited (Peeters et al., 2016). Hence, it is imperative to gain more insights from an interpersonal perspective.

Further, regarding the second trend of positive outcomes, the distinction that is most often derived is that approach job crafting is associated with advantageous results while avoidance crafting is correlated with negative consequences (Mainka & Süß, 2022). Further elaborated, social psychology studies portray approach job crafting as having a positive effect on variables such as work engagement (Van Wingerden et al., 2017), work performance (Petrou et al., 2015), and self-reported person-job fit (Kooij et al., 2017). However, keeping a narrow

focus on this line of inquiry has left a gap in the literature where an extensive examination of the potential dark side of approach job crafting from an interpersonal standpoint is still lacking.

Nevertheless, recently Dong et al. (2022) deviated from the existing main line of research and theorized that negative consequences (social undermining and less prosocial behaviors) are present by approach job crafting as well. The authors based their assumption on the relative deprivation theory (Crosby, 1984). According to it, individuals tend to engage in comparisons with others (such as their coworkers). When they evaluate their circumstances as worse than they deserve, they experience feelings of deprivation and consequently, anger and resentment. Analogously, in the work context, this translates into an employee feeling deprived if their colleague is a job crafter, which may further result in negative attitudes regarding their interpersonal relationship. Among them could be relationship conflict described as unhappiness with the job crafter (Fong et al., 2022) and personal incompatibility (Jehn, 1995). In comparison to conflict solely related to the task, known to have a beneficial influence, relationship conflict is linked to negative effects on performance, task concentration (Lu et al., 2011) and team spirit (Jehn, 1995). This calls attention to the crucial role this type of conflict can have in a work setting.

It is argued that the adverse effects are dependent on how the employee perceives the availability of job-related resources – as finite or unlimited (Dong et al., 2022) since job crafting is viewed as a method to gain resources at the workplace (Tims et al., 2012). This outlook on accessibility corresponds to a zero-sum mindset, referring to the conviction that the win of one individual equates to the experience of loss by another person (Davidai & Ongis, 2019; Sirola & Pitesa, 2017). Dong et al. (2022) hypothesized that the strength of relative deprivation is dependent on how the employee perceives the availability of the

desired job resources. Furthermore, they found that zero-sum mindset moderates the relationship between job crafting and harmful behavior towards the job crafter.

The aim of this study is to illuminate the research gap beyond the bright side of approach crafting on an individual level. For that reason, this paper attempts to answer the question of how approach job crafting impacts the likelihood of relationship conflict between an employee and their job crafting coworker. Respectively, hypotheses about the nature of the association and the potential moderating effect of the zero-sum mindset are presented.

Literature Review

Job Crafting

In the course of job crafting research, there have been several accounts classifying the possible types and behaviors included in the term. Aside from the approach and avoidance distinction, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) has been especially popular. According to it, job resources correspond to the characteristics of the job that are useful in carrying the occupational responsibilities and encouraging one's development, whereas job demands are those facets of the job that may cause pressure if they are beyond the worker's capacity to adapt.

More recently, Zhang and Parker (2019) went a step further and combined both abovementioned prominent approaches. Following their reasoning, eight types of job crafting exist and they are distinguished based on whether the actions are aimed at approach or avoidance, are of behavioral or cognitive nature, and refer to either job resources or job demands (e.g., avoidance cognitive resources crafting or approach behavioral demands crafting). Cognitive job crafting is described as the changes in framing and interpretation regarding one's job. Given that it is so reliant on the perceptions of the job crafter, it does not directly affect other employees. Therefore, it is unlikely to trigger a coworker reaction and

leading for me to focus my investigative efforts on behavioral crafting and on the approach subtype in particular due to the identified research gap.

As mentioned, according to Zhang and Parker (2019), who drew inspiration from the JD-R framework, approach job crafting can be divided into two additional subtypes. The demands-oriented approach job crafting highlights the actions aiming to increase challenging job demands (e.g., engaging in tasks beyond the mandatory ones). In contrast, resource-focused approach job crafting consists of increasing or conserving workplace resources (Bruning & Campion, 2018) where the employees adapt them to their own needs, competencies, and desires (Zhang & Parker, 2019). A previous model by Tims et al. (2012) showcases job crafting activities as gaining more social resources (e.g., feedback, social support, and mentoring from the leader) and structural job resources (e.g., independence, development opportunities and task variation). In the end, this serves the purpose of aiding a person in goal achievement, management of responsibilities, and personal development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

However, despite the fact that such behavior might bring several work-related benefits to the job crafter, it is possible for it to harm their colleague relationships. A finding, providing a basis for such speculation, indicates that when employees perceive their coworkers as being too proactive, they might take countermeasures like damaging the colleagues' reputation, for instance (Van Dyne & Ellis, 2004). Such actions and discrepancies in work attitudes are bound to affect the relationship between the employee and the job crafter. Namely, this can manifest itself in the form of conflict.

Relationship conflict

Interpersonal conflicts arise when individuals perceive incompatibility between their viewpoints and interests (Jehn, 1995). A body of work has been dedicated to researching this topic in organizations in particular (Barki & Hartwick, 2004) and based on it the distinction of

task vs relationship conflict has been made (Jehn, 1994; Pinkley, 1990). According to Jehn's (1994, 1995) definition task conflict reflects the recognition of divergent ideas and opinions strictly regarding the given task. In contrast, relationship conflict refers to the awareness of mismatches on a personal level. Most often this entails "tension, animosity, and annoyance" (Jehn, 1995, p.258) between individuals.

As the latter type relates more closely to the workplace situation where employees are competing for the same pool of resources and is problematic in many ways, it is the object of this study's investigation. According to Surra & Longstreth (1990), those who face conflict and tension with the person they are dating, experience decreased satisfaction in the relationship compared to those who do not. Likewise, workers suffering from interpersonal conflict are assumed to be dissatisfied with their work group, because interpersonal conflicts amplify unpleasant reactions such as anxiety and terror, lowering their contentment (Jehn, 1995).

Employees may also feel frustrated, strained, and unsettled when they dislike or are disliked themselves by colleagues (Walton & Dutton, 1969). Previous research reveals that in cases when anger, friction, and personality clashes are present, group members are less effective and achieve poor results (Argyris, 1962). Kelley (1979) interpreted that as the angry individual losing sight of the task at hand. Consequently, relationship conflict is found to be correlated to outcomes like worse performance (Jehn, 1995; De Dreu & Van Vianen, 2001; Varela et al., 2008) and lower quality of decision-making (Amason, 1996). Such negative effects can have serious implications for organizations and which encourages conflict experts to promote the avoidance of relationship conflict (Rispens, 2012). However, to evade it, one must be informed about the determinants of its emergence and relative deprivation theory has displayed significant explanatory power on the topic (Dong et al., 2022).

Relative Deprivation Theory

Indeed, a recent theoretical account on the grounds of the relative deprivation theory illustrates how the relationship between approach job crafting and conflict could arise (Dong et al., 2022). It is assumed that a worker's job crafting activities play a role in inducing feelings of relative deprivation in employees who, in turn, are likelier to exhibit a negative reaction towards the job crafter. This perspective is informed by the social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954). Conforming to it, people have the tendency to engage in self-assessment based on comparisons with similar others. Accordingly, a person is inclined to react to such a social comparison based on its nature (upward or downward) but interestingly in the context of relative deprivation theory, the reaction of feeling deprived is indeed "relative" and not always objective (Martin et al., 1984). The premise of the relative deprivation theory insists that in order to generate relative deprivation others who are seemingly at an advantage must be present (Hu et al., 2015). For instance, this can be someone pursues more social resources like supervisor feedback resulting in better performance.

Additionally, the employee's assessment of the conduct of the job crafter and their response to it are largely influenced by how much the employee is impacted by it (Tims & Parker, 2020). Taking into account that the pool of organizational resources is not limitless (Epitropaki et al., 2016), job crafters could be perceived by other employees as competition for those resources and thereby become the object of social comparisons. Since approach job crafting is a practice aimed at gaining and actively seeking more resources (Tims et al., 2012), the activities included under the term may be seen as infringing on what others believe they deserve. A fitting example is the opportunity to work on a challenging project, a finite resource offering the best chance for growth in a professional and personal sense. When a job crafter seeks to be included in 3 of those projects, for instance, the even distribution of resources across employees is disregarded, leaving some better off than others. Therefore,

seeing others engage in approach job crafting is highly probable to initiate a comparison where the employee identifies their circumstances worsening due to the job crafter. Per relative deprivation theory, a social comparison like this is likely to bring about feelings of relative deprivation (Crosby, 1984).

Next, it is important to recognize the negative affective responses left behind in the aftermath of these comparisons which tie approach job crafting and relative deprivation, along with relationship conflict, together. According to Crosby (1984), aside from relative deprivation, one is also prone to anger and resentment, which are commonly recognized as critical aspects of intragroup conflicts (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003). Adapting Crosby's reasoning to this study's research question, those emotions are rooted in the individual feeling victimized by unequal conduct, an outcome of the actions of the job crafter.

Even though there is little research available that has not only explored but also directly supported the existence of an interaction between approach job crafting and relationship conflict, there are still parallels to be drawn. For instance, when negative attitudes towards coworkers are present, damaging interpersonal actions between individuals are taken (Dong et al., 2022). Among them are social undermining (Reh et al., 2018; Sun et al., 2021) with relative deprivation as a mediator (Dong et al., 2022) and decreased helping behavior (Sun et al., 2021). However, relationship conflict is known to be an antecedent of social undermining (Yu & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2018). The aggregation of these scientific insights allows me to argue that when an employee compares their circumstances to those of an approach job crafter, feelings of relative deprivation as well as anger and resentment emerge and an increased likelihood of relationship conflict follows. In agreement with this argumentation, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): The probability of an employee engaging in relationship conflict increases when their coworker engages in approach job crafting.

The Moderating Effect of Zero-Sum Mindset on the Relationship Between Approach

Job Crafting and Relationship Conflict

According to the relative deprivation theory, employee attitudes regarding resources influence the degree to which social comparisons impact feelings of relative deprivation (Buunk et al., 2003; Crosby, 1984). This provides the needed theoretical basis for this study to investigate whether the interaction between a worker's job crafting and their interpersonal relationship with the employee depends on the employee's zero-sum mindset.

When one has adopted a zero-sum mindset, they view resources as limited and as an object of competition between colleagues. For them, if a person is acquiring something, this automatically means a loss for another party (Sirola & Pitesa, 2017). In accordance with that, Dong et al. (2022) argue that an employee perceives the job crafting activities of their coworker as taking advantage of the resources desired by the employee. This, in turn, results in more intense feelings of relative deprivation. Next, it could lead to them ascribing personal motivations to harm to the job crafter for their actions (Dong et al., 2022) and perceiving them as self-centered and as participating in job crafting to the detriment of others (De Dreu, 2007). In such instances, the employee views their interests as suffering and thereby the two personal standpoints on utilizing work resources fairly as incompatible. Following this line of reasoning, it is logical to assume that the likelihood of relationship conflict increases when the employee endorses a zero-sum mindset.

On the other hand, when an individual recognizes that the pool of resources is not limited, they do not maintain a zero-sum perspective (Sirola & Pitesa, 2017). In that case, an employee considers the job-crafting activities of their coworker as a way to produce extra resources overall. Moreover, they believe that win-win scenarios are realistic and that optimizing the work circumstances of their coworker is not synonymous with a personal loss for them (Dong et al., 2022) but rather with possible benefits for the whole team (De Dreu,

2007). To illustrate this, one can call upon Tims et al.'s (2013) finding that job crafting can stimulate team creativity, information exchange, and performance. All of this points to the low plausibility of employees suffering from feelings of relative deprivation. Additionally, in such cases, the employee does not perceive their interests as incompatible with those of the job crafter but rather as mutually reinforcing, thereby lowering the likelihood of experiencing relationship conflict.

Indeed, the already existing literature supports zero-sum mindset in its capacity as a moderator of the relationship between a worker's job crafting and an employee's damaging practices towards the job crafter (Dong et al., 2022). The discussed empirical evidence as well as theoretical context have allowed me to construct this study's research model (see Figure 1). In accordance with the proposed model, the following hypothesis is presented:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): The positive relationship between coworker approach job crafting and relationship conflict is stronger for employees with a high score on zero-sum mindset in comparison to employees with a low score on zero-sum mindset.

Figure 1

The Research Model
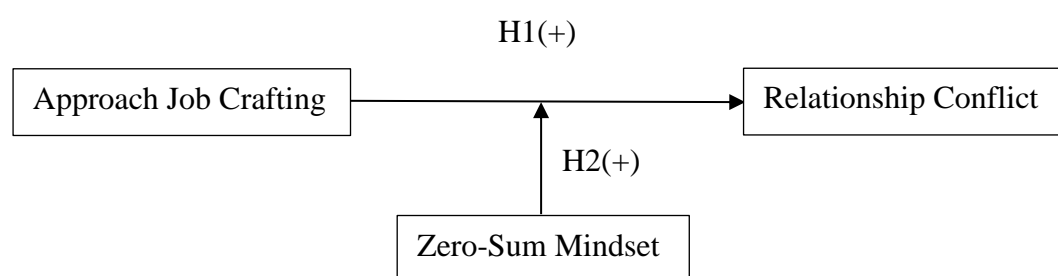
Method

Participants

The participants were recruited through social media advertising and the personal contacts of myself and my fellow thesis group members. Out of the 142 individuals, who consented to their data being processed, 51 people did not finish the survey, which led to the final sample

consisting of 91 workers (31.9% male and 68,1% female). The majority of the participants (44.0%) fell into the 18-29 age group, while approximately 24.4% and 22.0% belonged to the category of 30 to 39-year-olds and 40 to 49-year-olds, respectively. That left 9.9% of the sample between the ages of 50 and 59. The group of respondents were geographically diverse with a few countries being represented the most: Germany (26.4%), shortly followed by Jordan (25.3%) and Bulgaria (14.3%).

Attending to the participants' job and educational characteristics, the working hours including overtime averaged across the whole sample were 40.2 hours, very close to the premises of the regular job contracts. Taking into account the educational level of the participants, most of them (39.6%) held a master's degree, with an additional 28.6% having completed a bachelor's degree and 16.5% having followed solely high school education. This logically corresponds to 41.8% of the sample engaging in upper-level white-collar work (e.g., teacher or doctor), 23.1% occupying a high management position, and 27.5% having a low-level white-collar job (e.g., assistant or nurse). Accordingly, the majority of the participants did not have a leadership position at their workplace (68.1%).

Design and Procedure

The participants were recruited through our social network. In order to take part in the study, they had to work a minimum of 20 hours per week and be at least 18 years old. A cross-sectional design was used for conducting this self-report study. The survey was constructed and filled in on Qualtrics. Additionally, the questionnaire was fully translated into German by two of the thesis group members to aid in accessibility and comprehension for the German-speaking respondents.

At the beginning of the questionnaire, the participants were asked for their informed consent and were briefly introduced to the notion of job crafting. Next, they filled in the section of the questionnaire inquiring about their own job crafting behaviors. Additionally,

they were requested to think of a random coworker. To ensure they would have a critical outlook on the chosen colleague, the employees had to write down two negative and two positive characteristics regarding the coworker. Following that, the employees proceeded to answer the sections about the coworker's job crafting, their own feelings of relative deprivation and their zero-sum mindset. In the end, they provided their demographic information.

Measures

Job Crafting

A scale developed by Tims et al. (2012) was used to measure individual job crafting behavior. It consisted of the operationalization of three different constructs (structural job resources, social job resources, and job demands) which were explored in 4 to 5 items each, amounting to a total of 14 items. The participants were asked to rate the occurrence of certain events on a 5-point frequency scale, where "Never" (= 1) and "Very Often" (= 5). The first construct was aimed at efforts to increase structural job resources (5 items). A sample item from this section was the following: "I try to learn new things at work.", $\alpha = 0.62$. Meanwhile, the second section targeted attempts to improve social job resources (5 items), $\alpha = 0.84$. It included items such as: "I ask others for feedback on my job performance.". Lastly, the last 3 items targeted the tendency to increase challenging job demands, $\alpha = 0.73$. Among the statements to be rated in that category was "When there is not much to do at work, I see it as a chance to start new projects."

The same 14 items were used in the coworker evaluation version of the scale. The only difference to be found was in the phrasing. The statements were adapted to refer to the participant's coworker in the following way: "I see my colleague trying to learn new things at work" and "When there is not much to do at work, my colleague sees it as a chance to start

new projects." Cronbach's alpha values were 0.80 for structural job resources, 0.80 for social

job resources, and 0.78 for challenging job demands.

Relationship Conflict

A scale developed by Jehn (1995) was introduced to capture the likelihood of relationship

conflict. It consisted of 4 items, which were to be rated from "None" (= 1) to "Very Often" (=

5), $\alpha = 0.90$. An example of the included content is the following question: "To what extent

do you think your colleague's behavior will lead to friction between you and your colleague?"

Relative Deprivation

The feeling of relative deprivation was measured by a 5-item scale (Callan et al., 2011).

The participants were asked to rate statements like: "I feel deprived when I think about what I

have compared to what other people like me have." using one of 5 anchored answers from 1 =

"Strongly Disagree" (= 1) to "Strongly Agree" (= 5), $\alpha = 0.61$. Among the items in the scale,

two were reversed coded ("I feel privileged compared to other people like me").

Zero-Sum Mindset

A 6-item scale by Sirola and Pitesa (2017) was used to assess whether the participants

viewed success using a zero-sum approach. The researchers adapted a system originally

developed by (Esses et al., 1998). In the current cross-sectional study, the more recent version

was used, $\alpha = 0.69$. The previously applied 5-point ranking was utilized in this section of the

questionnaire as well ("Strongly Disagree" = 1 to "Strongly Agree" = 5). Statements such as:

"When some workers make economic gains, others lose out economically." and "The more

employees a company employs, the harder it is for existing employees to advance." were

included.

The measures used in the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

Data Analysis Procedure

The whole statistical analysis was conducted using the IBM SPSS software program. Firstly, I inspected the descriptive statistics. Next, we checked for possible outliers. Afterwards, the necessary checks for linearity, homoscedasticity, and normality were administered. Subsequently, the data underwent a linear regression analysis, where the mean of coworker approach job crafting was the independent variable, relationship conflict was the dependent variable and the employee's zero-sum mindset was the moderator. Since the factors included in the model did not have a meaningful zero, the independent and moderating variables were centered in order to make reliable inferences about the moderation effect. The interaction term between the approach job crafting of the coworker and the employee's zero-sum mindset was calculated by multiplying the two. Including it in the linear regression mode allowed me to draw conclusions about H2.

Results

Descriptives

The descriptive statistics for the dependent and independent as well as moderating variables can be found in Table 1. What stands out regarding the correlations between all three factors is that the strongest one is between zero-sum mindset and relationship conflict ($r = .31$, $p = .002$). In other words, employees who perceive job resources as limited also involve themselves in more relationship conflict. In comparison, the association between approach job crafting and relationship conflict ($r = -22$, $p = .018$) is negative in direction, while being weaker in magnitude. The study participants whose coworkers engage in approach job crafting seem to participate in less relationship conflict. That leaves the correlation between approach job crafting and zero-sum mindset ($r = -.12$, $p = .126$) as the only insignificant one.

Table 1

The Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation Coefficients for All Variables

	M	SD	Relationship Conflict	Approach Job Crafting	Zero-Sum Mindset

Relationship Conflict	2.18	0.92	1.00	.22*	.31**
Approach Job Crafting	3.10	0.58		1.00	-.12
Zero-Sum Mindset	2.84	0.73			1.00

Note. $N = 91$. "Approach Job Crafting" refers to the activities of the coworker.

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Hypotheses Testing

Upon inspection all the necessary regression assumption requirements for linearity, homoscedasticity, normality as well as independence were satisfied. A VIF check indicated the absence of multicollinearity between the job crafting scores (VIF = 1.06), the zero-sum mindset results (VIF = 1.09) and the interaction term (VIF = 1.11).

The linear regression analysis did not yield a statistically significant result for the main effect hypothesis ($p = .095$, $B = -0.28$). Put differently, whether the coworker took part in approach job crafting or not seemed to have no effect on the occurrence of relationship conflict.

Similarly, the moderating effect of zero-sum mindset on the association between job crafting and relationship conflict was not supported by the results of the analysis ($p = .553$, $B = -0.13$). Taking a look at the explanatory power of the proposed research model, the explained variance (R^2) equals .13. The rest of the relevant statistics can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Linear Regression Results for the Main and Moderation Effect

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		

(Constant)	1.97	0.69		2.86	.005
Approach Job Crafting	-0.28	0.16	-0.17	-1.67	.095
Zero-Sum Mindset	0.38	0.13	0.30	2.87	.005
Interaction Term	-0.13	0.22	-0.06	-0.60	.553

Note. $N = 91$. "Approach Job Crafting" relates to the activities of the coworker. "Interaction Term" refers to the moderation effect.

Discussion

When investigating job crafting it is critical to understand that it is a relatively new concept and consequently, there is still much to be explored about the notion. So far research has emphasized the beneficial and intrapersonal outcomes (Bakker et al., 2012; Bakker & Oerlemans, 2019) but overlooked examining potential adverse effects. Respectively, the aim of this paper is to illuminate possible interpersonal negative effects. Accordingly, it was hypothesized that individuals who work alongside approach job crafters are more likely to engage in relationship conflict with their proactive coworker compared to individuals with coworkers low on approach job crafting. However, no significant effect was found. Meanwhile, the moderation hypothesis defended that the positive relationship between coworker approach job crafting and relationship conflict is stronger for employees with a high score on zero-sum mindset in comparison to employees with a low score on zero-sum mindset. Similarly, the results did not provide support.

A possible explanation for the absence of significant outcomes resides within a flaw of my study, namely, the lack of power. Since the sample size is limited ($N = 91$), the likelihood of allowing a Type II Error is high. Thereby I could have failed to detect an effect when there was one in fact to be observed. More participants are needed in order to draw reliable conclusions about the presence or absence of interactions between my variables of interest.

On the other hand, our scientific investigation was not completely fruitless since a significant negative correlation was found between approach job crafting and relationship conflict. This can potentially be explained by the attribution-theory-based proposition presented by Tims and Parker (2020) briefly mentioned in this paper's argumentation on the moderating role of zero-sum mindset. Aside from the possibility of attributing the job crafter's efforts to gain more resources to selfishness, it is also possible for prosocial motives to be ascribed to the same behavior. This depends on whether the employee perceives themselves as benefiting from the job crafter's activities (Jones & Davis, 1965; Tims & Parker, 2020) since individuals have the tendency to look favorably on those whose actions impact them positively (Weiner, 2001). For instance, if a job crafter completes extra tasks and helps develop new work methods, then those can also be used by others to enhance their performance. Following this logical sequence, it can be assumed that the study participants might have recognized a personal benefit resulting from the coworker's job crafting, which would have contributed to prosocial motive attribution and a positive outlook of the coworker. In turn, the likelihood of relationship conflict would be expected to drop which was the case in my study.

Upon a more detailed inspection another surprising result was observed. The linear regression analysis revealed that zero-sum mindset has a positive effect on relationship conflict. In addition, the correlation between the two was also significant. This outcome partly relates to the reasoning introduced earlier in the paper regarding the role of the zero-sum mindset as a moderator. The direction of the correlation is not a surprise. Based on the rationale presented in the introduction it is logical that when the employees score high on zero-sum mindset, they are more likely to engage in relationship conflict with the job crafter. In that scenario, the study participants perceive the coworker's win as their loss. As such, they are more likely to view their colleague as a competitor, someone who threatens the limited

resources the employees are entitled to. Consequently, the survey respondents might see the job crafter in a negative light, resulting in perceived incompatibility and interpersonal friction.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This research project offers valuable theoretical implications. As mentioned above, the potential adverse effects of approach job crafting are severely understudied. Indeed, I was unable to uncover any statistically significant findings relevant to the proposed hypotheses. Still, but based on the correlation analysis this study was able to add weight to the positive findings published on my main effect hypothesis (Fong et al., 2022). What additionally seems to be confirmed by my scientific inquiry is that adopting a zero-sum mindset can impact interpersonal relationships. This empirical evidence based on a sample from diverse professional and educational backgrounds is one of the first building blocks of the scientific body of knowledge on this interaction. As a consequence, researchers are confronted with the understanding that unsuspected intricate processes are taking place in organizations. This calls for a more detailed investigation from a perspective other than the intrapersonal one and for the construction of more comprehensive models on workplace dynamics. Overall, this study's outcomes open a world of possibilities and inspiration for future research.

Shifting our focus to the present, companies and their managers can be more comfortable encouraging employees to engage in approach job crafting activities without risking the possibility of unwanted interpersonal friction. However, one should not neglect the fact that more research is needed on the topic to establish full confidence in such conclusions. Additionally, the possible presence of other negative outcomes such as jealousy or decreased work engagement should not be disregarded since it alludes to an array of other potential disadvantages of approach job crafting. Nevertheless, this study and the already existing literature point towards conclusions which at a later point can become a part of the scientific

evidence backing up workplace interventions encouraging approach job crafting among employees.

In the interim, organizations should not overlook the importance of zero-sum mindset among their workers. The outcomes from my investigation indicate that it is essential for employers to be mindful of the way individuals perceive job resources in order to prevent friction and the negative consequences that follow. To achieve that, it would be valuable to ensure procedural transparency about the distribution of resources as well as inform all employees about the actual resource availability. Such mechanisms provide everyone with a clear picture of what can be pursued without directly taking away opportunities from other coworkers, thereby avoiding conflict.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite its valuable contributions, certain limitations of my research should also be addressed. Even though the experience of relative deprivation was measured during the questionnaire and was the key element of the theoretical background for the hypotheses, it was not included in the research model or analysis. Adding the variable as a mediator would have potentially provided more information about the validity and reliability of the theoretical basis used for this study. This would probably have added more explanatory value to the proposed model. Moreover, it would have allowed me to infer with more clarity whether relative deprivation theory holds merit when investigating job crafting.

Next, the probability that the participants chose a coworker with whom they already have a strong positive relationship should not be disregarded. When they were asked to talk about a coworker, naturally I expected them to name a colleague they favor which would have interfered with the probability of entering an interpersonal conflict with them. Therefore, I attempted to prevent an overly positive perception of the coworker by encouraging the survey respondents to adopt a more neutral outlook by asking them to list two positive and two

negative characteristics of their chosen coworker. However, despite my efforts to promote a more neutral outlook, it is highly likely that such impartiality lacked. Still, this can be improved in future research by making use of a vignette design. Introducing a set scenario and the same character across participants developed by researchers would ensure a reduction of the between-person variability and allow for more reliable conclusions.

Finally, the outcomes of this study are based on a convenience sample, which, in turn, restricts the external validity of the results. More scientific exploration is needed to replicate and extend the findings to more representative samples. From a cultural perspective, people from a collectivistic background have the tendency to avoid conflict more in contrast to representatives of individualistic cultures (Hofstede, 2001; Tjosvold et al., 2000). Generating a research model where both groups are equally represented and their cultural background is controlled for has the potential to provide very interesting outcomes. Nevertheless, strengthening generalizability goes beyond cultural diversity to also include various modes of work. For instance, working remotely versus on-site could influence relationships between colleagues and interfere with witnessing and being impacted by job crafting behavior. As a result, a research design can benefit a lot from controlling for such a factor. To further promote external validity along with the abovementioned suggestions a new line of research focusing on this utilizing a field study design is needed.

Conclusion

To conclude, while approach job crafting does not seem to have an effect on relationship conflict, the same cannot be deduced regarding zero-sum mindset. Indeed, according to the study outcomes adopting a win-lose outlook has a positive effect on relationship conflict likelihood. In order to avoid such negative consequences, organizations should be aware of how their workers perceive the availability of job resources and take action accordingly to ensure a positive and productive work environment.

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Appendix A

Job Crafting

Individual Job Crafting

Increasing structural job resources.

1) I try to develop my capabilities.

2) I try to develop myself professionally.

3) I try to learn new things at work.

4) I make sure that I use my capacities to the fullest.

5) I decide on my own how I do things.

Increasing social job resources.

6) I ask my supervisor to coach me.

7) I ask whether my supervisor is satisfied with my work.

8) I look to my supervisor for inspiration.

9) I ask others for feedback on my job performance.

10) I ask colleagues for advice.

Increasing challenging job demands.

11) When an interesting project comes along, I offer myself proactively as project coworker.

12) If there are new developments, I am one of the first to learn about them and try them out.

13) When there is not much to do at work, I see it as a chance to start new projects.

14) I regularly take on extra tasks even though I do not receive extra salary for them.

Peer-Evaluation Version

Increasing structural job resources.

1) I see my colleague trying to develop their capabilities.

2) I see my colleague trying to develop themselves professionally.

3) I see my colleague trying to learn new things at work.

4)   I see my colleague making sure that they use their capacities to the fullest.

5)   I see my colleague decide on their own how they do things.

Increasing social job resources.

6) I see my colleague asking their/our supervisor to coach them.

7) I see my colleague asking whether their/ our supervisor is satisfied with their work.

8) I see my colleague looking to their/our supervisor for inspiration.

9) I see my colleague asking others for feedback on their job performance.

10) I see my colleague asking fellow coworkers for advice.

Increasing challenging job demands.

11) When an interesting project comes along, my colleague offers themselves proactively as project coworker.

12) If there are new developments, my colleague is one of the first to learn about them and try them out.

13) When there is not much to do at work, my colleague sees it as a chance to start new projects.

14) My colleague regularly takes on extra tasks even though they do not receive extra salary for them.

Relative Deprivation

1) I feel deprived when I think about what I have compared to what other people like me have.

2) I feel privileged compared to other people like me.

3) I feel resentful when I see how prosperous other people like me seem to be.

4) When I compare what I have with what others like me have, I realize that I am quite well off.

5) I feel dissatisfied with what I have compared to what other people like me have.

Zero-Sum Mindset

1) When some workers make economic gains, others lose out economically.

2) People who want to get ahead economically must do so at the expense of others.

3) The more employees a company employs, the harder it is for existing employees to advance.

4) More good jobs for some employees means fewer good jobs for other employees.

5) Not everyone can be wealthy.

6) For every rich person, there is usually a person experiencing financial hardship.

Expected Relationship Conflict

To what extent do you think your colleague's behavior will lead to …

1) friction among you and your colleague?

2) personality conflicts between you and your colleague?

3) tension between you and your colleague?

4) emotional conflict between you and your colleague?