The Effects of Job Crafting and Leader Member Exchange on the Affective Well-Being of Emerging Adults in College

by

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Thesis Proposal for the Degree of M.A.

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Abstract

Relatively little research has been conducted on factors that affect the work life of emerging

adults. Drawing from a primarily college sample ($N = 194$), this study investigates the

relationships between leader member exchange (LMX), job crafting (JC) and job affective

well-being. A simultaneous multiple regression demonstrated that several dimensions of JC were

positively associated with job affective well-being. A multiple parallel mediation model

conducted with JC as a mediator between LMX and job affective well-being. demonstrated that

the increasing structural job resources component of JC was a partial mediator between LMX

and job affective well-being. Future studies should include dyadic data from both employees and

supervisors to improve research on job affective well-being.

The Effects of Job Crafting and Leader Member Exchange on the Affective Well-Being of

Emerging Adults in College

Employee well-being is an important area of study because employees' well-being, work

attitudes and job performance are interrelated. Many employees strive to create greater meaning

and personal development from their work and view work as a calling: enjoyable, fulfilling and

socially useful (Avolio & Sonik, 1999). Though many studies focus on overall well-being, much

of the research into well-being has been expanded into specific areas such as job related affective

well-being. Job related affective well being is associated with autonomy, aspiration and

integrated functioning (Hosie & Sevatos, 2010) and can be termed as happiness in the workplace.

One working population that deserves special attention in this area is emerging adults

(Arnett, 2015) because challenges that face working emerging adults may be unique due to their

age and responsibilities. Being situated between adolescence and young adulthood may present

challenges in having access to supportive managers at the workplace and finding satisfaction at

work, and these challenges may affect their job related well-being. Emerging adults seek jobs

that help them to learn and gain experience in preparation for the next move up (Zaniboni,

Truxillo & Fraccaroli, 2013; Tapscott 2009). According to socioemotional selectivity theory

(STT), emerging adults seek to derive meaning at work and thrive in environments where they

can build their skills, as this helps to alleviate boredom. Research has indicated that these goals

need the support of management or supervisors (Jackson & Dutton, 1988; Lazarus & Folkman,

1984; Tierney, Farmer & Graen, 1999; Zhang, & Bartol, 2010). Therefore, this study will be

looking specifically at two factors that may impact the job-related affective well-being of

emerging adults: leader-member exchange (LMX) and job crafting.

Leader-member exchange is a theory in the leadership literature that highlights the

relationships between leaders and employees. LMX is defined as the relationship between a

subordinate and a supervisor (Gerstner & Day, 1997). The quality of this relationship can predict

the job attitudes and well-being of workers (Chen & Kanfer, 2006). *Job crafting* occurs when

employees proactively seek opportunities or re-invent job tasks to keep workplace experiences at

an optimal level. Job crafting may be linked to well-being because it is a self-motivating tool for

workers. The purpose of the current study is to investigate how these two features of an

emerging adult's work life - leader-member exchange and job crafting actions - might contribute

to their job-related affective well-being.

Emerging Adulthood

Research by Arnett (2000; 2015) indicates that emerging adults, commonly defined as

individuals aged 18-29, are a unique part of the working population. Many emerging adults are

employed at least part-time and state that the time spent working helps with learning about time

and money management (Mortimer, Harley, & Aronson, 1999). In the United States, emerging

adults tend to be employed in low-wage jobs that reflect their low levels of skills, education and

experiences (Ross, Gatz, Ng, Kazis & Svajlenka, 2015). Leisure industries account for 25

percent of young adults' employment, whereas hospitality and retail trade account for 25 percent

and 19.1 percent respectively. These industries are known for low wages and part-time hours.

Emerging adults are less likely to be employed in education and health services (10.7%) and

professional and business services (8.1%), which tend to provide higher pay (Bureau of Labor

Statistics, 2014). The data suggests that younger workers are either more willing to accept jobs

within these industries where unpredictable schedules and low wages are the norm, or have no

choice but to do so (Ross et al., 2015). These types of working conditions may lead to poor work experiences for young adults, many of whom are currently enrolled in school, work second jobs, are caring for parents, or are raising their siblings or even their own family. They may experience poor psychological well-being due to the instability in their work schedules (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014; Ross et al., 2015) and the burden of their responsibilities.

The emerging adult population has received a great deal of attention in the developmental psychology literature (e.g., Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Connolly & McIsaac, 2011). Many of the research studies have investigated various domains of emerging adults' lives, such as personal relationships (Aquilino, 2008; Fraley & Davis, 1997), risky behaviors (Arnett, Offer & Fine, 1997; Arnett, 1992; Bradley & Wildman, 2002), morality (Jensen, Arnett, Feldman & Cauffman, 2004) and religiosity (Yonker, Schnabelrauch, & DeHaan, 2012). However, investigations into how the workplace experiences of emerging adults affect their well-being has been limited. Though Frone (2000) investigated interpersonal conflicts in young workers, there exists a gap in the literature about the workplace experiences of emerging adults. It is an area which requires more investigation, given that 45% of young adults are employed either part time or full time (Ross et al., 2015). More specifically, factors that promote worker affective well-being in the workplace have not been fully investigated. Given the uniqueness of the emerging adulthood population's employment (Ross et al., 2015), it is worth investigating their negative and positive experiences in the workplace.

Much research shows that workers want more control in their job environment (Lyness, Gornick, Stone & Grotto, 2012). They also want jobs that are interesting and satisfying (Kalleberg, 1977). Oftentimes, workers might find themselves in jobs that are not motivating or

are uninspiring. Supervisors or leaders can make the difference when a worker finds his/her job unmotivating. More specifically, the type of relationship which exists between workers and their supervisors can change the job experience for the worker. In a high quality relationship, workers are given more encouragement and support for their job duties. This supportive relationship gives the worker courage to show initiative to perform more than their formal job description (Liden & Graen, 1980). Moreover, a worker with a high quality relationship with their supervisor may perceive more latitude to enhance their job duties by job crafting. This is because it is likely that in a high quality relationship, supervisors and workers will have a mutual exchange with regard to resources. For example, the supervisor provides the trust and job support and in return the workers show effort and better job performance (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

This study examines the factors that affect emerging adults' affective well-being in the workplace. For example, emerging adults are often not given opportunities to learn skills and knowledge that could help with future occupations because of their age (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014; Ross et al., 2015). This is because it is expected that they will transition to different jobs during this period of life and thus employers may choose not to invest valuable resources in their development (Greenberger & Steinberg, 1986; Steinberg & Cauffman, 1995). This may lead to a decrease in motivation, because emerging adults are driven to accrue skills and knowledge during this period of their lives (Carstensen, 1991). They strive to harness resources to enable them to further their career advancements (Carstensen, 1991). The focus of this particular study is primarily on individuals during the first half of emerging adulthood (18-25 years old) who are currently in college pursuing their bachelor's degree.

Socioemotional selectivity theory (SST) posits that young people perceive themselves as having a virtually unlimited amount of time, and are more likely to show enthusiasm for gaining more working experience which enables them to develop the knowledge and skills they need for career advancement (Carstensen, 1991). The meaning of work experience may be particularly important for emerging adults. Many emerging adults are focused on their ideals and values, and may not be completely consumed by the advancement of their skill set unless it enhances their career goals. In the current study, the meaning of work is explored as the creation of self-motivating behaviors by the employee (that is, job crafting). The ability to engage in job crafting may be dependent on the quality of relationship between the supervisor and employee at the workplace (that is, leader-member exchange). For example, the quality of the relationship may determine the amount or level of job crafting allowed on the job.

Leader-member exchange and job crafting are discussed in more detail below.

Leader-Member Exchange Theory

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) established that high-quality exchange relationships between managers and workers are characterized by heightened feelings of mutual liking, trust, respect, obligation and reciprocal influence. Low-quality exchange relationships tend to be formal and interactions are restricted to the language description of the employment contract. In comparison, in high-quality exchange relationships, leaders guide and help their workers in ways which exceed the workers' formal job description and followers carry out activities with more autonomy and responsibility. These high-quality relationships can positively enhance employees' job satisfaction and well-being, while low-quality relationships can have a negative impact, resulting in negative affect and increased worker stress (Erdogan & Liden, 2002; Gerstner &

Day, 1997). For example, in a study on leadership and safety culture, Barling, Loughlin and Kelloway (2002) found that managers served as role models for safety, galvanized workers to work safely, promoted creative thinking about safety and increased employees' well-being safety outcomes when they showed a personal interest in employees. This research study demonstrates the importance of managers' attitudes on the employees' well-being and positive work behaviors.

Previous research has shown that positive supervisory behavior - such as granting employees more control, providing skillful communication and organization, and engaging in considerate actions on behalf of employees and their well-being - is associated with an increase in employee well-being (Gilbreath & Benson, 2004). This increase was observed after controlling for the effects of age, lifestyle, social support from coworkers and at home, and stressful work and life events. Likewise, Van Dierendonck, Haynes, Borrill and Stride (2004) found that leader behavior, defined as feedback, coaching, fairness, communication, empowerment, diversity and integrity, was associated with increased employee well-being. Research has shown that if employees are committed to their jobs, they may remain with the organization (Habib et al., 2014). Supervisors tend to play a major role in the employees' decision to stay with an organization and past research has demonstrated that employees who experience positive relationships with their supervisors tend to be more committed to their organizations (Jiwen, Tsui, & Law, 2009). Increased positive relationships between supervisors and employees may lead to employees' perceptions that the organization will act on their behalf with consistency and reliability (Jiwen, Tsui, & Law, 2009). Employees who have a positive perception of their organizations and supervisors may also enjoy increased well being.

The research on LMX relationships clearly underscores the important role that supervisory relationships play in the workplace. For example, it has been shown that a low quality relationship contributes to role ambiguity - a lack of employee clarity about job tasks or boundaries and responsibilities - which then results in high levels of stress and job turnover (Jian, 2014). Decreased stress and positive resources, on the other hand, result from high quality LMX (Thomas & Lankau, 2009).

The service industry, where the majority of emerging adults are employed (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014; Ross et al., 2015), is plagued by high turnover rates (Kacmar et al., 2006). Turnover rates are lower when employees feel committed to their organization (Somers, 1995). Commitment to the organization is often derived from the relationships employees have formed within the organization. The primary relationship that is dependent on an employee's commitment tends to be with their immediate supervisor (Tse, 2008). Therefore, supervisors need to be open to employees' needs, because emerging adults are autonomous and expect flexibility in their workplace environment (Loughlin & Barling, 2001). It has been theorized that emerging adults tend to switch jobs every 2-3 years as a result of their need to alleviate boredom and avoid stagnant work experiences (Zemke, Raines & Filipczak, 2013). Emerging adults expect and need to choose job tasks that fit their lifestyles. If workplaces are rigid and do not promote a flexible and adaptable work environment, it is likely that the emerging adult will leave the job (Tapscott, 2009). Adaptability may be expected in job tasks or schedule changes to accommodate their needs. If, on the other hand, they are allowed some flexibility, they may remain with the organization (Zemke, Raines & Filipczak, 2013). Given the workplace experiences that are expected by emerging adults, it is likely that enabling their autonomy will

require the skill of good leaders who are flexible within the organization's requirements. Supervisors have some freedom in terms of assigning job duties and projects to their employees, and as such supervisory decisions and behaviors can enhance the job affective well-being of employees.

Job Crafting

Job crafting is an active way that employees adapt their job tasks in order to meet their work-related goals (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). For example, a dishwasher in a restaurant might take the opportunity each day to help on the kitchen preparation line, or a greeter in a restaurant might volunteer to be in charge of supervision a few hours a day. Job crafting is mostly informal and not expressed in a written job description (Leana, Appelbaune & Shevchuk, 2009). Practicing job crafting enables employees to rework their work identities and their sense of meaning on the job. Job crafting can address the employees' individual needs at work in three ways (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). First, it allows the employee to manage their job in an effort to counteract alienation from the work. Second, it provides a way for employees to build a positive self-image in their work. Third, it grants the employee an opportunity to make connections with others, which is a basic human need (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Job crafting is psychologically-based behavior that workers utilize to tailor their job duties to enable greater job satisfaction and also engagement, resilience and thriving at work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). This behavior enables workers to seek out or mold opportunities to obtain the optimal workplace experience while also performing their core job duties.

Job crafting can be created in three primary ways: adapting required job tasks to enhance engagement and efficiency (e.g., chatting with a customer while completing job tasks), changing

work interactions (e.g., working in groups to have more social interactions), and changing

perception of job tasks, such as seeing the social value in their job (Wrzesniewski & Dutton,

2001). Job crafting should not be confused with job redesign, which is typically initiated by

management (Grant & Ashford 2008; Oldham & Hackman 2010); by definition, job crafting is

initiated by the employee. The desire to use job crafting is likely to be enhanced when employees

realize that pathways to crafting exist (Jackson & Dutton, 1988; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This

feeling of freedom can produce more autonomy at work which is directly linked to enhanced

psychological well-being (Jackson & Dutton, 1988; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Although

employees initiate job crafting, as an intrinsically motivated act, it is likely to be facilitated by

the flexibility of supervisors (Tierney, Farmer & Graen, 1999; Zhang, & Bartol, 2010). This

influence might be subtle, with the quality of the relationship between employees and

supervisors affecting the perception the employee has regarding their freedom to practice job

crafting.

Job crafting is practiced by emerging adults because it can give them the autonomy and

motivation they need in the workplace to enhance their job experience. As the

employee-supervisor relationship is enhanced, it is predicted that emerging adults will flourish

and their psychological well-being will increase.

Job Affective Well-Being

Well-being is a broad term and can be subdivided into different types. Subjective

well-being (SWB) encompasses many different domains such as health and happiness, whereas

affective well-being (AWB) tends to be a measurement of positive and negative emotions and

moods (Warr, 1990). Diener (1994) demonstrated that subjective well-being (SWB) tends to

encompass both affective reactions and cognitive judgements. The results of SWB may be interpreted as life satisfaction that is domain-specific (Diener, 1994). Affective well-being is a more continuous state of emotions and may be measured in specific domains, such as the job or work domain. The job domain refers to specific job tasks whereas the work domain refers to jobs in general (Hosie & Sevastos, 2010) Affective well-being is measured by the frequency and intensity of positive and negative affect. The emotions are expressed as a function of both pleasure level and arousal level, resulting in four dimensions of affective well-being: high pleasure high arousal, high pleasure low arousal, low pleasure high arousal and low pleasure low arousal. Individuals experiencing high pleasure high arousal feel excited, energetic, ecstatic, cheerful, lively and inspired. High pleasure low arousal is expressed as contentment, low pleasure high arousal is expressed as distress and low pleasure low arousal is expressed as depression. Affective well-being tends to be measured over a short span of time and thus is a more immediate measure of well-being. Subjective well-being has been well researched, whereas there exists a dearth of research on affective well-being on the job for emerging adults. A job which brings excitement, energy or inspiration is helpful to understand how to retain and create meaning at work for the emerging adult population. For this reason, the current study will focus particularly on the high pleasure high arousal dimension of job affective well-being.

Study Hypotheses

In the current paper, the roles that job crafting and LMX play in the psychological well-being of emerging adults in the workplace are examined.

As demonstrated by Tims et al. (2013), job crafting in the form of increasing structural job resources is akin to gaining more responsibility (i.e., autonomy and variety) and/or

knowledge (i.e., opportunity to develop oneself), while increasing social job resources is more

focused on enhancing the social aspects of work (i.e., feedback and coaching) and achieving

satisfactory types of interaction with others. If emerging adults are able to use job crafting, it is

expected that they will report increased levels of affective well-being because they will

experience more autonomy and gain more knowledge on the job.

Hypothesis 1: Each of the three dimensions of job crafting will be positively related to

the High Pleasure High Arousal dimension of affective well-being.

Second, if the leader member relationship is high quality, it is expected that emerging

adults will be more enthusiastic about their job as a result of this high quality relationship with

their supervisor, and therefore, LMX will positively correlate with affective well-being.

Hypothesis 2: High quality Leader Member Exchange will be positively correlated with

the High Pleasure High Arousal dimension of affective well-being.

Thirdly, the relationship between the leader and affective well-being will be affected

based on how much job crafting is utilized. It is hypothesized that the encouragement or support

to engage in job crafting will partially explain (that is, mediate) the link between having a high

quality supervisor-employee relationship and experiencing job affective well-being.

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between Leader Member Exchange and the High

Pleasure High Arousal dimension of affective well-being will be mediated by each of the three

dimensions of job crafting.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited primarily from a state university in the Northeastern U.S. via the Psychology Department subject pool to participate in the current study. Employed students between the ages of 18-25 were recruited to participate by completing an online survey. A survey link was also posted via social media. Participants who did not provide responses to key variables were removed. Of the 194 participants who accessed the survey, 170 (87.63%) provided usable data. Additional information about participant demographics is displayed in Table 1.

Procedure

Participants completed the survey online using the web survey tool Qualtrics. The survey took approximately 45 minutes to complete. Participants were compensated with credits toward their psychology courses or major requirements. Participants were directed to think about their current job and the person they perceived to be their supervisor on that job when they were responding to the survey questions.

Measures

Leader-Member Exchange. LMX was measured by the 12-item scale developed and validated by Liden and Maslyn (1998). The items were answered on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*applies completely*) to 5 (*does not apply at all*). Example items from the scale are "My supervisor would come to my defense if I were 'attacked' by others" and "My supervisor is a lot of fun to work with." Scores were reverse coded so that high scores on the measure indicate high quality LMX. A total score was calculated by averaging across the 12 items. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale in the current sample is .92.

Job Crafting. Job crafting was measured with the 21-item Job Crafting Scale developed and validated by Tims et al. (2012). All responses were made on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). Example items are "I try to develop my capabilities" and "When an interesting project comes along, I offer myself proactively as project co-worker." Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the four dimensions of increasing structural job resources, decreasing hindering job demands, increasing social job resources and increasing challenging job demands are .62, .60, .75, and .76, respectively for the current sample. Each dimension includes 5 items with the exception of decreasing hindering job demands, which includes 6 items. One item from the decreasing hindering job demands subscale was inadvertently omitted during data collection, and therefore this subscale has been removed from the analyses. The other three subscales were intact and analyzed.

Job Affective Well-Being. Worker well-being was measured by the 30-items Job-related Affective Well-being Scale (JAWS) developed and validated by Van Katwyk, Fox, Spector, and Kelloway (2000). All responses were made on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). Example items are "My job made me feel at ease" and "My job made me feel discouraged." There are two dimensions to the scale: *pleasure-displeasure*, which measures emotional valence, and *arousal*, which portrays the range of emotions. Well-being is measured from low quality (negative, bad) to high quality (positive, good). The two dimensions produce four subscales: 1) High Pleasure-High Arousal (HPHA, or Excitement), 2) High Pleasure-Low Arousal (HPLA, or Contentment), 3) Low Pleasure-High Arousal (LPHA, or Distress), and 4) Low Pleasure-Low Arousal (LPLA, or Depression).Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the four dimensions of High Pleasure-High Arousal (HPHA, or Excitement), High Pleasure-Low Arousal

(HPLA, or Contentment), Low Pleasure-High Arousal (LPHA, or Distress), and Low

Pleasure-Low Arousal (LPLA, or Depression) are .92, .87, .81, and .77 respectively for the

current sample. For the purposes of the current study, only the High Pleasure-High Arousal

subscale was utilized.

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients are provided in Table 2. Leader-member

exchange was significantly and positively associated with all three types of job crafting.

Additionally, both LMX and the three types of job crafting were positively related to job

affective well-being.

Results of a simultaneous multiple regression analysis noted in Table 3 was conducted to

investigate the first hypothesis that the various dimensions of job crafting would be positively

related to job affective well-being. The multiple linear regression used high pleasure high affect

(HPHA) as the outcome variable and the three job crafting subscales were each predictors:

increasing structural job resources (ISTJR), increasing social job resources (ISJR) and increasing

challenging job demands (ICJD). All three types of job crafting were positively associated with

job affective well-being. The relationship was significant for two of the predictors - increasing

structural job resources (ISTJR) and increasing social job resources (ISJR) - but not for

increasing challenging job demands (ICJD). The overall model was significant, $F(3,156) =$

18.18, $p < .001$, with an R^2 of .26, indicating that together, the job crafting measures explained

roughly one quarter of the variance in job affective well-being. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was

largely supported.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to investigate the second hypothesis that leader membership exchange is positively related to job affective well-being. Results of the Pearson correlation indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between leader membership exchange and high pleasure high affect, $r(160) = .49$, $p < .001$. These results support Hypothesis 2.

A series of regression analyses was conducted to investigate the third hypothesis that job crafting mediates the effect of leader membership exchange on job affective well-being. Because there are three measures of job crafting - Increasing Structural Job Resources (ISTJR), Increasing Social Job Resources (ISJR) and Increasing Job Demands (ICJD) - this involves testing a multiple parallel mediator model. The PROCESS macro developed by Andrew Hayes for SPSS (Hayes, 2013) was used to conduct the regressions, compute the indirect (mediator) effect of each of the three types of job crafting, and determine the significance of these effects using bootstrapping methods. Bootstrapping is a random resampling process where thousands of random samples drawn from the original sample data itself are used to form a distribution of these resamples. 95% bias corrected bootstrap confidence intervals were generated for all indirect effects, and confidence intervals which do not include zero are considered indicative of a significant mediation effect.

Results (shown in Figure 1) indicated that increasing structural job resources, $b = .36$, SE $= .133$, $p < .01$, and increasing social job resources, $b = .18$, SE $= .083$, $p < .05$ were significant predictors of high pleasure high affect. Increasing challenging job demands, $b = .12$, SE $= .093$, $p > .05$, was not a significant predictor of high pleasure high affect. The indirect effects were tested using a percentile bootstrap estimation approach with 5,000 samples. These results

indicated the indirect coefficient for increasing structural job resources was significant, $b = .017$,

SE = .0096, 95% CI = [.0194, .0834], the indirect coefficient for increasing social job resources

was insignificant, $b = .020$, SE = .0126, 95% CI = [-.0015, .0481], and the indirect coefficient for

increasing challenging job demands was insignificant $b = .011$, SE = .0102, 95% CI = [-.0094,

.0309]. These results partially support the mediational hypothesis.

Figure 1. *Results from Multiple Parallel Mediation Analysis*
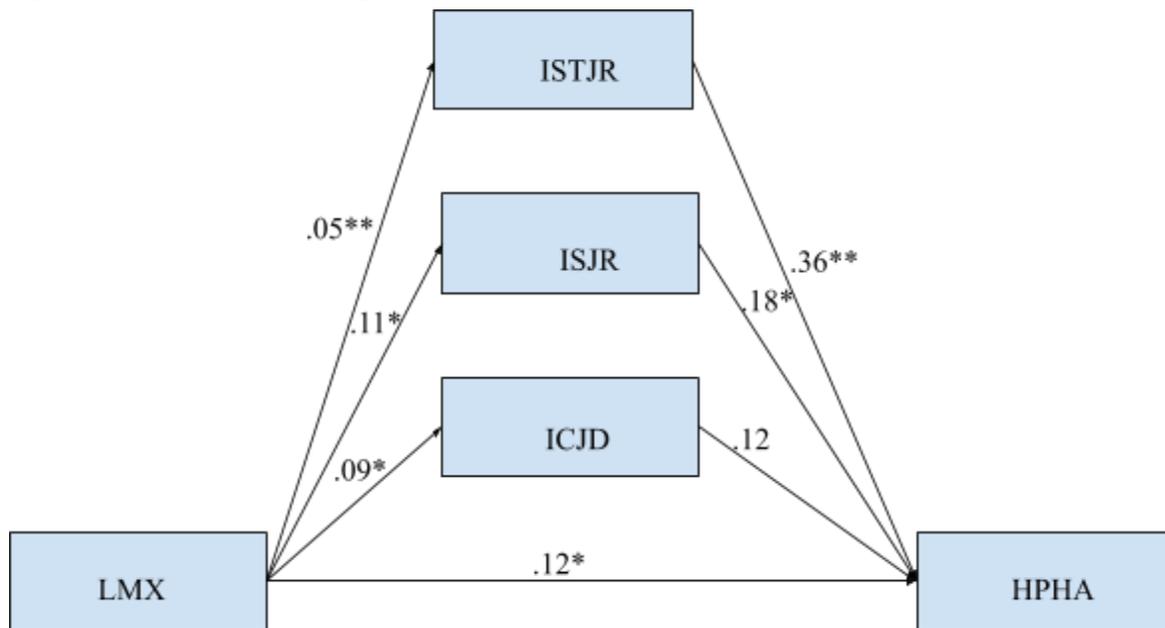
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 1. *Percentages of Participants Demographics*

Demographic Variable	Percentage
Gender	
Male	11.9%
Female	84.3%
Other	3.8%
Did Not Identify	.6%
Ethnicity	
Caucasian	71.7%
Hispanic/Latinx	15.1%
Asian	3.1%
Black American	3.1%
Caribbean/West Indian	1.3%
American Indian/Native Hawaiaan/Pacific Islander	.6%
Other	.5%
Did Not Identify	.6%
Highest Degree Completed	
High School	52.7%
Associate	31.4%
Bachelor	14.8%
Master	11.3%
Did Not Disclose	.6%
Income	
<10000	76.9%

10,000-20,000	15.5%
20,000-30,000	11.3%
30,000-40,000	1.8%
>50,000	1.8%
Did Not Disclose	1.2%
Job	
Permanent	27.4%
Temporary	72.6%
Did Not Disclose	1.2%
Full-time	20.7%
Part-time	79.3%
Did Not Disclose	.6%

Table 2. *Correlation Matrix of Study Variables*

	M	SD	High Pleasure High Arousal	Increasing Structural Job Resources	Increasing Social Job Resources	Increasing Challenging Job Demands	LMX
High Pleasure High Arousal	14.16	4.573	1.000				
Increasing Structural Job Resources	19.93	2.548	.397*	1.000			
Increasing Social Job Resources	14.98	4.270	.417*	.359*	1.000		
Increasing Challenging Job Demands	16.13	3.962	.394*	.471*	.511*	1.000	
LMX	33.14	13.631	.485*	.249*	.352*	.322*	1.000

* *p* < .01

Table 3. *Simultaneous Multiple Regression Analysis for Job Affective Well-Being (High Pleasure-High Arousal)*

	B	SE	☐	t	*p*	F	R²
(Constant)	-1.134	2.50		-.454	0.65	18.20	.259
Increasing Structural Job Resources	.418	.412	.233	2.95	.004		
Increasing Social Job Resources	.272	.087	.254	3.13	.002		
Increasing Challenging Job Resources	.178	.099	.155	1.80	.074		

*p < 0.05

Discussion

The main purpose of this research study was to understand whether leader member exchange and job crafting predicted job affective well-being. The sample was college-based and data were collected via online surveys. There were three hypotheses and statistical analyses: Firstly, a simultaneous multiple regression analysis was conducted to investigate whether the various dimensions of job crafting are positively related to job affective well-being. Secondly, a Pearson correlation was conducted to investigate the hypothesis that leader member exchange is positively related to job affective well-being. And, thirdly, a parallel multiple mediation model was conducted to examine the mediating role of job crafting on leader member exchange and job affective well-being.

Job Crafting and Positive Job Affective Well-being

The present study generally supported the proposition that job crafting predicts job affective well-being. This finding is consistent with those of Tims, Bakker and Derk (2013), where employees who changed their job characteristics through job crafting experienced enhanced well being. Similarly, the current study found that emerging adults who had higher levels of increasing structural job resources, increasing social job resources and increasing job demands also had higher levels of job affective well-being. This finding is in line with emerging adults' developmental goals as suggested by Carstensen's (1991) theory of socioemotional selectivity. However, in the current study, only increasing structural job resources and social job resources were significant predictors of job affective well-being. This finding suggests that the ability to tailor one's job resources may most affect employees' well-being. Given that emerging adults tend to be focused on goal achievement and growth and development (Carstensen, 1991;

1999), their ability to utilize structural and social job resources to fulfill their need for autonomy, skills, social support and feedback may be one important pathway to increased job affective well-being.

Increasing challenging job demands (such as taking on new projects) did not significantly contribute to job affective well-being. Job crafting and its effects on affective well being is a novel research area and thus, in forming the hypotheses, previous studies were drawn from the broader working population which have shown that increasing challenging job demands is positively correlated with work engagement and job performance (Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli, & Hetland, 2012; Tims, Bakker, Derks, & Van Rhenen, 2013). This lack of relationship between increasing challenging job demands and well-being was surprising, given emerging adults' quest for more opportunities. However, it may be that increased challenging job demands was not related to increased levels of well-being because initially only more demand is experienced and once the demands are met, more pleasure is experienced thus increasing job affective well being. The skills gap and the energy needed to close the gap to meet the increased demand may initially cause an increase in workload, thus decreasing pleasure, however once the skills are mastered, the increased workload diminishes and reduces the demand. This equilibrium once established may drive increased job affective well-being. Longitudinal research investigating the short- and long-term effects of this form of job crafting may reveal patterns of employee investment (increasing job challenge) and payoff (e.g., greater motivation and well-being).

A further explanation may be that increasing challenging job demands may be experienced as additional work during a period in emerging adults' lives when new skills are

being learned, thus contributing to more workload. This is also a period when emerging adults are juggling (at least) one job while also often attending college and this may have an effect on their ability to effectively manage increasing challenging job demands. The perceived high workload across all of their responsibilities may prevent an increase in job affective well-being.

Job Crafting as a Mediator between Leader Member Exchange and Job Affective Well-being

Increasing structural job resources (such as autonomy and skill variety) was the only significant mediator between leader member exchange and job affective well-being. The relationship between leader member exchange and positive job affective well-being was mediated by emerging adults who demonstrate more autonomous behavior and a variety of job skills. Increased social job resources (social support and feedback) was not a significant mediator and this may indicate that a supervisor who is already providing the needed social support and feedback may make further job crafting in this area less necessary.

Increasing challenging job demands was also not a significant mediator and it may be that, as described above, emerging adults may experience more stress when tasked with new projects, thus leading to a diminished benefit to job affective well-being. This last finding is somewhat at odds with the research by Radstaak and Hennes (2017), who found that increasing challenging job demands was a significant mediator between leader member exchange and work engagement (which tends to be positively associated with well-being; Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli, & Hetland, 2012; Tims, Bakker, Derks, & Van Rhenen, 2013).

An alternative explanation is that the job crafting scale may not capture all behaviors aimed at increasing challenging demands. For example, applying for other jobs may qualify as

seeking more challenges, however the scale does not pose this question in a specific context

(Van Den Heuvel, Demerouti & Peeters 2015). The scale is designed to capture challenging job

demands at one's current position with their current organization. In other words, the scale

design is targeted at "within the job" aspects of crafting and not "between jobs" aspects. That is,

emerging adults who feel under-challenged at work may choose to remedy the situation by

changing jobs rather than by job crafting.

Many emerging adults are employed in temporary jobs within the hospitality and retail

industries and their goals may be to gain more experience and eventually achieve better jobs.

This makes it likely that they may not take the time to increase the social job resources (feedback

and coaching) at their current job. For example, an emerging adult working as a waitress while

applying for graduate school or seeking long-term jobs in other industries is unlikely to approach

a supervisor to ask for guidance in applying to graduate school or feedback on job performance

that they see as irrelevant to their own career goals.

Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing economic recession has created

greater difficulty in the transition to adulthood. It is estimated that one in six young people lost

their jobs and had their job hours reduced by nearly 25 percent (International Labor

Organization, 2020), -resulting in decreased income and a gap in knowledge, skills and abilities

of the emerging adults. Even among those still employed, these disruptions may impact some of

the variables studied here. For example, maintaining a strong employee-supervisor relationship

and engaging in job crafting are more likely to be challenging for those working remotely.

Limitations

The sample was relatively homogenous, composed of mostly female college students. A better sample would have also included full time emerging adult workers who were not enrolled in college. Academic pressures at college may predispose participants to experience less affective well-being at work. A more inclusive sample may present a better representation of the emerging adult population's work experience. The sample is female dominated, making it difficult to examine any potential gender differences. Many studies have shown that men tend to suffer more ill health than women (Courtenay, 2003). It is likely that results may be different with a better representation of men. It is also important to study work experiences such as those in this study in the non-binary population (Winter et al. 2016).

Likewise, the sample is mostly white and non diverse. Research by Sagrestano (2004) demonstrates that race and ethnicity play a role in stressful events at the workplace. Emerging adults who are immigrants or minorities may have different experiences in the workplace which may bring about different results.

The self-report measures may have caused a bias in the reporting. Participants may choose to report only events which are pleasurable or socially acceptable. Thus, they may only report experiences with their supervisors and job crafting that are positive. For example, it is possible that there were no significant results for the link between leader-member exchange and increasing challenging job demands because any negative interactions with their supervisors may be unpleasant for participants to recollect.

Finally, it is important to note that even though the data partially or fully support each of the study hypotheses, cause and effect results can not be concluded from the study. For example, it could be that the relationship between job crafting and high pleasure high affect may be in the

reverse direction because participants with higher affective well-being may be more inclined to job craft.

Future Research

Future studies should include analyses on how leader personality and culture affects the link between leader member exchange and job crafting. It may be that different personalities and cultural backgrounds of leaders makes a difference in the nature of the supervisor-employee relationship, and thus affects the job crafting of those employees as well as their job affective well-being. Additionally supervisors' perceptions should be included in future studies to better understand their role among the constructs of job crafting, leader member exchange and job affective well-being. The use of dyadic data (pairs of supervisors and employees) may provide additional insights into the relationships among these study variables.

Data collected during this study were primarily from a college-based emerging adult population which is a subset of the wider emerging adult population. Emerging adults who have never attended college but are working may present different results, because their life experiences may be different. These differences may affect their work-related perceptions and behaviors, which could then affect their job affective work well-being status. For example, such individuals are likely to be employed in work that is more relevant to their ultimate career aspirations; therefore, the quality of the relationship with their supervisor may be more crucial, or they may engage in higher levels of job crafting. Emerging adults without college degrees are an understudied and important population for future research.

Conclusion

Emerging adults who engaged actively with some aspects of job crafting experienced enhanced job affective well-being. This is an important contribution to understanding job affective well-being. Emerging adults are at an age where developing healthy work habits should serve to promote a more healthy work life in their future careers. Job crafting offers emerging adults the opportunity to manage their jobs and build a positive self-image through work experiences. The quality of relationship between the supervisor and emerging adult played a significant role in the amount of particular types of job crafting experienced, and in the case of increasing structural job resources, this resulted in increased job affective well-being.

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Appendix A

Job Crafting Scale

Please indicate how you feel about the following questions by circling the most appropriate response.

A response of 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Frequently, and 5 = Often

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 to use my capabilities to the fullest

5. I decide on my own how to do things

6. I make sure that my work is less mentally intense

7. I manage my work so that I try to minimize contact with people whose problems affect me emotionally

8. I organize my work so as to minimize contact with people whose expectations are unrealistic

9. I try to ensure that I do not have to make many difficult decisions at work

10. I organize my work in such a way to make sure that I do not have to concentrate for too long a period at once

11. I ask my supervisor to coach me

12. I ask whether my supervisor is satisfied with my work

13. I look to my supervisor for inspiration

14. I ask others for feedback on my job performance

15. I ask colleagues for advice

16. When an interesting project comes along,

17. I offer myself proactively as project co-worker

18. If there are new developments,

19. I am one of the first to learn about them and try them out

20. When there is not much to do at work,

21. I see it as a chance to start new projects

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

23. I try to make my work more challenging by examining the underlying relationships between aspects of my job

Appendix B

Leader –Member Exchange Scale

Please indicate how you feel about the following questions by circling the most appropriate response.

A response of 1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Moderately agree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Neither agree nor disagree, 5 = Disagree, 6 = Moderately disagree and 7 = Strongly disagree

1. I like my supervisor very much as a person.

2. My supervisor is the kind of person one would like to have as a friend.

3. My supervisor is a lot of fun to work with.

4. My supervisor defends my work actions to a superior, even without complete knowledge of the issue in question.

5. My supervisor would come to my defense if I were "attacked" by others.

6. My supervisor would defend me to others in the organization if I made an honest mistake.

7. I do work for my supervisor that goes beyond what is specified in my job description.

8. I am willing to apply extra efforts, beyond those normally required, to meet my supervisor's work goals.

9. I am impressed with my supervisor's knowledge of his/her job.

10. I respect my supervisor's knowledge of and competence on the job.

11. I admire my supervisor's professional skills.

12. I do not mind working my hardest for my supervisor.

Appendix C

Job-Related Affective Well-Being Scale

Below are a number of statements that describe different emotions that a job can make a person feel. Please indicate the amount to which any part of your job (e.g., the work, coworkers, supervisor, clients, pay) has made you feel that emotion in the past 30 days. Base your answers on the following scale

1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Quite often, 5 = Extremely often or always

1. My job made me feel at ease

2. My job made me feel angry

3. My job made me feel annoyed

4. My job made me feel anxious

5. My job made me feel bored

6. My job made me feel cheerful

7. My job made me feel calm

8. My job made me feel confused

9. My job made me feel content

10. My job made me feel depressed

11. My job made me feel disgusted

12. My job made me feel discouraged

13. My job made me feel elated

14. My job made me feel energetic

15. My job made me feel excited

16. My job made me feel ecstatic

17. My job made me feel enthusiastic

18. My job made me feel frightened

19. My job made me feel frustrated

20. My job made me feel furious

21. My job made me feel gloomy

22. My job made me feel fatigued

23. My job made me feel happy

24. My job made me feel intimidated

25. My job made me feel inspired

26. My job made me feel miserable

27. My job made me feel pleased

28. My job made me feel proud

29. My job made me feel satisfied

30. My job made me feel relaxed