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Combinations of approach and avoidance crafting matter: Linking job crafting profiles with proactive personality, autonomy, work engagement, and performance

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Summary
Traditional variable-centered job crafting research typically examines individual job crafting behaviors in isolation. This study builds upon existing person-centered job crafting research, aiming to further validate job crafting profiles based on the job demands-resources model. By testing profile similarity across different samples and time points, we identify three consistent job crafting profiles: proactive crafters, characterized by a high use of approach crafting and a moderate use of avoidance crafting; active crafters, who exhibit an average level of all job crafting strategies; and reactive crafters, marked by a low use of approach crafting strategies but a relatively high use of avoidance crafting. As theorized, the proactive crafters profile emerged as the most desirable, displaying the highest levels of self-reported work engagement, task performance, and organizational citizenship behavior. This finding underscores that avoidance crafting becomes less detrimental when used alongside approach crafting. Moreover, our study reveals that proactive personality and job autonomy significantly increase the likelihood of employees being proactive crafters, offering empirical support for the notion that avoidance crafting can be an integral part of a proactive goal when combined with approach crafting.

KEYWORDS
job autonomy, job crafting profiles, job performance, proactive personality, work engagement

1 | INTRODUCTION

Job crafting, or the actions that employees self-initiate in their jobs to create better quality work for themselves (Tims & Bakker, 2010; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), has gained increasing attention as a powerful complement to traditional top-down work redesigns (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Job crafting has been defined and operationalized in different ways based on two dominant perspectives, with one focusing on altering task and relational boundaries (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) and the other on modifying job resources and job demands (Tims & Bakker, 2010). To better integrate these theoretical perspectives, the approach-avoidance or promotion-prevention taxonomy has been applied (Bruning & Campion, 2018; Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019; Zhang & Parker, 2019). Specifically, approach crafting is defined as crafting that is motivated by problem- and improvement-focused goals, whereas avoidance crafting is directed toward reducing or eliminating negative aspects of one's work (Bruning & Campion, 2018; Zhang & Parker, 2019).

The approach-avoidance taxonomy has been proven effective, as it differentiates the effects of different job crafting strategies. From

the variable-centered job crafting research, which investigates job crafting strategies independently, approach crafting has been associated with positive outcomes such as enhanced well-being and performance, whereas avoidance crafting has been linked with negative outcomes, such as decreased engagement and increased job strain (Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019; Rudolph et al., 2017; Zhang & Parker, 2019). However, the variable-centered approach overlooks the possibility of the simultaneous use of approach and avoidance crafting, which may show different patterns of job crafting with potentially varying effects. For instance, avoidance crafting could be employed with or without approach crafting (Zhang & Parker, 2019). When used alongside various types of approach crafting, avoidance crafting could be part of an overall proactive response. For example, proactive crafters might withdraw from certain tasks to dedicate more time to other tasks. However, when used in isolation, avoidance crafting might function as a form of passive withdrawal (Zhang & Parker, 2019).

To investigate the use of different patterns of approach and avoidance job crafting, a person-centered approach is warranted (Wang & Hanges, 2011). This approach can identify whether there are different subpopulations of job crafters, such as crafters who use both approach and avoidance crafting versus crafters who use just approach or avoidance crafting. Importantly, the idea that job crafting strategies can be combined in various ways has been supported in two pioneering studies using the person-centered approach (Mäkikangas, 2018; Mäkikangas & Schaufeli, 2021). Specifically, based on the job demands-resources perspective of job crafting (Tims et al., 2012), Mäkikangas (2018) investigated 131 rehabilitation workers' daily job crafting behaviors and identified two profiles: active job crafters (using both approach and avoidance crafting) and passive job crafters (using only avoidance crafting). In another study, Mäkikangas and Schaufeli (2021) investigated 419 managers' job crafting measured at a general level—without setting a specific time frame. The authors integrated the job demands-resources perspective of job crafting (Tims et al., 2012) and the perspective of Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) and identified four profiles: approach-oriented crafters (i.e., above-average use of approach job crafting and below-average use of decreasing hindering job demands), avoidance-oriented crafters (i.e., above-average use of decreasing hindering job demands and low use of approach crafting), average crafters (i.e., average use of all job crafting strategies), and self-oriented crafters (i.e., above-average use of task crafting, increasing structural job resources and increasing challenging job demands, low use of cognitive crafting, and below-average use of relational and social job resources crafting and decreasing hindering job demands). Overall, both studies showed that avoidance crafting is less detrimental when combined with the use of approach crafting, aligning with the argument of Zhang and Parker (2019).

Despite the noteworthy strengths of these studies, there are several significant limitations and unaddressed questions that need further investigation. A primary concern lies in the generalizability of job crafting profiles. The inconsistencies of job crafting profiles observed across existing studies necessitate replication and reconciliation.

Indeed, this challenge of generalizability represents a recognized issue within the broader field of person-centered research. Leading scholars in this field have called for systematic and quantitative testing to ensure that identified profiles are meaningful and are not merely artifacts of specific sampling methods (Morin et al., 2016).

Several factors could contribute to the inconsistencies in job crafting profiles, including the adoption of different theoretical frameworks, the professions represented in the samples, and sample sizes. Our research specifically adopts the job demands-resources perspective of job crafting (Tims et al., 2012), as this perspective encompasses both approach crafting (i.e., increasing structural resources, increasing social resources, and increasing challenging demands) and avoidance crafting (i.e., decreasing hindering job demands). Furthermore, Mäkikangas and Schaufeli (2021) recommended employing more diversified samples in terms of professions and larger sample sizes to increase the generalizability of job crafting profiles. Consequently, the primary aim of this paper is to systematically test the similarity of job crafting profiles across two heterogeneous samples with diverse professions and larger sample sizes, which contributes to the validation of meaningful job crafting profiles.

A second unaddressed question arising from existing research is whether the job crafting profiles and memberships are consistent and stable over time. Mäkikangas (2018) found high consistency in day-level job crafting profiles over a week. However, further investigation with job crafting behaviors at a more general level and over longer times is needed (Mäkikangas & Schaufeli, 2021). Thus, the second aim of this paper is to examine the generalizability and stability of job crafting profiles over 1 month, which will provide further evidence for the validity of job crafting profiles.

A third limitation of existing studies is the lack of validation of how job crafting profiles relate to outcomes across different groups, which is crucial for ensuring the meaningful interpretation of profiles (Morin et al., 2016). Consequently, our research aims to systematically test whether the relationships of job crafting profiles with outcomes can be meaningfully interpreted across samples. The variable-centered job crafting research has shown that the strength of job crafting relationships with work engagement and self-rated performance significantly decreased when aggregating avoidance crafting with approach crafting into an overall job crafting score (Rudolph et al., 2017). Existing job crafting profile studies have shown that avoidance crafting is less detrimental for work engagement when employed alongside approach crafting (Mäkikangas, 2018; Mäkikangas & Schaufeli, 2021). We aim to validate this finding and extend the outcomes to self-rated performance, examining whether similar patterns emerge as the relationship between job crafting profiles and work engagement. This will contribute to a better understanding of whether the effect of avoidance crafting on employee performance and well-being might be more or less dysfunctional when combined with approach crafting behaviors.

A final unaddressed question relates to the antecedents of job crafting profiles. The variable-centered job crafting research has revealed how factors influence different job crafting strategies independently. For instance, proactive personality and job autonomy, two

well-established drivers of proactivity (see Marinova et al., 2015, for a meta-analysis), have been shown to be positively associated with approach crafting while they related negatively to avoidance crafting in a meta-analysis (Rudolph et al., 2017). However, the nuanced impact of these factors on the combined use of approach and avoidance crafting remains unclear. Given that avoidance crafting can also play a role in proactive behavior when used alongside approach crafting (Zhang & Parker, 2019), individuals with high proactive personality and job autonomy might simultaneously engage in both high levels of approach crafting and avoidance crafting. Therefore, investigating the antecedents of job crafting profiles provides valuable insights that extend beyond the findings of variable-centered research on job crafting.

2 | THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

In what follows, we develop our hypotheses regarding job crafting profiles and their outcomes and antecedents.

2.1 | Job crafting profiles

In this study, we draw on the job demands-resources perspective of job crafting theory (Tims & Bakker, 2010), in conjunction with the conservation of resources theory (COR, Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), to develop hypotheses on distinct job crafting profiles. The job demands-resources perspective suggests that employees can adjust the job demands and job resources to better fit their needs, skills, and preferences (Tims et al., 2012; Tims & Bakker, 2010). As stated in COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), employees are driven to gain resources and protect themselves from resource loss via two distinct processes: resource protection or resource accumulation, depending on their existing level of resource loss and associated motivations.

We adopt the approach-avoidance taxonomy, which has proven effective in categorizing distinct job crafting profiles (Mäkikangas, 2018; Mäkikangas & Schaufeli, 2021), to develop our hypotheses. Consistent with COR theory and the resource accumulation process, approach forms of job crafting aim to enhance desirable job aspects to make the work environment resourceful and stimulating. In contrast, avoidant forms of job crafting are used to prevent resource loss and therefore are similar to a resource protection process. Individuals with a pool of resources have greater opportunities to gain and accumulate new resources, for example, through approach forms of crafting. However, individuals who lack resources are more likely to focus on protecting remaining resources, such as through avoidance crafting.

In what follows, we develop hypotheses of job crafting profiles based on theories and existing job crafting profile studies. Mäkikangas (2018) identified two job crafting profiles. The majority of employees (94%) were active job crafters who used high levels (i.e., above the sample means) of both approach and avoidance crafting, while

the remaining 6% of employees (passive job crafters) engaged in low levels (below the sample means) of all job crafting strategies but sought to use more avoidance crafting. Mäkikangas and Schaufeli (2021) found four job crafting profiles: 47% were "average crafters" characterized by average use of all job crafting strategies; 30% were "avoidance-oriented" crafters characterized by above-average use of avoidance crafting but below-average use of approach crafting; 19% were "approach-oriented crafters" characterized by above-average use of approach crafting but below-average use of avoidance crafting; and 4% were "self-oriented task crafters" characterized by above-average use of task-related job crafting strategies but below-average use of all other job crafting strategies.

We first identify *proactive crafters* as employees possessing a rich pool of resources, enabling them to readily acquire additional resources and actively engage in resource accumulation. Leveraging their available resources, these individuals exert control over their work environment and are driven to further expand their resource pool by proactively seeking new resources. Consequently, we anticipate these individuals to exhibit high levels of approach forms of crafting. In terms of avoidance crafting, we put forth two profile possibilities based on the job demands-resources theory and existing job crafting profile studies. First, employees with sufficient resources to manage job demands may not require avoidance crafting. This profile would exhibit high levels of approach crafting and low levels of avoidance crafting, aligning with the approach-oriented crafters identified by Mäkikangas and Schaufeli (2021). Second, employees might need to proactively minimize hindering job demands to create the capacity and resources for role expansion through approach crafting. This profile would exhibit both high levels of approach and avoidance crafting, similar to the active job crafters described by Mäkikangas (2018).

Second, we identify *reactive crafters* as employees who have experienced resource loss and consequently prioritize protecting their remaining resources, investing less effort in acquiring new ones. The COR theory posits that individuals require resources to meet job demands and perform effectively (Hobfoll, 1989). When resources are depleted or not replenished, individuals struggle to cope with workplace demands and are more likely to avoid hindering demands (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Therefore, we anticipate these employees to engage in minimal approach crafting but to exhibit higher levels of avoidance crafting to conserve energy. This profile aligns with the passive job crafters identified by Mäkikangas (2018) and the avoidance-oriented crafters described by Mäkikangas and Schaufeli (2021).

Third, beyond the extremes of proactive crafters with abundant resources and reactive crafters facing resource depletion, we identify *active crafters* as a middle-ground group. These employees possess some resources but also face the challenge of actual or potential resource loss. Consequently, they have some capacity to acquire new resources through approach crafting while also needing to engage in avoidance crafting to manage hindering job demands. This profile would exhibit moderate levels of both approach and avoidance crafting, similar to the average crafters described by Mäkikangas and Schaufeli (2021).

As the person-centered approach is a data-driven method, the profiles we propose may not be exhaustive to cover all potential job crafting profiles. Nevertheless, based on the theoretical reasoning and previous job crafting profile studies, we hypothesize the following:

> **Hypothesis H1.** There are at least three or four profiles of job crafters: proactive crafters characterized by high levels of approach crafting with low or high levels of avoidance crafting; active crafters demonstrating moderate levels of both approach and avoidance crafting; and reactive crafters exhibiting low levels of approach crafting but high levels of avoidance crafting.

2.2 | Outcomes of job crafting profiles

People who proactively craft their jobs are more likely to experience enhanced well-being and performance due to their increased control over their work environment (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) and improved person-job fit (Lu et al., 2014; Tims et al., 2016). The job demands-resources theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) posits that sufficient job resources and challenging demands foster employee motivation and performance. Consequently, when employees utilize approach crafting to increase job resources and challenges, they fulfill their needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competency, thereby promoting well-being and performance (Tims et al., 2013, 2015). Meta-analyses on job crafting have consistently shown that employees who use more approach crafting are more engaged and perform better (Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019; Rudolph et al., 2017).

While avoidance crafting is expected to shield employees from excessive job demands, variable-centered research suggests it may be dysfunctional when examined in isolation from other job crafting strategies (Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019; Rudolph et al., 2017). However, the person-centered approach suggests that the impact of avoidance crafting is contingent upon its concurrent use with approach crafting (Zhang & Parker, 2019). Employees who proactively create opportunities for skill development, build colleague support, and concurrently reduce hindering job demands may maintain adequate levels of work engagement and job performance (Petrou et al., 2012; Petrou & Xanthopoulou, 2021). This is because these crafters have created a more fulfilling and stimulating work environment. Conversely, those who primarily focus on reducing hindering job demands may inadvertently create a less motivating and resourceful work environment (Petrou et al., 2012; Petrou & Xanthopoulou, 2021).

Considering the combined use of approach and avoidance crafting, preliminary findings from job crafting profile studies indicated that employees who predominantly used approach forms crafting (i.e., approach-oriented crafters) or those who used high levels of approach forms of crafting combined with some level of avoidance crafting (i.e., active crafters) reported the highest levels of work engagement, while those primarily utilizing avoidance crafting exhibited the lowest levels of work engagement (Mäkikangas, 2018; Mäkikangas & Schaufeli, 2021).

Therefore, on grounds of above theoretical reasoning and consistent with previous job crafting profile studies, we propose the following:

> **Hypothesis H2.** Proactive crafters will report the highest levels of work engagement and performance (task performance and OCB), followed by active crafters, with reactive crafters reporting the lowest levels on these outcomes.

2.3 | Predictors of job crafting profiles

In this study, we focus on proactive personality as an individual predictor and job autonomy as a contextual predictor of job crafting profiles as they have been recognized as the strongest predictors of proactive behavior (Marinova et al., 2015). Job crafting research has shown that both proactive personality and job autonomy play a significant role in motivating job crafting behaviors (Tims & Bakker, 2010; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Proactive personality refers to a proclivity to initiate positive changes to the environment irrespective of situational constraints (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Proactive employees craft undesirable job aspects to create a better environment for themselves (Bakker et al., 2012). Therefore, proactive employees are inclined to enrich their structural and social job resources through actions such as seeking autonomy, developmental opportunities, and seeking help or feedback. In addition, proactive employees actively seek challenges when feeling under-stimulated. To gain a better position to deal with job demands, proactive employees prepare to overcome existing job demands or prevent future demands.

The variable-centered job crafting research has indicated that proactive employees engage in more approach crafting and less avoidance crafting (Rudolph et al., 2017). Thus, employees with higher levels of proactive personality tend to use more approach types of crafting. Moreover, the person-centered approach of job crafting suggests that proactive individuals may reduce hindering job demands to allocate resources toward approach crafting. However, their tendency to accumulate resources may lead them to prioritize approach crafting over avoidance crafting. Considering this preference for approach crafting and the potential combined use of avoidance crafting, we propose the following:

> **Hypothesis H3.** Individuals high in proactive personality will have a higher probability of being proactive crafters as opposed to reactive crafters (H3a), of being active crafters as opposed to reactive crafters (H3b), and of being proactive crafters as opposed to active crafters (H3c).

Employees who are motivated to make changes in their jobs are likely to assess crafting opportunities before taking action (van Wingerden & Poell, 2017; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Job autonomy, defined as the extent of freedom in work scheduling, choosing methods to carry out work tasks and making decisions (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006), plays a significant role in enhancing the possibility of job crafting (Petrou et al., 2012; Tims & Bakker, 2010; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Job autonomy leads not only to meaningful and healthy work but also to felt responsibility for the job, increasing perceived opportunities for job crafting (Tims & Bakker, 2010; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

From the variable-centered approach, a meta-analysis showed that job autonomy is associated with increased use of approach crafting and decreased use of avoidance crafting (Rudolph et al., 2017). Aligned with this research, we anticipate that as job autonomy increases, employees will engage in more approach crafting. According to the COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001), when employees possess job resources, they are in a better position to address job demands and accumulate additional resources (Hobfoll, 2002). Therefore, when considering the combined use of job crafting strategies, high job autonomy offers opportunities to reduce hindering demands and accumulate job resources for positive outcomes. In contrast, low job autonomy limits job crafting opportunities and leads to resource loss. To mitigate the pressure of high job demands, employees with low job autonomy will primarily attempt to reduce hindering job demands (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998) and are less likely to use approach crafting due to the lack of resources for future investment (Hobfoll, 2001).

In sum, we argue that

> **Hypothesis H4.** Higher levels of job autonomy will increase the possibility of individuals being proactive crafters as opposed to reactive crafters (H4a), being active crafters as opposed to reactive crafters (H4b), and being proactive crafters as opposed to active crafters (H4c).

3 | OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

To test our hypotheses, we conducted two studies focusing on employees' general job crafting behaviors, which are relatively stable. This approach is preferred, as it mitigates the fluctuations in job crafting behaviors observed over short periods, such as a day or a week (Mäkikangas & Schaufeli, 2021).

3.1 | Study 1

Study 1 was designed to investigate and validate job crafting profiles by examining their similarity across two diverse samples, as well as the consistency of their relationships with outcomes and predictors.

3.1.1 | Method

Participants and procedure

Data used in Study 1 were part of a larger project, and other parts of that dataset have been reported in a published paper (see Paper 1 in the data transparency table).

Sample 1. Respondents were recruited in the Netherlands, with the help of four HR Management Master's students. The students each reached out to their contacts within organizations and their social networks (e.g., LinkedIn and Facebook) to invite employees to participate in the study. Furthermore, the snowballing technique was used by providing participants with a standardized invitation including a description of the research project and a survey link that they could spread among their colleagues. A total of 560 employees started the online survey, of which 350 finished (a response rate of 62.5%). There were slightly more female respondents (60.1%), and the sample was on average 26.07 years old (SD = 4.50). Respondents worked on average for about 2.18 years (SD = 2.13) in their current organization with a total work experience of 4.92 years (SD = 3.28). On average, respondents worked 35.97 h per week (SD = 11.42). In terms of educational level, most participants had a university level of education (45.4%), followed by a vocational level of education (38.6%), a secondary-school level of education (12.3%), or other (3.7%). They were employed in the following sectors: business (19.9%), healthcare (12.5%), culture and other services (12.2%), education (11.1%), government (9.7%), financial activities (7.8%), trade (6.9%), construction (6.4%), and other (13.5%).

Sample 2. Three German HR Management Master's students collected the data in Germany, using the same procedure as described in Sample 1. A total of 415 employees started the survey with 296 finishing it (response rate of 71.3%). There were slightly more female respondents (63.5%), and the respondents were on average 24.21 years old (SD = 3.72). On average, they had worked for about 1.99 years (SD = 1.94) in their current organization with a total work experience of 4.09 years (SD = 3.17). Respondents worked 40.11 h per week (SD = 11.00). Participants mainly had secondary education (14.9%), vocational education (39.2%), university training (25.7%), or others (20.2%) and were employed in the following sectors: financial activities (32.1%), business activities (17.6%), production (11.1%), culture and other services (8.8%), trade (8.1%), government (8.1%), transport (3.7%), and others (10.5%).

Measures

All variables were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) unless otherwise indicated. A back-translation procedure was adopted to ensure item accuracy (Brislin, 1986). All Cronbach alpha values were acceptable with values above .70 (see Tables S1 and S2).

Job crafting. Job crafting was assessed using the job crafting scale developed by Tims et al. (2012), including four job crafting

dimensions: increasing structural job resources (five items, e.g., "I try to learn new things at work"), increasing social job resources (five items, e.g., "I ask others for feedback on my job performance"), increasing challenging job demands (five items, e.g., "I regularly take on extra tasks even though I do not receive extra salary for them"), and decreasing hindering job demands (six items, e.g., "I make sure that my work is mentally less intense"). Answer categories ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*often*).

Proactive personality. Proactive personality was measured with a shortened four-item scale (Parker & Collins, 2010). An example item is "If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen."

Job autonomy. Job autonomy was measured with four items developed by Bakker et al. (2003). An example item is "Do you have freedom to solve problems at work yourself?" Answer categories ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*).

Work engagement. Work engagement was assessed using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) comprising three dimensions (Schaufeli et al., 2006): vigor (three items, e.g., "At my job, I feel strong and vigorous"), dedication (three items, e.g., "My job inspires me"), and absorption (three items, e.g., "I feel happy when I am working intensely"). The response categories ranged from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*always*).

Self-reported task performance. Task performance was assessed with a seven-item scale (Williams & Anderson, 1991). An example item is "I adequately complete assigned duties."

OCB. OCB toward individuals was assessed using a seven-item scale (Williams & Anderson, 1991). An example item is "I help others who have been absent."

Statistical analyses

Confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) and latent profile analyses (LPAs) were performed following the guidelines for analyzing latent profile similarity across multiple groups (Morin et al., 2016). CFAs were conducted to verify the factorial validity of all measures and their measurement invariance across samples, using the robust maximum likelihood estimator (MLR) available in Mplus 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). Details of all measurement models and measurement invariance models are reported in Table S3. Factor scores (estimated with an SD of 1 and a grand mean of 0 across samples) were saved from the strict invariant (i.e., factor loadings, intercepts, and residuals constrained to be equal) measurement models (Millsap, 2011) and used for subsequent analyses. Factor scores are better than scale scores for LPAs as they ensure measure comparability across samples and reduce measurement errors by assigning higher weights to more credible items (Morin et al., 2016).

LPA models were estimated based on factor scores of the four job crafting indicators. To ensure global maximum of model estimation, all LPA models were estimated using 5000 random sets of start values and 1000 iterations, and the 200 best solutions were retained for final stage optimization (Hipp & Bauer, 2006). Starting from a single-profile model, LPA models with up to four profiles were estimated separately for each sample.

A variety of statistical indicators were used to choose the best fit solution (McLachlan & Peel, 2000). Specifically, a lower value on the Akaike information criterion (AIC), Consistent AIC (CAIC), Bayesian information criterion (BIC), sample-size-adjusted BIC (SABIC), a significant value on Lo–Mendell–Rubin likelihood ratio test (LMR), and bootstrap likelihood ratio test (BLRT) indicate a favorable model. In addition, the entropy ranging from 0 to 1 indicates the precision of latent profiles extracted from the cases (Peugh & Fan, 2013). Higher values close to 1 indicate better classification accuracy in the model. All indicators, along with theoretical meaning, need to be considered to choose the best fit model with an optimal number of latent profiles (Marsh et al., 2009).

Meaningful profiles should exhibit both quantitative and qualitative differences (Marsh et al., 2009). Quantitative differences refer to variations in the levels of indicators across profiles (Marsh et al., 2009). For example, in the context of job crafting, profiles with only quantitative differences might consist of three profiles with high, medium, and low levels of all job crafting behaviors, respectively. These profiles would appear parallel to each other in a visual representation. Qualitative differences, on the other hand, refer to variations in the shapes of the profiles, indicating relatively high or low levels of different indicators (Marsh et al., 2009). For instance, Mäkikangas and Schaufeli (2021) identified approach-oriented crafters who used more approach crafting than avoidance crafting, avoidance-oriented crafters who exhibited the opposite pattern, and average crafters who showed no preference for either crafting type. These distinct patterns create unique shapes for each job crafting profile.

After recognizing the LPA models in both samples, profile similarity was systematically tested across two samples following strategies outlined by Morin et al. (2016). First, the optimal LPA models in both samples were integrated into a single multigroup LPA model to form the configural similarity model, which aims to assess if the same number of profiles could be ascertained in both samples. Next, we assessed if the indicators' levels in each profile were the same across samples to test the structural similarity, which concerns the nature and meaning of profiles. In the third step, we examined whether profile indicators' variability in each profile were the same across samples to test the dispersion similarity, which determines whether the profiles are more or less homogenous. Finally, we assessed if the relative sizes of the profiles were the same across samples to test the distributional similarity.

After tests of similarity of job crafting profiles across samples, we further included predictors and outcomes into the model to examine the predictive similarity (i.e., whether the predictor-profile relations are the same across samples) and explanatory similarity (i.e., whether the profile-outcome relations are the same across samples). Including covariates into LPA models is likely to influence the

TABLE 1 Fit results from the latent profiles analyses and profile similarity analyses conducted in Study 1.

	Log likelihood	#fp	Scaling	AIC	CAIC	BIC	SABIC	Entropy	LMR	BLRT
Class enumeration: the Netherlands (Sample 1)										
1 profile	−1381.08	8	0.95	2778.16	2817.02	2809.02	2783.64	—	—	—
2 profiles	−1122.33	13	1.10	2270.66	2333.81	2320.81	2279.57	0.89	<0.001	<0.001
3 profiles	−1032.65	18	1.20	2101.29	2188.74	2170.74	2113.63	0.84	0.005	<0.001
4 profiles	−976.43	23	1.12	1998.87	2110.60	2087.60	2014.63	0.87	0.002	<0.001
Class enumeration: Germany (Sample 2)										
1 profile	−1106.82	8	1.10	2229.63	2267.15	2259.15	2233.78	—	—	—
2 profiles	−962.74	13	1.41	1951.48	2012.46	1999.46	1958.23	0.77	0.012	<0.001
3 profiles	−887.50	18	1.26	1811.00	1895.42	1877.42	1820.34	0.87	0.020	<0.001
4 profiles	−834.24	23	1.42	1714.48	1822.36	1799.36	1726.42	0.86	0.138	<0.001
Class enumeration: combined samples (Samples 1 & 2)										
1 profile	−1635.59	8	0.99	3287.17	3330.94	3322.94	3297.54	—	—	—
2 profiles	−1272.66	13	1.19	2571.32	2642.44	2629.44	2588.17	0.83	<0.001	<0.001
3 profiles	−1139.62	18	1.56	2315.25	2413.72	2395.72	2338.57	0.80	0.012	<0.001
4 profiles	−1046.90	23	1.34	2139.80	2265.63	2242.63	2169.61	0.83	0.024	<0.001
Profile similarity										
Configural	−2336.93	53	1.15	4779.85	5069.80	5016.80	4848.53	0.92	—	—
Structural	−2417.85	41	1.20	4917.70	5142.00	5101.00	4970.83	0.89	—	—
Structural (partial)	−2345.85	47	1.16	4785.69	5042.82	4995.82	4846.59	0.90	—	—
Dispersion	−2356.73	41	1.16	4795.47	5019.77	4978.77	4848.60	0.89	—	—
Distribution	−2367.48	39	1.23	4812.96	5026.32	4987.32	4863.50	0.89	—	—
Predictive similarity										
Freely estimated	−1659.77	63	1.14	3445.54	3771.36	3708.36	3508.40	0.90	—	—
Equality constrained	−1668.42	51	1.15	3438.85	3702.60	3651.60	3489.74	0.90	—	—
Explanatory similarity										
Freely estimated	−5618.78	99	1.38	11435.56	11976.40	11877.40	11563.08	0.92	—	—
Equality constrained	−5516.17	84	1.27	11200.33	11659.23	11575.23	11308.53	0.93	—	—

Abbreviations: #fp, number of free parameters; AIC, Akaike information criterion; BIC, Bayesian information criterion; BLRT, *p* value associated with the bootstrap likelihood ratio test; CAIC, consistent AIC; LMR, *p* value associated with the adjusted Lo–Mendell–Rubin likelihood ratio test; SABIC, sample size adjusted BIC.

nature of job crafting profiles (Vermunt, 2010). To avoid changes in job crafting profiles, we used the start values of the retained similarity model in models including the covariates (Morin et al., 2016). We used multinomial logistic regressions to investigate how proactive personality and job autonomy are associated with job crafting profiles.

To test predictive similarity, we compared a similarity model that constrained the relationships between job crafting profiles and predictors to be equal across samples with a model that allowed these relationships to vary freely within each sample. We tested explanatory similarity by imposing equality constraints across samples on the within-profile means of outcome variables. Support for predictive or explanatory similarity was established if the similarity model yielded at least two lower values on the CAIC, BIC, and/or ABIC compared to the freely estimated model (Morin et al., 2016).

3.1.2 | Results and discussion

Job crafting profiles and similarities

We examined LPA models including one- to four-profile solutions separately in both samples. As shown in Table 1, in both samples, the values of BIC, CAIC, and SABIC kept declining as the number of profiles increased. The LMR supported a three-profile solution in Sample 2, indicated by the non-significant LMR value for the four-profile solution. Although the significant LMR in Sample 1 suggested a four-profile solution, only three profiles displayed qualitative differences (i.e., profiles with distinct shapes). Two parallel reactive crafter profiles emerged, differing solely in the levels of all job crafting behaviors. Consequently, we adopted the three-profile solution, as it was both the most meaningful solution and was consistent with theorizing. This confirmed the configural similarity of job crafting profiles across samples, as we identified the same number of meaningful profiles in each.
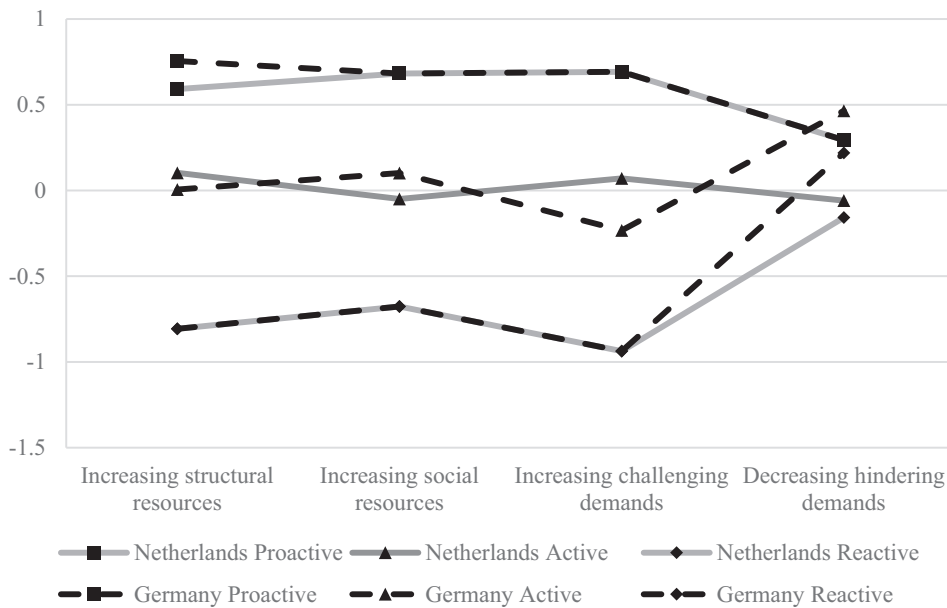
FIGURE 1 Job crafting profiles identified in Study 1 at both samples.

As shown in Table 1, the structural similarity model showed higher values on CAIC, BIC, and SABIC than the baseline configural similarity model, indicating structural differences in job crafting profiles across samples. A partial structural similarity model was retained for dispersion similarity as suggested by Morin et al. (2016). The lower CAIC and BIC values supported the dispersion similarity of job crafting profiles across samples, indicating consistent within-profile variability across both samples. Finally, increased AIC, BIC, and CAIC values did not support distributional similarity, implying variations in the relative sizes of job crafting profiles between samples. Therefore, the dispersion similarity model was used for illustration (Figure 1) and for predictive and explanatory similarity tests. The retained three-profile model yielded high classification accuracy (entropy value of .89), further supported by high correct membership assignment probabilities (ranging from .90 to .97 in Sample 1 and from .90 to .95 in Sample 2; see Table S4). Thus, Hypothesis H1 was supported.

Figure 1 illustrates the strong similarity in the profile structures of proactive and reactive crafters across samples, despite minor differences in specific indicators. Notably, German proactive crafters exhibited higher levels of increasing structural job resources compared to the Dutch sample, while German reactive crafters displayed higher levels of decreasing hindering job demands. Given that active crafters utilize both approach and avoidance crafting strategies without a clear preference, their structural differences across samples are less surprising. Despite some structural variations, the overall characteristics and patterns of job crafting profiles align with our hypothesis.

Moreover, the three job crafting profiles displayed both quantitative and qualitative differences. Quantitative differences were evident in the levels of approach crafting behaviors across profiles, with proactive crafters demonstrating the highest levels, followed by active crafters and then reactive crafters. Qualitative differences were reflected in the profiles' shapes, with proactive crafters using more

approach crafting, reactive crafters using more avoidance crafting, and active crafters having no preference for either crafting type.

With differences in profile sizes across samples, results (Table S4) showed higher prevalence of proactive and active crafters in the German sample (39.9% and 48.9% of employees, respectively) compared to the Dutch sample (31.7% and 40.3%, respectively). Conversely, reactive crafters were more prevalent in the Dutch sample (28.0%) than in the German sample (11.2%).

Similarities of outcomes of job crafting profiles

As shown in Table 1, explanatory similarity (i.e., profile-outcome relationship similarity) was supported with lower values of CAIC, BIC, and ABIC in the similarity model. Means of all outcome variables in each profile and comparisons of mean-level differences in both samples are reported in Table 2. The results indicate that proactive crafters exhibit the most desirable levels across all outcomes (excluding task performance), followed by active crafters and, lastly, reactive crafters. Task performance is the sole exception, showing no significant difference between reactive and active crafters. Thus, Hypothesis H2 was largely supported.

Similarities of predictors of job crafting profiles

Predictive similarity (i.e., predictor-profile relationship similarity) was confirmed with lower values on CAIC, BIC, and SABIC in the similarity model (Table 1). The relations of job crafting profiles with predictors retained from the predictive similarity model are reported in Table 3. In terms of demographics, gender and tenure were uncorrelated with job crafting profile membership. As age increased, the likelihood of being proactive crafters versus reactive crafters decreased. Individuals with higher education exhibited an increased probability of being proactive crafters versus active crafters.

As hypothesized, proactive employees demonstrated a higher likelihood of being classified as proactive crafters compared to

TABLE 2 Means of outcomes in job crafting profiles in Study 1 (explanatory similarity).

Outcome	Proactive crafters (P1)	Active crafters (P2)	Reactive crafters (P3)	Tests of significance
Vigor	0.674	−0.350	−1.344	P1 > P2 > P3
Dedication	0.781	−0.428	−1.750	P1 > P2 > P3
Absorption	0.862	0.009	−1.161	P1 > P2 > P3
Task performance	0.151	−0.148	−0.179	P1 > P2 = P3
OCB	0.201	−0.126	−0.330	P1 > P2 > P3

TABLE 3 Effects of predictors on job crafting profile memberships in Study 1 (predictive similarity).

	Profile 1 vs. Profile 3		Profile 2 vs. Profile 3		Profile 1 vs. Profile 2	
	Coef. (SE)	OR	Coef. (SE)	OR	Coef. (SE)	OR
Age	−0.14 (0.05)*	0.87	−0.05 (0.04)	0.95	−0.09 (0.05)	0.92
Gender	−0.20 (0.35)	0.82	−0.02 (0.29)	0.98	−0.17 (0.29)	0.84
Education	0.30 (0.28)	1.34	−0.23 (0.24)	0.80	0.52 (0.20)**	1.68
Tenure	−0.09 (0.09)	0.92	−0.03 (0.09)	0.97	−0.06 (0.08)	0.95
Proactive personality	6.14 (0.86)***	463.17	2.79 (0.60)***	16.32	3.35 (0.68)***	28.38
Job autonomy	0.59 (0.28)*	1.80	0.40 (0.24)†	1.49	0.19 (0.24)	1.21

Note: Profile 1, proactive crafters; Profile 2, active crafters; Profile 3, reactive crafters.

Abbreviations: SE, standard error of the coefficient; OR, odds ratio.

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$, and †$p < .10$.

reactive crafters (Hypothesis H3a) and active crafters (Hypothesis H3c), as well as a higher probability of being active crafters compared to reactive crafters (Hypothesis H3b). Thus, Hypothesis H3a–c was supported. Table 3 further showed that increased job autonomy was associated with a higher probability of being categorized as proactive crafters versus reactive crafters (Hypothesis H4a). However, job autonomy was uncorrelated with the likelihood of being active crafters as opposed to reactive crafters (Hypothesis H4b), and the probability of being proactive crafters instead of active crafters (Hypothesis H4c). Thus, only Hypothesis H4a, was supported.

In summary, the significant differences in outcomes observed across the three job crafting profiles provide strong support for their meaningful distinction. Moreover, findings on predictors of job crafting profiles reveal that individuals with a high proactive personality or a high degree of job autonomy also engage in avoidance crafting. This is reflected in the proactive crafters profile, suggesting that avoidance crafting, when combined with approach crafting, can be a component of a proactive strategy.

A limitation of Study 1 is its cross-sectional design, which raises concerns about common method bias and prevents the examination of both the longitudinal similarity of job crafting profiles and the transitions in profile membership over time. To address these limitations and gain deeper insights into job crafting profiles, Study 2 was conducted.

3.2 | Study 2

To add more robustness to the job crafting profiles, we assessed the longitudinal similarity of job crafting profiles across two time points over 1 month. To overcome the common method bias in Study 1, we replicated the relationships of job crafting profiles with predictors and outcomes, measured at separate times. Specifically, we linked Time 2 job crafting profile membership with predictors at Time 1 and outcomes at Time 3.

While determining the ideal time lag for assessing the longitudinal consistency of job crafting profiles remains an open question in the literature, job crafting research using the variable-centered approach has shown meaningful changes in job crafting behaviors and related outcomes within timeframes as short as 1 month (Tims et al., 2013, 2015). Following recommendations for utilizing shorter intervals in research (Dormann & Griffin, 2015), we posit that a 1-month period is sufficient for capturing both the stability of individual job crafting behaviors and any potential fluctuations arising from external environmental factors.

3.2.1 | Method

Participants and procedure

Data used in this study are distinct from Study 1. It has previously been reported in two published papers (see Papers 2 and 3 in the data

transparency table). Respondents were recruited from a chemical plant in the Netherlands. The plant makes plastics and supplies them to the automotive and healthcare industries. All employees ($N \approx 1250$) received a standard invitation including a description and confidentiality of the study, a personal login code, and the survey link. The study was designed with three measurement times each with 1 month in-between, measuring job autonomy at Time 1, job crafting at Times 2 and 3, and work engagement, task performance, and OCB at Time 3. The number of participants at T1, T2, and T3 was 564 (45.1%), 468 (37.4%), and 477 (38.1%), respectively.

There were 288 participants in total who completed the surveys on all three occasions, which comprised the sample for this study. Participants were mainly male (82.6%), which is consistent with the gender distribution within the organization, with a mean age of 45.19 years (SD = 8.71). On average, participants had worked for 18.31 years (SD = 9.95) in this organization and worked 39.15 h per week (SD = 6.81). Regarding educational level, 15% of the participants had primary or secondary education, 40% had vocational education, and 45% had higher degrees in universities or colleges. Additional analyses showed that there were no significant differences in the demographic and study variables between those who dropped out and those who finished all three surveys. Thus, the sample was deemed to be representative of the total population of 1250 individuals.

Measures

Job autonomy, job crafting, work engagement, task performance, and OCB were measured with the same scales used in Study 1. All Cronbach alpha values were acceptable, being above .70 (see Table S5).

Statistical analyses

Similar to Study 1, CFAs were conducted to verify the longitudinal measurement invariance of job crafting measures across the two time points (Table S3), and factor scores were saved from strict invariant measurement models (Millsap, 2011) and used for subsequent analyses.

Longitudinal similarity of job crafting profiles was tested following strategies outlined by Morin et al. (2016). Starting with a single-profile solution, LPA models with up to four profiles were first conducted separately at each time point. After identifying the best-fitting model for both waves, we assessed the longitudinal similarity of these job crafting profiles following the same sequence as in Study 1: configural similarity, structural similarity, dispersion similarity, and distributional similarity.

To ensure job crafting profiles remained unchanged by including covariates, we adopted a three-step approach to estimate predictors and outcomes of job crafting profiles (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2013; Vermunt, 2010). First, LPA was conducted to choose the best fitting model with the optimal number of profiles. Next, the most likely class membership was retained relying on the posterior distribution (i.e., the most likely profile classification) in the first step. Finally, considering both the most likely class membership and classification error, the relationships between covariates and job crafting profiles were estimated. Multinomial logistic regressions were conducted to estimate relations of job crafting profiles with predictors via the R3STEP command in Mplus (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2013). The regression results determine changes in the probability of a person classified to one profile over another profile with changes of levels in predictors. We utilized the DU3STEP command in Mplus (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2013) to estimate the outcomes of job crafting profiles, which compares each profile on each outcome separately to determine significant differences between the compared groups.

3.2.2 | Results and discussion

Longitudinal similarity of job crafting profiles

As shown in Table 4, the BIC, CAIC, and SABIC values decreased with an increasing number of profiles. The non-significant LMR values in the four-profile solution supported the three-profile solution in both time points. Therefore, the configural similarity was confirmed. Next, the structural similarity, dispersion similarity, and distributional similarity were all confirmed with lower CAIC, BIC, and SABIC values in the similarity model. Thus, the distributional similarity model was retained for interpretation, and profile solutions are illustrated in Figure 2. This model resulted in a high classification accuracy of job crafting profiles with an entropy value of .85. The three identified job crafting profiles are meaningfully distinct, both quantitatively (differences in job crafting indicator levels) and qualitatively (differences in profile shapes regarding relative levels of approach and avoidance crafting). Thus, Hypothesis H1 was supported.

The size of the three profiles remained relatively stable over time (see Table S6), characterizing 32.3% and 35.4% of proactive crafters at Times 2 and 3, 46.5% and 43.4% of active crafters at Times 2 and 3, and 21.2% and 21.2% of reactive crafters at Times 2 and 3. Despite the stable relative sizes of job crafting profiles, 29.9% of the participants (86 out of 288 employees) switched profile classifications between Times 2 and 3 (see Table S6), which indicates a change in their combined use of the job crafting strategies. For example, 22 out of 93 employees who were classified as proactive crafters at Time 2 became active crafters at Time 3.

Outcomes of job crafting profiles

As Table 5 indicates, proactive crafters demonstrated the highest level of work engagement, followed by active crafters and then reactive crafters. Similarly, proactive crafters exhibited the highest task performance compared to the other two profiles. However, no significant difference in task performance was observed between active and reactive crafters. In terms of OCB, proactive crafters reported higher levels than reactive crafters, but no significant differences were found between active versus reactive crafters, nor between proactive and active crafters. Thus, Hypothesis H2 was partially supported.

Predictors of job crafting profiles

As shown in Table 6, the multinomial logistic regression results showed that increased job autonomy led to a higher probability of

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TABLE 4 Fit results from the latent profiles analyses and profile similarity analyses conducted in Study 2.

	Log likelihood	#fp	Scaling	AIC	CAIC	BIC	SABIC	Entropy	LMR	BLRT
Time 2 class enumeration										
1 profile	−1217.34	8	1.07	2450.69	2487.99	2479.99	2454.62	—	—	—
2 profiles	−1027.09	13	1.32	2080.19	2140.81	2127.81	2086.58	0.82	<0.001	<0.001
3 profiles	−945.18	18	1.36	1926.36	2010.29	1992.29	1935.21	0.85	0.029	<0.001
4 profiles	−896.41	23	1.37	1838.82	1946.07	1923.07	1850.13	0.86	0.099	<0.001
Time 3 class enumeration										
1 profile	−1276.04	8	1.02	2568.07	2605.37	2597.37	2572.01	—	—	—
2 profiles	−1082.34	13	1.60	2190.67	2251.29	2238.29	2197.07	0.83	0.028	<0.001
3 profiles	−998.46	18	1.40	2032.92	2116.86	2098.86	2041.78	0.82	0.012	<0.001
4 profiles	−961.87	23	1.47	1969.73	2076.98	2053.98	1981.04	0.81	0.267	<0.001
Longitudinal transition analyses										
Configural similarity	−1864.44	52	1.27	3832.88	4075.35	4023.35	3858.45	0.86	—	—
Structural similarity	−1870.13	40	1.48	3820.27	4006.79	3966.79	3839.94	0.85	—	—
Dispersion similarity	−1876.38	28	1.86	3808.75	3939.31	3911.31	3822.52	0.85	—	—
Distribution similarity	−1876.73	26	1.98	3805.45	3926.69	3900.69	3818.24	0.85	—	—

Abbreviations: #fp, number of free parameters; AIC, Akaike information criterion; BIC, Bayesian information criterion; BLRT, p value associated with the bootstrap likelihood ratio test; CAIC, consistent AIC; LMR, p value associated with the adjusted Lo–Mendell–Rubin likelihood ratio test; SABIC, sample size adjusted BIC.
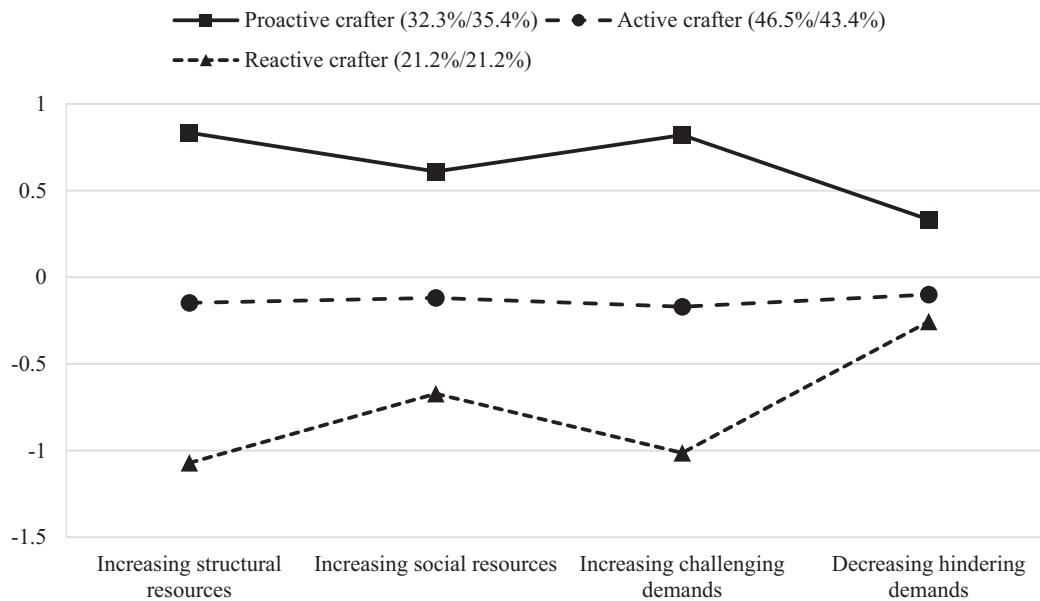

FIGURE 2 Job crafting profiles transition model from T2 to T3 in Study 2.

TABLE 5 Outcome means and pairwise comparisons between profiles in Study 2.

	Profile means			Profile comparisons				
	P1	P2	P3	Global χ^2	1 vs. 3	2 vs. 3	1 vs. 2	Summary of comparisons
Work engagement	5.16	4.39	3.79	46.65***	45.66***	9.82**	18.31***	P1 > P2 > P3
Task performance	4.37	4.16	4.09	10.91**	10.10***	0.82	6.55*	P1 > P2 = P3
OCB	4.16	3.97	3.80	13.69***	13.50***	2.78	2.43	P1 > P3, P2 = P3, P1 = P2

Note: P1, proactive crafters; P2, active crafters; P3, reactive crafters.
*p < .05, **p < .01, and ***p < .001.

	P1 vs. P3		P2 vs. P3		P1 vs. P2	
Predictor	Coef. (SE)	OR	Coef. (SE)	OR	Coef. (SE)	OR
Job autonomy	1.19 (0.28)***	3.29	0.80 (0.23)***	2.23	0.39 (0.27)	1.48

TABLE 6 Three-step results for antecedents of job crafting profile membership in Study 2.

Note: P1, proactive crafters; P2, active crafters; P3, reactive crafters.
Abbreviations: OR, odds ratio; SE, standard error of the coefficient.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, and ***$p < .001$.

individuals being proactive crafters compared to reactive crafters (Hypothesis H4a) and being active crafters compared to reactive crafters (Hypothesis H4b). However, job autonomy was not correlated with the probability of being classified as proactive crafters versus active crafters (Hypothesis H4c). Therefore, Hypothesis H4a,b was supported, but Hypothesis H4c was not supported.

In summary, the results of Study 2 revealed the generalizability and membership changes of job crafting profiles over time and largely replicated the results for predictors and outcomes of job crafting profiles from Study 1.

4 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

While approach and avoidance job crafting activities have distinct predictors and outcomes, their interdependence is becoming increasingly evident. They may complement each other, with their combined use influencing the effectiveness of job crafting strategies (Tims et al., 2021). Building upon existing person-centered job crafting research (Mäkikangas, 2018; Mäkikangas & Schaufeli, 2021), this study aimed to provide further insights into job crafting profiles by validating these profiles across diverse samples and time points, and linking them with relevant outcomes and predictors.

4.1 | Theoretical implications

A key theoretical contribution of this article is that we theorized, and showed, that distinct subpopulations of employees engage in different combinations of job crafting strategies. To maximize the generalizability of job crafting profiles, we systematically examined the similarity of job crafting profiles across two diverse samples, revealing three distinct profiles with remarkably similar structures. Notably, most employees engage in some degree of avoidance crafting, but the key differentiation among the profiles is the extent of their use of approach crafting. Proactive crafters demonstrate the highest level of approach crafting, followed by active crafters and then reactive crafters. In fact, reactive crafters primarily engage in avoidance crafting, with minimal approach crafting behaviors.

The characteristics of proactive crafters and reactive crafters profiles align with those identified in Mäkikangas (2018). Similarly, the active crafters profile resembles the average crafters profile found in Mäkikangas and Schaufeli (2021). However, both our study and Mäkikangas (2018) found that proactive crafters also engaged in

moderate levels of avoidance crafting, contrasting with the purely approach-oriented crafters in Mäkikangas and Schaufeli (2021). This might be due to the rank of participants in the studies, with our study and Mäkikangas (2018) focusing on employees while Mäkikangas and Schaufeli (2021) focused on managers. It is plausible that managers may possess greater access to resources, which can facilitate their approach-oriented job crafting strategies. For employees facing high job demands, the combined use of avoidance crafting and approach crafting could indicate healthy and flexible job crafting (Mäkikangas, 2018), which aligns with the coping literature that suggests that active copers also utilize avoidance coping strategies (Mauno et al., 2014). Additionally, consistent with Mäkikangas (2018), we did not identify the task-oriented crafters profile found in Mäkikangas and Schaufeli (2021), possibly due to differences in job crafting perspectives used for profile analysis. As suggested by Mäkikangas and Schaufeli (2021), this warrants further investigation considering the small proportion of this profile.

Second, our research contributes to understanding the stability of job crafting profiles. Consistent with Mäkikangas (2018), despite fluctuations in job crafting behaviors across time (e.g., days and weeks), the typical job crafting profiles remain stable over a month. Mäkikangas (2018) did not find the transition of job crafting membership over 1 week. However, we found transitions among different profiles over a month, indicating that employees' combined use of job crafting strategies may change over longer periods. This highlights that employees' job crafting profiles may be affected by contextual factors.

Third, this study underscores the significance of differentiating job crafting profiles due to their varying associations with outcomes. Our research extends prior job crafting theories by providing important insights into the effects of the combination of job crafting strategies, beyond variable-centered studies focusing on independent job crafting strategies. Consistent with previous job crafting profile studies (Mäkikangas, 2018; Mäkikangas & Schaufeli, 2021), our study showed that proactive crafters who engaged in high levels of approach crafting alongside moderate levels of avoidance crafting experienced the highest work engagement (i.e., work engagement level: proactive crafters > active crafters > reactive crafters). Interestingly, our study revealed significant differences in task performance and OCB between proactive and reactive crafters, but not between active and reactive crafters. This suggests that for employees who adopt avoidance crafting, achieving significant performance improvement requires engaging in higher levels of approach crafting compared to the dominant use of avoidance crafting. Overall, and consistent with previous studies (Mäkikangas, 2018; Mäkikangas &

Schaufeli, 2021), the dominant use of avoidance crafting likely constitutes avoidant behavior, while its combination with approach crafting strategies appears less detrimental to work engagement and performance.

Finally, our findings provide a new perspective to investigate factors that influence job crafting. Unlike the variable-centered results indicating a negative association between proactive personality and avoidance crafting (Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019; Rudolph et al., 2017; Zhang & Parker, 2019), our person-centered approach reveals that proactive employees also decrease hindering job demands but do so alongside higher or at least comparable levels of approach crafting. Moreover, job autonomy consistently differentiated proactive crafters from reactive crafters, but not proactive from active crafters, nor active from reactive crafters. As job autonomy and job crafting are reciprocally correlated (Petrou et al., 2012; Tims et al., 2013; Tims & Bakker, 2010), the results might be limited in cross-sectional research designs, suggesting avenues for future research. Overall, our results indicate that the effect of proactive personality and job autonomy is not only to promote approach crafting but also to encourage employees to balance the use of all job crafting strategies.

4.2 | Practical implications

Our research findings have significant practical implications for organizations seeking to enhance employee well-being and performance. In addition to understanding individual job crafting strategies, it is crucial for organizations to guide employees in effectively combining various job crafting techniques. The variable-centered job crafting research cautions against endorsing avoidance crafting due to its association with detrimental effects (Rudolph et al., 2017). Consequently, many interventions, following a variable-centered approach, often focus on enhancing specific job crafting strategies, such as approach crafting, while neglecting avoidance crafting (e.g., van Wingerden et al., 2016). Some intervention studies fail to point out the potential risk of using avoidance crafting and how to mitigate the adverse consequences when implementing this strategy (e.g., van den Heuvel et al., 2015).

We advocate for a person-centered approach that offers an impartial depiction of employee use of job crafting strategies, enabling managers and practitioners to design more effective interventions. Specifically, recognizing that the proactive crafters profile leads to the most desirable outcomes, organizations should encourage increased use of approach crafting. Moreover, employees can be trained to utilize avoidance crafting to protect them from becoming overwhelmed, but it should be used alongside approach crafting for optimal results.

Regarding the antecedents of profile membership examined in this study, proactive personality is a relatively stable trait and less susceptible to intervention influence. Nevertheless, we suggest that organizations consider providing employees with increased job autonomy, as it has the potential to elevate the likelihood of becoming proactive and active crafters, which leads to higher work engagement and performance.

4.3 | Limitations and future directions

An initial limitation of this research is that all measures were rated from one source (i.e., employees), raising concerns about common method bias. However, as job crafting is self-initiated behavior and not easily observed by others, self-reports are a valuable evaluation tool (Zhang & Parker, 2019). Therefore, the job crafting profiles are unlikely to be influenced by common method variance. To further address this issue, we included a three-wave time-lagged study in which antecedents and outcomes of job crafting profiles were collected at different times. Nevertheless, further studies should collect data from additional sources (e.g., supervisors), particularly for outcome variables like performance, to ensure greater robustness.

Second, despite the diverse samples used in our studies, limitations regarding the generalizability of job crafting profiles exist due to theoretical frameworks and sample characteristics. Future studies could further replicate job crafting profiles based on the perspective of Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), as we focused solely on the job demands-resources perspective. Additionally, professions and employee rank may affect job crafting profiles (Mäkikangas & Schaufeli, 2021). Thus, future studies could investigate profession-specific job crafting profiles and potential differences between employee and manager crafting profiles. Moreover, we investigated job crafting profiles in two different countries (the Netherlands and Germany) with cultural distances and found some minor differences in the shapes of job crafting profiles. However, the impact of cultural distance on these profiles remains unclear and warrants further exploration. Lastly, research suggests that large samples with over 500 participants are needed to detect all possible profiles (Meyer & Morin, 2016). To address this, we investigated job crafting profiles using the combined samples ($N = 646$) in Study 1. While statistical indices supported a four-profile solution, two parallel reactive crafters profiles emerged with only quantitative differences. Thus, consistent with the separate samples, three meaningful profiles were identified in the combined large sample. However, future research on job crafting profiles should consider sample size as a crucial factor affecting the number of profiles.

Third, while we investigated the antecedents and outcomes of job crafting profiles, there was insufficient evidence to point to a causal direction between these variables. However, our primary purpose was to understand the relationships of job crafting profiles with outcomes and antecedents, rather than establishing causality. Future studies could use longitudinal designs to investigate these variables' causal relationships. For example, the variable-centered job crafting research has shown reciprocal relationships between work engagement and approach crafting (Vogt et al., 2016) and between avoidance crafting and burnout (Petrou et al., 2015). It is possible that reactive crafters, who rely primarily on avoidance crafting, may be trapped in a vicious cycle of escalating avoidance crafting and burnout. Conversely, proactive crafters, who use avoidance crafting alongside approach crafting, may not experience the negative consequences associated with avoidance crafting.

Fourth, our study showed that some individuals (29.9%) switched membership between different job crafting profiles within 1 month but did not focus on the effects of these changes or the factors influencing profile membership transitions. Further investigation is needed on the predictors and outcomes of profile transition to provide additional insights into job crafting research and interventions. As our studies suggest, movement into proactive crafters profile is expected to enhance well-being and performance, while transitioning to reactive crafters profile may lead to declines in these areas. Future research could explore the effects of job crafting profile transition, particularly over longer periods than the 1-month timeframe of the current study. Additionally, efforts should focus on identifying factors, especially contextual factors, that influence transitions in job crafting profile membership. Our results suggest that increased job resources could promote transitions to a proactive profile.

Finally, while the approach-avoidance taxonomy conceptually categorizes current job crafting behaviors, the measures employed in our studies, and those used in prior profile research, did not differentiate between approach and avoidance crafting. For a more comprehensive understanding of the co-occurrence of approach and avoidance crafting, future research could employ measures that integrate approach-avoidance dimensions. For instance, the measure developed by Bindl et al. (2019) encompasses task, relational, skill, and cognitive crafting, including both promotion and prevention dimensions. Similarly, the measure developed by Lopper et al. (2024) consists of four approach crafting and four avoidance crafting dimensions, aligning with the hierarchical model of job crafting proposed by Zhang and Parker (2019).

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

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