

Jarosław Stanisław Kardas
University of Siedlce

ORCID: 0000-0003-3038-6859
e-mail: jaroslaw.kardas@uws.edu.pl

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THE ABILITY OF THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION TO REDESIGN THEIR WORK IN MATURE ENTERPRISES - EMPLOYEE ASSESSMENT OF SELF-ORGANIZATION IN THE WORKPLACE AND THEIR ATTITUDE TO CAREER PROGRAMS

ZDOLNOŚĆ POKOLENIA MILLENNIALSÓW DO PRZEPROJEKTOWANIA SWOJEJ PRACY W DOJRZAŁYCH PRZEDSIĘBIORSTWACH - OCENA SAMOORGANIZACJI PRACOWNIKÓW W MIEJSCU PRACY I ICH STOSUNEK DO PROGRAMÓW KARIER

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Abstract: The aim of the research here was to determine the ability of employees (Generation Y – millennial generation) to redesign their work (job crafting) in mature enterprises in the areas of self-organization and to determine their attitude to career programs. To achieve this, the following methods were used: analysis and critical review of the literature, a diagnostic survey, and guided discussions (N=300). Calculations were performed with IBM SPSS, version 24. Employees of mature organizations consider self-organization in the workplace to be of great value and are aware of its positive impact on their ability to job craft. However, they are not satisfied with their career programs. Almost all respondents (92.3%) believe that their participation in designing their own development should be active. Such an attitude has a positive impact on their ability to redesign work (job crafting). The contribution of the present research is manifested in filling the gap in the theory of planned behavior and the theory of self-determination. For future research, it is recommended to increase the sample size and use the following tools: Job Crafting Scale, Occupational Self-Effectiveness Scale, Quantitative Workload Inventory, Emotional Well-Being at Work Scale, and Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

Keywords: job crafting, work redesign, career, millennial generation, generation Y, mature company

Streszczenie: Celem badań było określenie zdolności pracowników (pokolenie Y – pokolenie millenialsów) do przeprojektowania swojej pracy (*job crafting*) w dojrzałych przedsiębiorstwach w obszarach samoorganizacji oraz określenie ich stosunku do programów karier. W tym celu wykorzystano następujące metody: analizę i krytyczny przegląd literatury, sondaż diagnostyczny oraz dyskusję kierowaną (N=300). Obliczenia wykonano za pomocą programu IBM SPSS wersja 24. Pracownicy dojrzałych organizacji uważają samoorganizację w miejscu pracy za bardzo wartościową i są świadomi jej pozytywnego wpływu na ich zdolność do przeprojektowania swojej pracy (*job crafting*). Nie są jednak zadowoleni ze swoich programów karier zawodowych. Prawie wszyscy respondenci (92,3%) uważają, że ich udział w projektowaniu własnego rozwoju powinien być aktywny. Taka postawa pozytywnie wpływa na ich zdolność do przeprojektowywania pracy (*job crafting*). Wkład niniejszych badań przejawia się w wypełnieniu luki w teorii planowanego zachowania i teorii samostanowienia. W kolejnych badaniach zaleca się zwiększenie liczebności próby i wykorzystanie następujących narzędzi: Job Crafting Scale – JCS, Occupational Self-Effectiveness Scale – OSES, Quantitative Workload Inventory – QWI, Emotional Well-Being at Work Scale, Confirmatory Factor Analysis – CFA.

Słowa kluczowe: job crafting, przeprojektowanie pracy, kariera, pokolenie millenialsów, pokolenie Y, dojrzała organizacja

Introduction

The present paper assumes that a good way to study the ability of Generation Y employees, i.e., millennials, to engage in job crafting is to determine how they assess their self-organization in the workplace and what their attitude to career programs is. A decisive assessment is expected especially from younger employees, i.e., the generation of millennials, whose professional commitment depends on the relationship between work and other areas of their lives. The millennial generation is not ready to abandon their personal lives for the sake of work; they have little ability to build consensus in this area. This requires a new perspective to engage them in work (Fuchs, 2022; Lavallard, 2019; Valentine, Powers, 2013). To determine their attitude in the above matters, young employees (millennial generation) working for mature organizations were selected for the research. A mature organization, in the author's understanding, is the one that plans its activities in harmony with its employees' values and interests and constantly focuses on improving the level of maturity of the most important business processes. Additionally, mature companies always focus on the quality of human resources. The basis for determining whether an enterprise is mature or not was the model (Business Process Maturity Model – BPMM) based on five stages of process maturity (Kalinowski, 2011; Ko et al., 2009; Van Looy et al., 2011).

Previous research (Kardas, 2020, 2023a, 2023b) has shown that job crafting has an impact on employee attitudes, behavior, and performance, mainly in the area of work engagement (Bakker, 2018; Bakker, Demerouti, 2007), work performance (Dubbelt et al., 2019), and creativity (Chen et al., 2014).

Despite a significant increase in research and practice regarding job crafting, in Poland there has been a small number of scientific publications on the ability of employees to engage in job crafting in mature organizations in the areas of self-organization in the workplace and care for career programs. A review of articles from 1996-2004 in leading American occupational psychology journals showed that 94% of their reports dealt with negative phenomena (Kapica, Baka, 2021). Moreover, no attempt has been made to assess the relationship between job redesign and the development of mature organizations or employee career programs. The ability to influence work areas through employee self-organization in the workplace and a greater attention to career programs can be a source of satisfaction and a motivator for effective performance (Boehnlein, Baum, 2022; Dubbelt et al., 2019; Tims et al., 2012). The above research gap gave the author an impetus to undertake research in this area and enrich the Theory of Planned Behavior of Icek Ajzen (Ajzen, 1991). This theory was developed as an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action, developed by Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein (Ajzen, Fishbein, 1980). In both of these models, intentions occupy a central position, being a motivational component of a human way of acting, indicating "how much people are willing to pursue given behavior" (Ajzen, 1991). The basic assumption of both theoretical models is that unless unforeseen circumstances arise, people will behave in accordance with their stated intentions (Ajzen, Fishbein, 1980). At the same time, the present research fits into the Self-Determination Theories of Richard Ryan and Edward Deci, seeking to understand human motivation (Ryan, Deci, 2000). Their theory arises from research on intrinsic motivation – the internal desire to do something for one's own good rather than for an external reward. According to the Self-Determination Theory, people are guided by three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

The difficulty in the research was how to evaluate the difference between work redesign, understood as an organizational process forced by superiors and leading to a change in some work features, and those processes that are initiated by the employee, without the involvement of organizational resources or with their limited use. In the case of an organizational process initiated by employees, they adapt their tasks to individual needs and preferences, instead of doing the work that the organization has created (Tims, Bakker, 2010). As a result, employees' readiness to job crafting is strengthened by their satisfaction resulting from self-organization and pursuit of their career programs. As a result, work efficiency increases (Boehnlein, Baum, 2022; Dubbelt et al., 2019; Tims et al., 2012). Career planning is important for achieving job satisfaction, well-being, and work-life balance (Błachnio, 2020; Bohdziewicz, 2022; Kardas, 2023a, 2023b; Muridan

et al., 2023; Myszka, 2020). Therefore, it is worth knowing how and when to define goals and adjust activities in work processes.

The roles of initiator, creator, and controller are fulfilled by the organization, having formal tools to determine the level of freedom in making decisions and to assess the implementation of the goals set for employees. The most frequently used formal HR tools by employers are periodic assessment questionnaires, career plans, reserve staff, and succession plans. Although most mature organizations are assessed positively regarding employee job crafting possibilities, in the area of career programs they mostly receive negative ratings. It can be concluded that career programs could have two paths: normative and auxiliary (Baruch, 2003; Callanan, Zimmerman, 2016; Kardas, 2009).

The normative path, considered obligatory in enterprises, arouses the greatest interest and therefore controversy. Critics say planned career guidelines can be demoralizing. Supporters, in turn, believe that clear criteria and a designated promotion path positively motivate employees to work more effectively. The normative path provides greater opportunities to fulfill aspirations than the auxiliary path and strongly mobilizes for positive action. Knowing a clearly defined path to the next promotion (with normative assumptions), employees more often make plans to organize time and resources better and to pursue their development goals. They are more creative, accept changes more willingly, and adapt to the strategic tasks of the company. Employees consider such a path to be stable and are more confident of achieving professional success. However, a career path that fulfills the auxiliary function, although it supports work processes and employee development, does not have as much influence and predictability as the normative path. In this case, the certainty that expectations will be met is much lower.

Methodology and theoretical basis

To conduct the research, it was necessary to select a group of millennials from among people working for a mature organization (currently or in the past). In the first part of the research, the maturity of their organization was assessed. For this purpose, an original interview questionnaire was developed and used. The inspiration to develop the questionnaire was a model, Business Process Maturity Model – BPMM, based on a five-stage process maturity (Kalinowski, 2011; Ko et al., 2009; Van Looy et al., 2011). The respondent was eligible for the second, main part, when the completed questionnaire (organization assessment) showed that the organization in which he or she worked met the criteria of a mature organization, i.e. it was at the third, fourth or fifth (greatest) maturity level. An organization with the first or second level of maturity was considered by the present author to be immature (Kardas, 2023b). Thus, the remaining people who placed their organization at level one or two were not qualified for further research.

The aim of the research was to determine the ability of employees (millennials – generation Y) to undertake job crafting in mature enterprises in the areas of self-organization in the workplace and career programs. The main research problem was posed: what value does self-organization in the workplace in a mature organization have for employees (millennials) and do employers care about their employees' career programs? During the analyses, detailed research questions were formulated:

- Q1: What is the value of self-organization in the workplace for employees of mature organizations and how does it affect their ability to job craft?
- Q2: Do employers care about employee career programs and indicate career paths?
- Q3: What should be the participation of employees in designing their own development and how does it affect their ability to job craft?

The main hypothesis was formulated: self-organization in the workplace in a mature organization is of great value to employees, which affects their ability to job craft, while employers mostly do not care about career programs of the staff. Additionally, the following detailed hypotheses were formulated:

H1: For employees of mature organizations, self-organization in the workplace is of great value and has a positive impact on their ability to job craft.

- H2: Employers do not care about career programs and this negatively affects their ability to job craft.
- H3: Employees are aware that they need to actively participate in designing their own development. This attitude has a positive impact on their ability to job craft.

To achieve the aim of the research, the following methods were used: analysis and critical review of the literature, a diagnostic survey, and guided discussions (according to a previously developed scenario, in thirteen groups, N=300). Data collection techniques included surveys, interviews, observations, analysis of published sources of literature and documents, and analysis of opinions expressed in discussions. In group discussions, participants were greatly engaged and willing to express additional opinions. The problem was grouping opinions into thematic modules, i.e., self-organization in the workplace and building a career path because the participants discussed them very extensively and often went beyond the topics indicated in the discussion. They pointed out management errors, presented possible solutions, sometimes beyond the immediate capabilities of enterprises, and demanded systemic actions.

The area of research interest was located in the work processes of a mature organization and employee job crafting abilities. The research and discussions were conducted between February 2019 and March 2020 on a group of 300 people of Generation Y, i.e. millennials who worked or had worked for a mature organization in Poland in the Masovian Voivodeship. Among other definitions, millennials are people born between 1976 and 2000. However, the Times magazine assumes that these are people born between 1980 and 2000. The vast majority of respondents were aged 18-25 (74.6%), in the initial phase of building a professional career. The remaining respondents were those aged 26-40 (22%) and people over 40, who constituted only 2.7%. All of them were classified as millennials. The surveyed respondents included 178 women (59.3%) and 118 men (39.3%), with 4 people (1.3%) who did not provide their gender for unknown reasons. The confidence level index of the research was: $\alpha = 0.95$, fraction size: 0.5, and the maximum error was 6%.

In order to process responses to the research questions, calculations were made with IBM SPSS, version 24. To assess relationships between nominal variables or between nominal and ordinal variables and to assess the significance of differences between groups in terms of the frequency of responses, contingency tables were used and chi-square tests. The limit of statistical significance was $p < 0.05$.

Results and discussion

Table 1 summarizes the results indicating the level of value that self-organization in the workplace has for the employee. The table provides the percentage of each response and the percentage of valid answers. As expected, a vast majority of respondents indicated great value of self-organization in the workplace (64.6%). Moderate value was declared by 30% of respondents. However, low value was selected by 1.3% and no value by 0.7%. Surprisingly, 3.4% of respondents had no opinion on this subject even though almost all aspects of self-organization in the workplace had been discussed before.

Table 1. The value of self-organization in the workplace, N=297

What value does self-organization in the workplace have for you?	n	Percentage	Percentage of valid answers
great	192	64.0	64.6
moderate	89	29.7	30.0
low	4	1.3	1.3
none	2	0.7	0.7
no opinion	10	3.3	3.4
Total	297	99.0	100.0
No answer	3	1.0	
Total	300	100,0	

Source: Author's elaboration.

Gender slightly differentiated the assessment of the value of self-organization in the workplace (Table 2). For 66.7% of men and for 63.8% of women self-organization was of great value. A greater diversity was noted among those who selected moderate value (25.6% of men, 32.8% of women).

Table 2. The value of self-organization in the workplace and the gender of respondents, N=294

Contingency Table				
What is the value of self-organization in the workplace for you?		Gender		Total
		Woman	Man	
great	n	113	78	191
	percentage	63.8%	66.7%	65.0%
moderate	n	58	30	88
	percentage	32.8%	25.6%	29.9%
low	n	1	3	4
	percentage	0.6%	2.6%	1.4%
none	n	1	1	2
	percentage	0.6%	0.9%	0.7%
no opinion	n	4	5	9
	percentage	2.3%	4.3%	3.1%
Total	n	177	117	294
	percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<i>Pearson's chi-squared test</i>				
	Value	d.f.	<i>p</i>	
Pearson's chi-squared test	4.371	4	0.358	
Likelihood Ratio	4.342	4	0.362	
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.344	1	0.557	
N of valid cases	294			

Source: Author's elaboration.

The participants of the discussions tried to identify aspects of their work most strongly affecting their job satisfaction. They declared that self-organization was attractive and gave them a sense of purpose and meaning in their actions. According to Table 2, self-organization in the workplace had a significant impact on employee satisfaction. Additionally, the survey respondents confirmed that they liked their job – this was declared by as many as 78% of them (Table 3). As many as 71.3% of respondents were happy to be able to come to work (Table 4). The above declarations indicated the readiness of the surveyed millennials to engage in job crafting. In the opinion of respondents, the factors that strengthen job crafting were rewards, guaranteed career paths, and delegation of authority. Many authors argue that the inherent factors of self-determination are common benefits for the employee competences and self-development and for the enterprise (Hauk, 2018; Sowińska, 2014; Terelak, Jankowska, 2009; Zalewska, 2009).

Table 3. Respondents' declaration: I like my job, N=300

Do you like your job?	n	Percentage	Percentage of valid answers
yes	234	78.0	78.0
no	32	10.7	10.7
no opinion	34	11.3	11.3
Total	300	100.0	100.0
No answer	0	0	
Total	300	100.0	

Source: Author's elaboration.

Table 4. Respondents' declaration: I am happy to come to work, N=300

Are you happy to come to work?	n	Percentage	Percentage of valid answers
yes	214	71.3	71.3
no	47	15.7	15.7
no opinion	39	13.0	13.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0
No answer	0	0	
Total	300	100.0	

Source: Author's elaboration.

According to a 2009 survey of CBOS, a Polish opinion polling institute, with a sample of N=1,096 professionally active Poles (CBOS, 2009), over 78% of respondents were satisfied with their work. The rest either assessed it negatively (11%) or provided answers indicating an ambivalent attitude (11%). Despite such a great level of job satisfaction, one of the factors hindering job crafting in Polish enterprises is directive work culture. This means that employees' rights are limited and rigid and there is little space for discussions. According to the survey, millennials (Generation Y) try to achieve coherence between work and other areas of life. They want to be devoted to work, but they also want to do what is important and good for them. They are not ready to abandon personal values for work. The discussion showed that the millennials had requirements in the area of commitment and work culture. Employee engagement in work was closely related to self-organization and they treated the latter as a process of participation, involving them in decision making. They treated work culture as a set of rules that shaped the social relationship within their company. Common goals and values unite employees and superiors into one group focused on striving for continuous development. The youngest generation of employees expect flexible organizational structures and better working conditions. They want to utilize their knowledge and expertise. Other authors have reached similar conclusions (Daniel et al., 2020; Kaczmarczyk, 2017). This, in turn, translates into employees' ability to job craft, including an awareness of labor costs and sense of belonging and productivity (Rudolph et al., 2017).

The research confirmed Hypothesis 1 (H1) that self-organization in the workplace is of great value to employees of mature organizations and has a positive impact on their ability to job craft. Despite the positive opinion, it should be noted that human resources management in Polish enterprises lacks the advantages of the Japanese and Anglo-Saxon models. In important areas, managers are reluctant to delegate authority to employees in the Polish model, but in the Japanese model, delegation of authority works well and makes the management of a company easier. In the Polish model, managers only occasionally involve employees in the decision-making process, while in the Anglo-Saxon model, employee decision-making participation is the norm.

Table 5 presents data on employers' attitude to their employees' career programs. Respondents were given eight response options. Four of them positively assessed employers' participation in employee's career programs (answers 1-4). The respondent admitted the existence of such programs and named activities aimed at implementing them. The remaining four answers expressed negative opinion of the respondents (answers 5-8). Although one answer (response 5) indicated that career programs existed, it was also indicated that employers did not care about their standard. In another answer, also classified as negative (response 8), respondents declared that they had no opinion on this subject.

The vast majority of the surveyed millennials declared a negative attitude of employers towards employee career programs (Table 5, answers 5 to 8 = 65.9%). A big group of respondents did not express an opinion on this subject (21.9%). It might have been because they lacked self-confidence, were afraid of a potential conflict or simply did not know how to effectively express their needs. Many authors (Ames, 2008; Oana, Ionica Ona, 2019; Solberg et al., 1995) agree that assertiveness is a key element of personal development. An assertive person is able to express his or her opinion and defend his or her rights and needs. A lack

of assertiveness may result from low self-esteem or from upbringing. People who do not believe in their abilities often fear that their opinion does not count or is of little importance. As a result, instead of expressing their needs and opinions, they remain passive and agree to everything others say or do. This leads to frustration and dissatisfaction and to a loss of control over one’s life. Such behavior may have serious consequences for interpersonal relationships too.

Table 5. Respondents’ declaration regarding employers attitude towards employee career programs, N=297

Do employers care about employee career programs?	n	Percentage	Percentage of valid answers
1. Yes, through systematic meetings and conversations profiling the employee’s career.	34	11.3	11.4
2. Yes, by periodically assessing employees – indicating development paths in evaluation sheets.	50	16.7	16.8
3. Yes, through systematic meetings and periodic assessments.	2	0.7	0.7
4. Yes, through other activities.	15	5.0	5.1
5. There are career programs, but employers do not care about their standard.	42	14.0	14.1
6. There are no programs, so employers do not care about employees’ careers.	61	20.3	20.5
7. Career programs are only “on paper”, but employers do not implement them.	28	9.3	9.4
8. No opinion	65	21.7	21.9
Total	297	99.0	100.0
No answer	3	1.0	
Total	300	100,0	

Source: Author’s elaboration.

The second biggest group indicated that there were no career programs in their organizations, which is why employers did not care about employees’ careers (20.5%). Other answers indicated a negative approach of employers to employees’ career programs. Some of them said that there were career programs in their companies, but employers did not care about their standard (14.1%). Others answered that career programs were included in personnel documents, but employers did not implement them (9.4 %).

The survey results identified employers’ problems with planning the careers of their employees. The great rate of negative opinions (as much as 65.9%) indicated major gaps in career programs and a lack of systemic solutions. It was emphasized that the first stage of building a career path was planning. Planning at the organizational level is an important element of the HR process. However, the discussion showed that the majority of surveyed millennials considered planning activities to be insufficient, which hindered the implementation of job crafting. At the same time, the participants had great expectations, believing that their career should involve promotion within a short time frame and a quick climb up the corporate hierarchy. Moreover, they believed that every company should have a career management system based on competencies. The research confirmed hypothesis 2 (H2) that employers do not care about career programs and this negatively affects their ability to job craft.

Analyzing research done by other authors, one can come to a conclusion that employee career planning promotes competitiveness, builds the brand and staff stability, and limits unnecessary employment and employee turnover. Following this approach, managers of the American banks estimate that “they will save approximately USD 1.95 million annually thanks to career planning because staff turnover has decreased by 65%, productivity has increased by 25%, the quality of work by 85%, and the probability of promotion by 75%” (Kostera, Kowacki, 1999). It should be added that the proper management of employees’ careers attracts talented and motivated people to the company, with ambition and a desire for further improvement.

A lack of career programs in companies demotivates employees from job crafting (Ali et al., 2023; Hassan et al., 2022).

Table 6 presents declarations of employees regarding active or passive participation in designing their own development. Almost all respondents (92.3%) declared that their participation in designing their development should be active.

Table 6. Respondents' declaration regarding their active or passive participation in designing their development, N=298

What should be your participation in designing your own development?	n	Percentage	Percentage of valid answers
active participation	275	91.7	92.3
passive participation	12	4.0	4.0
no opinion	11	3.7	3.7
Total	298	99.3	100.0
No answer	2	0.7	
Total	300	100,0	

Source: Author's elaboration.

The surveyed millennials believe that the lack of employee participation in creating development paths is a mistake. An employee who is not involved in this process often becomes just a contractor, lacking creativity and innovation, and is often inefficient at work. The problem of the coexistence of autonomy and participation in decision-making as a condition for job crafting increasing employee productivity is also addressed by other authors (Bartkowiak, Krugiełka, 2018; Roczniowska, Puchalska-Kamińska, 2017; Shi, Cao, 2022; Spector, 1986). They emphasize the significant role of active participation and autonomy in achieving greater commitment to work.

The discussion and survey shows that millennials know that they need to develop their professional competences. They want to be active creators of their professional development. They are willing to take up challenges at work, and, as a result, this has a positive impact on their ability to job craft. By improving their qualifications, an employee contributes to an increase in the value of the company, making it more competitive on the market. The research confirms hypothesis 3 (H3) that employees want to actively participate in designing their own development, which has a positive impact on their engagement in job crafting. Many authors are of the same opinion (Aleksandrovna et al., 2018; Buonocore et al., 2020; Kardas, 2020).

Conclusions

The results lead to a conclusion that self-organization in the workplace is important and affects the ability of employees (millennials – generation Y) to job craft. The role of self-organization in the workplace is not modified by gender; it is of similar importance for women and men. This means that regardless of gender, self-organization supports employees in the achievement of their goals, gives them a sense of work value, and helps them meet challenges. It allows millennials to confirm their identity at work. Employers' activities related to employee career programs, including those so important for the job crafting process, require positive relations between the employee and the employer, with the development of communication system solutions.

Design and implementation activities in the field of career programs should be intentional, well-thought-out, and time-bound because they are related to costs. They should therefore be on the list of human resources management priorities. Current solutions are insufficient and demotivate employees from engaging in job crafting. In the opinion of respondents, such solutions have a negative impact on the economic results of the company. Millennials (Generation Y) have specific expectations in two perspectives: active

involvement in designing their own development and self-organization at the workplace. Those perspectives are a challenge for companies that do not always understand younger generation employees.

The research provides application-oriented postulates addressed to mature enterprises, namely increasing the autonomy and participation of younger employees (millennials); identifying positive relationship between employees' careers and the economic effects of the company (indicating common values) and developing systemic solutions; supporting and promoting employee activity in the field of personal development.

The contribution of the present research is manifested in filling the gap in the theory of planned behavior and the theory of self-determination in the areas of self-organization in the workplace, career path planning and development programs for young employees in mature enterprises. At the same time, the contribution to science is the collection and analysis of the literature in the field of job crafting and career planning. The contribution of the research to practice consists in presenting employee-oriented solutions that increase motivation at work.

The present research was not free from limitations, including a single measurement and a subjective assessment of problems resulting from the discussion made by the people participating in the research. Another limitation of the research was the use of preliminary statistical analysis of selected variables.

Future research on the matter is needed with an increase in the sample size and the use of following tools: Job Crafting Scale – JCS, Occupational Self-Effectiveness Scale – OSES, Quantitative Workload Inventory – QWI, Emotional Well-Being at Work Scale, and Confirmatory Factor Analysis – CFA. It is argued that researchers and management practitioners would benefit from large-scale randomized controlled trials of interventions to assess the economic value of job crafting and to promote it.

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