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AYUSHI YADAV
Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee

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YADAV, AYUSHI, "How Job Crafting is Shaping the Future of Hospitality Industry: through the Lens of Industry 4.0" (2020). *Travel and Tourism Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally*. 2. https://scholarworks.umass.edu/ttra/2020/research_papers/2

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How Job Crafting is Shaping the Future of Hospitality Industry: through the Lens of Industry 4.0

Introduction

“Work in the twenty-first century increasingly will be changed by the necessity for more employees to actively craft their own work lives...”

[Wrzesniewski & Dutton (2001: p. 196)]

“...the external environment is rapidly evolving and work roles are less clearly defined than in the past...job crafting may create conditions that stimulate employees to voluntarily ‘do more than is required’.”

[Demerouti, Bakker, & Gevers (2015: p. 87)]

Over the last decade, researchers and managers have contemplated the importance of top-down job design in the field of human resource management (Oldham & Fried, 2016). Later, the transition of manufacturing economy to a knowledge-based and service economy has become a calling for dynamic and creative jobs rather than the jobs assigned by management (Petrou, Bakker, & van den Heuvel, 2017). The rise of Industry 4.0 is marked with digitalization resulting into human-robot interaction on a large scale. Along with check-in check-out kiosks, ordering food and paying bills online, surfaces the challenge of providing customers with an engaging and personalized service. Embracing the Industry 4.0 and hospitality 2.0 together, thus, requires dynamic job profiles and continuous learning along with the development of innovative capabilities (Shamim, Cang, Yu, & Li, 2016).

The flourishing of the hospitality industry has also resulted into the recognition of the pivotal role that hotel employees, particularly frontline employees, play in catering diverse customers’ needs and achieving organizational effectiveness (Chen, Yen, & Tsai, 2014; Kim, Im, Qu, & NamKoong, 2018). Thus, the nature of the job and pace of technology calls for job designs through which hotel employees would be able to satisfy various customer demands and provide them a real-time experience without confronting role stress and structural and involuntary unemployment (Cheng & O-Yang, 2018). As an upshot of the accelerating changes, researchers and practitioners have reconsidered the approach of job design, i.e., jobs configured by employees themselves, known as job crafting phenomenon (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Job crafting is defined as a creative and proactive behavior practiced by employees to make necessary changes in their work and characterized by employees’ initiatives to make physical, cognitive and relational changes in their job (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) and by increasing structural job resources, increasing social job resources, and increasing challenging job demands (Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2012). As crafting behavior is all about exhibiting creative skills or performing and perceiving tasks in a way that suits their interests, it has been considered as a “strategic advantage” to gain a competitive edge.

Thus, the call for a conceptual paper exploring the challenges of Industry 4.0 in the hospitality sector is needful:

- To explore the impact of Industry 4.0 in the hospitality sector.
- To know how job crafting can tackle these challenges and gain a competitive advantage.

The current literature is an attempt to prompt researchers' and practitioners' interest by exploring how job crafting practices can leverage technological advancements, further enhancing employee performance, and customer satisfaction.

Literature Review

As the out-turn of Industry 4.0 technologies on work is seen as a double-edged sword in the literature the confrontation of virtual reality with the real-world renders an open-ended question for researchers and practitioners, i.e., Does Industry 4.0 serves us or takes from us? Technological advancements in the field of hospitality industry diversify from browsing inventories to completing reservations and purchasing a range of services (Shamim, Cang, Yu, & Li, 2017). On the one hand, these advancements in the hospitality industry provide the potential to offer more magnificent information at a single platform and enhance revenue-generating opportunities. The rapidly changing scenario, on the other hand, mirrors the importance of employees' dynamic capabilities and innovative behavior. The inclusion of different technologies and management practices is the critical requirement of the digital age (Sener & Yuksel, 2017), and to harmonize with the changes of Industry 4.0, employees need to exhibit new skills (Shamim et al., 2017). In the hospitality industry, the front office tasks with dynamic profiles are the ones that are most influenced by the emerging changes. For example, the frontline employees dealing with smart operations and smart demands of customers are expected to acquire radically different skills, with the nature of changing demands and technology. As the information processed and tasks performed by smart systems are geared towards augmenting the employee expertise, flexibility, and innovative skills, the frontline hotel employees, being customers' contact point, remain the essential information processor and central decision-maker. Ras, Wild, Stahl, & Baudet (2017) stated the need for new competencies in employees, e.g., creativity, social intelligence, and problem-solving- most of which are covered under an umbrella concept coined by Wrzesniewski & Dutton (2001) known as 'job crafting'. This practice enables the employees to change their job characteristics according to their preferences that result in achieving positive outcomes (Warr & Inceoglu, 2012).

Methodology

A literature review method was approached to facilitate review of published studies in order to develop better understanding of the Industry 4.0 and job crafting. To achieve the set research objectives, multiple databases including Science Direct, Scopus, SAGE, Emerald and EBSCOhost were searched. The keywords used as search terms within the titles or abstracts of published articles were: *Industry 4.0*, *job crafting*, and *work crafting*. After a pilot review, search terms *Industry 4.0 challenges*, *Hospitality industry challenges*, *bottom-up job design*, *bottom-up work design*, *crafting a job*, and *crafting a work* were added. As the steep increase in job crafting research was observed after the notable work of Wrzesniewski & Dutton in 2001, the search year limit was restricted between 2001 and 2019. Out of the yielded search results, 77 potentially relevant articles were selected to conduct this review.

Results

Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, (2008) revealed that crafting the job results in positive outcomes such as personal growth. Employees who make changes in their job are found to perform better,

revealing a positive relationship between job crafting and adaptive performance i.e., ability to adapt to the changes in the work environment (Demerouti, Xanthopoulou, Petrou, & Karagkounis, 2017). The researchers also proved that promotion-focused job crafting strongly influences adaptive performance (Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2018). Furthermore, increasing structural job resources is considered as one of the significant predictors for performance (Bakker, Tims, & Derks, 2012). Moreover, altering the adequate job demands and resources develops a sense of responsibility in employees towards their performance, which, in turn, triggers their effort to achieve a competitive advantage.

However, a recent study on hospitality management practices reported the issues faced by employees related to lack of autonomy and workplace discretion (Shamim et al., 2017). It hinders employees from taking instant decisions and redesigning their tasks as per the requirement, further lessening the employees' tendency to provide innovative and personalized services, i.e., the critical affair of Industry 4.0. The workforce development per technological changes needs management support, and thus, managerial approaches are anticipated to devise flexible job characteristics and job design that provide employees a higher degree of freedom to alter the job boundaries.

Conclusion and Discussion

The ramifications of Industry 4.0 in the manufacturing sector are well-documented. However, researchers and practitioners have ignored the impact of Industry 4.0 in the service sector. This study is an attempt to provide an overview of Industry 4.0 challenges faced by hospitality industry and a possible solution for inclusive growth. This review also attempts to offer a rich theoretical background of Industry 4.0 and job crafting and future research agenda for qualitative and quantitative validation.

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