

# How does Job Crafting Impact on Career Commitment of Rural Teachers?

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this study is to examine the current state of job crafting and career commitment of rural primary teachers and to analyze the relationship between the two variables as well as the influencing mechanisms through a questionnaire survey of 2,217 primary school teachers in Liaoning, Yunnan, Chongqing, Guangxi, and Guizhou. The research findings showed that rural primary teachers exhibited a moderate level of capacity for job crafting and career commitment; that job crafting positively predicted career commitment among rural primary teachers; and that teachers' self-efficacy and organizational support played mediating and moderating roles respectively in the relationship between the two variables.*

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## **Introduction**

Career commitment is about an individual's identification with the value of their career or occupation and an indicator of the extent to which they engage in their current profession (Meyer et al., 1993). Job crafting is an individually driven work design process which gives full play to individuals' agency in workplace, helping them attain meaning at work and personal development. It is viewed as an important means for teachers to autonomously expand their job resources (Qi, 2016). In the current context of rural education with limited resources, can teachers actively tap endogenous resources to achieve work goals and improve professional commitment? Can job crafting of Chinese rural teachers positively predict their career commitment? This study aims to present the current state of job crafting and career commitment among rural teachers and to explore their relations from the perspective of job redesign, utilizing data of rural primary teachers in five provincial administrative regions in China.

## **Data Sources and Selection of Variables**

The data in this article was derived from a survey in 2020 of compulsory education teachers in five provincial administrative regions: Liaoning, Yunnan, Guangxi, and Guizhou Provinces and Chongqing City. Adopting stratified random sampling, the research team first selected one economically less developed county from each region, and then picked one moderately developed township and one underdeveloped township from each county. After that, one demonstration primary school and two ordinary primary schools from each county, and one central primary school, one village primary school, and two teaching sites from each of the two townships were included in the investigation; a total of 2217 primary teachers were surveyed.

The independent variable in this study was teacher job crafting, measured by the job crafting scale developed by Slemp and Vella-Rodrick (2013). Teacher career commitment was the dependent variable, measured by the primary and secondary teachers' career commitment scale created by Li (2001). Teacher self-efficacy was the mediator, measured by Yu et al.'s (1995) simplified version of the general self-efficacy scale, while teacher organizational support was measured by the primary teachers' perception of organizational support scale created by the research team according to the actual educational experience of primary teachers.

## **Research Findings**

### ***Common Method Biases Test***

The test results showed that there were seven principal factors that have a greater-than-1 characteristic root and that the variance explained by the top factor was 36.4%, which was less than the critical value of 40%. That indicated that the common method biases were not significant.

## ***Descriptive Statistics of Variables and Relevant Analyses***

(i) The mean value of job crafting of rural teachers was 3.87, with the mean of their cognitive crafting being the highest (4.04) and that of their relationship crafting being the lowest (3.76), both of which were slightly higher than the critical value of 3. The analysis results showed there was no significant difference in job crafting performance between rural and urban primary teachers. (ii) The mean value of career commitment of rural teachers was 3.17, with the mean of their normative commitment being the highest (3.32) and their continuance commitment being the lowest (2.92), both of which were above the critical value of 2, but slightly lower than the level of career commitment among urban teachers. (iii) The self-efficacy of rural teachers was similar to that of urban teachers, and their perception of organizational support was slightly lower than that of the latter, with both being above the critical value of 2.

## ***Verification of Hypotheses***

This study constructed structural equation models based on samples of urban and rural teachers to verify hypotheses 1 and 2. The structural equation model based on the sample of rural teachers resulted in a satisfactory goodness of fit: RMSEA = 0.06, CFI = 0.90, TLI = 0.90, SRMR = 0.06; Job crafting of rural primary teachers could significantly and positively predict their career commitment, and their self-efficacy posed a mediating effect on the relation between the two variables. Thus, H1 and H2 were confirmed. The study also constructed latent moderation models based on samples of urban and rural teacher to verify hypothesis 3. The results demonstrated that both teachers' job crafting and perception of organizational support significantly and positively predict career commitment, with the former having a greater effect than the latter.

## **Conclusions**

The rural primary teachers sampled exhibit a moderate level of capacity for job crafting. Job crafting has the potential of enhancing career commitment of rural primary teachers. The effect of teacher job crafting on career commitment is mediated by teacher self-efficacy. Organizational support significantly and positively moderates the positive relationship between job crafting and career commitment of rural primary teachers.

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