

Job demands and job resources: given and crafted

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Abstract

The Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R) emerged from dominant work psychological models. The JD-R model was developed to explain the development of the two components of the burnout syndrome i.e. exhaustion and distancing from work. Already from the beginning of its introduction the model proved to be able to explain employee health and motivation. The main assumption of the JD-R model is that although each occupation has its own specific characteristics that may influence employee well-being and job performance, these characteristics can be classified in two general categories, i.e. job demands and job resources. Job demands represent aspects of the work that require effort and therefore are associated with specific physical and psychological costs. Therefore, job demands are generally considered as the initiators of the health impairment process. In contrast, job resources are aspects of the work environment that help to fulfill job demands or reduce the associated costs and stimulate learning. Job resources are the most important predictors of work engagement, and are the initiators of a motivational process. The JD-R model has been expanded with additional elements to examine how job demands and (job and personal) resources have unique and multiplicative effects on job stress and motivation, and to focus on reversed effects of health and motivation on job demands and job resources. The aim of the presentation will be to present evidence for processes and assumptions of the JD-R model as well as for the usefulness of the model to explain individual and organizational outcomes.

Inspired by the idea that individuals are active agents who can also influence their job, the presentation will go on and focus on job crafting. Job crafting refers to proactive and voluntary adjustments that individuals make in their work in order to make it more meaningful and satisfying. According to the JD-R model employees can increase resources, increase challenges, and decrease demands. It is suggested that job crafting represents a relatively new paradigm that organizations can stimulate to improve the working conditions for their employees. To highlight the usefulness of job crafting, a bottom-up job crafting intervention will be presented which aims to stimulate job crafting behavior of employees such that they (re)design their job demands and job resources according to their preferences. The presentation will conclude with evidence on the effectiveness of the intervention to increase well-being and (adaptive) performance among different occupational groups. The basic premise is that job crafting can be used in addition to top-down approaches to improve jobs in order to overcome the inadequacies of job redesign approaches, to respond to the complexity of the contemporary jobs, and to deal with the needs of the current workforce. Finally, the presentation will close with an outlook on future challenges regarding job characteristics and the possibilities for organizations and employees to optimize them in order to contribute to healthy organizations and individuals.