

Exploring the dark side of job crafting



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Abstract

In the current literature job crafting has been found to have many beneficial effects on work outcomes. However, job crafting seems to be mostly used in its broadest sense and little attention is paid to its underlying intentionality/motivation. Since in previous research the beneficial effects of proactive personality on outcomes seemed to be fully mediated by job crafting, the question arises if the same is true for dark triad personality characteristics and undesirable work outcomes. Therefore, the dark side of job crafting will be explored by studying the relation between dark triad personality and work outcomes as mediated through job crafting. Further, an extra motivational dimension has been added to existing job crafting scales to create a bright (organization-centered) and dark (self-centered) version. Results showed that job crafting does fully mediate the effects of dark triad personality traits for positive work outcomes when it is organization-centered, and for some negative work outcomes when it is self-centered. This shows that there is merit to adding dimensions such as intentionality/motivation to job crafting and further research could expand further on this theme.

Key words:

Job crafting, dark triad personality, work engagement, job satisfaction, counterproductive work behaviour

Introduction

The design of modern-day work has changed a lot compared to the past century. The early stages of job design were focused on adapting workers to the tasks they were given in manufacturing economies. This early top-down approach was called *scientific management* and was founded by Frederick Taylor in the early 20th century. Taylor (1911) came up with several principles to improve job design, like simplifying tasks, selecting workers for particular tasks, and separating the planning of tasks from their execution. However, these principles are currently considered outdated, as managers have deemed them inefficient or sometimes even counterproductive in the contemporary ever-changing work environment (Bernoux, 2002). Nowadays workers are expected to take adaptive efforts and be proactive in modifying their tasks. When employees alter their set of tasks or task characteristics on their own initiative, they engage in *job crafting* (Parker & Ohly 2008; Grant & Parker, 2009; Wrzesniewski & Dutton 2001). Although job crafting has often been examined, the *motivation* for engaging in such behavior has so far hardly been studied. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) for example, defined three types of needs that an individual could have to start engaging in job crafting. The first need would be to avoid negative consequences to the self. The second is a need for expressing a more positive sense of the self at work. The third need was defined as fulfilling the need for human connection to others. These are all mostly self-centered reasons for job crafting. Petrou, Demerouti, Schaufeli and Hetland (2012) also noted a strategic advantage to job crafting: during the constant organizational change that is inherent in many post-industrial jobs nowadays, job crafting can serve the organization and not just the individual. This is manifested by maximizing the pool of resources through job crafting, but also keeping the work pressure at an optimal level. Through job crafting, organizational change can be transformed into an engaging experience (Avey, Wernsing & Luthans, 2008). To summarize:

workers may engage in job crafting for primarily self-centered reasons (without strongly considering the interests of others or the organization), but also to improve own performance (i.e., for organization/other-focused reasons). Since mostly only specific motivations for job crafting have been researched in specific contexts, the overarching motivations such as self-centered and organization-centered job crafting have not often been juxtaposed. In the present thesis we examine whether adding intentionality as an extra dimension to job crafting will enhance our understanding of its effects on work outcomes.

Job crafting: The good and the bad.

The practice of job crafting is primarily aimed at increasing person-job fit, which refers to the match between the set of tasks and work environment with the skills and interests of the worker. Moreover, it is aimed at improving personal job motivation (Peeters, et. al., 2014; Tims, Bakker & Demerouti, 2012). This freedom to increase own person-job fit may seem like a mostly good development to many. However, it is not improbable that there are downsides to this practice as well. Oldham and Hackman (2010) noted there could be dysfunctional consequences to job crafting, because of possible disruptions in work processes due to the change in tasks. There are other reasons why job crafting could be (mis)used by people who are inclined to disregard the needs of others: First, job crafting is often aimed at personal needs, and does not necessarily lead to higher organizational effectiveness (Tims et al., 2012). Research has shown that people who score higher on dark triad personality traits (i.e., narcissism, machiavellism and psychopathy) have a higher tendency to use manipulation tactics to get what they want in the workplace, regardless of the consequences this may have for other people or the organization (Jonason et al., 2012). Second, what is called “manipulation tactics” in one context, can be considered “job crafting” in another. For example, changing your list of tasks to seem more important than other coworkers

could be seen as a manipulation tactic. Yet, not every form of job crafting should be seen as a manipulation tactic. Changing your set of tasks to better serve the organization's goals would generally be considered as well-intended and not manipulative. This shows that there is a need for distinguishing among different types of job crafting. Effects of dark triad traits in the context of job crafting have thus far not been examined often. In an attempt to reconceptualize job crafting, Neale (2019) made a distinction in job crafting types in terms of intentionality/motivation:

“Individuals may also engage in job crafting for self-centered or deviant purposes. Here, we make a distinction between deviant-natured job crafting (dark job crafting) and well-intentioned job crafting (bright job crafting).” (Neale, 2019, p. 2).

This way of approaching job crafting looks promising for uncovering undesirable work outcomes that are possibly facilitated through job crafting. However, Neale's substantiation of splitting job crafting in terms of intentionality into bright and dark job crafting seems poorly defined for conceptual and operational reasons. First, there is a flawed subjective component in adding “well-intentioned” to the definition of bright job crafting and “deviant” to dark job crafting since people could easily disagree about what should be considered “well-intentioned” and “deviant” and what not. For example, a person might consider taking up more responsibilities than his/her equals as well-intentioned for the organization, while others may think s/he is being devious because s/he is taking up all the tasks that are more fun and less straining. Second, “self-centered” and “deviant” are not mutually exclusive categories and seem to be too different in meaning to be summarized under the same category of dark job crafting. This is mainly because considering something self-centered is not necessarily deviant. For example, trying to do tasks that are most fitting for you can be of benefit for the organization as well, because your performance may improve as a result of increasing your person-job fit (Leana, Appelbaum & Schevuz, 2009). This definition also seems

to suggest that self-centered job crafting is inherently something negative, while this does not necessarily have to be the case. To whom dark job crafting might be negative is also not clearly stated.

Aside from these conceptual issues revolving the definition of dark vs. bright job crafting, Neale (2019) seems to have included too many variables in the same items to operationalize the effects of bright and dark job crafting. The questionnaires of Neale (2019) applied either a dark or bright job crafting condition, while simultaneously adding promotion-focused or prevention-focused versions. This may have contaminated the perceived effects of bright and dark job crafting, since there were no items exclusively aimed at these variables. An example of such an item can be seen in table 1. As can be seen in this item, the promotion-focus and dark job crafting are intertwined in the underlined part of this item, making any effects from either concept contaminated with the other.

Table 1.

Example item from questionnaire made by Neale (2019)

Promotion-focused Relationship Dark Job Crafting
I sought to interact with other people at work, regardless of how well I knew them <u>because I want to gain a higher status in the organization</u>

Note. All items used in the questionnaire by Neale (2019) included a regulatory-focus indication (in this case promotion-focus) and a context category (in this case “relation”) and dark/bright job crafting.

Because of these shortcomings, there is a need for a different attempt at examining job crafting in terms of intentionality. In the present thesis, job crafting will also be split into bright and dark job crafting, but with a more solid conceptual definition. Dark and bright job crafting will be defined as follows: *Bright job crafting* refers to any form of task adjustment prompted by oneself to serve *the organization* where one is employed. *Dark job crafting* refers to any form of task adjustment prompted by oneself that is intended to serve *oneself* (the terminology of bright and dark crafting remains inspired by Neale's (2019) distinction). Since Neale (2019) had items that were too complex because they were contaminated with the other variable regulatory focus, a step back needs to be taken.

Personality and job crafting.

Merely assessing personality or intentions has proven to be not strongly predictive of actual behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), or in this context: work outcomes (for example: counterproductive work behaviours (CWBs)). Yet there is a multitude of research that did find job crafting as a predictor of work certain outcomes. Previous research has shown that job crafting is related to work outcomes like job satisfaction, through being able to create a work identity that enhances the meaning that is experienced at work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Other researchers have also shown that job crafting leads to higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment when it affects the cognitive and relational facets of work (among others, Ghitulescu, 2007). Schaufeli, Bakker and van Rhenen (2009) found that changing job resources through job crafting was predictive of work engagement. Petrou, Demerouti and Schaufeli (2013) found seeking challenges through job crafting was positively associated with work engagement. Additionally, effects of proactive personality have been found on work engagement and performance through job crafting (Bakker, Tims & Derks, 2012). An interesting part of this research is the fact that these work

outcomes were examined as effects of proactive personality. Job crafting seemed to be a full mediator of the effects of proactive personality on engagement and performance. An important observation was made by Bakker et al. (2012) when looking at the relation between personality and performance when they stated the following:

“Individuals who are generally inclined to be proactive will not perform better than their passive counterparts, unless they really engage in proactive behaviors in the workplace (job crafting).”

(Bakker et al., 2012, p. 1372).

So, for this certain personality characteristic to manifest itself in terms of its expected effect on work outcomes, subjects first had to engage in job crafting.

There seems to be evidence that dark triad personality traits are linked to CWB: Özsoy (2018) found that all dark triad personality traits (i.e., Narcissism, Machiavellianism and Psychopathy) were positively related to counterproductive work behaviours such as absenteeism, not following directions, being rude towards colleagues, et cetera. Narcissism can be defined as grandiosity of character, resulting in overconfidence, arrogance, exhibitionism, and intense envy (Pincus et al., 2009). Machiavellianism is the tendency to distrust others and to use manipulation of others as a strategy of social conduct (Christie & Geis, 1970; Wilson, Near & Miller, 1996). Psychopathy is generally defined as having no empathy for others and feeling no guilt when doing another person wrong (Hare, 1993). Therefore, it is interesting to examine if the relation between dark triad personality traits and work outcomes such as counterproductive work behaviours is similar to the relation between proactive personality and work outcomes like work engagement. To put it more clearly: Is the relation of personality on work outcomes mediated through job crafting? Perhaps this has not been found yet because job crafting scales are insufficient in their current “classic” (intentionless) state, but this begs the question if job crafting – as a form of self-

serving behavior – would mediate the expected effects of dark triad personality traits on work outcomes when a distinction in terms of intentionality has been made.

The present study

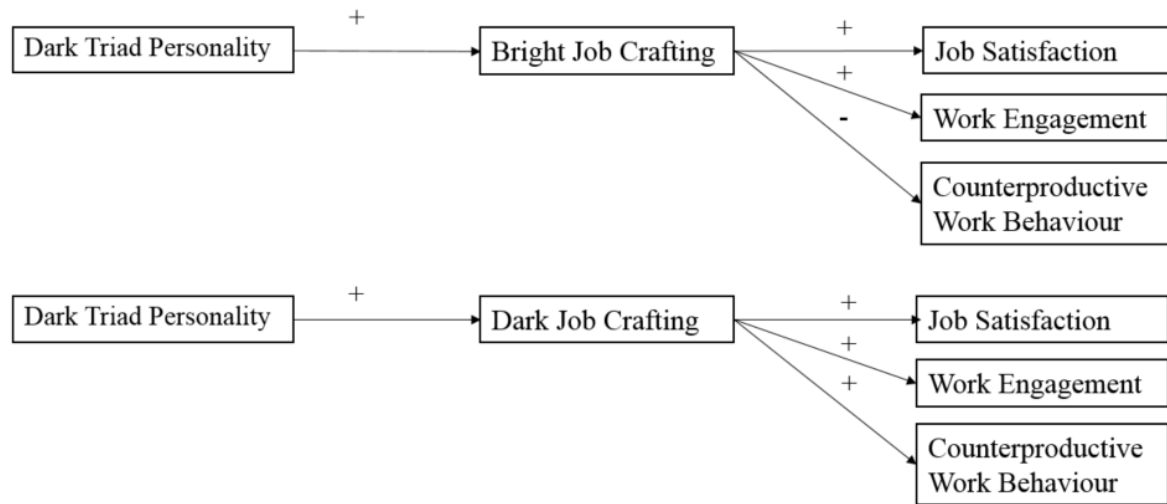
The aim of this thesis is to create a clearer image of the mediating role of bright versus dark job crafting in the relationship between dark triad personality traits and work outcomes, by answering the following question:

Are the effects of the dark triad traits on outcomes mediated by job crafting; and does this mediation effect depend on the type of job crafting (dark vs. bright)?

To answer this question, this thesis will create a new questionnaire to approach job crafting, and by doing so attempt to uncover the possible mediating properties that job crafting may have between dark triad personality traits and work outcomes. As stated before, a clearer distinction needs to be made when splitting the questionnaires in terms of intentionality. The complete theoretical model on which this thesis is based can be seen in figure 1.

Figure 1

Theoretical model.



The findings from the literature result in the following five main hypotheses:

1. There will be a positive relation between dark triad scores and bright job crafting (H1a) and dark job crafting (H1b)
2. Higher scores on dark job crafting will be associated with higher positive work outcomes and higher CWB.
3. Higher scores on bright job crafting will be associated with higher work positive outcomes and lower CWB.
4. The effect of the dark triad traits on work outcomes is at least partially mediated by bright job crafting.
5. The effect of the dark triad traits on work outcomes is at least partially mediated by dark job crafting.

METHOD

Study design and participants

To achieve a medium effect size ($F^2=.1$), a priori power analysis with $p < .05$ and a power of .80 suggests that a sufficient number of participants starts at $n=133$. Therefore, this thesis aimed to gather participants until this number was reached. The study was approved by the ethical committee of social sciences of Utrecht University on March 9th 2022 under decision number 22-0341. To ensure only valid respondents would fill in the online survey, introductory pages were built in that specified the conditions that participants should meet in order to participate:

The first page was informative, giving the participants the opportunity to read about the goal of this survey and the manner in which their responses would be anonymized and confidential. To ensure informed consent, participants were asked to agree with the following statement: “I hereby declare that I have read the information regarding the research”. Next, the participant could choose *I agree to participate in this survey*. If they did not agree, they were led to the end of the survey, excluding them from any further participation in the survey. After this question the survey asked: “*What is your age?*”. Any answers below 18 or above 75 were also referred to the end of the survey to ensure no children were allowed to participate. Any participants that reported to be older than 75 were also excluded since it was deemed unlikely that people of this age are representative of the target group (since old age comes with lots of other shortcomings like reduced stamina, mental capacity etc.). The next page asked: “*Do you currently have a paid job or internship? ("Answering "No" means you will not be able to participate in the remainder of this survey, as the questionnaires may not apply to you.)*” This ensured the respondent was currently involved in paid work and therefore a valid respondent for this research. The final preliminary question was: “*Do you work with colleagues, and do you have a supervisor? ("Answering "No"*

means you will not be able to participate in the remainder of this survey, as the questionnaires may not apply to you)”. Due to the nature of some of the items in the survey, it was required that respondents work with other people and have some sort of supervisor.

The first respondent participated on May 10th, 2022, and the last respondent participated on June 5th of that same year. At this point in time a sample size of $n=178$ was reached, using convenience and snowball sampling mainly through digital social media like WhatsApp and LinkedIn. All participants that failed to fully complete the survey were deleted. It turned out that only 65.7% of respondents filled in the survey completely, leaving the final sample of $n=117$. Among the final sample, 37.6% was male and 62.4% was female. Most participants (56.4%) held a university degree, with an additional 27.4% attending or having completed higher professional education (HBO). Only 5.1% of the participants had followed secondary vocational education (MBO) and the remaining participants had only done secondary education (7.7%) or filled in ‘else...’ (3.4%).

Instruments

A six-part survey was constructed and filled in completely by 117 respondents. The *Job Satisfaction Test* (Roelen et al., 2008) consists only of a single item so there was no reliability analysis to be done. The item looked as follows: “*To which degree do you agree with the following item: Overall I am satisfied with my current job*”. Participants could give a score between 1 (“*Strongly disagree*”) to 7 (“*Strongly agree*”). A Shapiro-Wilk test for normality showed that the distribution of the data departed from normality and was negatively skewed ($W = .702, p < .01$). In an attempt to reduce the skewness of the data, the variable was transformed into a logarithm of the mean scores.

The Dirty Dozen short Dark Triad questionnaire in Dutch (Çimen, 2017) consisted of 12 items in total ($\alpha = .83$): 4 items measuring Machiavellism ($\alpha = .68$); 4 items measuring Psychopathy ($\alpha = .71$); 4 items measuring Narcissism ($\alpha = .78$). The items looked as follows: “*To which degree do you agree with the following item: I have a tendency to manipulate others to get my way.*”. Participants could give a score between between 1 (“*Strongly disagree*”) to 7 (“*Strongly agree*”). A Shapiro-Wilk test for normality did not show evidence of non-normality for the Dirty Dozen ($W = .987, p = .354$);

The Counterproductive Work Behavior Test (Spector, 2011) consisted of 10 items in total ($\alpha = .62$). The items looked as follows: “*How often have you performed each of the following acts in your current job: Deliberately destroying property of the company.*”. Participants could give a score between 1 (“*Never*”) to 5 (“*Every day*”). A Shapiro-Wilk test for normality showed that the distribution of the data departed from normality and was positively skewed ($W = .902, p < .01$). In an attempt to reduce the skewness of the data, the variable was transformed into a logarithm of the mean scores.

The *Work engagement Test* (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) consisted of 3 items ($\alpha = .82$). The items looked as follows: “Please indicate how often each statement applies to you by giving the best suitable score (from 1 to 7): I am enthusiastic about my job.” Participants could give a score between 1 (“Never”) to 7 (“Always”). A Shapiro-Wilk test for normality did not show evidence of non-normality for the work engagement scale ($W = .979, p = .60$)

The *Job Crafting Scale* (Tims et al., 2012; vanBelle, van den Broek, & de Witte (2014)) was used as a basis for creating bright and dark job crafting (JC) items. In total the author generated a pool of 24 items. 12 bright job crafting items; 12 dark job crafting items. After factor analysis both job crafting scales were reduced to 5 items in bright job crafting ($\alpha = .87$) and 5 items in dark job crafting ($\alpha = .89$). The items looked as follows: (Bright JC) ‘I changed my tasks so that they were more challenging because I want to be able to help my organization’; Dark JC: ‘I changed my tasks so that they were more challenging because I want to seem superior to my colleagues’. Participants could give a score between 1 (“Never”) to 5 (“Every day”). A Shapiro-Wilk test for normality did not show evidence of non-normality for the mean scores of both bright job crafting ($W = .978, p < .05$) and dark job crafting ($W = .962, p < .05$). A more detailed description of how the bright and dark job crafting scales were constructed and what results came up in the factor analysis will be explained now. Full details on the statistical analyses and item generation and selection are presented in Appendix A.

Statistical analysis

The analyses that will be applied to the collected data to test the hypotheses are as follows: Hypotheses that revolved around the relations between bright/dark job crafting were performed by Pearson's r correlational analysis. Mediation analyses were performed using Hayes's (2014) PROCESS as implemented in SPSS; these mediation analyses also provide information about the regression paths linking outcome variables to predictors and mediators, meaning that separate regression analyses testing these paths are superfluous.

RESULTS

Correlational analysis

In this section every correlational hypothesis will be tested through the results following from the statistical analyses.

Table 2

Means, standard deviation and Pearson correlation matrix for continuous variables (n=117)

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Dark Triad	2.67	0.801	1					
2. Bright Job crafting	2.69	0.913	.281**	1				
3. Dark Job Crafting	2.54	0.891	.395**	.742**	1			
4. Work engagement	4.73	1.028	.027	.257**	.116	1		
5. CWB	1.35	0.280	.511**	.217*	.298**		1	
6. Job satisfaction	5.76	1.164	.005	.083	-.099	0.572**	-.096	1

Note. CWB: Counterproductive work behaviour.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

H1: There will be a positive relation between DT-scores and bright job crafting (H1.1) and dark job crafting (H1.2)

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between dark triad personality score and bright job crafting (table 2). There was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r(116) = .281$; $p < .05$. This means that people scoring higher on dark triad personality were more likely to engage in bright job crafting, meaning that H1.1 has been confirmed in this sample.

Another Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between dark triad personality score and dark job crafting (table 2). There was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r(116) = .395$; $p < .01$. This means that people scoring higher on dark triad personality were more likely to engage in dark job crafting as well, meaning H1.2 has been confirmed in this sample.

H2: Higher scores on bright job crafting will be positively associated with work engagement (2.1) and job satisfaction (2.2) and negatively associated with CWB (2.3).

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between bright job crafting and work engagement (table 2). There was a positive correlation between bright job crafting and work engagement $r(116) = .257$; $p < .05$. This means that people scoring higher on bright job crafting were more likely to feel engaged about their work meaning H2.1 has been confirmed in this sample.

Another Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between bright job crafting and job satisfaction (table 2). There was no relation found between the two variables $r(116) = .083$ $p > .05$. This means bright job crafting was not related to reported job satisfaction in this sample, rejecting H 2.1.

The next Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between bright job crafting and counterproductive work behaviour (table 2). There was no negative, but a positive relationship found between the two variables $r(116) = .217; p < .05$. This means the people who engage bright job crafting were likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviour, rejecting H 2.3.

H3: Higher scores on dark job crafting will be positively associated with work engagement (3.1) and job satisfaction (3.2) and positively associated with CWB (3.3).

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between dark job crafting and work engagement (table 2). There was a positive correlation between bright job crafting and work engagement $r(116) = .116; p > .05$. This means that people scoring higher on dark job crafting did not relate to how engaged they were about their work meaning H3.1 has been rejected this sample.

Another Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between dark job crafting and job satisfaction (table 2). There was no relation found between the two variables $r(116) = -.099; p > .05$. This means dark job crafting was not related to reported job satisfaction in this sample, rejecting H 3.2.

The next Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between dark job crafting and counterproductive work behaviour (table 2). There was a positive relationship found between the two variables $r(116) = .302; p < .01$. This means the people who engage dark job crafting were likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviour, confirming H 3.3 in this sample.

Mediation analyses

In this section every hypothesis that predicted mediation will be tested through the results following from the statistical analyses. Hypothesis 4 and 5 tested for mediation effects among the measured variables. Table 3 shows every separate effect between the independent variable, the mediator and the outcome variables. Table 4 shows the direct effects in the presence of the mediator and the indirect effects through mediation.

Table 3

Separate direct effects in the mediation analysis

Relation	Effect
Dark Triad -> Bright Job Crafting	.32**
Bright Job Crafting -> Job Satisfaction	.45*
Bright Job Crafting -> Work Engagement	.43**
Bright Job Crafting -> Counterproductive Work Behaviour	.00
Dark Triad -> DJC	.44**
Dark Job Crafting -> Job Satisfaction	-.50**
Dark Job Crafting -> Work Engagement	-.18
Dark Job Crafting -> Counterproductive Work Behaviour	.011

Note.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

Table 4*Mediation analysis of the total effects*

Relationship	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Confidence interval of the indirect effect (95%)		Conclusion
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Dark Triad -> BJC -> WE.	-.022	.14**	.032	.26	Full mediation
Dark Triad -> BJC -> JS.	.083	.14**	.026	.28	Full mediation
Dark Triad -> BJC -> CWB.	.048**	-.001	-.0085	.0081	Direct effect only
Dark Triad -> DJC -> WE.	-.022	-.080	-.24	.064	No mediation
Dark Triad -> DJC -> JS.	.083	-.22**	-.41	-.075	Full mediation
Dark Triad -> DJC -> CWB.	.048**	.0052	-.0052	.019	Direct effect only

*Note.** $p < .05$.** $p < .01$.

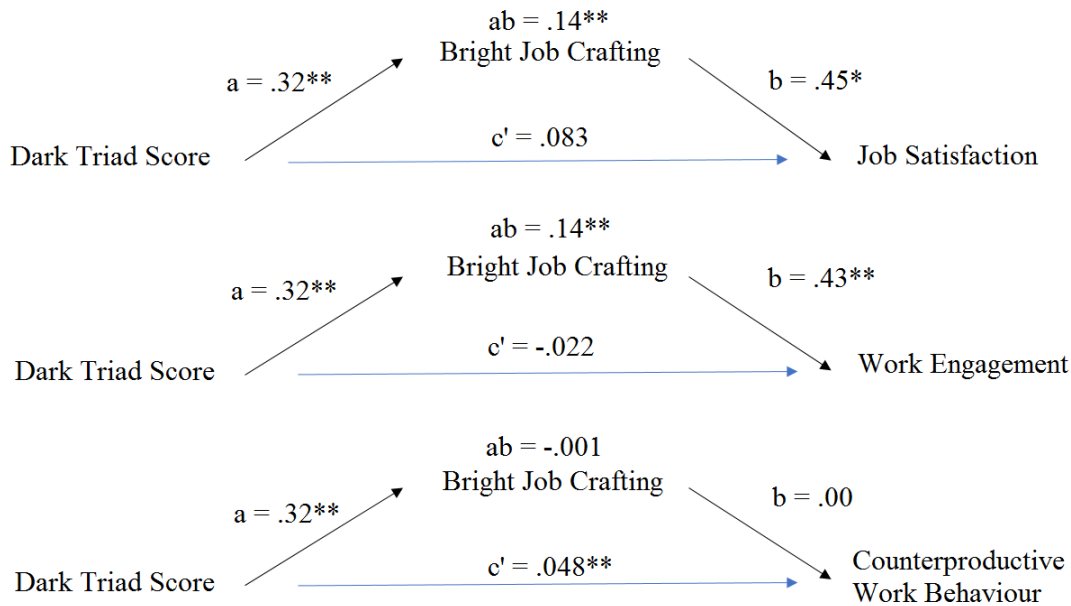
BJC = Bright Job Crafting; DJC = Dark Job Crafting.; JS = Job Satisfaction; WE = Work Engagement; CWB = Counterproductive Work Behaviour. Every mediation was analyzed separately using Hayes's PROCESS in SPSS.

H4: The effect of the dark triad traits on work engagement (4.1), job satisfaction (4.2) and CWB (4.3) is at least partially mediated through bright job crafting.

Using Hayes's (2014) PROCESS procedure, a series of regression analyses were carried out to test these hypotheses (table 4). A summary of all effects found concerning bright job crafting can be seen in figure 2.

Figure 2

Model diagram of all effects found in the mediation analysis of bright job crafting.



Note.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

a = effect of X on mediator; b = effect of mediator on Y; ab = indirect effect; c' is the direct effect in presence of the mediator.

Analyzing the indirect effects, results reveal that bright job crafting fully mediates work engagement $ab = .1367$ (95% CI, .0320 to .2648) $c' = -.0222$, $p = .8604$, meaning H4.1 is confirmed in this sample. This shows that people with dark triad personalities only were engaged at their work if they engaged in bright job crafting.

Another series of regression analyses were carried out to test these hypotheses (table 4). Analyzing the indirect effects, results reveal that bright job crafting fully mediates job satisfaction $ab = .1432$ (95% CI, .0257 to .2787) $c' = .0825$, $p = .5674$, meaning H4.2 is confirmed in this sample. This shows that people with dark triad personalities only were more satisfied about their work if they engaged in bright job crafting.

The next series of regression analyses were carried out to test these hypotheses (table 4).

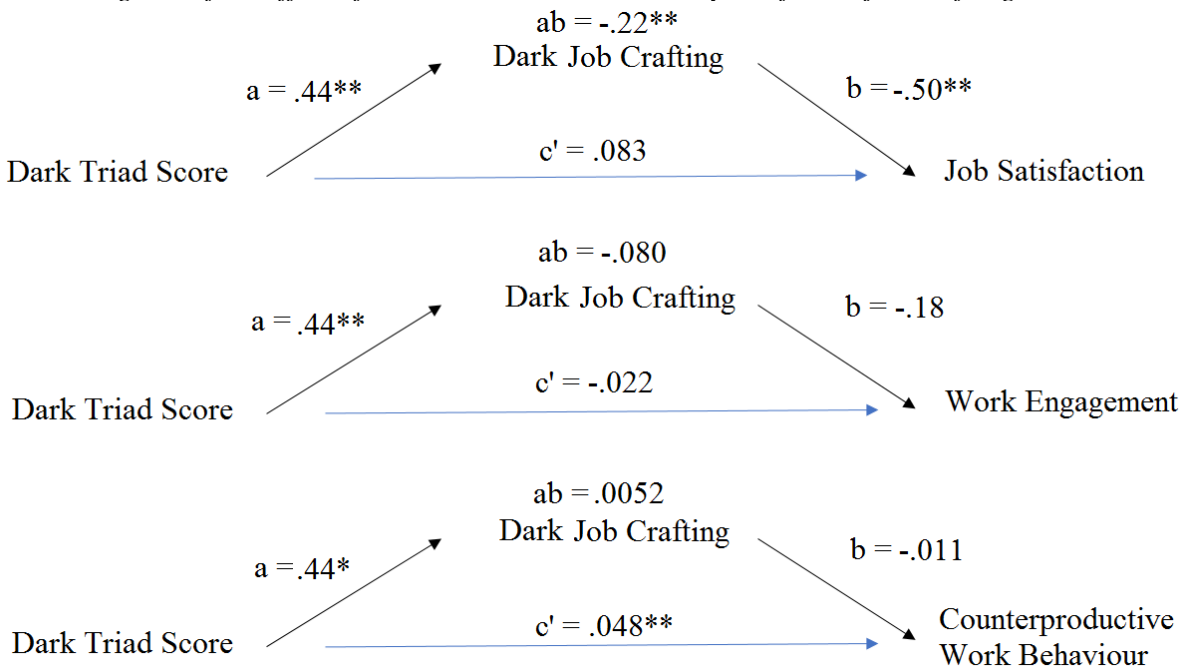
Analyzing the indirect effects, results reveal that bright job crafting did not mediate CWB, $ab = -.001$ (95% CI, -.0085 to .0081). Although there was a direct effect in the presence of the mediator $c' = .0476$, $p < .01$, meaning H4.3 is rejected in this sample. This shows that people with dark triad personalities that engaged in counterproductive work behaviour did not do so through engaging in bright job crafting, but people with dark triad personalities were still more inclined to take part in counterproductive work behaviours than non-dark triad personalities.

H5: The effect of the dark triad traits on job satisfaction (5.1), work engagement (5.2) and CWB (5.3) is at least partially mediated by dark job crafting.

A series of regression analyses were carried out to test these hypotheses (table 4). A summary of all effects found concerning dark job crafting can be seen in figure 3.

Figure 3

Model diagram of all effects found in the mediation analysis of dark job crafting.



Note.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

a = effect of X on mediator; b = effect of mediator on Y; ab = indirect effect; c' is the direct effect in presence of the mediator.

Analyzing the indirect effects, results reveal that dark job crafting does not mediate work engagement $ab = -.0801$ (95% CI, $-.2368$ to $.0636$). No direct effect was found either $c' = -.0222$, $p = .8604$, meaning H5.1 is rejected in this sample. This shows that people with dark triad

personalities were not engaged in their work and unlike bright job crafting, dark job crafting did not mediate work engagement.

Another series of regression analyses were carried out to test these hypotheses (table 4). Analyzing the indirect effects, results reveal that dark job crafting fully mediates job satisfaction $ab = -.2187$ (95% CI, $-.4120$ to $-.0747$) $c' = .0825$, $p = .5674$, meaning H5.2 is confirmed in this sample, but in. This shows that people with dark triad personalities were less satisfied about their work if they engaged in dark job crafting.

A third series of regression analyses were carried out to test these hypotheses (table 4). Analyzing the indirect effects, results reveal that bright job crafting did not mediate CWB $ab = .0052$ (95% CI, $-.0052$ to $.0190$). and there was the same direct effect in the presence of this mediator $c' = .0476$, $p < .01$, meaning H5.3 is rejected in this sample. This shows that people with dark triad personalities that engaged in counterproductive work behaviour did not do so through engaging in dark job crafting as well, but people with dark triad personalities were still more inclined to take part in counterproductive work behaviours than non-dark triad personalities.

DISCUSSION

In this thesis research the following research question has been addressed:

Are the effects of the dark triad traits on outcomes mediated by job crafting; and does this mediation effect depend on the type of job crafting (dark vs. bright)? In pursuit of answering this question, two new job crafting questionnaires were constructed based on existing job crafting questionnaires to add a dimension of intentionality to them. These were then called bright (organization-centered) job crafting and dark (self-centered) job crafting. Based on complete data from 117 participants, correlational and mediation analyses showed that there is merit to adding a dimension of intentionality/motivation to job crafting. Both bright and dark versions had different effects and the key findings will be discussed first.

Key findings.

The three most interesting findings of the present thesis are the following. First, the most interesting finding that was uncovered in this study is that job crafting can be related to intentionality/motivation. The main purpose of this thesis was expanding on what was already known about motivations for job crafting and see if there was a possibility if people with dark triad personalities (mis)use job crafting. By doing so, what would then be the effects on work outcomes? Even though motivations for job crafting were researched before (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Petrou et al., 2012), surprisingly few researchers (Neale, 2019) have tried to find patterns in overarching motivations, like the self-centered vs. organization-centered motivation for engaging in job crafting. All variables that were included have already been studied extensively, like the effects of dark triad personality traits (Özsoy, 2018; Jonason et al., 2012), or the effects of job

crafting in general on work outcomes (among others Bakker et al., 2012; Ghitulescu, 2007; Leana et al., 2009), but these underlying relations/motivations seem underexposed.

The second interesting finding is the different relations dark and bright job crafting have towards other variables. For example, this is seen when comparing the relation between dark triad personality and work engagement through bright and dark job crafting. There was a full mediation of work engagement for the respondents that had a dark triad personality when they engaged in bright job crafting. In contrast, there was no indication that dark job crafting had this mediating effect on work engagement. When looking at job satisfaction, bright job crafting was again a full mediator for dark triad personality types. Interestingly, dark job crafting was a full mediator as well, but for a negative effect on job satisfaction. Apparently dark triad personality types that engage in self-centered job crafting tend to be less satisfied about their job.

This brings us to the third interesting finding, which is the complex relation dark triad personality has with both job crafting and work outcomes. This study showed that bright job crafting is a unique practice for dark triad personalities that are engaged in their work and satisfied about their job. Besides that, dark job crafting seems to be a unique practice for dark triad types who are dissatisfied about their job. Interestingly, this did not occur when examining counterproductive work behaviour. Both bright and dark job crafting were found to be positively related to counterproductive work behaviour, yet both types of job crafting were not mediators for dark triad personality types. This makes the final finding more complex: a direct effect of dark triad personality types has been found for counterproductive work behaviour, which is in line with findings from Özsoy (2018). So, dark triad types are inclined to engage more in job crafting, and they are more inclined to engage in counterproductive work behaviours. Yet, job crafting had no mediating effect of counterproductive work behaviour whatsoever, even though both types of job

crafting were related to counterproductive work behaviour as well. This could mean that this sample has had a proportion of respondents that did not have dark triad personality but did engage in job crafting and counterproductive work behaviour as well.

So, is there a dark side to job crafting? Yes, job crafting seems to have a relation to undesirable work outcomes. Dark triad types seem to engage in self-centered job crafting when they are dissatisfied with their work. Separately from personality, people who engage in any type of job crafting seem to be related to counterproductive work behaviour as well. But there is also a strong case in defense of job crafting, because it seems there could be a lot to be gained on the bright version of this practice: First, job crafting for the benefit of the organization can make the dark triad types feel engaged and satisfied about their job. Second, dark triad types who engage in job crafting do not seem to be the dark triad types that engage in counterproductive work behaviour. Since bright job crafting seems to be mostly related to desirable work outcomes like work engagement and job satisfaction, and dark job crafting to an undesirable work outcome: job dissatisfaction, a case can be made to specify in what manner people should engage in job crafting, to get a more desirable effect from job crafting.

Limitations

A major limitation for this study has been the amount of time that could be asked from the respondents. To keep the response rate high and the dropout rate low, questionnaires have been used in their shortest form. Because of the limitations in size of the survey, some interesting variables have been left unexamined. For example, the literature suggested that organizational commitment was related to job crafting as well (Ghitulescu, 2007), but was left out of this study to keep the length of the questionnaire to a minimum.

Still, 34.3% of the respondents dropped out at some point while filling out the survey, meaning these efforts still were not enough for these types of sampling methods. This has caused the total number of respondents to drop to $n = 117$, which is lower than the power analysis suggested ($n = 133$) as a minimum sample size for finding a medium-sized effect.

Due to this second limitation (the power ending up being lower than planned), some effects may not have been detected. The data collection could have been done with a better method to obtain respondents to have a higher response rate and a lower dropout rate. This could help performing this study again, but on a larger scale, so that more variables could be added to the model. Perhaps a higher power would have brought more effects to light. A possibly good idea would be a chance to get a reward by participating and fully answering the survey to decrease the dropout rate.

A third limitation is that the newly constructed job crafting scales were translated to Dutch, which may have left some properties of the existing job crafting scales lost in translation. However, the purpose of this study was to explore underlying motivations on a broader scale, so negative consequences of this translation are probably negligible enough to be ignored for this type of research.

Further, the factor analysis has shown that the new job crafting scales have many similarities among themselves as well. While performing the first factor analysis, all job crafting items (both bright and dark) were entered into the same analysis, hoping to find the dark and bright items would cluster in two largely separate dimensions. This did not occur, even after removing noisy items from weaker factors. Eventually the choice was made to perform the factor analysis separately for each type of job crafting. In the end, we did find different properties for the different job crafting types, but a longer list of job crafting items, with a stricter elimination protocol during

the factor analysis, could have brought this study an even better and more powerful job crafting scale for each type.

Another limitation of this research is its cross-sectional design. Because this research was mainly exploratory and attempting to construct new questionnaires, establishing causality was not the most important aim of the present research, but it should be very interesting for future research to examine.

Finally, there is a limitation on the conceptual level for both job crafting definitions. Both job crafting types are not necessarily mutually exclusive, meaning self-centered job crafting could serve the organization, and organization-centered job crafting could serve oneself. Stepping away from definitions such as “deviant” or “well-intentioned” has been a good first step, but overlapping variance can reasonably be assumed when definitions like these collide. Therefore, bright and dark job crafting items may improve when more emphasis is given to whom exclusively the benefits are for engaging in this type of job crafting.

Theoretical implications and directions for Future research

The findings of this study call for replication of this research to affirm and expand on these findings. Perhaps even more personality types and work outcomes could be related to the bright and dark job crafting concepts. This means the theoretical preparation itself could be expanded on. Perhaps other versions of intentionality than bright and dark could be applied to this concept as well. Most importantly, performing this research on a bigger scale should find more convincing empirical evidence than what has already been found in this study.

A question that is left unanswered after this study is: Does work engagement precede bright job crafting as a mediator as well? It is not unthinkable to assume the mediation relation between

organization – centered job crafting and work engagement could work in both directions. Perhaps future research could check if work engagement would be a mediator for bright job crafting as an outcome variable. Another interesting study would be an experimental study in which respondents were split into two groups where one group is stimulated to engage in bright job crafting and the other group is not. Then it would be interesting to see if there would be a difference in work engagement between the groups. This could be done for other work outcomes as well, and a third condition could for example include being stimulated to engage in dark job crafting.

Another interesting question that has arisen from this study is: What is the relation of job crafting with counterproductive work behaviour? In the pursuit of exposing a dark side to job crafting, the variable CWB did not behave as expected. While job crafting does not seem to facilitate CWB for dark triad types, a relation still was found for bright job crafting and CWB. Does this mean any form of job crafting is related to CWB, and these are not even dark triad personalities? Future research should examine this relationship and find out why counterproductive work behaviour is related to job crafting. Perhaps CWB is job crafting in some contexts?

Something which was not completely applied in this research was using mirrored job crafting scales for bright and dark. It could be interesting to see how the effects of bright and dark job crafting would have manifested if every single item had a mirrored item in the opposite job crafting scale based on the same classical item. Along with that improvement, using the job crafting scales in their original language would have possibly also improved the reliability of the newly made scales.

Practical implications and Recommendations

A recommendation for individuals who are aware of their dark triad personality would be to consider their motives for engaging in job crafting. E.g., they could try to engage in organization-centered job crafting, instead of self-centered job crafting, if they want to be more satisfied and engaged with their work. Self-centered job crafting did not seem to deliver any desirable work outcomes, while organization-centered job crafting did.

A practical recommendation for organizations would be to try to identify dark triad personality types in your organization and be wary of them, because it has again been confirmed they partake in undesirable work outcomes like CWB. A good solution for preventing CWB in a company would seem to be stimulating employees with a dark triad personality to engage in any type of job crafting. Dark triad types seem to be inclined to engage in counterproductive work behaviour, but those who engage in job crafting do not.

Conclusion

All in all, this study has shown that there is a large amount of theory left uncovered regarding both job crafting as its relation to personality and work outcomes. This critical exploration of job crafting has shown that there may very well be a dark side to job crafting, but nevertheless also a bright side for both the individual as the organization. A promising new questionnaire could be developed arising from this study, with possibly even more categories applicable to it than merely bright and dark job crafting.

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APPENDIX A

Bright

- 1. Ik breng veranderingen aan in mijn werk om beter te presteren in het belang van het bedrijf.**
- 2. Ik verander mijn taken zodat het beter aansluit bij wat belangrijk is voor het bedrijf.**
3. Ik vraag mijn leidinggevende om mij te coachen, zodat ik van meer waarde kan zijn voor de organisatie.
4. Ik vraag of mijn leidinggevende tevreden is met mijn werk, zodat ik mijn waarde voor de organisatie kan vergroten.
5. Ik vraag anderen om feedback over mijn werkprestaties, zodat ik van meer waarde kan zijn voor de organisatie.
- 6. Ik heb mijn taken uitdagender gemaakt, omdat ik mijn organisatie beter wil helpen**
7. Ik heb mijn taken geherstructureerd zodat ik ingewikkelder werk voor mijn organisatie kan verrichten.
- 8. Ik heb mijn taken veranderd zodat ze uitdagender waren omdat ik denk dat het mijn team zal helpen.**
- 9. Ik heb geprobeerd enkele taken waaraan ik werkte te vereenvoudigen omdat ze me afleidden van het bereiken van de doelen van de organisatie.**
10. Ik zoek inspiratie bij mijn manager, zodat ik mijn taken kan afstemmen op de doelen van de organisatie.
11. Ik voer af en toe extra taken uit, ook al krijg ik daar niet meer voor betaald.
12. Ik probeer mezelf te ontwikkelen om het bedrijf beter van dienst te kunnen zijn.

Dark

- 1. Ik breng veranderingen aan in mijn werk zodat ik mij beter voel.**
- 2. Ik verander mijn taken zodat het beter past bij wie ik ben.**
- 3. Ik verander mijn taken zodat het beter aansluit bij wat ik belangrijk vind.**
4. Ik probeer mijn werk mentaal minder intens voor me te maken.
5. Ik probeer mijn werk emotioneel minder intens voor me te maken.
6. Ik probeer mijn contacten met mensen op het werk wiens problemen me emotioneel raken te minimaliseren.
7. Ik probeer contacten met mensen op het werk te minimaliseren wanneer zij onrealistische verwachtingen van mij hebben.
8. Ik heb de omvang van het aantal taken waar ik aan werkte actief verminderd om me in plaats daarvan op mijn eigen interesses te concentreren.
- 9. Ik heb geprobeerd sommige taken van mijn werk te vereenvoudigen, omdat ik geen profijt uit die taken haalde.**
- 10. Ik heb geprobeerd enkele van de taken waaraan ik werkte te vereenvoudigen om me op mijn eigen interesses te kunnen concentreren.¹**
11. Ik heb het aantal moeilijke beslissingen in mijn werk verhoogd omdat ik competenter wil overkomen dan mijn collega's.
12. Ik heb geprobeerd enkele van de taken waaraan ik werkte te vereenvoudigen omdat ze me afleidden van het bereiken van mijn persoonlijke doelen.

¹ Bold items were maintained after the factor analysis and were the only items used in the analyses that tested the hypotheses.

Job crafting item creation

By looking at a classic job crafting scale such as the one from the Overarching Job Crafting Scale (OJCS) from vanBelle et. al (2014), adjustments can be made to fit the added dimension of intentionality. For example:

OJCS: *'I changed my tasks so that they were more challenging'*

Bright JC: *'I changed my tasks so that they were more challenging because I want to be able to help my organization'*

Dark JC: *'I changed my tasks so that they were more challenging because I want to seem superior to my colleagues'*

As can be seen, both bright and dark items add new words to the original item to make the item either more organization-centered or self-centered. By doing so, the items are expected to elicit different responses when different personalities encounter them. This newly added portion of items has not been tested in previous research, so a relatively large pool of items was created under the assumption that a portion might have to be deleted after factor analysis.

In some cases, the OJCS already had a self- or organization-centered focus. The item would then remain the same and only the item for the missing intentionality will be added:

OJCS: *'I change my job so it would better fit with who I am'*

Bright JC: *'I change my job so it fits better with what I think is important for the company'*

Dark JC: *'I change my job so it would better fit with who I am'*

As can be seen, in this case the original OJCS-item could be left unchanged in the Dark JC since it was already self-centered. The bright JC version retained as much of the original phrasing as possible but puts the focus on the organization rather than oneself.

In the end 12 items were created for bright JC and 12 items were created for dark JC (see Table 5). Although the previous description did show a creation method in which two items were based on the same item, the final JC lists did not exist of completely mirrored JC items. In some cases, the phrasing ended up being too (seemingly) weak for measuring dark or bright job crafting. For example:

Bright JC: 'I sometimes take up more tasks, even if I do not get rewarded for it.'

Dark JC: 'I sometimes take up more tasks when I get rewarded for it.'

The Dark JC variant of this items was left out of the final list, since working for a reward seems more revolved around normal working and at willingness to work more, rather than self-centered job crafting. On the contrary, the bright JC item seemed more of an organization-centered job crafting item. Because of these exemptions, the final lists are not made from linked DJC or BJC items. Table 5 presents the 24 items and the results of a factor analysis.

Factor analysis

Table 5

Factor analysis of the bright vs. dark job crafting items

item	Bright job crafting		Dark job crafting	
	Loading initial scale	Loading final scale	Loading initial scale	Loading final scale
1	.75	.99	.72	.92
2	.84	.81	.77	.90
3	-.05		.82	.86
4	-.07		.22	
5	.05		.30	
6	.75	.89	-.15	
7	.72	.91	-.07	
8	.75		.57	
9	.72	.52	.86	.88
10	.35		.82	.97
11	.72		.46	
12	.49		.71	
eigenvalue	5.43	3.31	4.83	3.44
% variance explained	45.2	66.1	40.2	68.8

Note: Items that were deleted to show no loading in the final scale. Bright-item #9 is the only item that did not improve compared to its initial scale. This item had a higher loading in the final scale than the other items after deletion of certain lower items and was included in the final variables so both bright and dark job crafting would have an equal number of items.

To increase reliability of the constructs of bright and dark job crafting, a factor analysis was performed to check if the job crafting items are reducible into two dimensions. A principal component factor analysis (PCA) was performed to uncover the factors at work in the total list of job crafting items. Since the items are expected to be correlated because they all measure job crafting in some way, a direct oblimin rotation was used to perform the principal component analysis. The first attempt at performing the PCA was based on Eigenvalues > 1. This resulted in

2 factors for bright and the rotation failed to converge in 25 iterations for dark job crafting. Therefore 2 fixed factors were used for extraction, since this would be the same number of factors for bright job crafting and dark job crafting could extract a pattern matrix with fixed factors in 4 iterations.

Since the aim was to end up with the strongest single factor for each type of job crafting items were removed in a stepwise manner, removing factors that turned out weaker than factor of 0,7 in the pattern matrix. After the removal of the weaker items, a new PCA was performed. In the end bright job crafting was left with 5 items (items 1, 2, 6, 8, 9). Dark job crafting was also left with 5 items (items 1, 2, 3, 9, 10). To maintain an equal number of items across both the dark and bright variables, item 9 of bright job crafting was maintained, because it had the highest loading compared to the other items that fell off.