The Impact of Job Crafting in Working Condition Changes Due to Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract. This study examines the impact of job crafting in organizations during Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic has forced organization to make operational adjustment about health protocols, and employees need to adapt with a new way of working. The authors collected data from 316 respondents who worked in a logistic company in Indonesia. Data were analyzed with structural equation modeling (SEM) and Listel was used for the analysis. The findings show that the perceived impact of change and empowering leadership has a positive effect on job crafting. Furthermore, job crafting fully mediates the relationship between empowering leadership and perceived job performance, and partially mediated the relationship between empowering leadership and work engagement.

Keywords: Job Crafting, Organizational Change, Empowering Leadership, Job Performance, Work Engagement

1 Introduction

The acceleration of economic growth in a country continues to be done to boost sustainable economic development.

Job crafting is the changing of physical and cognitive that someone do in the task or the relational boundaries of their work [1]. It could be triggered by organizational and strategy change, and how to define these changing situations [2]. It covers psychological, social and physical action performed by motivated workers, known as job crafters [1].

Job crafting improves flexibility which is required during such a Covid-19 pandemic situation. The pandemic has forced organizations to adjust their operation, working patterns and habits. On the other hand, Covid-19 offers a practice to do smart work. This pandemic is a test for organizational adaptability and resilience of smart work practices, and triggers an opportunity of practices in the long term [3]. Organizations have adopted new ways of working remotely through digital communication and rethink their business models to adapt with Covid-19 [4].

Job crafting is necessary because it allows flexibly for employees to deal with unknown situations. Employees consider organizations have a capability in implementing change if they recognize the organization's priorities have been aligned with the objective of change, there is an effective communication. and enhancement of individual capacity for change [5]. Job crafting affects work routines, the scope of work, and exhaustion or work stress [6]. Job crafting behavior and task arrangement are used as a strategy for dealing with new situations in the workplace [7].

Leadership plays acritical role for employees' positive attitudes and behaviors. Leaders encourage employee's views and attitudes towards organizational change [8]. Sustainable leadership facilitates coping with changing business environment, and promotes proactive employee action for organizational change. One form of sustainable leadership is empowering leadership that focuses on distributing authority for decision making, taking responsibility, and supportive behavior to increase employee motivation [9]. The increase in authority is positively related to proactive behaviors and personal initiatives, which contributes to work adjustments [10].

Increasing autonomy and job support, derived from empowering leadership and job crafting behaviors, motivate employees to set boundaries and perceptions of their work roles. Consequently, the level of task performance and positive influence in the workplace will be higher [11]. Job crafting improves employee job performance [12]. Job performance is an important criterion related to organizational success, and defined as what a person does as an interpretation of the output and quality of work [13].

Having engaged employees is a competitive advantage [14], and job crafting is a practical way to increase work engagement [15]. Employees who exhibit job crafting behaviors tend to engage in their work because they adjust their working conditions proactively. One of the adjustments because of Covid-19 pandemic is working with the health protocol that may affect work convenience and stress. The study shows that stress causes work disengagement and decreases work resilience [16]. Therefore, this study verifies the impact of job crafting and empowering leadership on work engagement and job performance.

Most State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) are currently trying to change from an authoritarian style to a more democratic and participatory way of working. They allow their employees to share opinions and involve them in decision-making process [17]. However, the employees' commitment is decreasing because of the bureaucratic culture [17]. This study is undertaken in PT KAI Logistic (KALOG), a subsidiary of PT KAI (Persero), one of the largest SOE in Indonesia. Practically, the work culture in KALOG is adopted from PT KAI. This study is timely because it investigates job crafting and leadership practices during the pandemic in the context of a bureaucratic organization.

This study advances job crafting literature in two ways. First, most of study on job crafting is conducted in the context of planned changes. This study investigates job crafting as unplanned changes due to Covid-19. Second, this study enriches the perspective of empowering leadership in job crafting in an organization with a strong bureaucratic culture. The study aims to examine the effect of changes in working conditions during the pandemic and the application of empowering leadership as a trigger of job crafting, and its consequences on job performance and work engagement.

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Change & Job Crafting

Job crafting has multiple perspectives, i.e., individual, job, and organizational perspectives. These perspectives influence the practice of job crafting, and may have different antecedents [1]. Job crafting includes changing into what someone does, how to approach work, or how someone interacts with others. Since job crafting tends to occur in situations where individuals understand their roles and redesign their jobs, most likely happen throughout organizational change [18].

Walk & Handy (2018) conducted a study by emphasizing the response to change proactivity. They found that perceived impact of organizational change has a positive impact on the practice of job crafting. The higher the negative impact of the perceived change, the less probability job crafting will emerge.

Hypothesis 1 : Perceived impact of change is positively related to job crafting

2.2 Empowering Leadership & Job Crafting

Kim & Beehr (2018) found that empowering leadership was positively related to job crafting behavior. Empowering leadership encourages and facilitates job crafting behavior. Audenaert et al. (2020) raised a hypothesis that empowering leadership has a positive effect on job crafting. Supervisors spend a lot of their working time to communicate with employees, and they provide freedom and meaningfulness that affect ability, readiness and motivation to do work.

Hypothesis 2 : Empowering leadership is positively related to job crafting

2.3 Job Crafting & Work Engagement

Previous studies found a positive relationship between job crafting and work engagement. Bakker et al. (2012) found that employees who have a proactive personality are most likely to craft their jobs. Job crafting induce the work engagement (vigor, dedication, and absorption). The study findings propose when employees proactively adapt their work environment, they will stay engaged.

A recent study by Zahoor (2018) showed that hindering job demands is positively correlated with work engagement. Decreasing hindering job demands can reduce negative effect such as fatigue. His study shows a negative relationship between hindering job demands and work engagement (Crawford et al., 2010). Therefore, employees increase their level of work engagement by proactively decreasing hindering job demands,.

Hypothesis 3 : Job crafting is positively related to work engagement

2.4 Job Crafting & Job Performance

Lichtenthaler & Fischbach (2018) investigated the relationship between leadership, job crafting, and performance. They found that promotion-focused job crafting has a positive impact while prevention-focused job crafting has a negative impact on employee's health and performance. Promotion-focused job crafting has the strongest positive impact on adaptive performance, followed by proactive performance and then task performance.

A study by Esmaeili et al. (2019) was conducted in a non-western automotive industry. The results show job crafting has a significant and positive effect on task performance and contextual performance. Similarly, Moon et al. (2020) found a positive relationship between job crafting and job performance.

Hypothesis 4 : Job crafting is positively related to job performance

2.5 Empowering Leadership & Job Performance

The literature has shown the impact of empowering leadership on job performance. Vecchio et al. (2010) for example, found that empowering leadership has a positive effect on performance and satisfaction. Furthermore, dysfunctional resistance mediates partially empowering leadership to employee performance and satisfaction.

Bringing up previous study by Govender (2016), Kundu et al. (2019) also examined the influence of empowering leadership on employee job performance. They found that the empowering leadership behavior has a positive influence on the psychological empowerment and job performance.

Hypothesis 5 : Empowering Leadership has a positively related on Job Performance

2.6 Empowering Leadership & Work Engagement

The survey conducted by Tuckey et al. (2013) on 540 firefighters showed that empowering leadership has the effect of optimizing working conditions for engagements. They showed that empowering leadership behavior of the captains had a positive relationship with the work engagement of firefighters.

A study by Park et al. (2017) also found that empowering leadership affects work engagement. They explained that leaders' empowering behavior will have a positive impact on employees' positive state of mind towards their work and personal lives.

Hypothesis 6 : Empowering leadership has a positively related on work engagement

2.7 Job crafting mediates the relationship between empowering leadership and work engagement and job performance

Promotion-focused job crafting is triggered by employee-oriented leadership, which in turn improves the employees' health and performance (Lichtenthaler & Fischbach (2018). The study was continued by Wang et al. (2020) who found that social factors from positive leadership styles (for example, transformational and empowering), and co-workers' support were positively related to employee job crafting. Furthermore, job crafting mediates the relationship between social factors and work outcomes. Their study contributes to emphasize the important role of job crafting in transmitting valuable social resources into better work outcomes.

Hypothesis 7 : Job crafting mediates empowering leadership and work engagement
Hypothesis 8 : Job crafting mediates empowering leadership and job performance

3 Method

3.1 Research Design

The authors followed a quantitative paradigm, and conducted a survey. This approach is suitable to answer the research questions, and address all hypotheses. The first author works at PT KALOG that allowed us to collect data from the company.

3.2 Measurement

In consultation with an academic, the questionnaire was translated into Bahasa, and then checked by five potential respondents. All items used a Likert scale, from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

- *Perceived impact of change.* The authors followed Vakola (2014) 's measurement. Sample items were "It bothers me that […]" or "I don't like it that […]" or "I like that […]."

- *Empowering leadership*. The measurement by Ahearne et al.'s (2005) that covers four dimensions was used: enhancing the meaningfulness of work (e.g., "My manager shows me how my job fits the bigger company picture"), fostering participation in decision making (e.g., "My manager involves me in important decisions"), expressing confidence in high performance (e.g., : "My manager always shows confidence in my abilities"), and providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints (e.g.,: "My manager lets me take important decisions on my own").
- *Job crafting*. The authors followed Tims et al. (2012), which include four dimension, i.e., increasing structural job resources (e.g., "I try to develop myself professionally"), decreasing hindering job demands (e.g., "I manage my work so that I try to minimize contact with people whose problems affect me emotionally"), increasing social job resources (e.g., : "I ask others for feedback on my job performance"), and increasing challenging job demands (e.g., "If there're new developments, I am one of the first to learn about them & try them out").
- *Employee engagement*. The authors used the Work Engagement Utrecht (Schaufeli et al., 2006) that includes three dimensions of engagement, i.e., vigor (e.g., "When I get up in the morning, I am eager go to work"), dedication (e.g., "My job inspires me") and absorption (e.g., "It is difficult to detach myself from my job").
- *Job Performance*. The authors used the IWPQ to measure job performance that consistsof three scales, i.e., task performance (e.g., "I manage my work time well"), contextual performance (e.g., "I try to keep updating my knowledge related to my work."), and counterproductive work behavior (e.g., "I exaggerate problems at work").

3.3 The Survey

The survey was conducted online in April 2021, and the authors collected data from 316 respondents who are PT Kalog's employees . Tabel 1 describes details of the respondents. Previously, the authors conducted a pre-test with 34 respondents to validate the questionnaire.

Tabel 1. Respondents' Profile (N=316)

Category	Total	%	Category	Total	%
Gender			Job Nature		
Male	232	73%	Operasional	161	50,95%
Female	84	27%	Supporting	155	49,05%
Age			Education Level		
< 21	8	2,53%	High School	122	38,60%
21-30	135	42,72%	Diploma	36	11,40%
31-40	109	34,50%	Bachelor Degree	143	45,25%
41-50	48	15,19%	Master Degree	15	4,75%
> 50	16	5,06%			
Working Area			Employment Status		
Head Office	163	51,58%	Permanent Employee	224	70,89%
Region	153	48,42%	Contract Employee	38	12,02%
			Outsourcing	54	17.09%
Tenure					
< 1 year	15	4,75%			
1-3 years	94	29,74%			

4-6 years	73	23,10%
7-9 years	83	26,27%
> 9 years	51	16,14%

4 Result and Discussion

4.1 Reliability and Validity

The authors tested the measurement model before the hypothesis testing. Four items were dropped (JC6, JC7, JC11, WE13), but we kept two items (EL10, JC10) because they were marginally fit. The authors rerun the test after dropping off the four items, and the measurement model is fit as shown by the standardized loading factor (SLF), average variance extracted (AVE), and construct reliability (CR) (Hair et al., 2014). Table 2 shows the validity and reliability of the measurement.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability

Construct	Dimension	Slf	Error	Cr	Ave
Perceived Impact of change					
CH1	-	0,85	0,27	0,87	0,52
CH2		0,58	0,66		
CH3		0,79	0,38		
CH4		0,75	0,43		
CH5		0,68	0,53		
CH6		0,64	0,59		
Empowering Leadership					
EL1	Enhancing the meaningfulness of work	0,94	0,12	0,93	0,52
EL2		0,93	0,14		
EL3		0,95	0,10		
EL4	Fostering participation in decision making	0,73	0,46		
EL5		0,66	0,57		
EL6		0,70	0,51		
EL7	Expressing confidence in high performance	0,56	0,68		
EL8		0,59	0,66		
EL9		0,65	0,58		
EL10	Providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints	0,49	0,76		
EL11		0,69	0,52		
EL12		0,61	0,63		
Job Crafting					
JC1	Increasing structural job resources	0,71	0,24	0,88	0,60
JC2		0,82	0,12		
JC3		0,73	0,29		
JC4		0,65	0,24		
JC5		0,81	0,94		
JC6	Decreasing hindering job demands	0,42	0,83	0,73	0,34
JC7		0,38	0,86		
JC8		0,87	0,24		
JC9		0,81	0,35		
JC10		0,46	0,79		
JC11		0,3	0,91		

JC12		0,74	0,24		
JC13	Increasing social job resources	0,78	0,12		
JC14		0,84	0,29	0,88	0,60
JC15		0,68	0,24		
JC16		0,63	0,94		
JC17	Increasing challenging job demands	0,71	0,50	0,86	0,56
JC18		0,82	0,32		
JC19		0,73	0,47		
JC20		0,65	0,57		
JC21		0,81	0,35		

Construct	Dimension	Slf	Error	Cr	Ave
Work Engagement					
WE1		0,69	0,53		
WE2		0,85	0,28		
WE3	Vigor	0,76	0,43		
WE4		0,68	0,53		
WE5		0,83	0,32		
WE6		0,74	0,46		
WE7		0,80	0,35		
WE8		0,83	0,31		
WE9	Dedication	0,83	0,31	0,95	0,55
WE10		0,83	0,31		
WE11		0,73	0,46		
WE12		0,60	0,64		
WE13		0,33	0,89		
WE14	Absorption	0,82	0,33		
WE15		0,62	0,62		
WE16		0,66	0,56		
WE17		0,82	0,33		
Job Performance					
JP1		0,83	0,31		
JP2		0,85	0,29		
JP3	Task performance	0,89	0,22	0,93	0,73
JP4		0,84	0,29		
JP5		0,88	0,23		
JP6		0,77	0,41		
JP7		0,77	0,41		
JP8		0,85	0,27		
JP9	Contextual performance	0,87	0,25	0,94	0,66
JP10		0,86	0,26		
JP11		0,82	0,32		
JP12		0,87	0,24		
JP13		0,67	0,55		
JP14		0,64	0,58		
JP15		0,83	0,32		
JP16	Counter-productive work behavior	0,88	0,22	0,91	0,67
JP17		0,85	0,28		
JP18		0,86	0,27		

SLF : Standard Loading Factors, CR: Critical Ratio, AVE : Average Variance Extracted

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

Table 3 summarizes the results. The authors found that that perceived impact of change was positively related to job crafting. Employees with a positive perception about the change tend to do job crafting (accept Hypothesis 1). This finding supports the study by [19]. In their study, job crafting is the behavior shown by individuals that reflect changing work environment.

The authors also found that empowering leadership had a positive relationship with job crafting (accept Hypothesis 2). The result is similar to previous studies, such as Kim and Beehr [10] or Audenaert et al. [20]. The characteristics of empowering leadership, i.e., autonomy, power sharing, motivational support, and personal development are related to job crafting [10].

Furthermore, the data supports a positive relationship between job crafting and work engagement (accept Hypothesis 3), as well as between job crafting and perceived job performance (accept Hypothesis 4). The literature shows the relationship between job crafting and work engagement [21][22], and between job crafting and job performance Lichtenthaler [23] and Fischbach, Moon et al. [12]. Employees who involved in job crafting proactively try to align working conditions with their own needs and abilities, try to minimize differences and create suitability with environment. Consequently, the increase in job crafting will increase work engagement [28]. Meanwhile, employees who are able to develop relationships, increase work challenges and utilize resources to make adjustments to the workplace, will enjoy the work time and have positive sense to accomplish tasks and responsibilities with satisfactory results.

Tabel 3. Hypothesis Testing

Path	Label	SLF	t-value
Perceived Impact of Change → Job Crafting	H1	0,14	2,86
Empowering Leadership → Job Crafting	H2	0,72	9,77
Job Crafting → Work Engagement	H3	0,50	5,35
Job Crafting → Job Performance	H4	0,67	8,27
Empowering Leadership → Job Performance	H5	0,26	4,25
Empowering Leadership → Work Engagement	H6	0,38	4,69
Empowering Leadership → Job Crafting →Job Performance	H7	0,48	4,25
Empowering Leadership→ Job Crafting →Work Engagement	H8	0,36	4,69

t-value > 1,645 : significant

The study also found a positive relationship between empowering leadership to perceived job performance (accept Hypothesis 5), and between empowering leadership to work engagement (accept Hypothesis 6). These findings are consistent with the literature where leadership has a positive effect on work performance Amundsen and Martinsen [29], Vecchio et al. [25], and the impact is higher in empowering leadership [27]. Previous study has also found the positive relationship between job crafting and work engagement [30][31]. Empowering leadership provides resources and enable employees to engage in their work Cai et al. [32].

Furthermore, the results showed the mediation effect of job crafting (hypothesis 7 and 8). The authors found that job crafting fully mediated the relationship of empowering leadership

on perceived job performance (accept Hypothesis 7), while job crafting partially mediated the influence of empowering leadership on work engagement. Leaders encourage employees to "craft their own jobs", that in turn will lead to motivation, work engagement, and better performance [10]. Wang et al. [33] also argued that empowering leadership effectively improves employee performance through promotion-focused job crafting. Empowering leadership provides resources, autonomy and support. When autonomy and support were increased, employees were motivated to set boundaries and perceptions of their roles, that in cause a higher level of task performance.
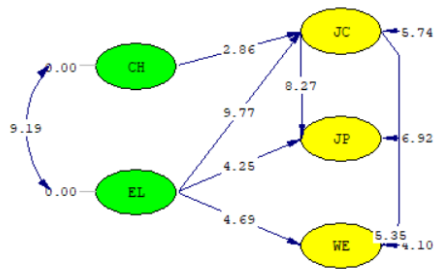

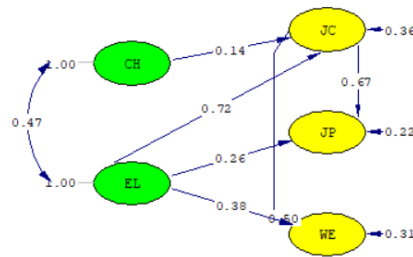**Fig 1.** Structural Model (t-value)   **Fig 2.** Structural Model (loading factors)

5 Conclusion

This study examines job crafting in the setting of Covid-19 pandemic. Results show perceived impact of change and empowering leadership as antecedents of job crafting. Furthermore, the study also find job crafting as a mediator; it mediates the relationship between perceived impact of change-empowering leadership and job performance-work engagement.

This study contributes to advance the organization and leadership literature. The authors introduce the perceived impact of change and empowering leadership as antecedents of job crafting. From this perspective, job crafting occurs in a context of organizational change and enabled by leaders. The authors also uncover the mediation effect of job crafting on job performance and work engagement.

5.1 Managerial Implication

Respondents perceived change because of Covid-19 pandemic positively, means KALOG has put the policy (e.g. working with health protocols) in place and socialized it well to employees. As a company that operates in an essential sector, the company still need to adapt the way how they operate. Maintaining flexibility is crucial for organizations as it will be perceived positively by employees, that in turn facilitates employees to craft their job as a response to change.

Empowering leadership is also an enabler of job crafting. Employees consider that leaders provide them with autonomy and authority to make decisions that allow job crafting. This finding is interesting because KALOG is a subsidiary of a SOE that typically is characterized

with a bureaucratic culture. Organizations must keep and improve the empowering leadership behaviors because it enables job crafting.

Perceived impact of change and empowering leadership are two crucial conditions for organizations. Mediated by job crafting, they help organizations to improve job performance and work engagements. Therefore, organizations and managers should pay attention on how organizations manage change and how the managers lead their subordinates.

5.2 Limitations and Further Research

This study has three limitations. First, the cause-and-effect inferences does not allowed because we used cross-sectional data. Reversed causality is possible happened in the relationships, e.g., work engagement and job crafting. It could be imagine that job crafting is a consequence someone engaged with the job. A longitudinal study may overcome this issue. Second, the study used self-report measures that may be biased (e.g., job performance). Future research may use different raters, such as supervisors or peers. Third, the usage of essential logistics company during pandemic might limit the generalization. The authors suggest researchers to conduct similar research in non-essential industry during pandemic.

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