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# Leadership, job crafting, and employee health and performance

Employee  
health and  
performance

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to integrate the effects of top-down leadership and employees' bottom-up job crafting behaviors on employee health and performance. The authors expected that employees' promotion- and prevention-focused job crafting act as intervening mechanisms linking top-down employee-oriented leadership with employee health and performance.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Multi-source data were collected among  $n = 117$  independent employee-leader dyads.

**Findings** – Promotion-focused job crafting was positively and prevention-focused job crafting was negatively related to employees' health and performance. Employee-oriented leadership was positively related to promotion-focused job crafting but unrelated to prevention-focused job crafting. Employee-oriented leadership was indirectly related to health and performance through promotion-focused job crafting. Moreover, promotion-focused job crafting had the strongest positive impact on adaptive performance, followed by proactive and then task performance, while prevention-focused job crafting had the strongest negative impact on task performance followed by proactive and then adaptive performance.

**Research limitations/implications** – Despite the cross-sectional study design, results reveal how employee-oriented leadership is related to employee health and performance through promotion-focused job crafting.

**Practical implications** – Organizations need employee-oriented leaders, who facilitate promotion-focused job crafting, which helps employees to perform well while staying well.

**Originality/value** – This study adds to the literatures on job crafting, leadership, and employee health and performance by explicating intervening processes in these relationships. It adds to research on the extended job demands-resources job crafting model by showing, that promotion- and prevention-focused job crafting has different relationships with antecedents (i.e. leadership) and outcomes (i.e. health and performance).

**Keywords** Performance, Leadership, Health, Job crafting

**Paper type** Research paper

Employees' health and performance are positively related to organizational productivity (Grossmeier *et al.*, 2016; Huselid, 1995; Jiang *et al.*, 2012). However, due to unhealthy employees, there are productivity related losses of up to \$168 billion (Hassard *et al.*, 2018). Accordingly, keeping employees healthy and productive is of high strategic value for organizations. Top-down leadership and employees' bottom-up job crafting are important drivers of employees' health and performance (Rudolph *et al.*, 2017; Skakon *et al.*, 2010; Wang *et al.*, 2011). The goal of this study is to integrate both perspectives. We develop and test a model where leadership has an impact on health and performance through employees' job crafting.

Through job crafting, employees are proactively aligning their work better with their abilities, needs, and preferences (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). In the job demands-resources (JD-R) job crafting model, employees' job crafting is aimed at changing job characteristics (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017; Tims *et al.*, 2012). In this study, we test an extended version of the JD-R job crafting model, which differentiates promotion-focused job crafting (i.e. employees try to approach motivating job characteristics through increasing job resources or challenging job demands) from prevention-focused job crafting (i.e. employees try to avoid strenuous job characteristics through decreasing hindering job demands) (Bruning and Champion, 2018; Lichtenhaler and Fischbach, 2016a).



Research shows that promotion-focused job crafting is positively and prevention-focused job crafting is negatively related to health and performance (Rudolph *et al.*, 2017). To ensure employees' health and performance leaders need to facilitate promotion-focused job crafting and attenuate prevention-focused job crafting. Leadership (e.g. servant leadership) is positively related to promotion-focused job crafting (Bavik *et al.*, 2017; Gordon *et al.*, 2015; Wang *et al.*, 2017). With regard to prevention-focused job crafting, results are mixed. For example, directive leadership is positively related to prevention-focused job crafting (Esteves and Lopes, 2017), whereas transformational leadership has no impact on prevention-focused job crafting (Wang *et al.*, 2017). In this study, we argue that employee-oriented leadership reduces employees' necessity for prevention-focused job crafting because employee-oriented leadership is negatively related to hindering job demands (Schaufeli, 2015; Tuckey *et al.*, 2012).

We expect to contribute with this study to the literatures on job crafting, leadership, and employee health and performance by explicating intervening processes in these relationships. We integrate the effects of top-down leadership and employees' bottom-up job crafting on employee health and performance. We add to research on the extended JD-R job crafting model (Bruning and Campion, 2018; Lichtenthaler and Fischbach, 2016a), which proposes that promotion- and prevention-focused job crafting have different relationships with antecedents (i.e. leadership) and outcomes (i.e. health and performance). We add to the literature on leadership as an antecedent of job crafting (Rudolph *et al.*, 2017). Finally, we add to the literature on performance by considering the relationships of promotion- and prevention-focused job crafting with different performance facets (i.e. task, adaptive, and proactive performance) (Griffin *et al.*, 2007). Summarizing, we expect that employee-oriented leadership is positively related to employees' health and performance through facilitating promotion-focused job crafting and reducing prevention-focused job crafting.

## Theory and hypotheses

### *Promotion- and prevention-focused job crafting*

Job crafting refers to "[...] the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work" (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001, p. 179). Tims and colleagues (2012) conceptualized job crafting within the JD-R model. The JD-R model proposes that each job has specific motivating (i.e. job resources and challenging job demands) and strenuous (i.e. hindering job demands) job characteristics, which have an impact on health and performance (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). More specifically, job resources (e.g. job autonomy) are "those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that either/or (1) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (2) are functional in achieving work goals; (3) stimulate personal growth, learning and development" (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004, p. 296), whereas job demands are "those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (i.e. cognitive or emotional) effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and or psychological costs. Although job demands are not necessarily negative" (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004, p. 296), i.e. there are challenging (e.g. responsibility) and hindering job demands (e.g. work conflicts) (Crawford *et al.*, 2010). Jobs characterized by low job resources and high hindering job demands are depleting employees' energy, which impairs health and performance, whereas jobs characterized by high job resources and challenging job demands are engaging employees, which facilitates health and performance (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017).

Based on these job resources and job demands definitions, the JD-R job crafting model proposes that employees craft their jobs through increasing job resources, increasing challenging job demands, or decreasing hindering job demands, and that all job crafting

behaviors are beneficial for employee health and performance (Tims *et al.*, 2012). However, empirical evidence demonstrates that only job crafting through increasing job resources and challenging job demands is beneficial, while job crafting through decreasing hindering job demands is detrimental for health and performance (Rudolph *et al.*, 2017). Adding a regulatory-focus (Higgins, 1998) view, the extended JD-R job crafting model seeks to resolve these theoretical and empirical inconsistencies (Bruning and Campion, 2018; Lichtenthaler and Fischbach, 2016a). Job crafting is a self-regulatory process and employees craft their jobs in promotion- or prevention-focused ways (Bipp and Demerouti, 2015; Brenninkmeijer and Hekkert-Koning, 2015; Petrou and Demerouti, 2015). Promotion- and prevention-focused job crafting have different underlying motivational principles (i.e. approach vs avoidance), and different relationships with antecedents (e.g. proactive personality) and outcomes (e.g. health and performance) (Rudolph *et al.*, 2017).

We expect that promotion-focused job crafting is positively and prevention-focused job crafting is negatively related to health and performance. Promotion-focused job crafting refers to employees' growth, advancement, and development need, and employees seek to approach motivating job characteristics through increasing job resources and challenging job demands. Promotion-focused job crafting increases tangible (e.g. increases in job resources) and intangible (e.g. increases in work meaningfulness) motivating job characteristics (Bakker *et al.*, 2012; Peral and Geldenhuys, 2016; Tims *et al.*, 2013, 2016), which are positively related to health and performance. Prevention-focused job crafting refers to employees' safety and security need, and employees seek to avoid strenuous job characteristics through decreasing hindering job demands. However, hindering job demands seem to be given rather than changeable job characteristics (Hakanen *et al.*, 2006); thus, prevention-focused job crafting does not reduce tangible strenuous job characteristics (i.e. no decreases in hindering job demands) (Tims *et al.*, 2013). Moreover, prevention-focused job crafting reduces intangible motivating job characteristics (e.g. decreases in work meaningfulness) (Bruning and Campion, 2018; Lichtenthaler and Fischbach, 2016a; Peral and Geldenhuys, 2016), which impairs health and performance. Further, prevention-focused job crafting is a kind of counterproductive work behavior (Demerouti *et al.*, 2015), and counterproductive work behaviors are negatively related to health and performance (Carpenter and Berry, 2017). Accordingly, we predict:

*H1a.* Promotion-focused job crafting is positively related to health and performance.

*H1b.* Prevention-focused job crafting is negatively related to health and performance.

#### *Employee-oriented leadership and promotion- and prevention-focused job crafting*

Employee-oriented leaders are supporting their employees in informational, instrumental, and emotional ways (House, 1981), are concerned with employees' individual needs and well-being, and seek to create working conditions in which employees can perform and stay well (Nielsen and Munir, 2009; Tuckey *et al.*, 2012). We expect that employee-oriented leadership is positively related to promotion-focused job crafting and negatively related to prevention-focused job crafting. First, employee-oriented leadership is positively related to other promotion-focused proactive work behaviors (Parker and Wu, 2012). Second, employee-oriented leadership should be positively related to promotion-focused increasing job resources because employee-oriented leaders empower employees to proactively accumulate further job resources (Hakanen *et al.*, 2008; Hobfoll, 1989). Third, employee-oriented leadership should be positively related to promotion-focused increasing challenging job demands because employees are empowered to deal on their own with such challenging job demands (Bakker *et al.*, 2007; Tuckey *et al.*, 2012). Fourth, employee-oriented leadership should be negatively related to prevention-focused decreasing

hindering job demands because employee-oriented leaders decrease hindering job demands (Schaufeli, 2015; Tuckey *et al.*, 2012), which reduces employees' necessity for prevention-focused job crafting. Fifth, prevention-focused job crafting is a kind of counterproductive work behavior (Demerouti *et al.*, 2015), and employee-oriented leadership is negatively related to counterproductive work behaviors (Holtz and Harold, 2013). Accordingly, we predict:

*H2a.* Employee-oriented leadership is positively related to promotion-focused job crafting.

*H2b.* Employee-oriented leadership is negatively related to prevention-focused job crafting.

Following our theoretical argumentation so far, we conclude that employee-oriented leadership influences health and performance through promotion- and prevention-focused job crafting. This idea is supported by research that shows that employee-oriented leadership is positively related to employee health and performance (Skakon *et al.*, 2010; Wang *et al.*, 2011). Accordingly, we predict:

*H3a.* Employee-oriented leadership is indirectly related to health and performance through promotion-focused job crafting.

*H3b.* Employee-oriented leadership is indirectly related to health and performance through prevention-focused job crafting.

## Methods

### *Participants and procedure*

We collected multi-source data in a large police department in Germany.  $n = 269$  employee-leader dyads were invited via e-mail to participate in this study. In total, we obtained ratings of  $n = 117$  employee-leader dyads (response rate 43 percent). Of the employees, 70 percent were male, and the mean age was 41.30 years ( $SD = 10.12$ ). Of the leaders, 91 percent were male, and the mean age was 49.22 years ( $SD = 6.78$ ). Employees rated employee-oriented leadership, promotion- and prevention-focused job crafting, and health. Leaders rated employees' performance.

### *Measures*

We used existing and validated scales to measure all constructs under study. Cronbach's  $\alpha$ 's of the scales, with the exception of the promotion-focused job crafting subdimension "increasing structural job resources," were well above the recommended 0.70 threshold (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

*Leader ratings.* Performance ( $\alpha = 0.89$ ) was assessed with nine items of the work role performance measure (Griffin *et al.*, 2007). Items were translated from English to German and then back-translated to check the accuracy of the translation. Responses were given on a seven-point scale with 1 (never)-7 (always). Leaders rated three performance facets: task performance (e.g. "How often in the last month did your employee carried out the core parts of his/her job well"; three items,  $\alpha = 0.85$ ), adaptive performance (e.g. "[...] learned new skills to help him/her adapt to changes in his/her core task"; three items,  $\alpha = 0.86$ ), and proactive performance (e.g. "[...] made changes to the way his/her core tasks are done"; three items,  $\alpha = 0.92$ ).

*Employee ratings.* Employee-oriented leadership ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ) was assessed with five items from the German version (Wilde *et al.*, 2009) of the employee-centeredness scale (Ekvall and Arvonen, 1994). Responses were given on a five-point scale with 1 (never)-(always). One example item is: "My manager shows regard for subordinates as individuals."

Promotion- and prevention-focused job crafting was assessed with the German version (Lichtenthaler and Fischbach, 2016b) of the job crafting scale (Tims *et al.*, 2012).

Responses were given on a five-point scale with 1 (does not apply at all)-5 (fully applies). Promotion-focused job crafting ( $\alpha=0.86$ ) was measured with the three subdimensions increasing structural job resources (e.g. "I decide on my own how I do things"; five items,  $\alpha=0.61$ ), increasing social job resources (e.g. "I look to my supervisor for inspiration"; five items,  $\alpha=0.80$ ), and increasing challenging job demands (e.g. "When an interesting project comes along, I offer myself as project coworker"; five items,  $\alpha=0.87$ ). Prevention-focused job crafting ( $\alpha=0.77$ ) was measured with the subdimension decreasing hindering job demands (e.g. "I try to ensure that I do not have to make many difficult decisions at work"; six items).

Health ( $\alpha=0.76$ ) was assessed with the German version (Hasselhorn and Freude, 2007) of the short form of the work ability index (Tuomi *et al.*, 1998, 2001), which comprises seven items: current work ability in relation to life's best work ability; current work ability in relation to both physical and mental demands of the work; number of diagnosed diseases; work impairment due to disease; number of sick leave days during the past year; estimation of work ability in two years; and psychological resources (e.g. daily task enjoyment).

#### Data analysis strategy

We used structural equation modeling (SEM) with AMOS 24 (Arbuckle, 2016) to test our hypotheses. We conducted the SEM analyses on a partial disaggregation model (Bagozzi and Edwards, 1998) by creating item parcels (Hall *et al.*, 1999; Little *et al.*, 2002), and analyzed the covariance matrix using the maximum likelihood method of estimation. For promotion-focused job crafting and performance, we created three item parcels using the above-mentioned subscales. For employee-oriented leadership, prevention-focused job crafting, and health, we created two item parcels by conducting exploratory factor analyses for each measure, forcing two factors and then pairing the items with the highest loadings in each factor. This parceling strategy reduced the number of manifest variables from 42 to 12, resulting in a satisfactory variable-to-sample-size ratio of the model (Bentler and Chou, 1987). We assessed the fit of a model to the data using the traditional  $\chi^2$ , as well as five fit indices (Hoyle, 1995; Kline, 2005), and used  $\chi^2$  difference tests to compare the fit of alternative models. To test the indirect effects of employee-oriented leadership on health and performance through promotion- and prevention-focused job crafting separately, we used bootstrapping with the phantom model approach (Macho and Ledermann, 2011) because bootstrapping produces more accurate confidence intervals of indirect effects (Preacher and Hayes, 2008).

## Results

### Preliminary analyses

Descriptive statistics, reliabilities, and correlations among all study variables are displayed in Table I.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Employee-oriented leadership <sup>a</sup>	3.95	0.89	(0.91)				
2. Promotion-focused job crafting <sup>a</sup>	3.21	0.58	0.39*	(0.86)			
3. Prevention-focused job crafting <sup>a</sup>	1.89	0.61	-0.09	0.05	(0.77)		
4. Health <sup>a</sup>	37.32	6.35	0.43*	0.50*	-0.10	(0.76)	
5. Performance <sup>b</sup>	5.18	0.79	0.26*	0.28*	-0.26*	0.24*	(0.89)

**Notes:**  $n=117$ . <sup>a</sup>Employee rating; <sup>b</sup>leader ratings. Cronbach's  $\alpha$ 's are in parentheses on the diagonal. \* $p < 0.05$  (one-tailed)

**Table I.**  
Descriptives,  
reliabilities, and  
correlations

To demonstrate construct validity, we conducted a set confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the five measures under study (s. Table II). The five-factor model (employee-oriented leadership, promotion-focused job crafting, prevention-focused job crafting, health, performance) reached a good fit, and all parcels loaded significantly on the intended latent variables (standardized coefficients ranging from 0.57 to 0.98).  $\chi^2$  difference tests show that the fit of the five-factor model was significantly better than all alternative models. We conclude that the expected factor structure was valid, and the five measures indeed represent different constructs.

We also conducted a CFA for all employee self-report measures (i.e. employee-oriented leadership, promotion- and prevention-focused job crafting, health) with a common method factor (CMF) added, that was defined as having as indicators all the self-report measures (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2012). We compared the results of this CFA with the CMF with results of a CFA without the CMF and did not find substantial changes in factor loadings or intercorrelations. This suggests that common-method bias is limited in our study.

*Hypotheses testing*

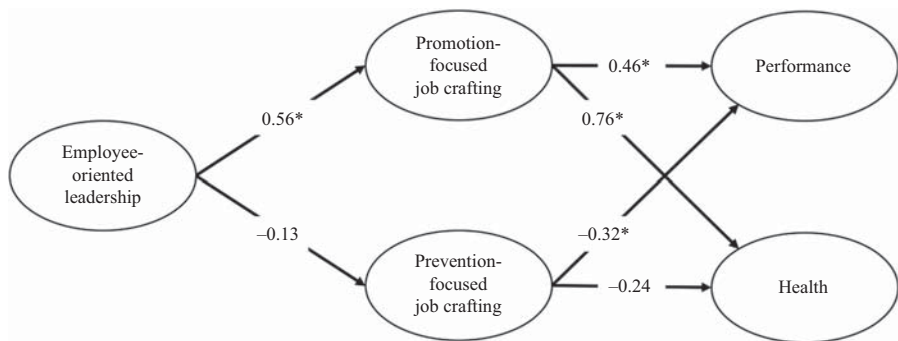
We used the structural equation model shown in Figure 1 to test our hypotheses. The model reached good fit ( $\chi^2 = 68.82$ ,  $df = 47$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 1.46$ ; RMSEA = 0.06; IFI = 0.95; TLI = 0.93; CFI = 0.95).

*H1a* was supported; promotion-focused job crafting was positively related to health ( $\beta = 0.76$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and performance ( $\beta = 0.46$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). *H1b* was partially supported;

Model	$\chi^2$	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	$\Delta df$	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	IFI	TLI	CFI
5-factor	67.83*	45	–	–	1.51	0.07	0.95	0.92	0.95
4-factor <sub>a</sub>	100.70*	49	32.87*	4	2.06	0.10	0.88	0.84	0.88
4-factor <sub>b</sub>	135.21*	49	67.38*	4	2.76	0.12	0.82	0.73	0.80
3-factor	169.48*	52	101.65*	7	3.26	0.14	0.74	0.65	0.73
1-factor	257.49*	55	189.66*	10	4.68	0.18	0.54	0.43	0.53

**Table II.** Results of confirmatory factor analyses and comparisons of alternative models

**Notes:** 5-factor: employee-oriented leadership, promotion-focused job crafting, prevention-focused job crafting, health, performance; 4-factor<sub>a</sub>: employee-oriented leadership, promotion- and prevention-focused job crafting load on one factor, health, performance; 4-factor<sub>b</sub>: employee-oriented leadership, promotion-focused job crafting, prevention-focused job crafting, health and performance load on one factor; 3-factor: employee-oriented leadership, promotion- and prevention-focused job crafting load on one factor, health and performance load on one factor; 1-factor: all item parcels load on one factor. \* $p < 0.05$



**Figure 1.** Maximum likelihood estimates of the proposed model

**Notes:** Values are standardized estimates. \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.10$

prevention-focused job crafting was negatively related to performance ( $\beta = -0.32, p < 0.05$ ), but not significantly related with health ( $\beta = -0.24, p = ns$ ).

*H2a* was supported; employee-oriented leadership was positively related to promotion-focused job crafting ( $\beta = 0.56, p < 0.05$ ). *H2b* was not supported; employee-oriented leadership was negatively but not significantly related to prevention-focused job crafting ( $\beta = -0.13, p = ns$ ).

*H3a* was supported; bootstrap analyses results show that both indirect effects of employee-oriented leadership on employee health and performance through promotion-focused job crafting were significant (indirect effect estimate for health = 0.38,  $p < 0.05$ , bias-corrected confidence interval (B-CCI)  $0.25 \leq B-CCI \leq 0.51$ ; indirect effect estimate for performance = 0.12,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $0.07 \leq B-CCI \leq 0.20$ ). *H3b* was not supported; both indirect effects of employee-oriented leadership on employee health and performance through prevention-focused job crafting were not significant (indirect effect estimate for health = 0.03,  $p = ns$ ,  $-0.01 \leq B-CCI \leq 0.11$ ; indirect effect estimate for performance = 0.02,  $p = ns$ ,  $-0.01 \leq B-CCI \leq 0.10$ ).

### Additional analyses

The findings so far support the proposed model with regard to the indirect effect of employee-oriented leadership on health and performance through promotion-focused job crafting. However, it remains unclear whether each performance facet (i.e. task, adaptive, or proactive performance) is equally facilitated by employee-oriented leadership and job crafting. Therefore, we tested three additional models that were similar to the proposed model, but in which the latent performance factor was replaced with one of the following factors: task performance, adaptive performance, and proactive performance. Each of these three additional models showed excellent fit to the data (see Table III).

The task performance model shows that promotion-focused job crafting was positively ( $\beta = 0.24, p < 0.05$ ) and prevention-focused job crafting was negatively ( $\beta = -0.47, p < 0.05$ ) related to task performance, and employee-oriented leadership was indirectly related to task performance through promotion-focused job crafting (indirect effect estimate = 0.08,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $0.01 \leq B-CCI \leq 0.18$ ). The adaptive performance model shows that promotion-focused job crafting was positively ( $\beta = 0.46, p < 0.05$ ) and prevention-focused job crafting was not significantly ( $\beta = -0.18, p = ns$ ) related to adaptive performance, and employee-oriented leadership was indirectly related to adaptive performance through promotion-focused job crafting (indirect effect estimate = 0.27,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $0.17 \leq B-CCI \leq 0.42$ ). The proactive performance model shows that promotion-focused job crafting was positively ( $\beta = 0.33, p < 0.05$ ) and prevention-focused job crafting was negatively ( $\beta = -0.38, p < 0.05$ ) related to proactive performance, and employee-oriented leadership was indirectly related to proactive performance through promotion-focused job crafting (indirect effect estimate = 0.20,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $0.09 \leq B-CCI \leq 0.33$ ).

## Discussion

In this study, we hypothesized that employee-oriented leadership facilitates promotion-focused job crafting (i.e. seeking to increase job resources and challenging job demands) and reduces

Model	$\chi^2$	df	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	IFI	TLI	CFI
Task performance	56.23*	47	1.20	0.04	0.98	0.97	0.98
Adaptive performance	57.18*	47	1.21	0.04	0.98	0.97	0.98
Proactive performance	50.64*	47	1.08	0.03	0.99	0.99	0.99

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

**Table III.**  
Goodness-of-fit indices  
of additional model  
analyses



prevention-focused job crafting (i.e. seeking to decrease hindering job demands), and that, in turn, promotion-focused job crafting is positively and prevention-focused job crafting is negatively related to employee health and performance. We found that employee-oriented leadership was indirect, positively related to employees' health and performance through promotion-focused job crafting. Employee-oriented leadership was not related to employees' prevention-focused job crafting, but as expected, prevention-focused job crafting was negatively related to employees' performance. Additional analyses show that in this study, promotion-focused job crafting had the strongest positive, direct effect on adaptive performance followed by proactive and then task performance, whereas prevention-focused job crafting had the strongest negative, direct effect on task performance followed by proactive and then adaptive performance. Employee-oriented leadership had the strongest indirect effect through promotion-focused job crafting on adaptive performance followed by proactive and then task performance.

#### *Implications for theory and future research*

The current study contributes to the literatures on job crafting, leadership, and employee health and performance in at least three ways. First, in line with previous research on job crafting (Rudolph *et al.*, 2017), we found that promotion-focused job crafting through increasing resources and challenging job demands facilitates, while prevention-focused job crafting through decreasing job demands impairs health and performance. These results are in line with the extended JD-R job crafting model (Bruning and Campion, 2018; Lichtenthaler and Fischbach, 2016a). It makes sense to differentiate promotion- from prevention-focused job crafting, and the results add to cumulating evidence that promotion-focused job crafting is functional and prevention-focused job crafting is dysfunctional with regard to employee health and performance (Demerouti *et al.*, 2015; Weseler and Niessen, 2016). Future research is needed to test the proposition that changes in tangible and intangible job characteristics are underlying mechanisms linking promotion- and prevention-focused job crafting with employee health and performance.

Second, a current meta-analysis on the JD-R job crafting model (Rudolph *et al.*, 2017) shows that research on job crafting antecedents predominantly focused on individual differences (e.g. proactive personality), while research on leadership as a job crafting antecedent is still scarce. We found that employee-oriented leadership encourages and empowers employees to engage in promotion-focused job crafting, which, in turn, is beneficial for employee health and performance. Employee-oriented leadership is a motivating job characteristic (Schaufeli, 2015), that helps employees to proactively and promotion-focused seek gains in other motivating job characteristics (i.e. job resources or challenging job demands). This finding is in line with the idea of positive gain spirals proposed by the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and the JD-R model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). Conceptually, this finding is also consistent with the idea that job resources like employee-oriented leadership facilitate promotion-focused proactive work behaviors (Parker and Wu, 2012). Contrary to our expectations, employee-oriented leadership was not directly related to prevention-focused job crafting. Possible explanations may be that leaders are more likely to evoke promotion-focused rather than prevention-focused self-regulation in their employees (Kark *et al.*, 2015; Kark and van Dijk, 2007; Neubert *et al.*, 2008), that job resources (i.e. employee-oriented leadership) are more strongly related to promotion-focused rather than prevention-focused job crafting (Wang *et al.*, 2017; Weseler and Niessen, 2016), or that employee-oriented leadership may be only indirectly related to prevention-focused job crafting through reductions in strenuous job characteristics (Schaufeli, 2015; Tuckey *et al.*, 2012). Future research is needed to directly test this indirect effect of leadership through reductions in strenuous job characteristics on prevention-focused job crafting. Moreover, it would be

interesting to conduct further research on the impact of other leadership behaviors on promotion- and prevention-focused job crafting. For example, passive leadership should be positively related to prevention-focused job crafting because it increases strenuous job characteristics like work role ambiguity (Barling and Frone, 2017). Finally, it is also possible that employees engage in prevention-focused job crafting in response to strenuous job characteristics (e.g. emotional demands due to customers or colleagues), which are beyond the control of leadership. Future research is needed to answer the question: what are the reasons for employees to engage in prevention-focused job crafting?

Third, previous theory and research demonstrated that top-down leadership is directly related to employee health and performance (Judge *et al.*, 2004; Skakon *et al.*, 2010; Wang *et al.*, 2011), and until now, it had remained unclear how bottom-up employee behaviors can account for these relationships. This study shows that promotion-focused job crafting is an intervening mechanism, linking employee-oriented leadership with health and performance. Moreover, we demonstrate that employee-oriented leadership is important in fostering employees' positive health (i.e. work ability; Tuomi *et al.*, 1998, 2001) and performance, which facilitates organizational productivity.

### *Limitations*

Like every research, this study also has a number of limitations. First, we are not able to make causal inferences due to the cross-sectional study design. For instance, reversed causality is plausible for the relationship between promotion- and prevention-focused job crafting and health. Employees low in health may engage less in promotion-focused and more in prevention-focused job crafting behaviors to prevent further resource losses (Ten Brummelhuis *et al.*, 2011). With a longitudinal study design, future research can establish causal and reciprocal relationships between promotion- and prevention-focused job crafting and employee health. Second, common-method bias may be an issue, since most study variables were assessed via self-report. We minimized the risk of common-method variance through procedural and statistical remedies: leaders rated their employees' performance; we used different response formats for the measurement of the different constructs, stressing anonymity of responses and assuring respondents that there were no right or wrong answers (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2012); results of the CFAs showed that our measurement model was robust, and results of a CFA with a CMF (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2012) suggest that common-method bias is not a problem in this study. However, future research can deal with this issue, gathering data from more multiple sources, for example, colleague ratings of job crafting. Third, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the promotion-focused job crafting subdimension increasing structural job resources was below the recommended 0.70 threshold (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). However, in this study, we looked at the effects of overall promotion-focused job crafting, so this poses no threat to our conclusions.

### *Practical implications and conclusion*

Employee health and performance is a necessity for organizations' functional capability. Organizations should acknowledge top-down leadership and bottom-up job crafting as drivers of employees' health and performance. We know that promotion-focused job crafting is beneficial for employee health and performance. This study suggests that employee-oriented leadership facilitates employees' promotion-focused job crafting, which, in turn, facilitates health and performance. Consequently, organizations should encourage employee-oriented leadership behaviors, e.g. through leadership training or coaching.

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