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A Multi-Level Model of Employee Motivation by Exploring the Intersection of Job Crafting and Job Embeddedness

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Abstract

Employee motivation is a very important factor that determines the performance of an organization, especially in a dynamic and competitive workplace. Nevertheless, few studies have been carried out to study the combined effect of proactive behaviors and retention mechanisms in motivation. This gap is filled in this study through the development of a multi-level model that investigates the connection between job crafting, job embeddedness, and employee motivation. The study used a quantitative and cross-sectional research design; data were gathered on 216 employees working in different industries using a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used to analyze the data. The findings show that job crafting has a strong positive impact on employee motivation ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$) and job embeddedness ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$). Moreover, job embeddedness also plays a key role in employee motivation ($\beta = 0.35$, $p = .001$), which is why it can be considered a significant mechanism that determines the connection between proactive work behavior and motivational consequences. The results imply that employees who are actively involved in the process of defining their work roles are more likely to gain a strong organizational attachment that in its turn boosts their motivation. This research adds to the literature of organizational behavior by combining job crafting and job embeddedness under one umbrella and provides implications of practical human resources strategies to enhance engagement and retention of employees.

Keywords: Employee Motivation, Job Crafting, Job Embeddedness, Proactive Behavior, Organizational Behavior, HRM Strategy.

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Introduction

In the current dynamic organizational environment, the motivation of employees has become an important factor of individual performance and organizational achievement. Unstable work environments where technology causes disruption, hybrid work arrangements, and growing job complexity require not only engaged but also intrinsically motivated employees to change and innovate. Motivation thus goes beyond the conventional systems that are reward-based and more and more involves psychological, behavioral, and contextual aspects that shape employee outcomes (Doğan et al., 2025).

The increasing focus on proactive work behaviors (especially job crafting) is one of the prominent changes in organizational behavior research. Job crafting is the self-initiated modifications of employees to be able to fit their tasks, relationships, and perceptions to their personal strengths and interests. The bottom-up strategy allows employees to restructure their work, thus increasing meaning and involvement. Recent research has made it clear that job crafting plays a significant role in enhanced performance, well-being, and flexibility in different work environments (Queiroga et al., 2023; Lanke et al., 2024). In addition, relational and contextual stimuli also enhance the development of behaviors, which strengthens their involvement in sustainable employability (Irfan et al., 2024).

At the same time, employee retention is also becoming a major concern to organizations, especially in the competitive and talent-driven sectors. The notion of job embeddedness gives a holistic view of the reasons behind employee retention in an organization. It includes three major dimensions, links, fit, and sacrifice, that all come together to define the level of psychological and social attachment to the workplace by employees. Empirical studies indicate that embeddedness has the effect of minimizing turnover intentions as well as increasing commitment and long-term engagement (AlMemari et al., 2025).

Although job crafting and job embeddedness have an individual importance, the current research primarily focuses on these two constructs separately (Naguib & Barbar, 2025; Dillard et al., 2025). New multi-level research highlights the significance of combining personal actions with workplace organizational and contextual conditions to gain a deeper insight into the workplace processes (Khan et al., 2025; Medina Molina et al., 2023). Moreover, the recent academic interest in the multi-level models in fields like leadership, spirituality in the workplace, and career advancement points to the necessity of more comprehensive models in the studies of organizations (Nuchpramool et al., 2025; Nayyar et al., 2025).

It is against this background that a critical gap in the knowledge of the interaction of proactive behaviors such as job crafting with retention mechanisms such as job embeddedness in influencing employee motivation still exists. This gap is especially significant when it comes to the creation of sustainable HR strategies that would facilitate engagement as well as retention. The present research, thus, suggests a multi-level model that incorporates job crafting and job embeddedness to describe the differences in employee motivation.

Research Objectives

- To investigate the effect of job crafting on employee motivation.
- To examine the job crafting and job embeddedness relationships.
- To explore the effect of job embeddedness on employee motivation.

Research Questions

1. What is the effect of job crafting on employee motivation?
2. How does job crafting and job embeddedness relate to each other?
3. What is the role of job embeddedness in motivating employees?

Paper Organization

The rest of the paper will be organized in the following way: Section 2 will contain the literature review, Section 3 will contain the methodology, Section 4 will contain the of the results, Section 5 will contain the discussion and the section 6 will contain the conclusion of the study.

Literature Review

Employee motivation is a key concept within organizational behavior, which affects performance, satisfaction, and retention. It has been widely divided into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is grounded on personal satisfaction and fulfillment whereas extrinsic motivation is grounded on external rewards such as salary,

recognition and promotions. The growing importance of intrinsic motivation in supporting sustainable career development and lifelong engagement is emphasized in the modern literature (Doğan et al., 2025).

The self-determination perspective also provides an explanation of motivation in terms of fulfillment of psychological needs which are autonomy, competence and relatedness. Employees with these attributes will tend to be more engaged and productive. In addition, meaningful work and supportive HR practices are also significant in enhancing motivation particularly in knowledge intensive and academic environments (Ahamed Shaik et al., 2025). This highlights the need to have organizations have a more holistic approach that would allow intrinsic motivation to be developed rather than transactional approach.

Job crafting is considered the proactive behavior where employees change their job descriptions to suit their skills, interests, and values. In contrast to the conventional top-down job design models, job crafting focuses on agency in employees to construct work experiences, which would make them more engaged and result in improved performance. It is self-driven transformations, which enable people to develop more fulfilling and valuable work situations. Recent literature has suggested that job crafting has attracted considerable interest as a tool to enhance employee flexibility and organizational performance in flexible work environments (Lanke et al., 2024).

Job crafting is often perceived based on three dimensions: task crafting, relational crafting, and cognitive crafting. Task crafting entails changing the quantity, the amount of job responsibilities undertaken, or the nature of the job responsibilities undertaken so that the employee can concentrate on job responsibilities that align his competencies. Relational crafting concerns transformation in the character and the level of interactions with colleagues, supervisors, and stakeholders, hence, having an impact on social dynamics in the workplace. Cognitive crafting, however, entails redefining the job roles for the employees, which in most cases results in greater purpose and identity. Empirical evidence suggests that a combination of these dimensions leads to improved performance results and employee satisfaction (Queiroga et al., 2023).

Many contextual and relational factors affect job crafting. As an example, the supportive work environments and interpersonal relations are the triggers that attract employees to participate in developing behaviors (Irfan et al., 2024). These proactive changes do not only enhance the performance of an individual but also the tie of the employees to the organization. Consequently, job crafting is a significant aspect in promoting sustainable employability and long-term career progression, and thus, it is a key construct in the modern research on organizational behavior.

Job embeddedness is a theoretical model, which is used to explain the reasons behind employee retention in an organization; it is concerned with how much attached to their job and workplace. Unlike the traditional turnover theories which revolve around dissatisfaction in the job, job embeddedness looks at the larger picture of interrelationships and situational dynamics which result in employee retention. It provides a detailed understanding of how employees are integrated into their organizational world hence become unlikely to leave the company (AlMemari et al., 2025).

The job embeddedness construct consists of three main dimensions: links, fit, and sacrifice. The links are the formal and informal associations that employees maintain with their peers, teams, and the organization as a community. Fit is the fit between the values, goals, and abilities of an employee and the organizational culture and job requirements. "Sacrifice" refers to the cost of the perceived exit of the organization in terms of benefits, relationships, and career opportunities. These dimensions form a network of attachment, which holds the employees of the organization.

Recent research indicates that job embeddedness is not just a predictor of retention but also a strong indicator of employee motivation and commitment to the organization. Notably, proactive actions, including job crafting, have been established to promote embeddedness through the enhancement of a sense of fit by employees and solidification of workplace relationships (AlMemari et al., 2025). This means that the workers who are actively involved in determining their working positions are more apt to feel part of and invested in their organization. Job embeddedness can, therefore, be considered an effective instrument that relates personal behavior to the success of an organization in the long run and, therefore, its importance in human resource management research.

The existing study relies on both Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model and the Social Exchange Theory, which have been applied to provide a good background of the interactions between job crafting, job embeddedness and employee motivation. The JD-R model presupposes that any employment includes both demands (e.g., workload, time pressure) and resources (e.g., autonomy, support, growth opportunities) and the resource availability plays a major role in the rise of motivation and engagement of the employees. In this regard, job crafting is viewed as an active practice, in which employees maximize their job resources and minimize job demands. Restructuring their work, social dynamics, and cognitive perception, workers will be capable of creating more resourceful working conditions which will help to

raise the level of motivation and performance rates (Queiroga et al., 2023). This perspective underlines the dynamism of work design whereby employees motivate their outcomes.

Social exchange theory describes the behavior of employees as a sequence of the mutual relations between individuals and their organization. This theory states that employees who feel supported, treated fairly, and given a chance to develop tend to give back in the form of positive attitudes and behavior such as increased motivation and commitment. Job crafting can be viewed in this context as a positive contribution of employees, who invest efforts in enhancing their work functions. The latter in turn, as employees are more likely to feel embedded in their organization through solid links, good fit, and perceived sacrifice by showing sustained motivation and engagement (Nuchpramool et al., 2025).

The combination of these theories is justified by the increase in the focus of the multi-level perspectives in organizational studies (Naguib & Barbar, 2025). Modern research points out that organizational and contextual factors and behaviors of employees are influenced at various levels by actions of individuals (Khan et al., 2025; Medina Molina et al., 2023). This multi-level lens enhances the relevancy of analyzing the interaction between job crafting (individual-level behavior) and job embeddedness (contextual and relational construct) in motivating employees. Therefore, the JD-R model and the social exchange theory, when used together, are a complete theoretical framework for developing an integrated framework where individual agency and organizational situation can be considered in their role in motivational outcomes.

Research Gap

Job crafting and job embeddedness have been extensively researched, but their combination as part of a multi-level system has been scarcely explored. The current body of literature focuses more on these constructs individually and not on how interrelate to employee motivation. Although other studies note the interrelation between job crafting and embeddedness, there is a lack of empirical research examining the combined effects of job crafting and embeddedness on motivational outcomes in various organizational settings. Moreover, multi-level analyses of organizational research have been a focus in leadership and career development, but little has been done to understand how can be applied in motivation. This study fills this gap by presenting an integrated model between job crafting, job embeddedness, and employee motivation.

Hypotheses Development

H1: Job crafting has a positive impact on employee motivation.

H2: Job crafting has a positive impact on job embeddedness.

H3: Job embeddedness has a positive impact on employee motivation.

Methodology

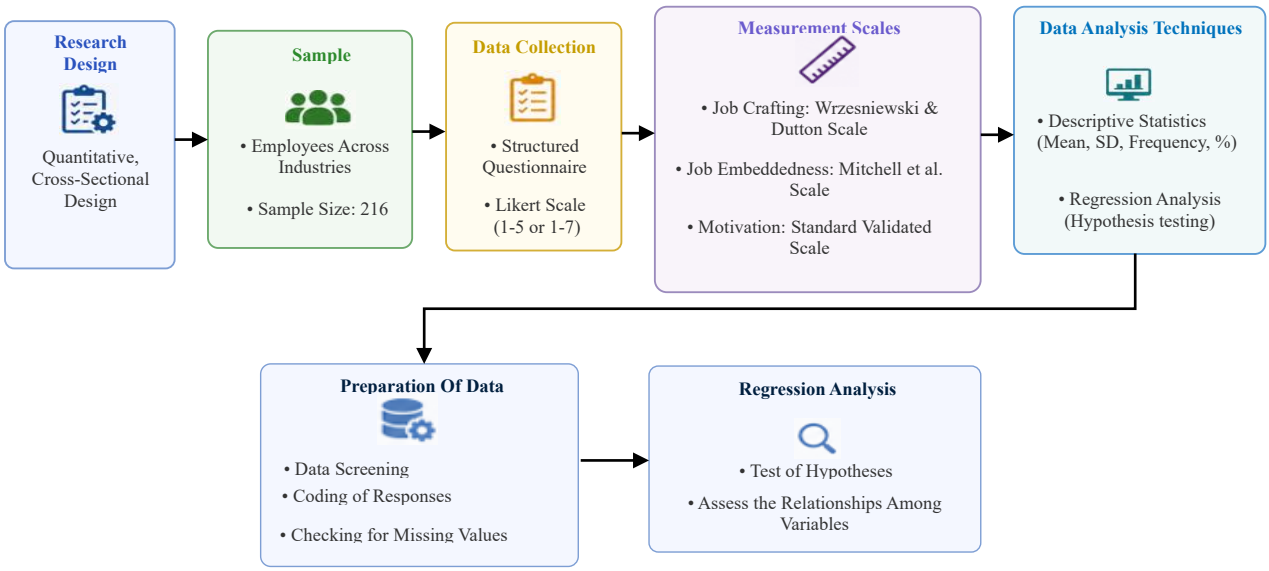


Fig. 1: Methodology Flow Diagram of the Study

Fig. 1 shows the systematic research process that will be followed in this study, providing a clear methodological framework from research design to results reporting. The quantitative, cross-sectional research design is followed by the selection of employees who will participate in the research, based on industry, yielding a total sample size of 216 respondents. It subsequently details the data collection phase using a structured questionnaire and a Likert scale, as well as standardized measurement scales for job crafting, job embeddedness, and employee motivation. The diagram also depicts the process of data analysis, including descriptive statistics and regression analysis, which is supported by initial steps such as data preparation and data reliability checks. Lastly, results interpretation and reporting are the end of the flow. The systematic development, as represented in fig. 1, not only ensures methodological rigor but also provides the study with a framework for analyzing the relationship between the research variables.

Research Design

This study is quantitative, as the research design aims to determine the correlations among job crafting, job embeddedness, and employee motivation. It is a cross-sectional approach, in which data are gathered at a single point in time and among respondents. It is an appropriate design for analyzing the relationships among variables and testing the hypotheses in a structured manner.

Sample

The study's sample comprises workers across different industries, making it diverse in terms of job roles, organizational structures, and work experiences. The complete dataset consisted of 216 respondents. The sampling rate will be applied to provide a broad picture of how employees act and become motivated across different sectors, thereby making the results more generalizable.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire to measure the important constructs of the study. The questionnaire was completed online and/or offline, depending on their availability. The responses were recorded on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, where a respondent indicated the extent to agreement with each statement. The approach simplifies the process of quantifying the perceptions and attitudes towards job crafting, embeddedness and motivation.

Measurement Scales

The study uses validated and reliable scales to ensure that, the measurements are reliable and valid. Job crafting is measured using a well-known scale based on the following dimensions: task, relational, and cognitive. Job embeddedness is evaluated using a scale that includes component concepts of links, fit, and sacrifice. Employee motivation is measured using a validated standard scale that assesses intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Each item is context-adapted to the study without losing its conceptual integrity.

Data Analysis Techniques

Statistical methods are used to test the proposed relationships with the collected data. Demographic data and key variables are summarized using descriptive statistics, including mean and SD values. Moreover, regression analysis is used to examine the effects of job crafting and job embeddedness on employee motivation and to test the proposed hypothesis. This analysis method enables identification of important relations and the strength of associations among the variables studied.

Results and Analysis

The study's findings are presented in this section using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. To make the results more understandable and interpretable, presented in tables and a graphical form.

Descriptive Statistics

To summarize the central tendency and variability of the key variables, i.e., job crafting, job embeddedness, and employee motivation, descriptive statistics were calculated.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Job Crafting	3.87	0.65
Job Embeddedness	3.74	0.70
Employee Motivation	3.92	0.68

As table 1 indicates, the mean value (M = 3.92) for employee motivation was the highest, indicating that employee motivation among the respondents is quite high. There is also a high level of proactive work behavior, as evidenced by job crafting (M = 3.87), and moderate attachment levels, as evidenced by job embeddedness (M = 3.74). The standard deviation values indicate a fair degree of uniformity in the sample responses. Among the measured constructs, Job Embeddedness exhibited the highest standard deviation (SD = 0.70), indicating that this factor showed the greatest variability in responses across the sample compared to other motivational drivers

Regression Analysis

The relationship between job crafting, job embeddedness, and employee motivation was analyzed using regression to test the proposed hypotheses.

Table 2: Regression Results

Hypothesis	Relationship Tested	Beta (β)	t-value	Significance (p)	Result
H1	Job Crafting → Employee Motivation	0.42	6.15	< 0.001	Supported
H2	Job Crafting → Job Embeddedness	0.38	5.48	< 0.001	Supported
H3	Job Embeddedness → Employee Motivation	0.35	5.02	< 0.001	Supported

Job crafting (H1) has a strong positive influence on employee motivation ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$), as shown in table 2. On the same note, job crafting has a significant impact on job embeddedness ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$), which proved H2. Also, job embeddedness positively affects employee motivation ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H3. These findings suggest that job crafting and embeddedness are both significant predictors of employee motivation.

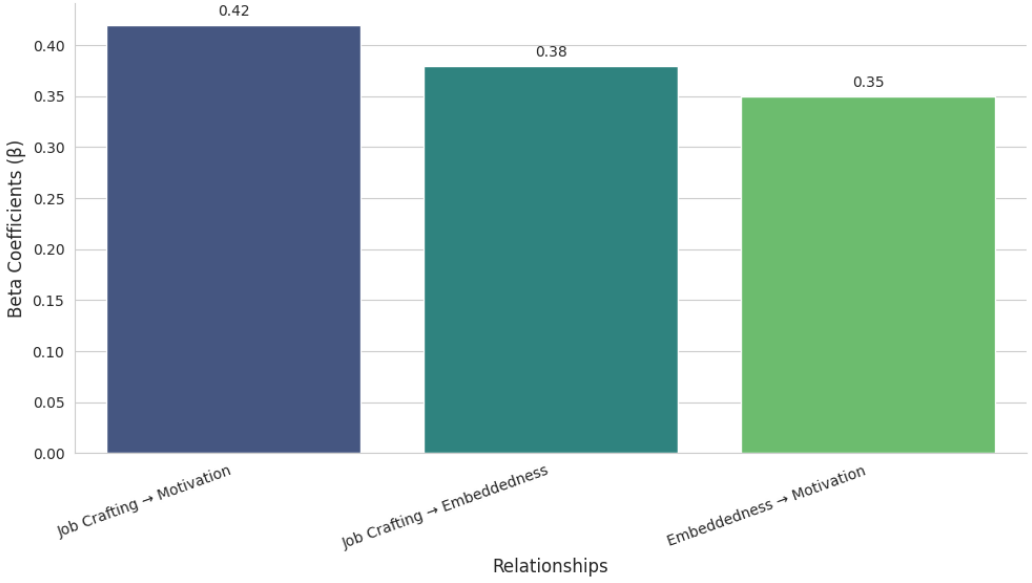


Fig. 2: Regression Coefficients of Study Variables

A graphical comparison of the standardized regression coefficients for the three hypothesized relationships is shown in fig. 2. The chart shows that the strongest relationship is between job crafting and employee motivation, followed by job crafting and job embeddedness, and lastly job embeddedness and motivation. Fig. 2 shows that all relationships are positive and statistically significant, supporting the importance of proactive work behaviors and organizational attachment in improving employee motivation.

The research results provide strong empirical evidence for the proposed relationships among job crafting, job embeddedness, and employee motivation. The descriptive statistics indicate that employees are highly motivated and proactive in their work behavior, suggesting a positive work environment in the sampled organizations. The regression analysis also establishes that job crafting significantly increases employee motivation, as employee-instigated role redesign plays a crucial role in ensuring improved engagement and performance. Moreover, job crafting has been shown to have a positive impact on job embeddedness, meaning that employees who are actively engaged in crafting their roles are more likely to establish stronger relationships and greater commitment to their organization. Furthermore, job embeddedness, in and of itself, has a considerable positive influence on employee motivation, supporting the idea that it is an important tool for retention and motivation. Overall, the findings indicate that the

combination of proactive behaviors and organizational attachment is positively associated with increased worker motivation, supporting the integrated framework proposed in this research.

Discussion

The results of this research closely correlate with underlying theoretical frameworks, especially with the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model and Social Exchange Theory. The high correlation between job crafting and employee motivation substantiates the JD-R perspective, which emphasizes that employees contribute positively to their job resources to increase engagement and performance. Through job crafting, employees can restructure their work to be more autonomy-focused, meaning-focused, and resource-rich, thereby increasing intrinsic motivation. Meanwhile, relationships are also shaped by the social exchange theory: the more employees feel connected and supported in their organization, the more willing to give back with greater motivation and commitment.

The results clearly show that job crafting is a relevant way to enhance employee motivation. This is because job crafting allows employees to tailor their job descriptions to their interests and strengths, leading to a sense of ownership and purpose. When employees willingly modify their work, relationships, and perceptions, can gain greater control over their work, which, in turn, increases their satisfaction and agreement. Such an effort can also enable staff to create a more meaningful workplace, free of job stress and enhancing overall health, which eventually results in higher motivation levels. The observed $\beta = 0.42$ for Hypothesis 1 provides empirical support for the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, specifically reinforcing the resource-motivation path where job resources act as precursors to increased employee engagement

The mediating role of job embeddedness is highlighted in the study. Job crafting is a direct driver of motivation and an enhancer of employees' attachment to the organization through improved links, better fit, and perceived sacrifice. This augmented embeddedness serves as a channel through which job crafting can impact enduring motivation. When employees are strongly attached to their organization, more likely to be committed and motivated, as the cost of defecting to a different organization is very high, including both personal and professional costs. Therefore, job embeddedness is an important element that bridges the gap between proactive work behaviors and long-term motivational results.

The results also align with previous studies on the subject. Past research has shown that job crafting positively affects performance and engagement, especially in dynamic work environments. Similarly, studies on job embeddedness have consistently highlighted its importance in reducing turnover and increasing organizational commitment. Newer research has begun to examine the relationship between job crafting and embeddedness, and there is potential that proactive behavior can enhance employees' organizational attachment. The current research extends this literature by integrating these constructs into a single framework and illustrating their joint effect on employee motivation. By so doing, it helps increase the focus on multi-level approaches in organizational studies, which provide a more in-depth picture of how individual behaviors and organizational characteristics interrelate to influence employee performance.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that must be noted. First, a cross-sectional research design does not allow determining causal connections between job crafting, job embeddedness, and employee motivation. The results reflect the relationship at a given point in time and may not capture dynamic changes in employee behavior and motivation. Second, the work is based on self-reported data, which may be prone to common-method bias and social desirability effects. Third, it has 216 employees, which is a small sample size considering that other areas of the industry are being studied, and non-probability sampling is employed, which can limit the applicability of the results. Moreover, the research is conducted with only a few variables and fails to consider other potential factors, such as leadership style, organizational culture, and psychological factors.

These limitations can be mitigated in future research by using a longitudinal research design to better capture causal relationships and temporal changes. The researchers can also incorporate multi-source data (e.g., supervisor ratings) to reduce bias and enhance validity of findings. It would also be more generalizable by adding samples from different regions or countries and by providing cross-cultural information. In addition, one would want to examine moderating and mediating variables, such as leadership styles, organizational support, and employees' well-being, to gain more insight into the motivation mechanisms. Further confirmation of the proposed framework may also be possible using more advanced analytical techniques, such as structural equation modelling (SEM).

Conclusion

This study examined the relationships among job crafting, job embeddedness, and motivation among employees using a multi-level approach. The findings show that job crafting positively affects employee motivation ($\beta = 0.42$) and job embeddedness ($\beta = 0.38$), and that job embeddedness ($\beta = 0.35$) has a significant positive influence on employee motivation. These results confirm that both organizational attachment and proactive work behaviors are crucial to motivation outcomes. By being more active in redefining work positions for employees, the likelihood of greater alignment and identification with their organization will increase, leading to greater engagement and motivation. This research study reveals the importance of integrating individual-level behaviors and organizational-level variables to better understand employee motivation. In practice, organizations should encourage job crafting by empowering autonomy, enabling work, and enhancing embeddedness through effective HR practices to improve fit, employee connection, and value. In total, the results may be applied in theory and practice, as offer a comprehensive framework for preserving motivation through the combined impact of job crafting and job embeddedness.

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